

The Consolidation of Polyarchy in Bolivia, 1985-1997

by

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This paper measures the process of democratization in Bolivia from 1985 to 1998 using polyarchy as an operational definition of democracy. This quality of democracy is measured using a model developed by Altman and Pérez-Liñán (1998) which considers effective opposition and effective competition in a political system. Bolivia has elected four governments since 1985. This paper measures each regime for the quality of its democracy using the Altman and Pérez-Liñán variables. Bolivia's political system is unique in that it rests on a semi-presidential, semi-parliamentary system while its constitution provides for institutionalized inter-party, postelectoral bargaining. The paper uses quantitative measurements of the quality of Bolivian democracy to discuss and explain the ongoing democratization process. Since 1985, Bolivian democracy has consolidated as it moved from a fragmented to a moderated political system. The political system is now stable and firmly planted while allowing flexibility along the party-coalition dimension.

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Introduction

In 1982 Bolivia joined democracy's third wave after a lengthy struggle which began in 1978. Civil unrest under the military government of General Hugo Bánzer Suárez forced elections that year which were subsequently won by the *Unidad Democrática y Popular* (UDP, Popular and Democratic Union), an alliance of left and left-of-center parties, led by Hernán Siles Zuazo. The military vetoed the elections and the next four years saw two more elections and a series of seven military juntas. It was the combination of growing civil unrest and the regional economic crisis of the early 1980s that finally pushed the military to relinquish its political authority in 1982. The Congress elected in 1980 was recalled and it in turn soon elected Siles Zuazo, the presidential front-runner, the first democratically chosen president of the republic since 1964.

Thirteen years and three elections later Jorge Lazarte, spokesman for the *Corte Nacional Electoral* (CNE, National Electoral Court), declared the need to “analyze how much we have advanced and how much more we have left to go” (1995, 21). Bolivia's transition to democracy gave her people little chance to soak in the euphoric sentiments of a return to democracy. Siles Zuazo's UDP government was plagued with hyperinflation reaching 25,000 percent —rivaling that of the Weimar Republic— and the popular discontent it created. Unable to solve the economic crisis, Siles Zuazo called early elections in 1985. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, founder of the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR, National Revolutionary Movement) and hero of the 1952 National Revolution, came to power in 1985 and halted hyperinflation with austerity measures which took a fierce toll on civil society. Bolivia's fledgling democracy did, however, survive the economic storm and appeared to emerge firmly rooted.

In 1995 Bolivia's *Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales* (ILDIS, Latin American Institute of Social Studies) organized a conference in which Lazarte and other public figures discussed the progress and direction of Bolivia's democracy.¹ Thomas Manz, ILDIS director, opened the colloquium emphasizing the need to abandon the culture of confrontation in favor of “a culture of dialogue, of concertation and of consensus” (1995, 8). Perhaps the mere fact that heads of diverse public and institutional sectors met together in an academic setting to discuss such important themes as political participation and competition indicates the advance of pluralism in Bolivia. Mass, nation-wide confrontational *paros* (strikes) and *manifestaciones* (demonstrations) are steadily replaced with dialogue between political leaders.

Why study the democratization of Bolivia? The simplest reason is that Bolivia is understudied in the broader social science literature —including the democratization lit-

¹ Participants in the ILDIS democracy colloquium included Thomas Manz, ILDIS director; Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, head of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación* (MRTKL, Revolutionary Movement of Liberation Tupac Katari) and then Vice President; Jorge Lazarte, NCE spokesman; Marcial Fabriacano, Amazonian indigenous peoples representative; Carlos Camargo, *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB, Bolivian Workers Central) national director; and Gustavo Fernández, ex-Minister of the Presidency under the *Acuerdo Patriótico* (MIR-ADN coalition) government.

erature. But Bolivia is also important because its unique political system is a hybridization of majoritarian and consensus models (Lijphart 1984; Rojas 1997). The Bolivian transition to democracy allows us to study not only the process of democratization itself, but also the importance and influence of political institutions and institutional design within that process. In contrast to some recent literature on the failure of presidentialism (Linz & Valenzuela 1994), Bolivia's hybrid political system may be the exception that proves the rule. The Bolivian model gives the president the legitimacy of a parliamentary system (a consistent majority in the legislature) and also the strong powers (avoiding votes of no confidence and fragmentation) of a presidential system.

This paper analyzes the process of democratization in Bolivia using a Dahlian notion of *polyarchy* —discussed at greater length in the subsequent section. Here it is only important to note that this discussion of Bolivia's democratization does not pretend to address all aspects of democratization (e.g. social or economic) but rather focuses on polyarchy, or political democracy. Showing how Bolivia became a consolidated democracy (*qua* polyarchy) allows us to consider how institutional design facilitated Bolivia's democratic consolidation in ways not available to other Latin American regimes.

Theory

Bolivia's democratic transition did more than reinstate democratic government. It began a process René Antonio Mayorga calls a “silent revolution” by improving the stability and governability of Bolivia's political system and making it “self-enforcing” through a set of unique political institutions which blend presidential and parliamentary features (1997, 42). Guillermo O'Donnell adds that “current democratic theory has ill prepared us to understand” Bolivia's democratic regime (1997, 42). This is not to say that Bolivia's polyarchy is not measurable using available standards. Yet Bolivia's democratic path has taken some unique and interesting directions. The development of polyarchy in Bolivia has meant a “system of interparty bargaining, postelectoral coalitions, consensus practices, and congressional election of the chief executive —a development that promises to have profound implications for the theory and practice of representative democracy” (Mayorga 1997, 43). One principle reason for the successful consolidation of polyarchy is its unique political system and institutional design. A more careful study of the blending of institutional design features in the Bolivian case may lead to a deeper understanding of the role of institutional design in democratic consolidation. In this way, the Bolivian political system may serve as a model for future Latin American democratic political theory and development.

This paper argues that Bolivia's democratic transition has ended and that a polyarchy is now consolidated. This does not mean, however, that Bolivian democracy resembles any democratic ideal-type; this paper merely suggests that democracy has taken root in Bolivia's political culture. Perhaps the best way to consider *democratic consolidation* is as that condition that exists when democratic norms become the routinized and accepted process for political decision-making. Or, as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan write: “we mean by consolidated democracy as a political situation in which ... democracy has become the ‘only game in town’” (1996, 5). To say that *democratic norms* become the “only game in town” is to say that (at least) most political and social actors agree to an

electoral mechanism to choose leaders, that these leaders are responsible to those who voted for them, that decisions are made with regard to the majority principle, but with minority rights, and that decisions political leaders make are accepted as binding.

Democratization has two basic stages: transition and consolidation. Bolivia's democratic transition began in 1978 when General Hugo Bánzer Suárez stepped down in favor of democratic elections. This phase ended in 1985 when the first democratically elected government successfully transferred power to another. The next phase, democratic consolidation, subsequently began in 1985 with the Paz Estensorro regime. This paper argues that (*qua* polyarchy) the democratic consolidation phase was concluded by the time of the 1997 general elections. Subsequent improvements in the quality of democracy should be considered as part of the broader process of democratic deepening (Dahl 1971, 10).

Linz and Stepan (1997) agree that there may be more than one type of consolidated democracy. Samuel Huntington (1991) also rejects the Western culture thesis argument that democracy is linked to Western culture, leaving the door open for new variants on democratic theory.² A more detailed reconsideration of democratic theory is beyond the scope of this brief paper, however. This paper considers only a minimalist definition based on what Robert Dahl (1971; 1982; 1989) calls *polyarchy* —and measures Bolivia's democratization process using this standard. As Mayorga points out, Bolivian democracy is something of an anomaly within the broader scope of democratic theory. This paper follows from the assumption that before we consider the implications of Bolivian democracy for democratic theory we must first establish it as a legitimate case of democratic consolidation.

Robert Dahl shifted the democratic theory debate toward the concept of polyarchy. Dahl describes polyarchies as “regimes that have been substantially popularized and liberalized” (1971, 8). The term polyarchy is also used by Dahl to “distinguish modern representative government from all other political systems, whether nondemocratic regimes or earlier democratic systems” (1989, 218). Dahl, of course, includes a much broader discussion of polyarchy than the one presented in this paper. I narrow my focus on polyarchy to political democracy and do not, due to limited space, consider other factors such as civil or economic society. Keeping this in mind, Dahl identifies seven institutions of polyarchy:

- (1) *Freedom to form and join organizations*
- (2) *Freedom of expression*
- (3) *Right to vote*
- (4) *Right of political leaders to compete for support*
- (5) *Alternative sources of information*
- (6) *Free and fair elections*
- (7) *Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference*

² Huntington has a more difficult time rejecting the less restrictive cultural thesis that some cultures may not suit democracy. He accepts the possibility of Islamic democracy while still rejecting the possibility of Confucian democracy. His rejection of the possible correlation between a Confucian *ethos* and democracy seem tenuous, however. See *The Third Wave*, pp. 298-311.

These institutions of polyarchy are considered necessary to solve the democratic problem of scale: Athenian-style, direct democracy is no longer possible in modern polities with millions of autonomous, diverse, and territorially scattered citizens.

Each of Dahl's seven institutions has been in existence since the return of democratic government to Bolivia in 1982. Bolivian citizens are free to form and join political parties and join in other political or social organizations. There is freedom of expression and freedom of the press —providing alternative sources of information other than the official or government point of view. Universal suffrage for all adults of voting age is respected and elections since 1985 have been free and fair. Political society is marked by a heavily competitive political party system based on multiple cleavages (not only right-left). Finally, the electoral and political systems (based on proportional representation) have strengthened government legitimacy.

The concept of polyarchy is closely tied to Joseph Schumpeter's description of democracy as competition between elites. Schumpeter rejects the epistemologically confusing definition of democracy as "rule by the people" and instead argues that "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote" (1975, 269). Thus, Schumpeter distinguishes democracy as *ends* from democracy as *means*. Democracy is no longer synonymous with "good government" or the "good society" of earlier philosophical traditions. Instead, Schumpeter considers democracy merely as a tool for arranging political affairs in the hope of achieving the "good society" (or *res publica*).

While the debate about democratic theory (what is it?) and its limits (what is it not?) continues, the history of democracy does not stand still. Beginning in the mid-1970s, authoritarian regimes across the world gave way to more democratic ones. Samuel Huntington analyzed this "third wave" of democracy and was optimistic that "the movement toward democracy seemed to take on the character of an almost irresistible global tide moving on from one triumph to the next" (1991, 21). Only six years later, however, Huntington stated that a "tendency seems to exist for third wave democracies to become something other than fully democratic" (1997, 10).

O'Donnell argues that some of these "incomplete" democracies are failing to become consolidated (1997, 40). O'Donnell blames this lack of democratic consolidation on "particularism" (i.e. clientelism) or restrictions on elected officials. Those regimes which O'Donnell does consider polyarchies are "neither the ones that the theory of democracy had in mind ... nor what many studies of democratization assume that democracy should be or become" (1997, 49). These regimes, however, are criticized for lacking liberal freedoms or some broader ideas of social justice or even republicanism. More recently, O'Donnell presents the dilemma of considering socioeconomic variables and the rule of law —defined as the principle of *secundum legem* (1998, 13) when discussing democracy or democratization. O'Donnell makes two arguments: (1) many of the third wave regimes are democracies *qua* polyarchy; but (2) polyarchy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for full democracy (or democratic consolidation).

Such an argument does not contradict Dahl's conception of polyarchy. But we need to be extremely careful —as social scientists— not to condemn Latin American democracies for their inability to consolidate more ideal democracies even while they are able to consolidate polyarchies. It might be useful to more closely compare third wave democracies with the older democracies to consider just how truly different they are in

terms of quality of democracy. Thus, I do not expect that a consolidated polyarchy leads *necessarily* to a high quality democracy.

Linz and Stepan state that they “do not want to imply that there is only one type of consolidated democracy” (1996, 16). They also argue that “consolidation does not entail either a high-quality democracy or a high-quality society” (1996, 30). Linz and Stepan highlight the importance of making a clear distinction between quality of democracy and quality of society variables. Still, they specify five prerequisites for democratic consolidation: (1) civil society, (2) political society, (3) rule of law, (4) state bureaucracy, and (5) economic society. Each of these variables is, no doubt, necessary in some way for fuller democratic consolidation. It is beyond the scope of this brief paper, however, to consider each of these five variables. This paper limits its discussion of democracy and democratic consolidation to consider only what Linz and Stepan term “political society.” They define *political society* as “that arena in which political actors compete for the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus” (1996, 17). Linz and Stepan further add that consolidation “requires that citizens develop an appreciation for the core institutions of a democratic political society —political parties, legislatures, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, and interparty alliances” (1996, 17).

Similarly, Philippe Schmitter considers democracy “a composite of ‘partial regimes’” (1997, 243). One of these partial regimes is the electoral regime in which individual voters and political parties participate.³ Schmitter also proposes that “the appropriate strategy for studying the relationship between [political democracy’s] consolidation and civil society would be to disaggregation” (1997, 244). This paper focuses its scope to one such disaggregation —to consider only the role of the electoral regime in polyarchy consolidation. As such, this paper uses electoral data to quantify measures of polyarchy consolidation.

Georg Sørensen considers polyarchy as “political democracy” and reduces Dahl’s conditions of polyarchy to three dimensions: *competition*, *participation*, and *civil and political liberties* (1998, 12). The consolidation of political democracy follows the transition to democracy. Sørensen divides this transition into preparatory and decision phases (1998, 39-44). While these phases overlap, Sørensen’s preparatory phase is that period in which civil society reemerges to challenge authoritarian rule. The decision phase is undergone once political leaders choose the democratic path. Democratic consolidation occurs when “the democratic institutions have been formed and the new democracy has proved itself capable of transferring power to an opposition party” (Sørensen 1998, 44). Huntington similarly suggests a “second-turnover test” (1991, 237) to conclude democratization’s consolidation phase.

This paper deals with democratic consolidation by focusing on polyarchy as defined by Robert Dahl and measured along the dimensions of participation and competition (see Figure 1). Doing so allows us to focus on a specific aspect of Bolivia’s democratization and use a simple standard for polyarchy. Dahl (1971, 10) considers democratization as having these three stages:

- (1) *Transformation of hegemonies and competitive oligarchies into near-polyarchies*
- (2) *Transformation of near-polyarchies into full polyarchies*

³ See Schmitter, *Civil Society East and West*, Figure 1, p. 245.

(3) *Further democratization of full polyarchies*

Much of the debate considering the consolidation of third wave democracies appears to ignore the emphasis Dahl places on “further democratization” of polyarchies. Democracy is “a moving target” (Dahl 1989) which is never reached —though it can, of course, be steadily approached. Part of the measure of a consolidated democracy is that of a state that —after electoral norms are stable and routinized— consistently strives to reform itself in order to offer greater degrees of democracy for its citizens. This paper, therefore, defines a consolidated polyarchy as a regime in which political democracy is instituted even while the regime makes explicit efforts (not mere posturing or rhetoric) toward deeper democratization of the political, social, or economic society. A regime may thus be a consolidated polyarchy even if social or economic democracy is temporarily lacking. By “temporarily lacking” I mean, however, that a polyarchy enters a phase of “democratic deepening” and strives to improve itself along social or economic (or other) dimensions.

[Figure 1 about here]

Using their polyarchy scale, Altman and Pérez-Liñán analyzed 58 countries (circa mid-1980s) using their participation and competition variables. Their findings are summarized in Figure 2 for comparative purposes.⁴

[Figure 2 about here]

Bolivia

Bolivia’s difficult transition to democracy began in 1978 when then-dictator Bánzer Suárez stepped down in favor of democratic elections. Economic growth under the Bánzer regime unleashed new social forces that demanded democracy even as military repression of workers and (to a lesser degree) peasants always presented a dilemma for authoritarian control. The UDP won the July 1978 elections but was prevented from holding power when Bánzer Suárez’ chosen successor, General Pereda Asbun, launched a coup and declared the elections invalid. In November, General David Padilla led another military revolt overthrowing the brief Pereda regime and promised new elections. Bolivian politics now entered a frantic time period as a vast array of political parties, splinter groups, student factions, workers’ organizations, and civic societies emerged and reemerged to challenge the authoritarian regime and each other. Most importantly, Bolivia’s peasants (its largest social group) no longer voted as a bloc and most no longer supported the military regime or its candidates (Klein 1992, 263).

July 1979 saw another democratic election as 1.6 million Bolivians (90 percent of eligible voters) went to the polls in an election that saw no official military candidate, although Bánzer Suárez’ newly-formed *Acción Democrática y Nacionalista* (ADN, De-

⁴ For the sake of space, only some of their countries in each category are used, the full country list and respective scores is reproduced in Appendix B.

mocratic and Nationalist Action) did campaign.⁵ Congress was unable to decide between the two front-runners, Paz Estenssoro (MNR) and Siles Zuazo (UDP), so it chose the President of the Senate, Walter Guevara Arce of the MNR, as interim president until elections could be held the following year. That November, Guevara Arce was also overthrown by a military junta led by Colonel Alberto Natusch Busch. By now, however, social resistance to authoritarian rule was intense and nation-wide general strikes and violence forced the military out of power after only fifteen days. Another compromise civilian—the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Lydia Gueiler Tejada,⁶ also of the MNR—was chosen to hold the presidential power until elections could be organized in 1980.

The June 1980 elections once more gave a plurality (though not a majority) to Siles Zuazo and the UDP. Military hard-liners led by Luís García Meza launched a bloody coup in July to prevent the UDP leader from holding office. The García Meza regime and those that followed were extremely brutal and faced continuous civil opposition led predominantly by workers' and students' groups. The last military junta finally resigned in September 1982. The Congress that had been elected in 1980 reconvened and subsequently chose Siles Zuazo as President of the Republic. Plagued by a growing economic crisis, Siles Zuazo held elections in 1985—one year ahead of schedule.

The 1985 general election was a turning point in Bolivia's political history (Gamarra 1997). Bánzer Suárez' ADN won a plurality of votes (32.8 percent) in the popular ballot but was unable to gain a majority of the seats in the National Congress. Most political actors were uneasy about allowing the former dictator to hold presidential power so soon after the return to democracy. The potential stalemate was ended peacefully with an old constitutional provision: Article 90. This provision has since become a staple of Bolivian politics and serves as the bedrock of a political system Mayorga (1997) terms "presidentialized parliamentarism" and Eduardo Gamarra (1997) terms "hybrid presidentialism." Article 90 provides for election of a president by a special joint session of the National Congress in the event that no candidate wins an electoral majority at the polls. Beyond institutionalizing Article 90 as a central part of Bolivia's new democratic system, the 1985 general election was also important because Bánzer Suárez' ADN conceded the presidency to Paz Estenssoro, marking the first peaceful transition of power by ballot since 1964.

If one uses the criteria developed by Sørensen and Huntington, one is tempted to conclude that Bolivia's democracy was consolidated in 1985. The peaceful transition of power from Siles Zuazo to Paz Estenssoro fulfilled Huntington's "second-turnover test," while the 1985 election also fulfilled Sørensen's simple definition of democratic consolidation when "democratic institutions have been formed and the new democracy proved itself capable of transferring power to an opposition party" (1998, 237). The three general elections following 1985 have all used Article 90 to choose a president and each time the then-opposition took power peacefully as the government party stepped down, recognizing democratic defeat. This paper, however, uses the "second-turnover test" proposed by

⁵ Herbert Klein (1992) argues that, since 1978, Bánzer Suárez "consistently threw his support behind the democratic process" and has become a "pillar of the civilian political system" despite his authoritarian past (p. 270). To his credit, Bánzer Suárez did distance himself from the various military regimes that followed his own and in 1985 conceded political defeat despite winning an electoral plurality.

⁶ Lydia Gueiler Tejada, albeit an interim president, was Bolivia's first woman president.

Sørensen and Huntington to demonstrate when the democratic transition phase ended and the democratic consolidation phase began. I extend Sørensen's condition that "democratic institutions have been formed" to mean that the new "rules of the game" should become routinized after at least two more elections. Using this guideline, a continuous use of Article 90 to choose the national president means that Bolivian democracy is eligible for consideration as consolidated (*qua* polyarchy) by the 1993 general election.

Another important element in the consolidation of polyarchy in Bolivia is the role that political parties have played. During Bolivia's democratic transition, civil society both emerged and reemerged: new social groups pressed for greater liberalization of the regime while the traditional organizations, such as the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB, Bolivian Workers Central) and the still-powerful *Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* (FSTMB, Federated Unions of Mine Workers of Bolivia), become more active in their demand for civilian rule. Within a few years, however, organized labor and mass social movements no longer dominated political discourse as they had in the 1978-82 period. Bolivia was indeed moving away from a culture of confrontation to one of "dialogue, concertation, and consensus" (Manz 1995, 8). Bolivia's political system now depends on the vitality of its political party regime. A constitutional provision (Article 223) states that all candidates for office must run as members of a recognized political party. This provision has focused citizen political participation away from civil society (most especially the powerful unions and *sindicatos*) and into political society. Political confrontations now are more likely to take place on the floor of the National Congress than across barricade lines. The provision has also encouraged greater party discipline both in and out of government.

The new importance of political society has increased inter-party cooperation and post-electoral bargaining. With no presidential candidate able to win a majority of votes in the last four elections (and there is little indication that any candidate will in the near future), political parties have quickly learned to craft formal pacts and alliances with one another. Article 113 of Bolivia's Electoral Law allows political parties to form joint fronts and/or coalitions. After applying for *personalidad jurídica* (legal personality) these fronts or coalitions follow the same requirements as an individual party and file a single list of candidates with the National Electoral Court. After the popular election, but before the National Congress chooses the new president from among the front-runners, political parties join in postelectoral coalitions. These postelectoral coalitions even have elaborate documents and pacts with names such as "*Pacto por la Democracia*" (MNR-ADN, 1985-89) or "*Acuerdo Patriótico*" (MIR-ADN, 1989-93). Such coalitions have "enhanced both the stability of the executive authority and the compatibility of legislative and executive powers" (Mayorga 1997, 150).

A recent constitutional reform also promises to provide greater political democratization. The political constitution was significantly rewritten in 1994 under the Sánchez de Lozada presidency as part of a larger reform package specifically aimed at the further democratization of Bolivia's political system. These reforms include the *Ley de Participación Popular* (LPP, Law of Popular Participation) —redistricting the Bolivian state into 311 municipalities and allowing Bolivians to elect their own municipal governments directly (headed by an *alcalde*). The LPP also provides for a fixed twenty percent of the national budget to be divided on a *per capita* basis among the 311 municipalities (known as the *coparticipación*). Each municipality is now also able to decide directly how the

newly provided funds are administered. Another important reform is the Educational Reform Law, giving local communities greater control over their schools—even allowing indigenous-language education.

If the period of polyarchy consolidation has a terminal point, a good choice is the Sánchez de Lozada regime (1993-97) in general and the enacting of the new *Constitución Política del Estado* (CPE, Political Constitution of the State) on 6 February 1995 in particular. The new CPE included some rather significant changes to its first article, which now boldly reads:

“Bolivia, free, independent, sovereign, *multi-ethnic and pluricultural*, constitutes a unitary Republic, adopting for its government the democratic representative form, *founded on the union and solidarity of all Bolivians.*”
(Article 1, emphasis added, author’s translation)

The changes reflect Sánchez de Lozada’s MNR platform for the 1993 elections (published as the “*Plan de Todos*” [Plan for Everyone]) stating that the Bolivian government must represent all Bolivians, regardless of their ethnic identity. It also marks the first time a government actively supported indigenous rights. It is no small matter that the 1993 general elections saw the MNR merge with the smaller *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Katari de Liberación* (MRTKL, Revolutionary Movement of Liberation Túpac Katari), an indigenous peasant party headed by Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, an Aymara peasant leader. The MNR-MRTKL electoral alliance also made Cárdenas the first indigenous Vice President in the republic’s history.

Another perhaps more directly significant reform to the CPE was a change to Article 60. This article deals with the election of members to the Chamber of Deputies. Deputies were previously all elected *plurinominally* (that is, from a single party list). Voters marked only one choice on their ballot—for the presidential candidate of their choice and his party—during the general election. Each political party then received a share of a department’s seats in the lower chamber depending on the percentage of votes each party won in that department. The new Article 60 created 68 voter districts (*circunscripciones*) which allow for just more than half of the 130 deputies to be elected *uninominally* (that is, directly) by a simple plurality (also known as first-past-the-post). This reform of the electoral regime was first applied in the 1997 general elections; voters marked two ballots, one for their presidential choice (and his/her plurinomial list) and another for their uninominal deputy. The new Article 60 promises greater local constituent control over political parties. It is too early to tell for sure, however, what effects this change in the electoral process holds for Bolivian politics.

Of all the qualitative and quantitative analysis of Bolivia’s democratic transformation and democratic consolidation, the most important is the continued and successful implementation of more sweeping democratic reforms (such as the LPP and others). The Bolivian government’s continued efforts to bring democracy to all its citizens—especially the underrepresented rural and indigenous population—demonstrates that the democratic regime in Bolivia is firmly rooted. Only a solidly planted democratic government would (or could?) peacefully attempt such broad sociopolitical reforms aimed specifically at increasing the spread of democratic norms throughout its territory. Such reforms, therefore, should not be seen as a sign of the lack of a “fuller” democracy in the

previous regime but rather as deriving from the strength of its democratic institutions. The Sánchez de Lozada reforms clearly demonstrate that Bolivia has moved out of the consolidation phase and into the phase of democratic deepening.

Hypotheses

This paper combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to consider the success of Bolivia's democratic consolidation (*qua* polyarchy). Results from the 1980, 1985, 1989, 1993, and 1997 general elections are used to quantitatively measure Bolivia's democratization using empirical measures. Complementing this, qualitative analysis of each of the political regimes since democratization in 1982 is used to describe the process of democratic crafting. Ultimately, this paper makes the case that we have enough information and that enough time has passed to conclude that Bolivia is indeed a consolidated polyarchy. Following Sørensen's (1998) three-dimensional concept of polyarchy, I develop and test three distinct hypotheses:

H_1 Levels of participation consistently remain high

H_2 Levels of regime competitiveness consistently remain high

H_3 Levels of civil liberties and political rights consistently remain high

Each of these three is a necessary condition for polyarchy. If each of these hypotheses hold, then we can conclude that Bolivia's political system is a case of polyarchy consolidation since a regime that measures highly on each dimension is considered a polyarchy (Sørensen 1998).

Data

This paper uses data from Bolivia's National Electoral Court, a constitutionally independent political elections monitoring agency. The election results of the last five general elections are used. Although Bolivia's democratic consolidation phase began in 1985, following the first democratic transfer of power, it is important to include the 1980 general elections in order to study the 1982 democratic government (1982-85) —and also the second democratic government (1985-89)— stand in stark contrast to subsequent governments. Using these measures allows us to measure not only the quantitative change from pre-consolidation to post-consolidation, it also allows us to notice more clearly the stabilization of our polyarchy measures in the post-1985 period. The paper also considers separately the electoral results as they relate to the Chamber of Deputies (the lower legislative chamber). Although members of both chambers —Senate and Chamber of Deputies— are elected under the same party list ballot, the 130-member Chamber of Deputies is more representative than the 27-member Senate.

Citizen Participation

The first dimension of polyarchy is *participation*. Voter turnout figures in the four general elections since 1985 serve as the most basic measure for citizen participation.⁷ Polyarchy is predicated on the civic act of citizen participation in the democratic election of political elites. Huntington writes: “The central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern” (1991, 6). What I mean by *citizen participation* is that as more citizens vote in general elections, more citizens participate in the democratic process. An ideal-type polyarchy solves the democratic problem of scale when the whole citizen body is actively involved in the choosing of its rulers. High measures of citizen participation (as voter turnout) improve the quality of polyarchy since “more votes [use] their resources to control politicians, thus making elites more accountable to a larger portion of the citizenship” (Altman & Pérez-Liñán 1998, 5).

This paper measures citizen participation using voter turnout (T) with values measured as a ratio from zero (no eligible citizen voted) to one (all eligible citizens voted). Any positive change signals greater citizen participation.

Our measures for citizen participation serve as our primary indicator of *regime inclusiveness*. I also consider high citizen participation to reflect in some way a measure of *regime legitimacy*. Citizens who vote, at the very minimum, accept the democratic institution of voting as legitimate (Rojas & Zuazo 1997, 56). This alone does not mean that citizens will abandon other, more confrontational political discourse, but at the very least those who vote state affirmatively that the democratic process is a legitimate means of mass-level decision-making.

Blank and Null Votes

One of the primary means of measuring party regime consolidation is through the number of blank and null votes cast by voters in general elections.⁸ We previously specified the relationship between citizen participation and regime inclusiveness. It follows, then, that higher voter turnout figures relate to higher citizen confidence in the political system in general. Voters casting blank and null votes choose to participate in the most basic act of citizenship—voting—and demonstrate confidence in the legitimacy of the democratic electoral mechanism. We assume, then, that voters casting blank and null

⁷ Voting is obligatory under Bolivia’s Electoral Law for all male and female citizens aged 18 (changed from 21 in 1996) to 70. Proof of voting (or receipt for payment of a fine) is required during the 90 days immediately following the last election in order to take public office, receive salaries if employed publicly or in a private enterprise contracted by the state, obtain loans, or obtain a passport. It is uncertain what percentage of the population is directly or indirectly affected by the possible penalties for not voting.

⁸ Blank and null votes are quite distinct. Blank votes are those ballots cast that are deliberately not marked. Null votes include ballots improperly marked and invalidated ballots due to fraud or other reasons. Because it is difficult to distinguish between null votes caused by deliberate act or by voter ignorance, this paper combines them along with blank votes to measure confidence in the democratic system and rejection of the participating political parties. At the minimum, null votes are cast by citizens who accept the democratic process. Their ignorance regarding proper voting procedure (in the non-deliberate cases especially) does not reduce their basic acceptance of the legitimacy of democratic norms.

votes express a rejection of specific political actors while still accepting the democratic system (Rojas & Zuazo 1997, 56).

This paper further argues that the decline in blank and null votes signals an increase in the acceptance of the participating political parties —what this paper refers to as *party regime consolidation*. Polyarchies rely on political parties to represent citizens in order to address the problem of scale in modern polities. Those political parties that participate in electoral politics constitute the party regime in any political system. Such a theory of polyarchy emphasizes the need for all citizens to find their interests expressed through a political party. Of the citizens who participate in the electoral process, the ratio of those who cast blank or null votes corresponds with those citizens who (by the act of voting) legitimate the electoral process but do not yet identify with any of the existing parties. One can also state this by claiming that blank and null votes correspond with voter preferences or interests that are not represented by a political party.

A party regime is more representative of citizen preferences as the ratio of electorate casting blank and null votes diminishes and voter identification with existing parties increases. This is what this paper refers to as *regime representativeness*. As existing parties become more representative, the party regime moves towards consolidation. By this I mean that the existing party regime comes to constitute (collectively) the fullest possible expression of voter interests. Our ideal-type consolidated party regime is a goal towards which every polyarchy strives.

This paper measures blank and null votes (B) as the ratio of blank and null votes over total votes cast with values measured as a ratio from zero (no blank or null votes) to one (all votes are blank or null). Any negative change signals an increase in party regime consolidation.

Support for Ineffective Parties

Another means of measuring party regime consolidation is to consider electoral support for ineffective parties. By *ineffective parties* this paper means those political parties that participate in elections but are not represented in the lower legislative chamber (the Chamber of Deputies). I consider those parties as excluded from the process of ruling.⁹ By ruling, we mean “the ability to initiate collective action, to participate in the determination of public policy and supervise its execution, to attend to the needs of the larger society and shape its future” (Poggi 1978, 68). *Effective parties*, in contrast, are those political parties that participate in elections and are represented in the Chamber of Deputies. Those parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies have the ability to directly effect legislative outcomes. Even if limited by the size, small parties within the

⁹ This paper assumes that those political parties represented in the legislative body (whether as part of the government or the opposition) are included in the most basic process of ruling. Even if their representation is minimal, political parties in the legislature are able to express their constituents’ interests through such media as legislative voting, debate, and bargaining with other parties. For example, the 1997 elections brought four *Izquierda Unida* (IU, United Left) deputies from Cochabamba (from four of the new winner-take-all uninominal districts). The IU deputies are the only IU legislators and represent the interests of the *cocaleros* (the Chapare region coca producers). While extremely weak as a legislative force, the mere presence of those four IU deputies has complicated government efforts to eradicate coca production in the Chapare region and has given the *cocaleros* a “legitimate” political voice.

Chamber of Deputies can initiate legislation, to participate in the discussion of proposed legislation and its later promulgation, and to speak out on issues concerning their constituent or ideological base.

This paper argues that as support for ineffective parties decreases, there is an increase in party regime consolidation. During a transition to democratic government numerous political parties emerge and compete for voter support. Some of these parties are small and do not gain representation in the legislature; some are larger and gain representation in the legislature. These latter parties form the core of the party regime. Over time, voters may cast more votes for parties they expect to win representation and fewer votes for those parties they do not expect to win representation. This is another component of the process I refer to as party regime consolidation. When this happens, all voters' preferences are represented in the legislature since no political party that campaigns in an election is excluded from the process of ruling.

This paper operationalizes the measure of support for ineffective parties (E) as the ratio of votes for unrepresented parties over total votes cast for political parties. As with values for blank and null votes, measures for support for ineffective parties are measured as a ratio from zero (no votes for ineffective parties) to one (all votes for ineffective parties). Any negative change signals an increase in party regime consolidation.

Effective Participation

This paper also develops a measure of *effective participation* —our first dimension of polyarchy. By effective participation I mean that “each citizen ought to have adequate and equal opportunities for expressing his or her preferences as to the final outcome” (Dahl 1982, 6). Dahl does imply more than simple voter participation as a consideration for effective participation. This paper, however, focuses on participation only in the electoral regime. Beyond simple voter turnout, I also wish to measure “expressing preferences as to final outcome” in the day-to-day legislative dimension of the state. The need for such a measure stems from the assumption that democracy is distinguished from other political systems by “being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens” (Dahl 1971, 2). To measure effective participation we combine all three previous measures (voter turnout, blank and null votes, and support for ineffective parties) to determine the effectiveness of citizen participation in a political regime. What this measures is the degree to which citizens' preferences are represented in the lower legislative chamber. Such a definition of effective participation is derived from the assumption that in an ideal-type polyarchy we expect to find three things:

- (1) *All citizens participate in general elections*
- (2) *All citizens vote for political parties*
- (3) *All political parties participating in elections are represented in the legislature*

We cannot, of course, expect an actual polyarchy to live up to all three standards. My measure of effective participation, therefore, measures the degree to which a political regime represents its citizens. The above criteria for an ideal-type polyarchy are derived from the following theoretical assumptions: a legislative body only represents those citi-

zens who voted for the political parties represented in that legislative body.

From the assumption above, this paper develops an *index of effective participation* (IEP):

$$IEP = T \times (1 - B) \times (1 - E)$$

Where IEP represents the percentage of citizens who voted for political parties represented in the lower legislative chamber. This measure combines the three previous measures —voter turnout, blank and null votes, and support for ineffective parties. Effective participation (IEP) values are measured as a ratio from zero (no citizen participation) to one (ideal or complete citizen participation). Any positive change signals an increase in regime representativeness.

Effective Competition

The second dimension of polyarchy is the concept of competition. To measure competition, this paper applies the operational mechanism developed by David Altman and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán (1998). They consider *effective competition*, defined as “the access that parties in the opposition have to the policymaking process and in the extent to which they are able to represent an alternative to the ruling coalition” (1998, 7). These measures rely on a distinction between political parties as members of government or opposition. This paper also considers *government parties* as those political parties represented in the lower legislative chamber (for Bolivia, the Chamber of Deputies) that are members of the government coalition. *Opposition parties* include all other political parties represented in the lower chamber but which do not participate in the government coalition.

Altman and Pérez-Liñán develop measures for the size of the “typical” opposition and government parties. These measurements are designed to account for fragmentation and are weighted in favor of the largest political parties. The Altman and Pérez-Liñán model first measures the size of the “typical” opposition party (O):

$$O = \frac{o_i^2}{o_i}$$

where o_i is the share of seats for the i -th opposition party. The model next measures the size of the “typical” government party (G):

$$G = \frac{g_i^2}{g_i}$$

where g_i is the share of the seats for the i -th government party. These measures allow us to find the relative size of both government and opposition blocks instead of simply using aggregate shares of government and opposition seats. Aggregate measures are not as insightful as measures for government (G) and opposition (O) since they disregard frag-

mentation and party size. The model assumes that a one-party government with large representation in the lower chamber is more effective at implementing policies than a large multiparty coalition of smaller parties.

Using G and O values, Altman and Pérez-Liñán next develop an *index of effective opposition* (IEO) to measure “access of the opposition to the policy-making process” (1998, 7):

$$IEO = \frac{O}{G}$$

with IEO values measured as a ratio from zero (the government controls the entire lower chamber) to one (the opposition is the same size as the government). IEO values can also be greater than one in the case that the opposition is more powerful than the government. Of course, IEO values greater than one do not signify a “better” polyarchy. If the opposition is stronger than the government, governability suffers “a substantial distortion of the majority preference nested in the political regime” (Altman & Pérez-Liñán 1998, 9). Finally, using government (G) and opposition (O) values, Altman and Pérez-Liñán also calculate the *index of competitiveness* (C):

$$C = 1 - \left| \frac{G - O}{100} \right|$$

with C values measured as a ratio from zero (when either the government or the opposition controls the lower chamber) to one (when the government and opposition are balanced). A positive change signals an increase in regime competitiveness; conversely, a negative change signals a decrease in regime competitiveness.

Analysis

Bolivia’s measures for participation demonstrate a significant degree of stabilization at relatively high levels since 1980 (see Table 1). The measures for effective participation (IEP) have stabilized—staying consistently at 0.65 for the last two elections (1993 & 1997). Voter turnout, however, has declined steadily in the 1985-97 period, although the decline appears to be nearing a plateau above the 0.7 range. The democratization process itself could explain this early decline in voter turnout (T): as the democratic “euphoria” ends, democracy becomes politics-as-usual, and the rule of law is institutionalized, we might expect a slight decline in voter turnout. This hypothesis is tentatively supported by the fact that the highest rates of voter turnout were recorded in the 1978, 1979, and 1980 elections. Two plausible explanations are: (a) that the people “fought against dictatorship” through the ballot, thus making voting a more urgent political act; or (b) that voter turnout was inflated (when elections were held under military dictatorships) by the military, the political parties, or both. In the 1985-97 period, turnout values peaked at 0.82 in 1985 with the single largest drop to 0.74 (a reduction of 0.08) by the next election in 1989. Subsequent reductions in voter turnout were much smaller, with values falling to 0.71 by 1997 (a three-election drop of only 0.03).

[Table 1 about here]

The most significantly improving measure is that for blank and null votes. (B) Blank and null votes also peaked in 1985 and dropped substantially (a total drop of 0.0678) by 1997. B values did, however, hit their lowest point in 1993. It remains to be seen if B values will rise again, continue to fall, or stabilize in the near future. Measures of support for ineffective parties (E) also dropped significantly, although inconsistently. E values peaked in 1989 but hit their lowest point in 1997. Overall, the drop from 1985 to 1997 was a substantial drop of the magnitude of 0.0241.

Measures for effective participation (IEP), driven heavily by voter turnout, have slightly decreased over time. IEP values peaked in 1985 and dropped a total magnitude of 0.03 by 1997. If we discount the 1985 measure as still influenced by transition-era “democratic euphoria,” then overall effective participation measures slightly increased in a similar magnitude from 1989 to 1997. It also appears that effective participation measures may have stabilized at 0.65 (also an equal distance from the 1985 peak and the 1989 low). Future elections will allow us to measure if effective participation has indeed stabilized around 0.65 or if it will increase.

Measures for competition demonstrate a significant degree of stability since 1989 with marked improvement from the 1980-85 period (see Table 2). Since measures for regime competitiveness rely on inter-party postelectoral bargaining, there is a larger *n*-sample than with our participation measures (as coalitions break down and new ones are established). This allows a consideration of a greater number of cases, although they are no longer evenly distributed across time. These other “cases” involve new governmental coalitions created after an immediate postelectoral coalition collapses, changes, or evolves. The two most important measures, effective opposition (IEO) and competitiveness (C), greatly improved from 1980 and 1985 levels. Competition values have demonstrated a remarkable stability since 1989.

[Table 2 about here]

Measures for civil and political liberties provided by Freedom House (FH) also demonstrate a near-stable improvement over time (see Table 3). Although FH values peaked in 1995 (“partly free”), the overall tendency was a drop to a low 2.0 (“free”) by 1997. The highest FH value prior to 1995 was 2.5 (“free”) which remained stable during the 1985-94 period. For each of the four electoral years, Freedom House counted Bolivia among the “free” countries of the world. This improvement over time also parallels the decrease in political confrontation as democratic practices have become normalized and institutionalized.

[Table 3 about here]

Hernán Siles Zuazo came to power after the 1980 National Congress reconvened to elect a president in 1982 following the last military regime’s surrender to the democratic movement. Although the UDP was a coalition of three left-wing parties —the left wing of the MNR (MNRI, MNR-*Izquierda*), the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*

(MIR, Revolutionary Movement of the Left), and *Partido Comunista de Bolivia* (PCB, Bolivian Communist Party)— it campaigned in the 1978, 1979, and 1980 general elections with a single candidate list headed by Siles Zuazo. When Siles Zuazo took office in 1982, the UDP share of seats in the lower chamber was only 36.75 percent. Facing a growing economic crisis, which the UDP was unable to manage without alienating its allies in the COB, the UDP government began to unravel.

The UDP crisis is not immediately obvious from its effective opposition (IEO) and competitiveness (C) values. The more numerous opposition in the lower chamber was divided among Bánzer Suárez' ADN, the MNR, and six other smaller parties covering a broad spectrum of interests and policy platforms. The unraveling of the UDP came, instead, from economic forces and the UDP's ineffective response to the crisis of hyperinflation. The leftist coalition was unable to implement stabilization programs due to pressure from the COB and the ideological stance of the Communist Party. The UDP had fought for democracy in the 1978-82 period with strong support from the COB. Siles Zuazo was unable to deal effectively with the economic crisis because his ideological and support base denied him the tools necessary to curb hyperinflation. By 1985, the situation had disintegrated to the point that Siles Zuazo called for elections one year ahead of schedule. The inability of the 1982 UDP regime to manage the economic crisis subsequently discredited the Bolivian left. The MNRI and Communist Party subsequently disappeared from the political scene and only MIR survived into subsequent elections—although never finishing higher than third in general elections (after ADN and MNR).

In 1985 Paz Estenssoro, the second runner-up to Bánzer Suárez, was elected when the left and left-of-center parties wanted to prevent the ex-dictator from assuming the presidency. Almost immediately after his election by Congress, however, Paz Estenssoro formed a cabinet with Bánzer Suárez' ADN and implemented much of the latter party's suggested neoliberal economic reforms in order to counter the rising hyperinflation and economic stagnation. The Paz Estenssoro government was thus able to pursue its austerity measures, consisting mainly of the *Nueva Política Económica* (NPE, New Economic Policy), against a numerically weaker and highly fragmented opposition, although at the cost of some semi-authoritarian practices. This is reflected in effective opposition and competitiveness values (0.20 and 0.74 respectively) which were the lowest of the post-transition period.

The next democratic regime was installed in 1989 after MIR's candidate, Jaime Paz Zamora, was chosen over front-runner Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (MNR) and second-runner-up Bánzer Suárez (ADN). Bánzer Suárez threw his party's support behind the third-runner-up in order to prevent the MNR from taking the presidency for a second consecutive term.¹⁰ In exchange, ADN was granted several cabinet and ministerial posts. The two parties signed the "*Acuerdo Patriótico*" (AP, Patriotic Accord) which outlined their co-government and then formed a single electoral front as AP for the 1993 general

¹⁰ It is generally speculated that the 1985 MNR-ADN "*Pacto por la Democracia*" included a secret clause in which the MNR agreed to not contest the presidency in the 1989 general elections. After winning a plurality in the elections, however, the MNR was reluctant to step down in favor of Bánzer Suárez. Klein (1992) argues that Bánzer Suárez gave his party's support to Paz Zamora realizing that MIR would not support ADN, but hoping to make his party a viable political force into the future. This analysis appears to be correct. Since 1989, an otherwise unlikely alliance of the right-of-center ADN and the left-of-center MIR has held steady. Both parties are, however, closer on the nationalist-pluralist cleavage dimension: ADN and MIR are more nationalist than the pluralist MNR.

elections. Results for the AP 1993 electoral configuration were dismal, but since 1989 ADN and MIR have consistently joined together as either opposition or government in later regimes.

The 1993 general elections returned the MNR to the presidency when Sánchez de Lozada won the support of two new parties: the *Unidad Cívica Solidaridad* (UCS, Solidarity Civic Union) and the *Movimiento Bolivia Libre* (MBL, Free Bolivia Movement). The following year, in September, UCS abandoned the government after disagreements concerning the populist party's role in the administration. Seven UCS members did, however, break ranks and remain in the government coalition, still giving Sánchez de Lozada a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. In June 1995 Max Fernández, UCS founder and party chief, brought his party formally back into the government.

Bánzer Suárez was finally democratically elected after the 1997 general elections. A dramatic rise in support for the two new populist parties, UCS and *Consciencia de Patria* (CONDEPA, Conscience of the Fatherland), spread the popular vote into five roughly equal blocks. Bánzer Suárez' coalition government, known as "*la Mega*," was a supermajority comprising of the AND, MIR, UCS, CONDEPA, and the small *Nueva Fuerza Republicana* (NFR, New Republican Force).¹¹ The *Mega* has proved unwieldy, however, as effective opposition and competitiveness values suggest, since as many as five political parties must coordinate against an opposition dominated by the large MNR which is also closely supported by the smaller MBL. This unwieldy size of the *Mega* explains why an ADN-led government with a supermajority should rate as "balanced" in comparison with the opposition parties. Within a year, tensions within the *Mega* caused a crisis as CONDEPA and UCS demanded more power within the cabinet as well as ministerial and bureaucratic positions.¹² In his August 1998 state-of-the-union address, Bánzer Suárez formally removed CONDEPA from the government coalition.

Conclusion

There is no reason to doubt the dramatic progress of Bolivia's democratization in the last fifteen years. Our measures for participation and competition suggest that Bo-

¹¹ NFR was part of the official ADN-NFR-PDC electoral front. The small *Partido Democrático Cristiano* (PDC, Christian Democratic Party) has not campaigned independently since 1985. Since then, it has been incorporated *de facto* (when not explicitly) into the ADN electoral lists. The NFR is headed by the popular *alcalde* of Cochabamba (Bolivia's third-largest city), Manfred Reyes Villa. Reyes Villa was an ADN partisan until the 1995 municipal elections, when he formed his own personalistic party (NFR is taken from the middle letters in his name, *Manfred*) as a campaign vehicle. NFR has special privileges within the Bánzer Suárez government, with control of such key vice ministries as the *Viceministerio de Participación Popular y Fortalecimiento Municipal* (VMPPFM, Vice Ministry of Popular Participation and Municipal Support).

¹² CONDEPA was the more troublesome of the two. Posturing for greater power within the government coalition, CONDEPA voted against the its own coalition's proposal to eliminate the *Bono Solidario* (BONOSOL), the national pension plan created by the previous Sánchez de Lozada government, less than a month before the 6 August 1998 state-of-the-union address. CONDEPA did vote with its coalition partners in the lower chamber, but voted against them in the upper chamber only days later. CONDEPA had threatened to vote against its *Mega* partners unless it was granted the presidency of either the lower or upper chambers. Tensions were high even shortly after the election of Bánzer Suárez when CONDEPA demanded the prefecture of Santa Cruz, Bolivia's most economically dynamic department. This resulted in mass protests from *cruceños* since CONDEPA had gained only 2.13 percent of the departmental vote.

livia's political system has stabilized since 1985, meeting the requirements for polyarchy as defined by Robert Dahl. Winners rule democratically and use constitutional means to implement policy while losers concede defeat peacefully (even if not always gracefully) and await the next elections even as they actively work within the democratic opposition. Meanwhile, measures of civil and political liberties as measured by Freedom House have improved over time. Bolivia is today much more free than at any other period in her history. The Bolivian example also gives much reason for optimism about the future of other third wave democracies.

It is interesting to note that we are often more willing to concede the label "democratic" to a regime that has low levels of participation so long as it maintains high levels of competition. The United States and Switzerland, for example, maintain low degrees of citizen participation while retaining the label "democratic" because of their highly competitive (and long-lasting) political regimes. Normatively, however, polyarchy theory argues that every democratic regime must continuously strive for greater democratization through liberalization and increased inclusiveness. The Bolivian democratic regime is no exception. The Sánchez de Lozada reforms (as well as those of other regimes) clearly demonstrate Bolivia's explicit movement toward deeper democratization. Still, the measures for Bolivia's political regime place it comfortably within the category of polyarchy as defined by Robert Dahl. I have no intention to "explain away" the slight decline in voter participation in order to support the argument that the Bolivian polity is a polyarchy. It may be that citizen participation (as voter turnout) is eroding over time, but for the time being, measures for effective participation are still within an acceptable range for polyarchy. It is important to note that even as voter turnout has seen a slight decline during recent elections (from 0.74 to 0.71) effective participation has seen a reverse increase (from 0.62 to 0.65) of the same magnitude.

Many of the reservations concerning the consolidation of democracy in the third wave states may very well have developed only because we ask too much of them. Work on democratic consolidation has become its own cottage industry, yet much of the literature (e.g. O'Donnell 1997; Linz & Stepan 1996; Valenzuela 1992) is highly skeptical and does not consider most third wave states (especially those in South America) as consolidated democracies according to a wide variety of criteria. Much of this paper's emphasis is on the need to compare Bolivia's political system not to the socioeconomic, sociopolitical, or sociocultural realities of advanced industrial states, but rather to *democratic theory proper*—in particular to democracy *qua* polyarchy. Dahl (1989) states:

"[S]o far no country has transcended polyarchy to a 'higher' stage of democracy [...] Compared with other alternatives, historical and actual, polyarchy is one of the most extraordinary of all human artifacts. *Yet it unquestionably falls well short of achieving the democratic process.*" (p. 223, emphasis added)

If we consider democracy as a "moving target" (*à la* Dahl) then we are not surprised to find that third wave states are not "fully democratic" in various ways. Neither are advanced industrialized states fully democratic *qua* democracy proper. The proper question we should ask of regimes is: are they *polyarchies*?

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Appendix A

Figure 1
Regime Types

	<i>low participation</i>	<i>high participation</i>
<i>high competition</i>	competitive oligarchy	polyarchy
<i>low competition</i>	closed hegemony	inclusive hegemony

From: Dahl, Polyarchy (1971, 7)

Figure 2
Countries by Regime Type (circa mid-1980s)

	<i>low participation</i>	<i>high participation</i>
<i>high competition</i>	Colombia United States Switzerland El Salvador Philippines	Mauritius Japan Portugal Netherlands Argentina
<i>low competition</i>	Egypt Senegal Mexico Trinidad & Tobago Antigua & Barbuda	Canada India Botswana Grenada Singapore

From: Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 1998.

Table 1
Effective Participation, 1980-1997

<i>Year</i>	<i>Voter Turnout (T)</i>	<i>Blank and Null Votes (B)</i>	<i>Votes for Ineffective Parties (E)</i>	<i>Index of Effective Participation (IEP)</i>
1980 (1)	0.74	0.1211	0.0564	0.62
1985	0.82	0.1298	0.0512	0.68
1989	0.74	0.1003	0.0702	0.62
1993	0.72	0.0483	0.0517	0.65
1997	0.71	0.0620	0.0271	0.65

Data: Corte Nacional Electoral

(1) Though elected in 1980, this legislature did not meet until after the collapse of the final military dictatorship in 1982.

Table 2
Effective Competition, 1982-1998

<i>Year</i>	<i>Size of “typical” government party (G)</i>	<i>Size of “typical” opposition party (O)</i>	<i>Index of Effective Opposition (IEO)</i>	<i>Index of Competitiveness (C)</i>
1982	36.75	18.21	0.50	0.81
1985a (1)	23.94	22.33	0.93	0.98
1985b (2)	32.33	6.49	0.20	0.74
1989	27.44	23.22	0.85	0.96
1993	30.70	21.07	0.69	0.90
1994 (3)	32.66	18.82	0.58	0.86
1995 (4)	30.70	21.07	0.69	0.90
1997	19.07	15.76	0.83	0.97
1998 (5)	20.18	15.37	0.76	0.95

Data: Corte Nacional Electoral

(1) Paz Estenssoro was elected by the MNR, MNRI, MIR, and PDC.

(2) Shortly after the election of Paz Estenssoro, MNR and ADN formed a coalition government.

(3) In September 1994 all but seven UCS members left the MNR-led government coalition.

(4) In June 1995 UCS formally rejoined the government.

(5) In August 1998 Bánzer Suárez expelled CONDEPA from the ADN-led government coalition.

Table 3
Freedom House Scores, 1978-1999

<i>Year</i>	<i>Political Rights</i>	<i>Civil Liberties</i>	<i>Combined Mean</i>	<i>Freedom Status</i>
<i>1980-81</i>	7	5	6.0	Not Free
<i>1981-82</i>	7	5	6.0	Not Free
<i>1982-83</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1983-84</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1984-85</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1985-86</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1986-87</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1987-88</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1988-89</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1989-90</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1990-91</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1991-92</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1992-93</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1993-94</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1994-95</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1995-96</i>	2	4	3.0	Partly Free
<i>1996-97</i>	2	3	2.5	Free
<i>1997-98</i>	1	3	2.0	Free
<i>1998-99</i>	1	3	2.0	Free

Data: Freedom House

Appendix B

Countries in the Altman and Pérez-Liñán sample (circa 1985)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Index of Competitiveness (C)</i>	<i>Index of Effective Opposition (IEO)</i>	<i>Voter Turnout (T)</i>	<i>Freedom Status</i>
Antigua & Barbuda	1984	0.12	0.06	0.61	Free
Argentina	1985	0.81	0.64	0.82	Free
Australia	1984	0.70	0.46	0.94	Free
Austria	1983	1.00	1.00	0.93	Free
Bahamas	1982	0.51	0.34	0.90	Free
Barbados	1981	0.74	0.59	0.72	Free
Belgium	1985	0.95	0.73	0.94	Free
Belize	1984	0.50	0.33	0.75	Free
Bolivia	1985	0.85	0.55	0.82	Free
Botswana	1984	0.24	0.11	0.76	Free
Brazil	1982	0.86	0.71	0.83	Partly Free
Canada	1984	0.38	0.17	0.76	Free
Colombia	1982	0.84	0.38	0.41	Free
Costa Rica	1982	0.67	0.43	0.79	Free
Cyprus	1985	0.91	0.74	0.89	Free
Denmark	1984	0.95	1.27	0.88	Free
Dominica	1985	0.49	0.29	0.75	Free
Dominican Republic	1982	0.85	0.71	0.74	Free
Ecuador	1984	0.96	1.34	0.71	Free
Egypt	1984	0.26	0.15	0.43	Partly Free
El Salvador	1985	0.84	0.70	0.54	Partly Free
Fiji	1982	0.85	0.73	0.86	Free
Finland	1983	0.95	0.77	0.76	Free
France	1981	0.56	0.22	0.71	Free
Germany	1983	0.95	1.19	0.88	Free
Greece	1985	0.85	0.72	0.84	Free
Grenada	1984	0.13	0.07	0.86	Not Free
India	1984	0.30	0.05	0.63	Free
Israel	1984	0.67	0.07	0.79	Free
Italy	1983	0.98	0.93	0.89	Free
Japan	1983	0.65	0.28	0.68	Free
Korea	1985	0.64	0.32	0.84	Partly Free
Luxembourg	1984	0.82	0.49	0.89	Free
Malaysia	1982	0.19	0.06	0.74	Partly Free
Malta	1981	0.95	0.91	0.95	Free
Mauritius	1983	0.79	0.59	0.85	Free
Mexico	1985	0.32	0.07	0.51	Partly Free
Netherlands	1982	0.95	0.82	0.81	Free
New Zealand	1984	0.76	0.60	0.92	Free
Norway	1985	0.90	1.38	0.75	Free
Panama	1984	0.76	0.41	0.69	Partly Free

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Index of Competitiveness (C)</i>	<i>Index of Effective Opposition (IEO)</i>	<i>Voter Turnout (T)</i>	<i>Freedom Status</i>
Peru	1985	0.60	0.33	0.81	Free
Philippines	1984	0.75	0.51	0.50	Partly Free
Portugal	1985	0.84	0.46	0.75	Free
Senegal	1983	0.14	0.07	0.57	Partly Free
Singapore	1984	0.04	0.01	0.96	Partly Free
Spain	1982	0.65	0.39	0.80	Free
St. Christopher & Nevis	1984	0.69	0.43	0.78	Free
St. Lucia	1982	0.27	0.12	0.66	Free
St. Vincent & Grenadines	1984	0.62	0.44	0.89	Free
Sweden	1985	0.70	0.35	0.90	Free
Switzerland	1983	0.80	0.12	0.49	Free
Trinidad & Tobago	1981	0.47	0.26	0.56	Free
Turkey	1983	0.72	0.47	0.92	Partly Free
United Kingdom	1983	0.66	0.44	0.73	Free
Uruguay	1984	0.88	0.70	0.88	Partly Free
USA	1984	0.84	0.72	0.51	Free

Source: David Altman and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, 1998.