# Social Movements, Party Organization, and Populism: Insights from the Bolivian MAS

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### ABSTRACT

The Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) emerged in Bolivia's Chapare region in the 1990s. Born of a rural social movement of coca growers, it spread to the cities and became the country's dominant political force as its leader, Evo Morales, was elected to the presidency in 2005. This article argues that the MAS is a hybrid organization whose electoral success has been contingent on the construction of a strong rural-urban coalition, built on the basis of different linkages between the MAS and organized popular constituencies in rural and urban areas. Whereas the MAS's rural origins gave rise to grassroots control over the leadership, its expansion to urban areas has fostered the emergence of top-down mobilization strategies. The analysis also reveals how much popular sectors allied with the MAS have pressured the Morales government from below and held it accountable to societal demands.

The literature on the Latin American "left turns," especially the literature that promotes the "two lefts" thesis (Panizza 2005; Petkoff 2005; Castañeda 2006; Weyland 2009; Weyland et al. 2010), tends to lump together Evo Morales, Hugo Chávez, and Rafael Correa in the "radical" or "populist" strand of the left. But the comparison is overdone, and it reveals a basic misunderstanding of how the social bases and movements that undergird the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia operate "on the ground."

This article shows that even though the Bolivian left turn is usually associated with those of Venezuela and Ecuador, the Bolivian case has peculiar characteristics that make it novel and important. Specifically, it is the only case in the region where social movements, originally in the rural areas, created a political leadership of their own, formed a political organization—the MAS—as their electoral vehicle, and captured state power through their participation in democratic elections after leading a series of mass protests. The bottom-up genesis of the MAS in Bolivia's rural *cocalero* movement has been the subject of significant attention in both scholarly and nonscholarly literature (see Van Cott 2005; Stefanoni and Do Alto 2006). Yet much less attention has been paid to how much the MAS's electoral success was contingent on the construction of an unusually strong rural-urban coalition, built

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on the basis of different linkages between the MAS and organized popular sectors in rural and urban areas. Nor has much attention been given to how the MAS has organized and exercised power.[1] This article constitutes an attempt to explore these questions. The larger aim is to situate the MAS in comparative perspective and determine what is unique about it and how it pertains to broader political phenomena in Latin America.

While the tendency in the literature is to call Morales a populist, some scholars (Roberts 2007; Levitsky and Roberts 2011) have correctly rejected the populist designation by pointing out important differences in the mobilization patterns that brought Morales to power compared to those that propelled Chávez and Correa.[2] Acknowledging the degree to which Morales remains accountable to the social movements that brought him to power, these authors argue that the populist label is not appropriate to characterize Morales. This observation is accurate only if we look at national-level patterns, though. In other words, this welcome corrective to the conventional interpretation of contemporary Bolivian politics remains insufficiently nuanced and, in particular, may distort our understanding of what occurs at subnational levels. This article is an attempt to redress this partial perspective. In so doing, it moves beyond the debates about whether Morales is or is not a populist to a deeper understanding of how the MAS has pursued complex combinations of bottom-up and top-down mobilization and linkage strategies to different constituencies.

Born of a rural social movement formed by the *cocaleros* in the Chapare region in Cochabamba, the MAS expanded to Bolivia's largest cities and became the governing party only ten years after its emergence, when Morales was elected to the presidency in 2005. That the MAS represents indigenous constituencies—and especially that it grew directly out of the autonomous mobilization of these constituencies—makes it a different case from other movement-based parties in the region. To state that the MAS represents indigenous constituencies is not to say that it is an "indigenous" party. Instead, we can conceive of the MAS as a party that presents itself using an ethnic discourse but tries to appeal to a wider constituency by blending class and ethnic elements in a manner that tolerates ethnic diversity.[3]

The MAS is a case of a movement-based party that has gradually shed the vestiges of the movement as it emerged as a claimant to power. However, unlike other parties spawned by social movements—such as the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), whose participation in the electoral arena has suppressed the movement logic of social mobilization in ways that lend support to Michels's "iron law" of oligarchy (Hunter 2010; Michels [1911] 1962)—the MAS seems to follow a different path.[4] Although it is still early to render an accurate judgment on whether the MAS will or will not ratify Michels's "iron law," it is safe to say that the MAS is an example of a strikingly hybrid organization that has distinct logics of operation in urban and rural settings, exhibiting a combination of autonomous mobilization from below with a top-down strategy of co-optation by a charismatic leader. Both strategies, which reflect the movement's origins and its rapid expansion, have allowed the MAS to reach core and noncore constituencies, and thus to craft a multiclass social base.

But harmonizing the interests of both constituencies has not been an easy task, especially since the MAS has come to power, as examples such as the *Gasolinazo* crisis of December 2010 demonstrate.

Drawing on materials gathered during fieldwork in the cities of La Paz and El Alto, this article examines the case of the MAS in order to contribute to the debate on the connections between social movements, parties based on them, governments formed by these parties, and populism. Fieldwork was carried out from June to September 2008, during which time in-depth interviews were conducted with leaders in urban and rural popular organizations, MAS leaders in Congress and the executive, municipal authorities, urban militants and community activists, and leaders of the political opposition. Fieldwork also included participatory observation in party locales in the cities of La Paz and El Alto. I participated in rallies organized by the MAS, attended regular meetings, and interviewed local activists, public officials, and intellectuals. Although the fieldwork was conducted in these two cities, which are critical to understanding how the MAS became a force at the national level, research undertaken by other scholars in other areas of the country (Zuazo 2008, 2010) lends support to the findings reported here. I also draw on secondary scholarly sources that examine both the origins and evolution of the MAS, as well as its actions as a governing party.

This article makes three primary contributions. First, it highlights the hybrid nature of the MAS's organization and argues that it has different social and organizational logics and linkage patterns in rural and urban settings. Whereas the rural dynamics reflect patterns of bottom-up mobilization and organic movement-party linkages, a logic that is quite distinct from populism, in the urban areas examined in this study it resembles a populist machine, as it operates with more top-down and co-optive practices. Second, the article stresses the fluidity of the MAS as an organization and points to the presence of accountability structures and constraints on Morales's authority that stem from this fluidity and lack of routinization. By looking at concrete conflictive situations, such as the *Gasolinazo* crisis, the article provides useful insights into a classic question facing progressive governments and the social movements that underpin them: who actually rules? Third, the article offers new insights on the leftist government of Evo Morales and the MAS and interprets them within the broader "left turns" debate in Latin America and the alleged revival of populism.

This article is divided into five sections. The first section introduces the theoretical discussion and the literature on social movements, parties based on them, and the revival of populism in Latin America. The second section provides a history of the evolution of the MAS from its emergence in the coca-growing areas of the Chapare to its rapid expansion and rise to power. The third section discusses how the MAS, an organization that emerged in rural areas and whose core constituencies shaping its identity are the coca growers in those areas, expanded into the cities of La Paz and El Alto. Although the MAS has expanded to Bolivia's largest cities to win electoral majorities and has grown exponentially along the way, the importance of its rural base should not be underestimated.

The fourth section discusses the governments of Morales and the MAS and looks at the internal transformations undergone by the MAS as a ruling force. Born as a rural and predominantly indigenous movement, the MAS came to power, and this profoundly changed its internal dynamics. As a ruling party, it has become increasingly detached from popular organizations, and this has sparked conflicts between these and the MAS. The concluding section discusses the implications of these transformations in light of recent political developments in Bolivia and suggests areas for further inquiry.

## MOVEMENTS, PARTIES, AND POPULISM: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

What do the terms *movements* and *parties* and *populism* mean here, and how do they relate to each other? Social movements are hard to define, as they are moving targets. Here I conceive of them as "actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect social transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action" (Amenta et al. 2010, 288). This definition builds on previous conceptualizations by Gamson (1990) and Tilly (1978), who have referred to movements as "challengers" of the polity, to frame them as groups that seek to change some aspect of the social and political structure by confronting some existing system of authority.[5] A political party, in turn, can be thought of as "any group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates to higher office" (Sartori 1976, 64). At a minimum, a party's goal is to gain and maintain office and promote the interests of its members, as well as to represent the interests of its supporters.

Specifically, this study deals with left-wing parties and social movements. Left-wing parties means those that are committed to the values of equality and solidarity. It is possible to make a useful distinction regarding their goals in the short and long terms (Ganz 2009). Tactically, or in the short and medium terms, parties and movements are very different. Movements seek to gain influence through noninstitutional means by employing a wide array of "repertoires of collective action" (Tilly 2006). In turn, like all other parties, those that are on the left pursue political power by engaging in electoral politics. Strategically, or in the long run, movements and left parties have the shared goal of social and political transformation.

In terms of their logics of operation, movements and parties are fundamentally distinct, and this has to do with their different relationships to the state. While movements are generally challengers of the state, parties are participants in state institutions. As we will see, however, the MAS is a hybrid organization that straddles the line between party and movement. Indeed, a central goal of this study is to problematize the distinction between social movements and institutional politics. As many scholars have shown, movements are deeply intertwined with institutional politics in modern societies (Goldstone 2003).

The case of the MAS offers, I believe, important elements for our understanding of the relationship between social movements, parties based on them, govern-

ments formed by these, and populism. The *cocaleros* who gave birth to the MAS still conceive of it as their "political instrument" (Núñez 2008). The organizations that formed the MAS, and particularly the *cocaleros*, constitute its "core constituencies."[6] As such, the party's genesis as a political organization was from the bottom up, making the MAS a clear example of a "movement party" (Kitschelt 2006). Movement parties are generally sponsored by social movements as their electoral vehicles, and they retain close ties to organized groups in civil society. These parties follow what Roberts (1998, 75) calls the "organic model" of party development in the sense that they are hybrid organizations: they engage in electoral politics and compete for office, and at the same time they engage in noninstitutional, contentious bargaining in the pursuit of programmatic goals. As Roberts (1998) notes, the boundaries that separate the party and the movement are deliberately blurred.

The MAS approximates this model, and as such it represents a phenomenon that does not easily fit into established categories of political classification. A sponsoring group, namely a rural social movement of coca producers, generated its own political leadership, formed a political vehicle to compete in elections, and maintained some degree of autonomy and leadership accountability (Van Cott 2005). That the MAS represents an indigenous constituency—and that it grew directly out of the autonomous social and political mobilization of these constituencies—makes it a different case from other movement parties in the region and beyond.

As Kitschelt (2006, 288) notes, movement parties are fundamentally transitional phenomena, both in the sense that their organizational strategies and strategic appeals are rapidly changing, and in the sense that these patterns do not evolve in a particularly linear way. As such, they offer opportunities to think about alternative forms of political organization that are not easily described as either social movements or political parties in the conventional sense of the terms. Indeed, in the case of the MAS, many of its political leaders reject the "party" label. They usually associate parties with institutions that, in their opinion and experience, divide rather than unite popular forces; and they reject the institutionalization of the movement as a party on the grounds that it may retard political change.

Given the ideological principle of self-representation of the masses that underpins the MAS, moreover, leaders do not want to speak "for" their constituencies. Instead, they stress that they are spokespeople, or messengers, for their constituencies. That they do not intend to build a conventional party has much to do with this. While functioning as a ruling organization has pushed the MAS to institutionalize the party-movement relationships in some ways, its political core has clearly privileged the sustaining of political mobilization in regard to the institutionalization of the movement as a party. Methodologically, this points to the usefulness of case studies that, through the use of process tracing, can open the "black box" of movement parties that share similar characteristics with the MAS (George and Bennett 2005).

It is also important to consider how populism plays out in this story, as Morales has been often called populist in a pejorative way in both Bolivian (e.g., Mayorga 2004; Molina 2006; Toranzo Roca 2008) and U.S. scholarship (e.g., Castañeda

2006; Weyland 2009). Therefore it is worthwhile to explore whether this is an accurate categorization. Although the concept of populism is contested, it still provides analytical leverage in comparative analysis (Weyland 2001). According to Weyland, populism "is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalist leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (2001, 14). By his definition, populism is associated not with any particular kind of economic or redistributive policies but instead with a specific leadership style.

According to Roberts's more political definition, populism can be thought of as "the top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge elite groups on behalf of an ill-defined *pueblo*, or 'the people'" (Roberts 2007, 5). This conceptualization is akin to Weyland's in the sense that populism can be associated with different kinds of economic policies or redistributive schemes. Understood in this way, populism can be used to think about the incorporation of previously excluded groups by a leader and a party. By this definition, populists bring excluded groups into the political system, albeit in a top-down or co-optive way. Thus, the "populist" label seems hardly appropriate for the Bolivian case, given the bottom-up logic of political mobilization and leadership formation in the country. But matters are somewhat more complex once we introduce the role of populist parties.

Indeed, the analysis of populism is not complete without looking at populist parties as organizations. Historically, during the early phases of populism in Latin America, from the 1940s to the 1960s, some populist figures, such as José María Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador and Juan Perón in Argentina, generally bypassed parties and appealed directly to the masses in ways that eroded the autonomy of civil society. Some of these populist leaders, such Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre in Peru, formed highly institutionalized party organizations. But for the most part, they were not big party builders, and they preferred unmediated relationships with mass constituencies.

In the case of early Peronism, for example, Juan and Eva Perón privileged the strengthening of a powerful labor confederation, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), rather than the configuration of a routinized party. And they maintained direct contact with the masses by leading social organizations and foundations. In later phases, after populist parties were established in various Latin American countries, these parties adopted diverse organizational forms, and some proved to be more enduring and successful than others. For example, the case of the (Peronist) Justicialista Party (PJ) is remarkable in the sense that its capacity to adapt to changing electoral and policy environments after the death of its founder was largely associated with its organizational fluidity and lack of formal institutionalization or routinization (Levitsky 2003, 1998).

To the extent that populist parties became institutionalized after the passing of their founding leaders, however, they established different relationships with mass constituencies in different settings. Examining the dynamics of the PJ in Argentina and the PRI in Mexico, for example, Gibson (1997) notes that populist parties in

Latin America often have different rural and urban social constituencies and adopt different organizational dynamics in each environment. Despite the obvious contextual differences between these cases and the MAS, the latter is a prime example of a movement party with a strikingly fluid and nonroutinized organization, as well as diverse social and organizational logics and mobilization patterns. Indeed, the MAS has quite different social and organizational logics and linkage patterns in rural and urban settings. Whereas the rural dynamics reflect patterns of bottom-up mobilization and organic movement-party linkages, a logic that is quite distinct from populism, in the urban areas examined in this study, the party resembles a populist machine, as it operates with more top-down and co-optive practices. This reflects the movement's protest origins and its rapid territorial expansion, when the "electoral imperative" pushed the MAS to nationalize its appeal.[7]

All movement parties encounter similar challenges when they enter office: tensions emerge between the government, the parliamentary representatives, the party leadership, and the leaders and grassroots members of sponsoring organizations that configure the governing coalition. These tensions interact in quite unpredictable ways. In the case of the MAS, they become particularly acute, given its organizational fluidity.

Most notably, however, all movement parties share a tension over how to manage conflicts between sponsoring social movements and the party, as well as ambiguities with regard to the lines of authority (Schönwälder 1997). The MAS is no exception. Evo Morales retains responsibility for leading both the party and social movement organizations, such as the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, the overarching union of coca growers. The lack of routinization creates struggles over the decisionmaking process. As a result, governments headed by movement parties often find themselves at odds with sponsoring and allied organizations, which can protest against them if their interests are threatened. For example, when the Bolivian government eliminated subsidies to gas during the *Gasolinazo* crisis, the move sparked a series of protests against the policy. Emanating from Morales's own supporters, these protests led to the policy's rapid overturn. To show the problems generated by blurred party–social movement boundaries, then, it is important to examine the strategies and actions of a ruling party in managing social conflict.

## A History of the MAS

The emergence and rise of the MAS as a "political instrument" was influenced by at least four elements that interacted in quite unpredictable ways. One was the implementation and subsequent crisis of neoliberalism, which created economic losers that would then resist neoliberal policies. Second was resistance to coca eradication and state violence, which acted as a unifying force in the emergence of new social movements. A third factor was a permissive institutional environment, which provided opportunities for social movements and new parties to thrive. Fourth was a crisis of the party system and state institutions that became acute in the context of mass protests in the early 2000s.

Bolivia implemented draconian neoliberal reforms during the period 1985–2005, and their consequences profoundly shaped the rise of the MAS.[8] Central to these policies was the closure of state-owned and -operated tin mines, which were no longer profitable by the mid-1980s. This meant that thousands of miners were forced to "relocate" to other sectors of the economy (Gill 2000). Some of these workers, who were the vanguard and most combative sectors of the Bolivian proletariat, left the mining camps and moved to cities like El Alto (Lazar 2008); others moved to the coca-producing regions of the Chapare, where they began to produce coca and organize with the *cocaleros*. Relocated workers brought with them a Trotskyist union-organizing background and a history of militant struggle and solidarity, which would influence the discourse of the coca growers by introducing elements of Marxism and nationalism (Escóbar 2008; Stefanoni 2003). Still, it is worth noting that while "relocalized" miners played an important organizational role, the coca grower movement preceded these mid-1980s developments.

A second important process involved the position of *cocaleros* in relation to coca eradication policies. As Postero (2010, 22) notes, *cocaleros* "came of age in a low-intensity war on drugs led by the U.S Drug Enforcement Agency." Indeed, it was with Law 1008, which framed the U.S.-sponsored drug war, that such groups were able to gain strength and self-confidence (Núñez 2008). The promulgation of this law was followed by state repression and conflicts in which many *cocalero*s died. But state repression worked as a catalyst for the *cocalero* unions, prompting their participation in the formal political system by constituting a relatively united political front with other peasant and indigenous organizations (Albro 2005b). In such a context, the leaders of the *cocalero* movement thought about the idea of building a "political instrument" through which *cocaleros* could challenge U.S. imperialism and neoliberal economic policies, both in the halls of Congress and in the streets (Escóbar 2008).

That the MAS emerged so powerfully and became so rapidly a national-level actor, however, had much to do with the circumstances of *cocaleros* in relation to the national political scene. A permissive institutional environment opened channels of participation for popular movements (Van Cott 2005). Taken together, the 1994 Popular Participation Law and the 1995 Law of Administrative Decentralization, under the government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, involved the creation of more than three hundred municipalities throughout the national territory and instituted direct municipal elections. As the Bolivian political scientist Moira Zuazo (2008) notes, this unleashed a process of "ruralization" of politics, given that the reforms recognized rural and indigenous communities as agents of participation at the municipal level and extended citizenship rights to indigenous peoples (Postero 2007). Indigenous movements formed their own political vehicles and, taking advantage of the new opportunity structures, engaged in electoral politics at the local level (see Van Cott 2005, 2009). Undoubtedly, the most successful of these newly created parties was the MAS.[9]

At first, the MAS took form as the Assembly for the Sovereignty of the People (ASP), which was a social movement organization of peasants and coca growers.

ASP backed the United Left (IU), which was a declining left party, in the municipal elections of 1995 and the national elections of 1997. *Cocaleros* provided an important flow of votes, helping the IU gain ten municipal governments in 1995 and four congressional seats to represent the Chapare region.[10] The ASP then formed the Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (IPSP), based on the idea of self-representation, which became the electoral arm of that movement (García Linera et al. 2004). For legal reasons, ASP then borrowed the acronym and legal registration of a nearly defunct party, the MAS, which was a left splinter of the Bolivian Socialist Falange party that formed the IU.

From the beginning, the MAS-IPSP engaged in electoral politics, and its leaders conceived of it more as a political instrument of the social movements than as a traditional political party. Its first electoral experience as MAS-IPSP was in the municipal elections of 1999, in which it obtained 3.3 percent of the national vote, and it was in Cochabamba, specifically in the coca-growing Chapare, where it obtained the most votes. Having established an anchor in the Chapare, the challenge was to nationalize its appeal.[11]

The cycle of mass protests that started in 2000 with the Water War would accelerate this process. Indeed, the MAS used this context to its advantage and adopted a "supraclass strategy" of electoral recruitment (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Albro (2005a) has described this in terms of a "plural popular" strategy of coalition building, in which indigenous issues became the framing plank for successful political articulation.

Expanding the electoral base, however, was anything but a straight line. Strategically, the MAS sought to include left-leaning and nationalist intellectuals, as well as the urban indigenous and nonindigenous middle classes, for example, by naming José Antonio Quiroga as a vice presidential candidate in 2002 (Escóbar 2008).[12] But expansion via electoral mobilization and territorial penetration were not the only component of its repertoire. Indeed, the dynamics of social protest proved to be central, as they allowed the MAS to forge a strikingly heterogeneous coalition that would challenge the established political class, the status quo, and neoliberalism. Although the MAS did not win the presidency in the 2002 elections, it placed 27 deputies in the lower chamber and thus became a powerful political agent. While some of these deputies were representatives from the Chapare and had been selected by the bases through mechanisms of direct participation, others were directly "invited" by the leadership, had no history of militancy in the MAS, and had few checks from below. Many of the "invited" leaders quickly became the voice of the MAS, as they related to the media very effectively and knew how to operate within representative institutions.[13]

Mass protests continued in 2003 with the first Gas War, which led to Sánchez de Lozada's resignation; and the 2005 May–June protests, which forced the resignation of his successor, Carlos Mesa, and the anticipated call for elections. While Morales and the MAS did not participate actively in these protests, they used this historical moment strategically. As Webber (2010) argues, by adopting the discourse of the most mobilized groups during these popular struggles and incorporating their demands,

Morales and the MAS managed to shift the prevailing balance of social forces to their advantage and win the presidential elections of 2005.[14]

To summarize, the "electoral imperative" involved four important shifts for the MAS: a territorial shift, from being a movement anchored in the coca-growing Chapare to a national movement with rural and urban social bases, as well as a growing presence in Bolivia's largest cities, like La Paz and El Alto; a shift in its class make-up from a resistance movement of coca producers and relocated miners to a catch-all, multiclass movement that included urban and informal workers as well as middle classes, all of whom converged in their rejection of the political status quo; an ethnic shift from being a largely indigenous movement to one that incorporated both indigenous and mestizo groups; and a shift in terms of the organizations it comprised from a small group to an increasingly larger and heterogeneous group of base organizations.[15]

It is through this last shift that the MAS inserted itself into the cities of La Paz and El Alto in the era of mass protests of the early 2000s. Ultimately, it can be argued, these four shifts pushed the MAS in a more populist direction as it built on top of the structures and social networks of older political parties and adopted many of their practices and participation schemes.

## THE MAS IN LA PAZ AND EL ALTO

The metropolitan area of La Paz and El Alto consists of more than 1.5 million people. La Paz is Bolivia's principal city and administrative capital and, together with El Alto, it comprises the biggest urban area of Bolivia, making both cities decisive players in national politics (Arbona and Kohl 2004; Albó 2006).

These cities, which were crucial to the organization and success of the protests of 2000–2005, are often seen as critical to winning national elections and to ensuring governability. Indeed, they achieved international prominence when their residents took to the streets and confronted military forces that occupied those spaces. Urban residents were central to the various mobilizations that had rendered the country ungovernable for several years, and they became key actors in the resignations of Sánchez de Lozada in 2003 and Mesa in 2005. Yet although the MAS penetrated these cities, it did not accompany the process with the consolidation of a structure that incorporated the interests and leaderships of these urban populations.

The MAS's experience in these cities is relatively recent, and it has been influenced by the protest activities that took place in September and October 2000 in the Department of La Paz. In September 2000, the conflicts that began in Cochabamba with the Water War spread to the highlands of La Paz, as Felipe Quispe ("the Mallku"), Aymara peasant leader and later head of the Unique Confederation of Rural Laborers of Bolivia (CSUTCB), led a series of mobilizations against the government of General Hugo Banzer. Protesters demanded that the government fulfill a series of agreements it had concluded with peasant workers (Espósito and Arteaga 2006). Although Quispe later formed his own party, the MIP, and rejected association with the MAS (Van Cott 2005), his mobilizations acted as

Table 1. Population of La Paz and El Alto

| | La Paz | | El Alto | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1992 | 2001 | 1992 | 2001 |
| Population | 715,900 | 793,292 | 405,492 | 649,958 |
| Poverty | 297,507 | 263,783 | 261,845 | 424,504 |
| | (41.55) | (33.25) | (64.57) | (65.31) |
| Extreme poverty | 78,200 | 74,420 | 95,529 | 111,697 |
| | (10.92) | (9.38) | (23.55) | (17.18) |
| Self-identification with indigenous peoples | | | | |
| Aymara | | 275,253 | | 291,977 |
| | | (49.81) | | (74.25) |
| Quechua | | 55,384 | | 25,025 |
| | | (10.02) | | (6.36) |
| Other | | 3,175 | | 1,399 |
| | | (0.57) | | (0.36) |
| None | | 214,296 | | 73,556 |
| | | (38.78) | | (18.71) |

Figures in parentheses denote percentages.
Note: The 1992 census did not include a question asking whether people self-identified as indigenous. That is why those values are not included in this table.
Source: INE 2001

a blow to the "traditional" political parties. Disenchanted with the status quo, *paceños* and *alteños* welcomed the MAS as a viable alternative.

But La Paz and El Alto differ in important ways, and these differences have shaped the ways the MAS as a rural organization adapted to these urban settings. Specifically, they differ in terms of their ethnic and class composition. Besides being Bolivia's fastest-growing city (Arbona and Kohl 2004, 258), El Alto is an urban community made up overwhelmingly of recent Aymara immigrants (see table 1). In contrast, the *cocaleros* of the Chapare tend to be Quechua and—to the extent that they are *colonos*, as many are—they tend to come from the mining communities of Oruro and Potosí.[16]

Table 1 also reveals El Alto's strikingly high levels of poverty. By contrast, La Paz is more of a "middle-class" city, with a significantly larger proportion of the population that does not claim an "indigenous" identity. Still, according to the 2001 census, close to 50 percent of the population over 15 years of age self-identifies as Aymara, and 10 percent as Quechua. Such ethnic and class differences between the MAS's "core constituency" and its constituency in La Paz and El Alto have made it difficult for the MAS to adapt to these settings, but particularly El Alto, which is a highly politicized social space with a strong Aymara identity (Albó 2006).

Table 2. Voting in La Paz and El Alto, General Elections, 1989–2009
(percent)

| | La Paz | | | | | | El Alto | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1989 | 1993 | 1997 | 2002 | 2005 | 2009 | 1989 | 1993 | 1997 | 2002 | 2005 | 2009 |
| CONDEPA | 30.1 | 27.6 | 31.5 | | | | 47.1 | 47.9 | 55.1 | | | |
| ADN | 27.5 | | 25.8 | | | | 15.8 | | 14.8 | | | |
| MNR | 22.9 | | 15.5 | 23.4 | | | 14.1 | | 6.8 | 8.7 | | |
| MIR | 12.5 | | 10.5 | 10.8 | | | 16.3 | | 11.2 | 12.7 | | |
| MNR-MRTKL | | 35.7 | | | | | | 24.5 | | | | |
| AP | | 16.4 | | | | | | 8.3 | | | | |
| UCS | | 9.2 | 10.8 | | | | | 9.8 | 8.1 | | | |
| MBL | | 5.4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| NFR | | | | 28.5 | | | | | | 21.3 | | |
| MIP | | | | 6.8 | | | | | | 17.9 | | |
| LJ | | | | 6.3 | | | | | | 6.9 | | |
| **MAS** | | | | **16.2** | **55.7** | **63.1** | | | | **27.9** | **77.1** | **87.5** |
| PODEMOS | | | | | 28.5 | | | | | | 13.9 | |
| UN | | | | | 10.1 | 14.7 | | | | | | 6.1 |
| PPB-CN | | | | | | 18.6 | | | | | | |

Notes: Empty cells denote parties that either did not participate in the electoral contest or received less than 5 percent of the vote. Parties not in the table, if they placed candidates, received less than 5 percent of the vote in the respective electoral contest.
Source: Organo Plurinacional Electoral

Table 3. Voting in La Paz and El Alto, Municipal Elections, 1989–2010
(percent)

| | La Paz | | | | | | | El Alto | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1999 | 2004 | 2010 | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1999 | 2004 | 2010 |
| MIR-ADN | 37.2 | | | | | | | 11.2 | | | | | | |
| AP | | 23.9 | | | | | | | 20.8 | | | | | |
| UCS | 5.4 | 18.8 | 3.4 | 4.8 | 2.8 | 6.4 | | 10.8 | 27.1 | 5.8 | 10.8 | 2.8 | | |
| MIR | | | 4.2 | 3.3 | 16.2 | | | | | 4.6 | 21.0 | 45.6 | 3.7 | |
| ADN | | | 5.3 | 20.2 | 17.8 | | 1.5 | | | 2.9 | 3.1 | 4.1 | | |
| MNR | 13.3 | 23.2 | 40.0 | 15.2 | 16.7 | | 1.7 | 8.5 | 9.3 | 12.8 | 7.1 | 6.6 | | |
| MBL | | 4.5 | 5.1 | 8.3 | 0.8 | | | | 3.9 | 3.4 | 2.2 | 3.6 | | |
| CONDEPA | 40.4 | 27.4 | 38.1 | 38.2 | 5.7 | | | 64.8 | 35.6 | 61.8 | 49.2 | 19.6 | | |
| IU | 2.2 | 2.2 | | 0.9 | | | | 2.8 | 3.4 | | | | | |
| **MAS** | | | | | **0.9** | **19.9** | **34.9** | | | | | **2.1** | **17.1** | **38.8** |
| MSM | | | | | 22.5 | 45.9 | 48.5 | | | | | 4.0 | 2.7 | 24.4 |
| ASP | | | | | | | 2.4 | | | | | | | 2.6 |
| UN | | | | | | 12.3 | 9.7 | | | | | | 1.2 | 30.4 |
| PP | | | | | | | | | | | | | 52.6 | |

Notes: Empty cells denote parties that did not present candidates in the respective election. Parties that are not in the table, if they presented candidates, received less than 5 percent of the vote and are not relevant for the arguments in this article.
Source: Órgano Plurinacional Electoral; Fundemos 1998

Table 2 shows voting trends in both cities in the general elections since 1989, when the data for municipalities became more reliable. Specifically, it shows that a populist party (Conscience of the Fatherland, or CONDEPA) dominated the electoral preferences of El Alto during the 1990s, capturing over 45 percent of the vote in the general elections of 1989, 1993, and 1997. While CONDEPA was also an important force in La Paz, this city remained more committed to "traditional" parties (ADN, MIR, and MNR) up until the 2002 election. Table 3 provides additional evidence that El Alto was heavily penetrated by CONDEPA during the 1990s, while residents of La Paz remained more committed to "traditional" parties (though with a gradual shift toward the center-left Movement Without Fear, MSM, starting in 1999). Against this backdrop, the MAS pursued two divergent strategies to penetrate these cities: whereas in El Alto it sought to co-opt grassroots organizations, in La Paz it sought to attract middle-class voters by pursuing an alliance with the already established MSM.

At first, residents of La Paz and El Alto resisted the MAS. Due to its origins in coca-growing regions, they associated the MAS with illicit activities, such as drug dealing, and they associated MAS operators with drug traffickers (Blanco 2008).[17] On the one hand, its expansion was only possible once CONDEPA started to lose influence in cities. At the same time, the MAS directly capitalized on the neopopulist inroads and symbolic and cultural strategies used by CONDEPA. On the other hand, this process was complicated by the presence of the MSM, which, particularly in La Paz, had been a dominant force since the late 1990s. This pushed MAS leaders to negotiate a strategic alliance with this party. According to Román Loayza (2008), this was detrimental to the MAS because it forced the MAS to include MSM militants in the public administration.[18]

Founded in 1988, CONDEPA emerged at the end of the 1980s to represent sectors that were "affected by adjustment policies and unrepresented by the established parties" (Mayorga 2006, 154). This party was built around the charismatic leadership of Carlos Palenque, and its political and symbolic practices combined the extensive use of clientelism, paternalism, plebiscitary appeals to the masses, unmediated relationships with constituents, and a strong antisystem discourse (Revilla Herrero 2006; Alenda 2003). Partly because CONDEPA failed to consolidate a party structure or forge organic linkages with its constituency, the party practically died along with its founder in 1997. This party's loss of political power created opportunities for the MAS, which would build on top of the networks inherited from older parties and replicate many of their practices in the cities.

In the municipal elections of 2004, which were affected by the contentious events of the Gas War, the MAS emerged as the most electorally successful party, especially in the western part of the country.[19] As noted, while the MAS was not a chief instigator of the protests (see Lazar 2006), it used the historical moment to its advantage. After Mesa's resignation in June 2005, some urban forces attempted to configure a "broad front" as a mechanism to incorporate a coalition of progressive forces into the MAS. The attempts to configure a strategic broad front failed, as the MAS insisted on the "zero alliances" formula (Quiroga 2008). But some of these

forces, particularly the center-left MSM, decided to accommodate the MAS and negotiated informal alliances that guaranteed spaces of power for their own candidates (Michel 2008). Before the presentation of lists to the National Electoral Court, the MSM placed some of its candidates on the MAS's lists. As some of the MSM candidates performed fairly well in the elections, this situation generated discontent in the *masista* urban bases.

The MAS therefore was not an organic product of these cities; it inserted itself into La Paz and El Alto as something foreign. As such, it faced obstacles as it sought to organize a structure of its own on top of political configurations and existing social networks of older parties, even though parties like CONDEPA had already broken significant popular ground. Along with this organizing, the MAS incorporated militants and party operators from other parties. These incorporations were accompanied by a transfer of top-down schemes of participation, as well as a set of co-optive practices that are now characteristic of the MAS in these settings.

## A NETWORK OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The MAS came to La Paz and El Alto as an outsider party, and it expanded in two directions: it sought to build a territorial infrastructure, and it sought to configure a network of alliances with urban popular organizations (Anria 2010). Although it had been growing closer to the latter since 2002, their strategic alliance truly materialized with the 2005 general election campaign. Organizations representing groups as diverse as artisans, microenterprises, pensioners, miners working for cooperatives, and other urban sectors perceived the alliance with the MAS as a unique opportunity to achieve parliamentary representation. For its part, the MAS expanded its social base and thereby its influence.

As Lazar (2008, 52–55) notes, El Alto is a highly mobilized and self-organized political space. The main civic organizations at the city level are the Federation of Neighborhood Boards (FEJUVE) and the Regional Labor Federation (COR).[20] These organizations are critical for ensuring governability in the city and gaining electoral majorities at the national level (García Linera et al. 2004; see also Alenda 2003). As a result, party operators historically have attempted to infiltrate these organizations and control their leadership, and the MAS is no exception. Indeed, infiltrating the leadership levels of these organizations, operators believe, allows the MAS to extend its influence and control throughout the territory and to recruit leaders who mobilize large numbers of voters.

While these organizations, in accordance with their statutes, do not have formal ties to political parties, the MAS has configured an umbrella of informal alliances with key leaders through which it has sought to insert itself into the cities to build a base and acquire political influence. Trying to win over these organizations, *masista* operators have frequently used top-down co-optive practices. These have consisted, for example, of offering positions in the government in exchange for loyalty (or what in Bolivian parlance is known as *pegas*). From the beginning, this approach was not aimed at building organic ties with these organizations. Bertha Blanco, one of the

leaders who brought the MAS into El Alto, noted, "When we were constructing the MAS, we needed to find candidates. We didn't have candidates in the city, and nobody wanted to be associated with the MAS. And what did we do? We went to find persons within the organizations, for example in the COR. And there we talked directly with the authorities" (Blanco 2008).

What began as a search for candidates quickly turned into a penetration strategy aimed at eroding the autonomy of the social organizations. As a *masista* representative for El Alto noted, "We can't deny we do that. We aim for our people to become leaders in these organizations. It is an effort to control the social organizations from the top" (Machaca 2008). A delegate to the Constituent Assembly concurred:

> The project we have had as MAS is to be able to take control over the social organizations. In order to do that, you need to start from working at the district level and from there you can start climbing. For FEJUVE's next congress, for example, we have the wish that we're going to take on FEJUVE's leadership.… At least, that's what I can tell you that we'd like to happen. (Parra 2008)

These testimonies provide evidence for a deliberate plan to win over previously existing popular organizations by penetrating their social networks. But it should be noted that this reflects a general pattern of how different collective political interests have long contended for control of umbrella organizations in Bolivia, as the history of the Bolivian Workers' Cental (COB) and the CSUTCB demonstrates (García Linera et al. 2004). In short, the MAS has not innovated much in terms of its practices for controlling umbrella organizations.

This strategy creates a situation in which authorities in social organizations perceive these entities simply as "a trampoline for launching oneself into a public administration position" (Morales 2008). The case of FEJUVE provides a good example. The highest authority of this organization since 2004, Abel Mamani, was appointed as the water minister for the Morales government in 2006. His appointment translated into the direct presence of FEJUVE in the government. On the one hand, this entailed growing capacities for the organization to negotiate corporativist demands from within the state. On the other hand, its presence in the government eroded its autonomy. As an authority of FEJUVE put it, "We have lost considerable capacities for mobilization. Why? Because leaders have occupied ministries and other public offices.… They have received quotas of power. But the people can see what their real interests are, and thus it is difficult to articulate the organization" (Huanca 2008).

In the case of the COR-El Alto, the linkage with the MAS is subtler and less direct. This organization supports, albeit not without criticism, the government and the process of social transformation sponsored by the MAS. Unlike FEJUVE, the COR has never been represented directly in the government apparatus; the COR has not physically occupied spaces of power under the Morales government. But party operators have sought to infiltrate this organization, and they have established negotiations directly with the leadership. In words of Edgar Patana, the COR exec-

utive in El Alto, "Former executives of COR have always had rapprochements with political parties. Since 2002 they have been courting the MAS so that they could negotiate spaces of power, such as a candidacy for deputyship or something else. But we have never been 'organic' members of the MAS" (Patana 2008).

In addition, Patana laments workers' lack of participation in the government structure. In his words, "as *alteños*, as workers, and as members of COR, we are represented by absolutely nobody in the government." Patana further laments the presence of "neoliberal" ministers in the Morales cabinet "whose very presence in the government structure has been detrimental to workers' interest" (2008). His testimony echoes that offered by Román Loayza when he renounced the MAS in April 2009. Taken together, their critical positions toward the MAS reveal a detachment of the MAS from the social organizations that brought it to power. A former MSM leader attributes this to the consolidation of a "bureaucratic MAS" (Michel 2008); that is, a small clique of individuals who, while being alien to social organizations, exert significant control over the MAS (and the popular organizations that shape it) from the top.

The MAS became a national-level force only insofar as it played an articulatory role among the experiences, demands, and internal structures of various base organizations in urban settings. But, of course with exceptions, the links between these base organizations and the MAS have been driven predominantly by pragmatism and the negotiation of spaces of power within the government. The MAS came to these cities as an outsider party and tried to win over existing base organizations. By incorporating or co-opting their leadership into the ranks of the party, the MAS has attempted to control these organizations from above and thus erode their autonomy and independence. Whereas the rural dynamic that shaped the emergence of the MAS was one of bottom-up mobilization and organic party-movement linkages, the dynamics in the urban areas under study are more reminiscent of a populist machine.

## MORALES'S MAS GOVERNMENT (2006–PRESENT)

Becoming a ruling force altered profoundly the internal dynamics of the MAS. As noted, this process involved the articulation of informal alliances with a wide array of peasant and urban workers' organizations, many of which exchanged loyalty for positions in the government. As a ruling party, however, the MAS has become increasingly detached from popular organizations. Morales, with some exceptions, staffed key positions in the executive and state enterprises with individuals alien to the MAS's sponsoring organizations (Zegada et al. 2008; Zuazo 2008). This has placed the MAS above the social organizations that form its political core. As a result, many perceive, not without reason, that a small clique of "invited" members has taken prominent roles in the government and the MAS.[21]

Here, the oligarchic tendencies in the MAS clash with the principle of "ruling by obeying" endorsed by Morales. For Freya Schiwy (2008), "governing by obeying means that if the organizations and social movements that brought Morales to power

find him failing to pursue their decisions, they are likely to force the president to step down." It also refers to being responsible for positive actions, and maybe responsive to the will of constituents while planning those actions. When Morales assumed office in 2006, for example, he addressed the demands set forth by the mass mobilizations of the early 2000s, which had, de facto, set the government's agenda. Therefore he declared the nationalization of the hydrocarbon industry, proclaimed an extensive agrarian reform, promoted an anticorruption law, and called for a constituent assembly through which popularly elected delegates would rewrite the country's constitution.[22] All of these actions can be seen as examples of Morales's positive accountability to the MAS's social base; that is, as attempts to follow through on the demands from the direct action protests of 2000–2005. But does his government truly rule by obeying? Do social movements lead the MAS's government?

To answer these questions, some scholars have looked at the composition and evolution of Morales's cabinets of ministers. Studies have found that the presence of leaders of social organizations in the cabinet has tended to decrease over time (Zegada et al. 2008). Indeed, the participation of popular organizations in the executive has been quite limited. With some exceptions, key positions have been occupied by a technocratic elite that is "invited" into the ranks of the party, that does not represent base organizations, and thus has few checks from below.[23] Other observers have examined the social composition of the legislature, pointing to a growing presence of popular, particularly peasant, sectors in this institution (Zuazo 2008).[24] Still others have noted that despite the admittedly limited presence of popular sectors in the government structure, government policy has yielded important benefits for these groups, particularly peasants. Indeed, as Do Alto (2011, 110) correctly notes, the majority of its national policies—even when many are universalistic in nature, like the Bono Juancito Pinto and the Renta Dignidad—tend to benefit rural areas relatively more than wealthier, urban areas.

It is also possible to answer whether the MAS is a government of the social movements by looking at the dynamics of social conflict in Bolivia, and particularly MAS's strategies and actions during concrete conflictive situations. The MAS has maintained tight bonds with the organizations that brought it to power. Indeed, since its origins in the Chapare, its core constituency has been the coca growers, who have maintained a strong influence over the MAS's agenda, particularly on issues of agrarian policy. But as the MAS became a catch-all movement with a national presence, it established a network of informal alliances with base organizations, and the linkages were never formalized. This has become a source of tension between these organizations and the MAS government and between popular organizations and the party. With exceptions, such as the configuration of the Pacto de Unidad, which provided input for the constitutional reform, the MAS has not yet formalized effective channels of participation in decisionmaking processes.[25] As noted, there has been some resistance to institutionalization, partly because MAS leaders think that formalizing these channels might lead the MAS to operate as a conventional political party; it might interfere with the assemblylike (*asambleísta*) style of decisionmaking in grassroots organizations (Guarayos 2008).

Insofar as these mechanisms are absent, Morales "is a referee and no one challenges his decisions" (Silva 2008). Indeed, many accounts have shown that Morales has concentrated great power in his hands (Anria et al. 2010, 254–60; Madrid 2012, 163). But this is not to say that he can do as he pleases, as there are limits to his authority that are shaped by the nature of the MAS's internal organization. It is precisely the MAS's fluidity, or its informal features and absence of routinization, that leaves wide maneuvering room for the social organizations allied with it. In many cases, these organizations maintain considerable autonomy from the MAS, and they mobilize both for and against the government, placing limits on Morales's authority by mobilizing resources even if Morales does not approve. In short, his authority may be challenged by what occurs at the level of the social movements (Do Alto 2007, 95–108).

The events in Huanuni during October 2006 provide a useful example. During that month, cooperativist and wage-earning miners clashed there over the control of mining activities in the Posokoni hill.[26] The conflict left 16 dead and more than 68 wounded (*El Deber* 2006a), leading to the expulsion of Walter Villarroel, a leader of the National Federation of Mining Cooperatives, from the Ministry of Mining (*El Deber* 2006b). On this occasion, the presence of this group in the government structure did not impede this sector from expressing an autonomous position against government policies or from spurring social conflict (see Zegada et al. 2008). Although the strike was crushed by the government and did not force policy change, it demonstrated that Morales could not fully control popular organizations from above.

Another example relates to the crisis in the department of Cochabamba in January 2007, when groups related to the MAS violently tried to force the resignation of Prefect Manfred Reyes Villa for differing with Morales on various policies. According to Do Alto (2007), although these organizations were close to the MAS, they ignored Morales's desire to deactivate the protest and mobilized autonomously.

Indeed, coca growers and base organizations do not always follow Morales's advice, and they do not always endorse government policies. Sponsoring and allied organizations have protested against those policies if their interests were threatened. A more recent example of this is the *Gasolinazo* crisis that began on December 26, 2010, after the government canceled fuel subsidies by decree, in a country where gasoline had been heavily subsidized for many years. Coming as a surprise to most Bolivians, the action quickly led to a massive increase in gasoline prices, estimated at 83 percent, as well as a general uncertainty among the population about prices and availability of basic goods, transportation prices, the stability of the government, and the next adjustment policies. The price increase was followed by popular revolts against the policy, including civic strikes, road blockades, and marches. It is interesting that the conservative right did not lead these mobilizations. Instead, mobilizations were led by sectors that had been traditional bastions of MAS support—such as neighborhood groups and informal sector workers, miners, and even coca farmers—and they demanded that Morales either annul the decree or resign. The mobilizations paralyzed virtually every major city in the country and eventually suc-

ceeded at forcing the policy to change. Protests forced the government to annul its own decree on the grounds that Morales was actually "ruling by obeying."

Thus, even while the participation of popular organizations in key executive positions has been limited and isolated, and even though their influence in decisionmaking has been limited as well, the Morales government has maintained some degree of accountability to the popular organizations that brought it to power. The government's agenda was profoundly shaped by the wave of protests in the early 2000s in the Altiplano, and government's policies have benefited its social base, which is largely rural, as well as the instigators of these protests. In addition, Morales's authority has been constrained because groups in the MAS's alliance retain autonomy despite the party's attempts to control social organizations from the top.

## Conclusions

Recent literature has suggested that Evo Morales seems less comparable to Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa in the "populist" strand of the left—and to other alleged populists, like the late Néstor Kirchner and his widow, current Argentine president Cristina Fernández, or Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega—and that he is largely accountable to the social bases that brought him to power.

By examining how the MAS operates in the cities of La Paz and El Alto, this article has sought to reframe this discussion, essentially by arguing that the MAS occupies a sort of gray area. On the one hand, this study has shown that what makes the MAS very different from the other "populists" is that it represents indigenous constituencies, even as it often contends with some. It also differs in that it grew directly out of the autonomous social and political mobilization of those constituencies. Indeed, Bolivia's legacy of indigenous mobilization constitutes a case starkly different from other cases in the region. On the other hand, this article has also shown that the MAS is a hybrid organization that operates with different dynamics and organizational logics in urban and rural areas. While it resembles a social movement in rural areas and reflects social mobilization from below, it resembles a populist machine in the urban areas studied, where it has sought to win over previously existing organizations and their social networks.

These observations tell us that the MAS does not fit easily into the schemes by which leftist governments in the region are classified. But it is less clear what consequences this might have over the long run. The question to consider is whether this means that popular sectors will have a greater capacity to pressure governments from below and hold them accountable to societal demands. It would also be worth considering whether this capacity varies in rural and urban areas and in the different party-society linkages outlined here.

This article has also shown that the MAS is an extremely fluid organization, and it is precisely its lack of formal institutionalization or routinization that leaves considerable maneuvering room to the social organizations allied with it. While these organizations constrain Morales's authority in important ways, their opportunities to participate in decisionmaking processes have been quite limited. Indeed, in the

absence of effective channels, Morales has remained the central figure in the MAS, a situation that is not optimal, given the usual weathering of popularity that affects presidents in their second terms. The lack of routinization also means that tensions over how to manage conflicts between social organizations and the MAS, as well as ambiguities about the lines of authority, are particularly aggravated. As a result, the MAS usually finds itself at odds with its sponsoring and allied social organizations, which mobilize, often vigorously, against the government when their interests are threatened.

The case of the MAS can also make us think about an area of concern that has received relatively little attention in the broader literature on social movements and parties based on them; namely, the issues that arise when movement parties, and the organizations that form governing coalitions, leave office. This question became particularly important, for example, after September 2011, when a mass popular uprising occurred against the government's intention of building a highway through the National Park and Indigenous Territory Isiboro Sécure (TIPNIS). This crisis, which involved confrontations between indigenous communities and *cocaleros*, was the second massive popular uprising against the Morales government. Unlike the *Gasolinazo* crisis of December 2010, this time the government handled the conflict with repression in a rather confusing series of events, even though, in the end, it did temporarily suspend the project.

In light of a loss in popularity partly attributable to how it managed the conflict, and in light of an eventual loss in future elections, a question worth pondering is how this event and response might affect the MAS's dynamics and organizational logics. Although this scenario of a loss of political power seems unlikely in the short run, the set of questions it raises are worthy of consideration if we think about the MAS's organizational legacies in the long run. The crucial question that will not be answered until sometime after Morales loses political power is whether the MAS will become an organizational actor that empowers popular sectors independent of Morales. What might happen to the MAS if it loses its electoral support and leaves power? Will its lack of routinization allow the MAS to adapt and survive in changing electoral environments, or does its organizational fluidity carry with it the seeds of the MAS's own demise?

Theory and empirical research on the issues that arise after social movements take on or leave governing roles are still in their infancy. The explanation of the inner workings of the MAS presented here provides a rough map of the territory of movement-party-government dynamics as a first step toward theory building. Comparative research on how other social movements make their transition to government can show whether the trends found here reflect general patterns. This is a promising research program, one that deserves further attention and much more systematic analysis.

# NOTES

1. For notable exceptions, see Do Alto 2007, 2011; Komadina and Geffroy 2007; Postero 2010; Zegada et al. 2008; Zuazo 2008, 2010.

2. The patterns have also been labeled "contestatory" (Weyland 2010), "radical/ constituent" (Luna 2010), and even "carnivorous" (Vargas Llosa 2007). Others have rejected the dichotomization of the Latin American left (Beasley-Murray et al. 2010). The concern here is not to come up with a new classificatory scheme but to show that the Bolivian case does not fit easily into the available categorizations of the contemporary Latin American left.

3. Madrid (2008) uses the term *ethnopopulism* to describe the MAS. Ethnopopulist parties are "inclusive ethnically based parties that adopt classical populist electoral strategies" (475). These parties present themselves with an ethnic discourse but try to appeal to a wider constituency. The difference between these and exclusionary indigenous-based parties is that the latter cannot make broad appeals beyond a specific and territorially defined ethnic group. Examples of these are the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP) and the Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupac Katari (MRTKL).

4. While there are hardly any universal laws in the social sciences, the closest to one is arguably the "iron law" of oligarchy. Developed by the German sociologist Robert Michels through an examination of the German Social Democratic Party, it claims that elite rule— what Michels refers to as oligarchy—and the emergence and consolidation of hierarchical decisionmaking structures are inherent to organizational development.

5. Not all social movements are focused on the state. There is a growing body of literature in social movement theory that conceives of social movements as groups that challenge organizations other than the state, such as multinational corporations (Soule 2009), public opinion (Gamson 1995), faith-based institutions (Chaves 2004), and other nonstate institutions (Van Dyke et al. 2004).

6. Gibson (1996, 7) distinguishes core from noncore constituencies: he defines the former as "those sectors of society that are most important to its political agenda and resources. Their importance lies not necessarily in the number of votes they represent, but in their *influence* on the party's agenda and capacities for political action." Noncore constituencies, in turn, are necessary to expand the party's electoral base.

7. In a parallel argument, Albro (2006, 411–14) notes that this is especially evident in the symbolic politics of the MAS, which are characterized by the use of generically indigenous symbols devoid of a particular cultural referent.

8. For a review of the neoliberal period in Bolivia, see Kohl and Farthing 2006.

9. Other indigenous parties include the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP), headed by Felipe Quispe, and the Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupaq Katari (MRTKL), headed by Genaro Flores. These did not become as electorally successful as the MAS (Madrid 2012, 35–73).

10. Evo Morales, Román Loayza, Néstor Guzmán, and Félix Sánchez became uninominal deputies for the Chapare and fought neoliberalism from the halls of Congress.

11. While the formal name is MAS-IPSP, it is referred to here as the MAS.

12. Quiroga was invited to run as Morales's vice presidential candidate but declined the offer, asserting personal reasons (Quiroga 2008). Morales then selected Antonio Peredo, a renowned journalist and teacher associated with the PCB, and Peredo accepted the candidacy (Peredo 2008).

13. Thus, observers have noted a process of "oligarchization" of the party leadership (Komadina and Geffroy 2007, 99; also Do Alto 2007, 82). While there are oligarchic tendencies within the MAS, this conclusion is misleading. "Invited" MAS candidates and social movement representatives do not form any sort of organic group with shared or corporate social and political interests and incentives. At best, they represent a temporary group of assorted representatives from diverse base organizations, in a loose coalition.

14. See the May 2010 special forum in *Latin American Perspectives* (37, 3) for an excellent collection of essays of Bolivia under the MAS.

15. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the observation about the ethnic shift.

16. I thank an anonymous reviewer for making this observation.

17. Bertha Blanco was one of the people who brought the MAS to El Alto. A former member of the National Federation of Campesina Women of Bolivia-Bartolina Sisa, she is currently estranged from the MAS.

18. Loayza was one of the founding members of the MAS and is now a dissident, since he was accused of betrayal and expelled from the MAS in April 2009 (*La Razón* 2009).

19. It is worth noting, however, that even though the MAS won almost every municipal government in the country, it did not win the municipalities of La Paz and El Alto.

20. The FEJUVE is a coordinator of residents, as well as neighborhood councils and associations, in El Alto. The COR is an umbrella organization of workers, which includes factory workers, teachers, journalists, and artisans but is dominated by street traders. A third organization, the Federation of Street Traders ("the Federation"), coordinates associations of street traders. Taken together, the three organizations possess an impressive mobilizational strength in the city. Despite the importance of the Federation to the political life of El Alto, this section focuses only on FEJUVE and COR and does not make direct claims with regard to the links between the MAS and the Federation. This is because during fieldwork I could not arrange an interview with its then–executive secretary, Braulio Rocha. However, interviews with leaders of COR and FEJUVE concurred in pointing out the similarities between these organizations and the Federation of Street Traders in regard to their linkages to the MAS.

21. Loayza (2008) laments that "we [*campesinos indígenas*] saw that leaders of social organizations who did not struggle like we did soon became spokespersons of the MAS and they tried to utilize the MAS for their interests." Although his critique cannot be taken at face value, considering that at the moment of the interview he was an interested contender seeking to launch his own party apart from the MAS, interviews with other MAS leaders, as well as leaders of urban social organizations, reveal a similar concern.

22. The constitution is of particular interest because it exemplifies the main tendencies found in this study. Indeed, the 2009 Constitution reflected the MAS's attempts to follow through on the protests' repeated calls for a constituent assembly. At the same time, the outcome of the constituent assembly was a text approved by progovernment delegates only, and many people accused the MAS of forcing the constitution through in antidemocratic ways. Nevertheless, that draft was negotiated and modified in Congress, with input from opposition forces and compromises on both sides. It became law with the constitutional referendum of January 2009.

23. Morales still serves as head of mass social movement organizations, such as the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, which is the main coca growers' federation.

24. Regarding the selection of candidates, Zuazo (2008) notes that in rural areas, there are horizontal decisionmaking mechanisms for the selection of authorities to run for Congress. Whereas many representatives in Congress are selected directly by their social bases, others, the so-called invited, have become authorities "without the support of any social or popular organization" (Peredo 2008). While the former are subject to pressures from their social bases, the latter enjoy a greater degree of autonomy and are not accountable to organized groups, but to Morales.

25. The Pacto de Unidad is an alliance of rural and indigenous popular organizations from the west and east of the country. Operating independently from the MAS, the Pacto de Unidad produced a complete draft of a constitutional text and presented it to the Constituent Assembly. Above all, it provided advisory consultation. Since the new constitution was approved, however, the Pacto de Unidad has not had active participation or visibility in decisionmaking processes (Pinto 2008).

26. Cooperativist miners also demanded a deeper pension reform than the government was proposing and the lowering of the retirement age to 55.

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