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Populism and Social Movements in Latin America

Patterns of Mobilization and Accountability in Bolivia

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For My Uncle Marcello

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List of Acronyms

AD	Acción Democrática (Democratic Action)
AD	Apruebo Dignidad (Approve Dignity)
ADN	Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action)
AP	Acuerdo Patriótico (Patriotic Accord)
APRA	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance)
art./artt.	Article/Articles
ASP	Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Assembly for the Sovereignty of the People)
Bartolinas	Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa" (Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia)
CFK	Cristina Fernández de Kirchner
CIDOB	Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia)
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers Central)
COMIBOL	Corporación Minera de Bolivia (Mining Corporation of Bolivia)
CONAIE	Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)

CONALCAM	Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio (National Coordination for Change)
CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu)
CONDEPA	Conciencia de Patria (Conscience of the Fatherland)
COPEI	Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (Independent Political Electoral Organization Committee, Social Christian Party)
CSCIB	Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia (Syndicalist Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia)
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos (Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia)
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
FA	Frente Amplio (Broad Front)
FABRILES	Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba (Departmental Federation of Factory Workers of Cochabamba)
FEDECOR	Federación Departamental Cochabambina de Organizaciones de Regantes (Cochabamba Federation of Irrigators Organizations)
Fejuve	Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighborhood Committees)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPSP	Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples)

ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization
IU	Izquierda Unida (United Left)
LPP	Ley de Participación Popular (Popular Participation Law)
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Toward Socialism)
MBL	Movimiento Bolivia Libre (Free Bolivia Movement)
MIP	Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (Pachakuti Indigenous Movement)
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Movement)
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement)
MNRI	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda (Left-Wing Revolutionary Nationalist Movement)
MRTKL	Movimiento Revolucionario Túpaj Katari de Liberación (Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupaq Katari)
MSM	Movimiento Sin miedo (Movement without Fear)
MST	Movimiento Sim Terra (Landless Movement)
MVR	Movimiento Quinta República (Fifth Republic Movement)
NFR	Nueva Fuerza Republicana (New Republican Force)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OAS	Organization of American States
PCCh	Partido Comunista de Chile (Communist Party of Chile)
PD	Partito Democratico (Democratic Party)
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party)
PJ	Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party)

PS	Partido Socialista de Chile (Socialist Party of Chile)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party)
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
SENPLADES	Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo (National Secretary of Planning and Development)
UCR	Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civic Union)
UCS	Unidad Cívica Solidaridad (Solidarity Civic Unity)
UDP	Unidad Democrática y Popular (Democratic and Popular Union)
UN	Unidad Nacional (National Unity)
US	United States
$US	United States Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialists Republics
TIPNIS	Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure (Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory)
WB	World Bank
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia (Fiscal Oil Fields of Bolivia)

Introduction

Often, we heard on television of a new populist outsider around the world who claims to have the solution for the illness of his/her country. The narrative is always more or less this: people are angry and tired of politics as usual and a charismatic outsider, taking advantage of this emotionality, challenges traditional parties and may even get to positions of high responsibility. While in the past this seemed like a problem of the developing, "non-modernized" countries, in the last decades this phenomenon has affected the Western "modern" countries, even the quintessentially democracy, the US. But what really is this fuzzing word, populism? Are people just so easily emotionally manipulated by a charismatic leader? What causes the rise of populism? And which are the consequences for the democracy it affects? Is it really just a threat for the democratic system (Rummens 2017) as usually represented in the media? Or it may even be a corrective of a dysfunctional democracy? (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012) Which is its relationship with the civil society and how they interact? These are some of the questions treated in this work.

To understand populism, no better context can be considered but Latin America, the "land of populism" (de la Torre 2017). Several countries of this region have seen throughout their history the rise and fall of different populist leaders, parties, or movements. The most recent was the forced exile of the first indigenous president that Bolivia ever had, Evo Morales of the leftist Movement Toward Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, MAS) after 13 years of consecutive ruling (2006-2019). After one year of the interim government of the conservative Jeanine Añez, on 18 October 2020 general elections took place in Bolivia. Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca were elected president and vice-president of Bolivia and the party (MAS) came back to power. The timing seems then perfect to make an overall balance of Morales' and MAS's 13 years in terms of their effects upon the state of the Bolivian democracy.

The division of the work is the following. The 1st Chapter provides a rich state of the art of the theoretical literature and some empirical findings on populism. Following Sartori's (1970) emphasis on the importance of concept formation, the chapter starts by reviewing the several definitions proposed and employed with a special emphasis on the Latin American region to finally justify the one chosen by this work, a "discursive-ideational" one (Mudde 2004; Mudde 2017; Hawkins 2009). The causes of populism are then analyzed. Structural, emotional-individual, and institutional factors intertwine and contribute to form what this work calls "failures of representation" or "perceived crises of democratic legitimacy" (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017b; Hawkins et al. 2017). What happens when populists get to power is the third section of this first chapter. The effects considered are both on the political-institutional side (effects for democracy) and briefly on the policies side (economic policy). The arguments made for the relationship between populism and democracy constitute the theoretical basis to be applied in the analysis of the Bolivian case study in Chapter 3. Finally, given the key role played by social movements in the Bolivian experience both at the origin and evolution of the populist party/movement, a section that mixes literature on populism and social movements concludes the chapter.

Chapter 2 contextualizes the case. Firstly, it gives a regional contextualization by briefly reviewing other contemporary leftist (populist and not) experiences and their differences in the relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs). A special emphasis is given to the other two populist experiences with which Bolivia and Morales are usually grouped, Venezuela with Chávez and Ecuador with Correa. The focus then shifts to the case of the work, Bolivia. An in-depth historical analysis of the Bolivia pre-MAS is given to show the different structural and institutional factors and the agency of social movements that produced the "perceived crisis of democratic legitimacy" for the Bolivian case. The chapter concludes by analyzing the nature and the strategies of the MAS as a populist party/movement and its early relationship with social movements in the country. This allows to signal some key differences of Morales and the MAS with respect to the cases with which are commonly grouped (Chávez and Correa). It then concludes in part the first comparative section of the Chapter and further justifies the case-selection.

While the 2nd Chapter analyzed the causes of MAS's rise and then the MAS as a challenger of an established order, Chapter 3 passes to analyze its consequences, and then the MAS as a governing party. The chapter starts by setting the political, social, and economic contexts in which the Morales' governments ruled alongside the main measures enacted that are of interest for this work. 13 years of ruling is a long time, within which not only these contexts but also the government's attitude, strategies and actual measures changed. The second section passes to analyze the effects for the Bolivian democracy of 13 years of populist ruling. Considering the pluralistic form of the Bolivian democracy as both representative and participatory, as stated by the new Constitution of 2009, and based upon the theory-building of Chapter 1, this essay argues that negative effects are expected for the liberal representative form, while positive ones for the participatory form. With respect to this last, the role of social movements is of paramount importance. While they cannot entirely be substitutive to the erosion of horizontal accountability, these can in part counterbalances the most authoritarian tendencies linked with a populist governor, performing a role of "social accountability" (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000; Anria 2018). The last section of the chapter provides a summary of the personal interview made with Manuel Canelas, former Minister of Communication in 2019 in the last Morales' government. Based on this and the previous analysis, some insights and final considerations for the whole research are drawn. The Conclusions summarizes the work and, based on the findings, makes some conjectures about possible future research and the next future of the MAS and Bolivia with the return of the MAS with Luis Arce.

The nature and the methodology of this work are clearly qualitative and in particular follow those of a single-case study with a brief comparative section in Chapter 2 and some comparisons and mentions to the Latin American region made in Chapter 3. The qualitative analysis is enriched in Chapter 2 by opinion surveys of the Latin American NGO *Latinobarómetro* and in Chapter 3 by various Democracy Indexes from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute and by the interview to Manuel Canelas, former Minister of Communication (2019) as primary sources. As an elite interview, this may represent a useful tool to generate unique data (Dexter 1970) and its semi-structured nature allows to use it both as a hypothesis testing and as a catalyzer of interesting new insights regarding our case study. The limitations of the work are

obviously those commonly related to qualitative research and especially single-case study, namely difficult and restricted generalizability, and replication. Furthermore, the research may have been enriched by additional interviews to direct representatives of social movements and a field study. The pandemic situation and a lack of adequate networking for a country this far from Italy rendered these tasks and improvements difficult ones. However, as it will emerge, Canelas' testimony was instrumental to understand informal internal dynamics of the MAS, key to appreciate advances in political participation and the insight about social accountability. Furthermore, it added a strategic perspective to understand MAS's actions and, in a sense, complemented the institutional view given in the analysis that preceded his interview.

1. Populism: A state of the art

1.1 Introduction of the Chapter

The term populism has been used for the first time to describe two political movements at the end of the 19th century, the US People's Party and the Russian movement of *Narodniki*. These can indeed be considered the first historical manifestations of populism (Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017). When reading literature about populism one of the few consensuses that seems emerging is that it is essentially a contested concept (Mudde 2017; Weyland 2017; Casullo 2014; Barr 2009). Populism has been defined as a thin-centered ideology (Mudde 2004), a political strategy (Weyland 2001), a political style (Moffitt and Tormey 2014), a discourse (Laclau 2005; Panizza 2005), a political frame (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2017) and a form of mobilization (Jansen 2011) among the most recent examples. The contest surrounding populism is not only about what it is but also about its existence. Moreover, recent developments in the Western anglophone World such as the Trump Presidency (2017-2021) and the Leave campaign for the Brexit referendum (2016) made populism a catchy word in the media to describe any political phenomena deviating from politics as usual and/or expressing protest. This excessive use of the term, often in a pejorative meaning to discredit politicians and/or adversaries, adds to the academic dispute to render an analytical use of the concept even more difficult.

For these reasons, any work analyzing supposedly populist phenomena can not disregard a clear definition of the concept. Accordingly, this chapter starts disentangling the debate on populism's definition and outlining the definition that will be used for the rest of the work, an ideational one (Mudde 2017; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017a). The literature review on populism proceeds reviewing the theoretical and empirical arguments on populism's causes and political and economic consequences at the country level and concludes with a section that analyzes an

under-researched topic, the relationship between populism and social movements. Finally, before to start with this sort of literature review, it is worth to mention that literature on populism has historically been prevalently focused on Latin America and Western Europe, even if more recently it is becoming an analytical concept more widely used to analyze even cases of other regions. For this reason, the review mainly refers to these two regions. However, due to its long history of populism, and considering the case treated (Bolivia) in the following chapters, a special attention is given to the Latin American context.

1.2 What is Populism?

Alternative theories

One of the main problems of the literature on populism is that, at least in the first works, this was really country specific, resulting in the proliferation of several ad hoc conceptualizations that lacked generalizability. A striking example is what can be called the structuralist tradition in conceptualizing populism of the first half of the 20th century in Latin America (Di Tella 1965; Germani 1978; Cardoso and Faletto 1969, 102-129). As the name suggests, this tradition saw populism as the product of the social structure of the South American region. A delayed industrialization mixed with a rapid urbanization and the subsequent migration paved the way for a portion of the population easily to be mobilized by a populist leader. Populism was indeed understood as a type of political regime characterized by a cross-class alliance mobilized by an anti-status quo appeal personified by the populist leader, and that pursued nationalist and redistributive social policies in the context of an industrial policy that followed Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). This conceptualization worked well for some well-known classic populists (de la Torre 2017) in relatively more industrialized countries of the region such as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (1946-55), Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1930-45, 1951-54) and to some extent Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico (1934-40). However, besides their specificity in time and space, these theories do not explain why populism did not emerge in other Latin American countries with similar social structures or why it emerged in different forms in more agrarian societies as with Haya de la Torre's APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) in Peru, Víctor Paz Estenssoro's MNR (Movimiento

Nacionalista Revolucionario) in Bolivia or the personal leadership of José Maria Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador. Furthermore, assuming the cross-class alliance as a peculiar characteristic of populism is quite fallacious since the same alliances characterized Western European mass parties as Christian and Social Democratic Parties (Rovira Kaltwasser 2014b).

The first real attempt to make a cross-regional study of populism is represented by the work edited by Ionescu and Gellner (1969). The book is the result of a conference held in 1967 at the London School of Economics which reunited scholars of different strands, theoretical backgrounds, and geographic expertise to discuss the issue. Another work worth to be mentioned is the book of Canovan (1981) in which the author outlined different types of populism (different subtypes of agrarian populism, populist democracy, populist dictatorship, reactionary populism, and politicians' populism) in order to find common elements. However, what both these early works missed was a unified definition of the concept.

In this regard, before passing to the two major currents adopted in the contemporary literature (political-strategic and ideational approach), it is essential to mention the vision exposed in the works of the Argentinean philosopher Ernesto Laclau. A post-Marxist philosopher, Laclau proposed a new approach to populism in his work *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* (1977) and completed it in Laclau (2005). Its works, really abstract and complicated, saw populism as a discursive strategy that is able to unify issues of the people that are initially separated through what he called a *logic of equivalence*. From this point of view, Laclau celebrates the transformative potential of populism of breaking with the liberal status quo. Laclau's work is really normative since he considers populism as the only possible discursive strategy to enact a transformative project to achieve a free and radical democracy. He goes further arguing that the antagonism on which populism is based, people vs elite, is the basis of politics and indeed democracy compared to mere administration. Finally, in Laclau's (2005) view the *people* and the *elite*, vague terms per se, are what he called *empty signifiers* meaning that they are constructed subjects depending on the context and differing over time and across cases (Rovira Kaltwasser 2014b). Laclau's original works has the merit of

overcoming structuralist definitions of populism and, as argued by Urbinati (2019), proposing a maximal theory of the concept.[1] However, its main flaw is, as mentioned above, its normative impetus, excessive abstraction and difficult vocabulary that renders empirical and causal analysis complicated. In this sense, the ideational approach that this work adopts, and that will be treated below, build on some elements of Laclau's theory such as the antagonism between the people and the elite but it is agnostic in its normative aspiration and for this more adapt for testing assumptions or analyzing in a neutral way case studies.

As highlighted in the introduction of *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, edited by Rovira Kaltwasser et al. (2017), today political science academic works on populism mainly follow two different conceptualizations: a political-strategic definition (Weyland 2001; Weyland 2017) and an ideational one (Mudde 2017). Even if this work adopts an ideational definition of populism, being the political-strategic one probably still the most used framework for the Latin American region, it is the last alternative theory that deserves a brief analysis. This approach developed indeed in the 90s as a response to explain the emergence of Latin American politicians allegedly perceived as populists but that enacted neo-liberal policies in full contradiction with their classical antecedents.[2] One of the first to find "unexpected affinities" between populism and neo-liberalism was Weyland (2003). Following Weyland (2001), populism was then defined "as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland 2001, 14). Populism in this sense is seen as a political strategy to gain and retain power as many others shown in Table 1.1. What is peculiar of populism is the fundamental role of the leader (Type of Ruler) and its relationship with the support base mainly informal and without intermediaries. Furthermore, populism is a political strategy used in a democratic context, since "populism rests primarily on mass support" (Weyland 2001, 13). This differentiates it from more authoritarian outcomes such as those represented in the table under the voices of

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[1] Laclau's works influenced what is today informally called the Essex School of discursive analysis. See for instance Stavrakakis et al. (2017) for an analysis that uses Laclau's framework.
[2] Examples of such politicians are Carlos Saúl Menem in Argentina (1989-99), Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990-2000), and Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil (1990-92).

Economic Clout and Military Coercion of Principal Power Capability. On the other hand, populism is different from the now customary political strategy and form of government in the Western tradition, Party Government, mainly for the absence of a formal organization (Party) and the consequent ties with the support base, formal and mediated in the case of a Party Government and direct and informal in the case of Populism.

Table 1.1. Political-Strategic Definition of Populism

TYPE OF RULER	PRINCIPAL POWER CAPABILITY			RULER'S RELATIONSHIP TO SUPPORT BASE
	Numbers	Special Weight		
		Economic Clout	Military Coercion	
Individual Person	**Populism**	Patrimonialism	*Caudillismo*	Fluid and Unorganized
Informal grouping	Clientelism	Oligarchy	Government by Military Faction	Firm Informal Ties
Formal Organization	Party Government	Corporatism	Government by Military Institution	Stable Organizational Links

Source: Weyland (2001)

Overall, the political-strategic definition has the pros of locating the populist phenomenon definitely in the political domain. It proposes a minimal definition of the concept more suitable for empirical analysis of populist cases. This definition dissociates populism from any specific cross-class constituency or stage of development (as in the structuralist tradition) or from the adoption of any specific economic policies.[3] In this way it encompasses both classical and neo-liberal populists

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[3] The adoption of specific economic policies, mainly redistributive and inflationary, is at the base of Economic definitions of Populism (See Dornbusch and Edwards 1991, Sachs 1989). These definitions

in the Latin American context and, more generally, allows for the existence of left-wing and right-wing populism. On the other hand, this conceptualization has several weaknesses. It conceives populism as an exclusively top-down phenomenon, while it can be also the result of a bottom-up mobilization as in the Bolivian of this work; even his definition of the masses and their relationship with the leader is ill-conceived since it is not always the case that the former are unorganized but indeed there are cases in which formal and informal ties mixed (Peronist experience in Argentina being the perfect example), or cases in which populism emerged in bureaucratized and well-organized parties such as right-wing populist parties in Western Europe.[4] More generally, Weyland's definition mainly focuses on the figure of the leader (supply side of populism) and underestimates a core concept of populism from which the term even derives, that is the "people" (demand side of populism). Conceiving populism as a top-down political strategy through which an individual leader gains and retains the popular support of inert masses not only does not minimally take into account the role of the people but also runs the risk of equating populism to demagogy and political opportunism.

Ideational Approach

After having established a sort of timeline of the academic debate regarding populism's definition and the related alternative theories, we can now outline the conceptualization followed in this work, the ideational approach to populism. According to Mudde (2004), populism is defined as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004, 543).

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have been deliberately not outlined in this paragraph because they will be treated in more detail in the paragraph of Populism and Its Consequences, more specifically its economic consequences.

[4] Following a political-strategic definition, Roberts (2006) analyzes the organizational variability of populism in the Latin American context in terms of Partisan Organization and Organization of the Civil Society, identifying four different subtypes of populism. Roberts argues that this variability is a function not only of structural and political-institutional variables but also of the threat posed by the populist leader to the elite. Accordingly, when the reforms, rhetoric and actions of the populist leader are perceived as radical and encounter a strong opposition, the consequent conflicts represent an incentive to organize and empower populist followers as a counterweight to be mobilized. As evidence to defend his thesis Roberts brought the examples of Chávez in Venezuela and Fujimori in Peru.

From this definition and the name that the author subsequently gave it (ideational in Mudde (2017)), it emerges how, differently from previous conceptualizations, the attention is put to a given set of ideas if not properly understood as an ideology. The use of the term ideology is indeed a controversial one, and together with "people", "elite" and "general will" constitutes the key elements of the ideational definition. Fully aware of the disputable use of the term ideology, Mudde (2017) defines populism as a "thin-centered" ideology to distinguish it from more "thick-ideologies" such as liberalism or socialism. To be sure, Mudde (2017) argues that populism is based on the vision of the society divided into people and elite and envisions a politics based upon the general will of the former, but at the same time it is quite vague regarding its views about socio-economic and socio-political issues and/or solutions. In this way he follows the distinction between thin and thick ideologies made by Freeden (1998) in which the former has not the same intellectual depth of the latter, it is based upon few core elements and does not present the same ambitions since it usually does not propose solutions to major socio-political issues. In this sense, populism may be regarded as a more general lens through which the world is seen not only by the populist leader but by who follows him/her. Being a thin-centered ideology, populism rarely exists by itself, and presents itself anchored to other ideologies, being them thin as nationalism (right-wing populism in Western Europe), or thick as socialism (left-wing populism in Latin America as in the case of the Socialism of the XXI century) and liberalism (neo-liberal populists in Latin America).

As mentioned above, the three core elements of populism as a thin-centered ideology are people, elite and general will. Several authors have argued that a thing as the people do not actually exist, and it is a mere construction of politicians. What matters here is that the term people has usually been used by populist leaders as to refer to the "sovereign people", the people as nations and the "common people" (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). This distinction generally depend on what is the host ideology of populism, so that when this is nationalism, the people can assume more nativistic meaning as in the case of right-wing populism in Europe; when on the other hand populism presents itself in a more left-wing form it can be the case that it exalts the common people as the *underdogs*, sometimes encompassing the concept of socio-economic classes. More generally, it seems appropriate the conception of

Laclau (2005) of people as an empty signifier whose meaning and substance vary according to the context in which populism emerges. It seems appropriate also the concept of the "heartland" outlined by Paul Taggart (2000) to refer to an idealized community that populist leaders claim to represent.

The same reasoning to explain the people can be applied to the concept of the elite. Usually seen as the anti-thesis of the people, the elite may be thought as an empty signifier whose meaning and substance vary depending on contexts and the host ideology of the particular subtype of populism considered. What can be added here is that, according to the Mudde's (2017) definition, what is common in all subtypes of populism is that the difference between the people and the elite is mainly moral. Accordingly, the people are pure, while the elite represents evil. To that common distinction others can follow depending on which other ideology populism is anchored to.

Finally, there is the concept of the general will. Superficially recalling the Rousseau's argument, populists argue that politics should follow the general will of the people. This claim is possible since they regard the people as a homogenous group and see any difference within them as artificially constructed to pursue special interests. In this vein, the elite is the representative of special interest, while populist leaders are those of the people and, if in power, their mandate is to pursue their general will (Mudde 2017).

This work adopts the ideational framework to populism because it regards it as the most complete and productive way to treat populist phenomena in both qualitatively and quantitatively empirical works. Following temporally the alternative definitions laid out above, we can see how the ideational definition overcomes their highlighted weaknesses.

With respect to the structuralist tradition, while this was quite specific in time and space, it was actually an ad hoc definition to make sense of some peculiar political regimes of the first half of the 20th century in Latin America, Mudde's (2017) definition can travel across different region and times. The ideational approach is dominant in the European context to conceptualize and explain the emergence of populist radical-right parties (Mudde 2007), but it is also increasingly used in the

Latin American context, where the political-strategic approach was previously hegemonic, both for contemporary and past manifestations or a comparison between them (Hawkins 2009; Ruth and Hawkins 2017; Rovira Kaltwasser 2014b; de la Torre 2017; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017a; Ruth 2018). Furthermore, the ideational framework is fit to make cross-regional studies (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013) widening the range of application for comparative research.

With regard to the discursive approach developed by Laclau (2005), the ideational definition is not normative, less abstract, and more suitable for empirical analysis. While Laclau's (2005) theory went further in its abstraction and generalization equating populism with politics and even democracy, the ideational approach builds on some concepts of Laclau's approach but remains a minimal definition of populism allowing for different categories of the phenomenon that still share some minimum elements. The most immediate distinction is between right-wing populism, usually the result of populism mixed with neo-liberalism or nationalism, and left-wing populism, when populism borrows some socialist elements.[5] Another insightful distinction is that made by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) between "inclusionary populism" in Latin America and "exclusionary populism" in Europe based on material (distribution of resources), political (political participation and contestation), and symbolic dimensions.[6]

When it comes to the political-strategic definition of Weyland (2017), the ideational approach is more versatile because from its attention to the realm of ideas it follows that populism is not only a "strategy" adopted by a leader but that some populist "attitudes" can be genuinely shared by its followers.[7] In other words, the ideational definition allows to analyze both the supply-side of populism of leaders, parties, and political elite in general, regardless of their sincerity or not,[8] and the demand-side of it from the people. This is conceptually important since, while acknowledging the importance of leadership, the ideational approach does not regard

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[5] For a theoretical discussion of the difference between "left" and "right" See Bobbio (1994).

[6] Especially the political dimension will be expanded in the Section Populism and Democracy.

[7] For studies on populist attitudes and the demand-side for populism in general, See for example Hawkins et al. (2012); Akkerman et al. (2014); Spruyt et al. (2016).

[8] Ideational approach leaves the sincerity of the populist argument as an empirical finding rather than an a priori assumption.

it as a constitutive element of populism but more as having an elective affinity with populism (Mudde 2017). Consequently, this definition encompasses not only the most common populism founded on the weight of an individual leadership, but also leaderless populism as with the recent Tea Party or the historical People's Party in US or the *Narodniki* movement in Russia, and populism within well developed and bureaucratized parties and party-system as in Western Europe.

Finally, ideational definitions of populism have been usually criticized for being too broad and general rendering difficult or pointless an analytical application of the term (Weyland 2017). Actually, conceptualizing populism as a thin-centered ideology or a set of ideas, permits to distinguish it from non-populists. According to this definition, there are two different opposites of populism: elitism and pluralism. Elitism as populism sees the world through a Manichean distinction between two groups, the people and the elite, and shares the conviction about the homogeneity of these two groups. Differently from populism, elitism regards people as irrational masses and advocates a minimal role for them, leaving politics as a matter of a few political elite. On the other hand, pluralism completely refuses the homogeneity argument, and indeed conceptualizes the people as inherently formed by different individuals. While populism sees politics as the enactment of the general will, pluralism deems politics as the art of compromise.[9] More practically, the ideational definition has proven to be productive and efficient to at least partially address a common problem in social sciences, that of measurability. Ideational approach has indeed been used as a framework to measure the level of populism and distinguish between populists and non-populist in several empirical works (Mudde 2007, Hawkins 2009).[10]

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[9] The difference with pluralism is important since pluralism is at the base of the modern conception of Democracy, the Liberal Democracy. This distinction explains partly the difficult relationship between Populism and Liberal Democracy that will be treated in more detail in a subsequent paragraph.

[10] What can be considered the most comprehensive coverage of Populists and non-Populists measurement across the globe follows an ideational approach. This is the Global Populism Database developed by the Team Populism scholars with the help of The Guardian. See Hawkins et al. (2019); Lewis et al. (2019).

1.3 Populism and Its Causes

Beside its contested definition, literature on populism abounds on the causes to clarify its emergence and support. This work follows the categorization made in Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017b) into Durkheimian, Downsian and Institutional theories to explain populism's appeal. The arguments belonging to the same group may diverge in some way but nonetheless follow the same causal mechanism. Below these three groupings will be briefly summarized before to try to give a general explanation for the emergence of populism based on the ideational definition outlined in the previous paragraph.

Durkheimian Theories

The arguments grouped in the Durkheimian Theories by Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017b) focus on great social changes to explain the ascendance of populism. The name of the group refers to the works of the sociologist Émile Durkheim and in particular to the concepts of "collective consciousness" and *anomie* (Hawkins et al. 2017). Durkheim argued that the former, understood as a set of shared values and norms, is what holds together a society; while the latter, which could be translated into disconnection and normlessness, affects a society experiencing a meaningful and continuous transformation. At the individual level *anomie* may be seen as a measurement for cultural insecurity (Spruyt et al. 2016).

Building on these concepts, some authors have understood populism as an effective way to respond to this state of *anomie*, as a way of rebuilding a lost cultural and political identity. The structuralist tradition in Latin America (Di Tella 1965; Germani 1978; Cardoso and Faletto 1969, 102-129), already mentioned in the previous paragraph, is an example of these Durkheimian Theories. These sociologists understood populism as an effective way to incorporate and mobilize the new social constituencies formed following the late industrialization and the related phenomena (internal immigration, urbanization) that some South American countries experienced.

More recently, a similar argument has been made to explain the emergence of populism in Western Europe and North America. This time the great social change considered is globalization and the subjects in question are not disenfranchised urban

workers as in mid-twentieth century Latin America but the so-called "losers of globalization" (Kriesi et al. 2006). The "losers of globalization" thesis applied to explain the appeal of populism argues that the social transformations brought by globalization such as de-industrialization, automation, and immigration of low-skilled workers have produced some losers, mostly blue-collar workers of developed countries who feel they have lost not only material but also social and cultural status (Spruyt et al. 2016). In this vein, they saw the nativist appeal of right-wing populists as a way to restore their national pride and prestige. In a similar way, Inglehart and Norris (2016) proposed the cultural backlash thesis as a cause of populism in Western Europe. This argument sees the rise in populist votes as a reaction of the older and conservative generation against progressive cultural change and post-materialist values as cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism (Inglehart and Norris 2016, 2-3).

Downsian Theories

This set of arguments focuses on economic complaints to explain populism's support. They are named after the works of the economist and political scientist Antony Dowson, especially his influential book *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). In it, Dowson applied rational choice theory from neoclassical economics for studying democratic politics. Accordingly, both politicians and voters are seen as rational individuals acting strategically to maximize their material self-interest, although in a situation of uncertainty and also asymmetric information for the latter.

Relying upon these key notions, Downsian theories of populism interpret its appeal as a response from citizens who suffered economic hardships to mainstream parties unable to represent them and their issues (Hawkins et al. 2017). As in the Durkheimian theories, here the "losers of globalization" (Kriesi et al. 2006) thesis is recurrent. However, this time the reasons to explain the support to populist parties are found in the material dimension of their losses. The new globalized society, which is automatized, de-industrialized and increasingly based on knowledge economy, requires and benefits skilled and flexible workers. However, the "losers", namely the unskilled, unemployed, and the informal workers, face difficulties in this new reality and are afflicted by economic insecurities and hardship. Following Rodrik (2018a) these represent the demand side for populism, the potential public support for forces

posited outside mainstream parties. What matters then and what determines the particular form of populism in Rodrik (2018a) is the supply side of politics. Populists supply their messages to give sense to the citizens' insecurities based on the country's context. If in their message they insist on the identity cleavage, their target becomes the immigrants and the permissive policies of mainstream parties, and then a right-wing populism. If, on the other hand, they insist on the income cleavage, the target becomes the wealthy and big corporations, giving rise to left-wing populism (Rodrik 2018a, 12-16).

A similar argument has been made in the Latin American context, that understands populism in part as a backlash against the neo-liberal policies of the 90's, the so-called "Washington Consensus" (Roberts 2008; Madrid 2009).[11] These policies resolved the hyper-inflation problem and stabilized the economy but generally produced disappointing outcomes in terms of economic growth and employment.

Institutional Theories

As the name suggests, these theories focus on the role of institutional features of the political system as facilitators or inhibitors for populism. From this perspective, the most common dichotomizations are those between a proportional and a majoritarian electoral system and between presidentialism and parliamentarism.

With respect to the electoral system, a proportional one typically requires lower thresholds to enter the parliament than majoritarian systems. This logically means that it is easier for outsiders to enter the political game. Outsider is not synonymous of populism, but some authors argue it is a common feature of populist figures or even one of its peculiar traits (Barr 2009).

As for the distinction between presidentialism and parliamentarism, the former is seen by some authors as a form of government that facilitates the emergence of

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[11] Furthermore, in several countries these policies were adopted by historical leftists or popular parties with links with labor unions and the urban workers. These were the cases for example of the Justicialist Party (PJ) in Argentina, Democratic Action (AD) in Venezuela, Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Bolivia, and Democratic Left (ID) in Ecuador. Apart from Argentina, where the political costs of the crisis were sustained by the successive Radical government of Fernando de la Rúa, and the Justicialist Party continued his dominion although with a shift to the left with Néstor Kirchner, the adoption of neo-liberal policies by historical leftist forces discredited them and created the political opportunity for the new populist-left (Madrid 2009, 598-602).

charismatic leaders (Carreras 2012). Again, not all charismatic leaders are populists, but in the paragraph outlining the debate on populism's definition, it emerged how leadership explicitly appeared in some definitions (Weyland 2001) or was regarded as having an elective affinity with populism (Mudde 2017).

Finally, a more substantial argument considers the level of institutionalization of parties and of the party system. In this vein institutionalized party systems promote moderation, political compromise and democratic stability, while an inchoate party system leads to instability and creates opportunity structures for and incentivizes strong and radical executives, regardless of who is in power (Schamis 2006; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2015).

General Theory

Each group of theories outlined above has its strengths and useful insights. The sociological approach of the Durkheimian explanations emphasizes the emotional side of voters, the importance of political identity, while the Downsian arguments put more emphasis on issues positions and focus on the concrete and material dimensions of both electors and politicians (Hawkins et al. 2017). Finally, institutional constraints represent classic insights for political competition.

However, they are incomplete and especially the first two groups seem to work in some precise historical moment or region but lack generalizability to explain the substantial appeal of populism per se. Besides the specificity of the structuralist tradition, already highlighted several times, current Durkheimian explanations seem more fit to explain the nativistic side of right-wing populism in Western Europe more than the appeal of the populist Manichean vision of society. On the other hand, economic explanations would superficially seem to have a more general validity but the evidence in support for the cultural backlash thesis (Inglehart and Norris 2016) and the fact that the Great Recession did not generate an overall and coherent wave of populism in the most hit countries discredit its applicability in the European context. For what concerns the Latin American region, important economic crises preceded both classic and neo-liberal populists, the Great Depression and the debt crisis of the 80's respectively, but there is not a causality between economic hardships and the emergence of the most recent radical populists. On the contrary, it seems that

populism emerged in some of these countries during a period of economic recovery and relative prosperity (Remmer 2012). Overall, having adopted an ideational definition of populism, the main problem of these explanations is that they do not pay enough attention to populist ideas (Hawkins et al. 2017). If we follow an ideational definition of populism, it is because in our conceptualization these ideas matter and so they must appear also in the rationale for its emergence and appeal.

Outlining a general theory for the emergence of populism is not easy but considering the explanations enunciated above, what seems recurrent in the emergence of populism in the various cases is a general and shared feeling of political distrust. Several works studied the relation between populism and political distrust. Some found that high level of public distrust in the key political institutions of liberal democracy increases the probability of support for populism and outperforms alternative explanations in Latin America (Doyle 2011; Del Tronco 2013). Other studies, in the European context, demonstrated that the relation between populism and political distrust is not so linear, with the latter being both cause and consequence of the former (Roodujin et al. 2016). It seems then that sometimes the two can overlap, reinforcing each other. If so, it can be that there is a third force that is behind the rise in both.

Following Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017b) and Hawkins et al. (2017), we may understand populism more generally as a byproduct of "failures of representation" or a normative response to "perceived crises of democratic legitimacy". This theory is more suitable for an ideational conceptualization of populism because it recognizes its appeal also at the individual level. Starting indeed at the individual level, Hawkins et al. (2017) talk about populist attitudes, understood as widespread latent ideas, that can be activated under certain conditions and conveyed by a populist message. This argument is able to explain populism more widely. The authors identified two reasons of the mentioned failures: bad governance due to high level of corruption for the Latin American context; and political collusion

and the subsequent unresponsiveness and perceived deficit of political representation for more "developed" nations.[12]

If these failures of representation happen and are traced by the electors in systematic malfeasance of traditional politicians, they break the trust in and the legitimacy of the basic institutions of liberal democracy and may fuel support for populists' claim against a conspiring elite. In a few words it means that populism is not simply a way to fill the void left by *anomie*, or a way to speak to people's guts but that "under certain circumstances ordinary people like you and me might become fervent populists" (Rovira Kaltwasser 2014b, 497).

1.4 Populism and Its Consequences

Once a definition of populism and a discussion of its causes have been delineated and analyzed, it is interesting questioning what actually happens when a populist party or leader rules. This section will focus on theoretical arguments and some empirical findings regarding the political and economic consequences of populist rule, with a special attention to the Latin American context given its prevalence of majoritarian populism in its history with respect to Western Europe, and the case that will be treated in the subsequent chapters. We will see that to argue about its political consequences, it is first essential to analyze the complex relation between populism and democracy, while, despite some economic definitions of populism claim otherwise, the adoption of specific economic policy is more linked with the host ideology of populism rather than with populism itself. Overall, based also on theoretical arguments, both political and economic consequences of populist rule should be deducted by empirical analysis rather than by normative assumptions as it often happened.

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[12] This means that a crisis of democratic legitimacy may be due to different factors and generate responses of different grade. Indeed, in countries where corruption is more widespread and perceived as in Latin America, the responses and approach of populist leaders have been far more radical than in Europe. This is corroborated by the results of the Global Populism Database in which Latin American politicians obtained a significantly higher score of populism than their European and North American counterparts. For a summary of the results See: https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2019/mar/06/revealed-the-rise-and-rise-of-populist-rhetoric

1.4.1 Populism, Democracy, and Its Political Consequences

To understand which may be the political consequences casually linked to populists' rule we first need to analyze the ambivalent relation between populism and democracy. The interest of the literature on populism is indeed often justified by the assumption that this latter represents a danger for the functioning of democracy, especially understood as liberal democracy. The problem in disentangling the impact of populism on democracy is that even in academic circles this is becoming less and less an empirical question and more a debate whose answers are flawed by normative assumptions and preconceptions about how a democracy should function (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 185). Populism is usually considered as a democratic disease or pathology (Rummens 2017) or romanticized as the purest form of democracy (Laclau 2005). This in turn depends on the ideal conception of democracy from which the authors start their thesis, liberal for the first, radical for the latter.[13] However, normative and partisan positions do not render justice to a question that seems to not present simple black or white answers, and are not neither useful in comprehending populism's claims and trying to copy with them.[14] In line with the definition adopted in this work, this paragraph follows Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) in arguing that populism may represent both a threat and a corrective for democracy depending on the context of the case considered and accordingly its impact and political consequences should be analyzed in an empirical manner.

In analyzing populism's impact on democracy, it is fair to say that not only populism but also democracy itself is a debated and controversial concept to define (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). Entering the democracy's definition debate is outside the scope of this work and for this reason we will simply adopt the definition of democracy of Robert Dahl (1971), one of the most important scholars on democratic theory, and the one followed in the position of Rovira Kaltwasser (2012; 2014) adopted in this work. In its works Dahl explains how democracy is to be considered both an actual political regime and an ideal, impossible to be achieved fully. More

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[13] For an example of these two different approaches to analyze populism in the case of Chávez, see Hawkins (2016).

[14] On the uselessness of "fighting fire with fire" in dealing with populism, see Rovira Kaltwasser (2017). On the possibility of a populism vs anti-populism cleavage, orthogonal to the classic left-right axis, see Ostiguy (2017).

specifically, the forms of modern and developed democracies that we know today are short with respect to the democratic ideal and are labelled by Dahl (1971) as polyarchies. This premise is important since we can acknowledge the fact that democracy is a dynamic open-ended process, always perfectible in a constant democratization of democracy. In Dahl's (1971) definition, to be considered a polyarchy a political regime must ensure eight fundamental guarantees to its citizens.[15] These in turn may be grouped into two independent dimensions of democracy, public contestation or political competition and inclusiveness or political participation (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 196-7). The first refers to the classic liberal individual liberties and rights, the liberal side of liberal democracy in other words (Plattner 2010, 83-86); while the latter in Dahl's original meaning referred only to participation in elections but to give a more comprehensive significate to it, we can refer to three dimensions of inclusiveness, material, political and symbolic (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013).

Having in mind these two dimensions, populism may theoretically be a threat for public contestation and a corrective for political participation. On one hand its Manichean vision about society posit populism at odds with pluralism, its homogeneous vision of the people denies the diversity of society, which is inherent to the liberal principle of democracy (Plattner 2010). Moreover, its conviction about the possibility of pursuing a general will of the people often makes populism skeptic regarding the importance of fundamental pillars of a liberal democracy as the division of executive and legislative powers guaranteed by checks and balances and the presence of independent bodies as courts and judiciaries. Especially when they enjoy a large popular support, populists see these as a restriction to the true will of the people. More generally the fact that populists often adopt a moral attitude to politics may render them intransigent and applying a sort of "everything for my friends, for my enemies the law" approach (Weyland 2013, 21) better known as discriminatory legalism (Urbinati 2019). On the other hand, in its claim to represent the people populism may foster political participation giving voice to disadvantaged groups

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[15] These are: (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) eligibility for public office; (6) alternative sources of information; (7) free and fair elections; (8) institutions for making government policies depend on vote and other expressions of preference.

(Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 197). This may especially be the case in societies highly afflicted by socio-economic inequalities and corruption as Latin American ones are, in which there is a gap between the rights theoretically conceived to their citizens by written constitution and their actual ones and effective participation to the societal and political life. As argued in Rovira Kaltwasser (2012, 196) citizens in such contexts may even be willing to renounce in part to political contestation for more political participation. For example, despite its ambivalent relation with liberal democracy and some authoritarian tendencies, it cannot be negated that Perón gave political and symbolic voice to previously excluded sectors, by putting an end to the previous oligarchic rule characterized by ridden elections and inaugurating the first process of mass political incorporation in his country (Roberts 2008).[16] This theoretical argument about the inclusiveness dimension seems also corroborated by the findings of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) that Latin American populism (Evo Morales in Bolivia and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in their works) is primarily inclusionary while European populism (Front National/Le Pen and the Austrian Freedom Party/Haider) is more exclusionary. However, it can be argued that even the minoritarian European radical right populist parties may, on some occasions, work as a corrective for the democratic process by politicizing some issues (e.g. immigration) that are felt by some but that mainstream parties tend to ignore (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 199).

Overall, it is not improper to say that populism's claims may often be legitimates. The problems that it arises are usually linked to "democratic dilemmas" (Rovira Kaltwasser 2014) such as the balance between constituent and constituted power and the problem of controlling independent institutions. In this vein, Plattner (2010) sees populism as a stretching of the democratic (majoritarian) side of liberal democracy, juxtaposed to the stretching of the liberal one, which he calls "radical pluralism". The intrinsic tension within our modern conception of democracy is well highlighted by Berman (2017) when he says that "although it is certainly true that democracy unchecked by liberalism can slide into excessive majoritarianism or oppressive

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[16] The concept of political incorporation was firstly used by Collier and Collier (1991). The concept entails the political representation and participation (electorally) of previously excluded sectors of the Latin American society.

populism, liberalism unchecked by democracy can easily deteriorate into oligarchy or technocracy" (Berman 2017, 30). Even earlier and in an original way, the ambivalent nature of democracy and the relation with populism is correctly summarized by Canovan (1999) who argued that democracy has two faces, a pragmatic and a redemptive one.[17] From this perspective, populism is the glorification of the redemptive side of democracy.

Therefore, what can be said about the political consequences of populism? Based on the analyzed relationship with democracy, it seems that populism has a strong preference for vertical accountability over horizontal one. The former refers to the ability of citizens to hold government accountable, mainly through elections. The latter relates to the extent to which the executive branch of government is accountable towards other state institutions. This requires the existence of certain institutions such as legislative and judicial branches and oversight agencies. More specifically, executive-legislative checks and balances are key to guarantee an effective separation of powers and horizontal accountability (O'Donnell 1998). Based on this kind of hypotheses, some large-N studies analyzed the political consequences of populism in the Latin American context. Huber and Schimpf (2016) studied the effect of populists in rule and opposition in democratic quality and as expected found a general negative effect for the former and positive for the latter. However, the size of the effects was not the one expected with the negative effect of populism in power being inferior to the positive one of populist's opposition. This may be explained arguing that populist governments do not have exclusively negative effects on democratic quality but may also have positive ones (Huber and Schimpf 2016, 885). Houle and Kenny (2018) analyzed the political effects of populist rule and found that populism is associated with a decrease in the rule of law, executive constraints, and judicial independence. Ruth (2018) went a step further analyzing under which conditions populist governments lead to erosions of horizontal accountability through a Qualitative

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[17] These two faces are fundamental to understand the nature of modern democracy in Canovan's (1999) vision. The pragmatic face sees democracy as a peaceful way to cope with problems of the modern society through a collection of rules and practices, these involve institutions. On the other hand, the redemptive face represents the democratic belief of salvation through politics and the popular power. Accordingly, there is an exaltation of the people as the only legitimate source of authority and a skepticism toward institutions. These faces form modern democracies, "are opposed, […] interdependent, and between them lies a gap in which populism is liable to appear" (Canovan 1999, 9).

Comparative Analysis (QCA). Among the conditions, a strong popular support for their agenda of institutional change was fundamental.

Overall, based on these theoretical arguments and empirical findings, it seems interesting to test which were the political consequences of the case considered in this work, the governments of Evo Morales's Movement Towards Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo* - MAS) (2006-2019). This was a long-lasting populist government that enjoyed of large popular support. A posteriori, it is worth asking which were the effects of Morales' MAS years of rule in terms of executive constraints, minority rights on one hand and effective inclusiveness/political participation and representation on the other.

1.4.2 Populism and Economic Policy

Besides the structuralist approach to define the classic populism of mid-twentieth century Latin America, the definitions of populism analyzed and particularly the one proposed in this work do not present any particular relation between populism per se and specific economic policies. It is indeed now common among academic scholars the assumption that populism is independent from the adoption of any specific economic policies.

Nonetheless, populism has been object of study also of some economists who tried to propose an economic definition of the concept applied to the Latin American context (Dornbusch and Edwards 1991; Sachs 1989). The context was that of the immediate aftermath of what has then been known as the "lost decade" for Latin America due to the intense debt crisis that hit several countries of the region and the subsequent decadence of public and pundits' support for ISI policies in favor of the new neo-liberal approach to economics, the so-called "Washington Consensus" (Williamson 1990). In this atmosphere and based on the economic history of boom and bust of some Latin American countries, the concept of economic populism was proposed as "an approach to economics that emphasizes growth and income redistribution and deemphasizes the risks of inflation and deficit finance, external constraints, and the reaction of economic agents to aggressive non-markets policies" (Dornbusch and Edwards 1991, 7). The concept was used by the authors as a framework to analyze the economic cycles of populists as Juan Domingo Perón, the

experience of Alan Garcia in Peru (1985-90), and the socialist experience of Salvador Allende in Chile (1970-73), hardly definable as populist by any other account. The commonalities found were an initial economic growth that always ended in rampant inflation, balance of payment crises and often programs of restructuring adjustment sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Sachs (1989) proposed a similar analysis of these populist cycles and argued that the high income inequality that afflicts Latin American countries creates political pressures for such populist macroeconomic policies that always end up harming the sectors of the society that were supposed to help. Even some more recent empirical works use this definition of populism as a framework of their analysis (Acemoglu et al. 2013, Edwards 2019).

However, this approach is not useful in explaining the populism phenomenon, it reduces it only to left-wing kind and besides this, it is a definition too broad that reduces populism simply equated to economic mismanagement. Perhaps these works have been more useful in analyzing some economic consequences of some populist governments, especially classic Latin American populism.

More recently, Rodrik (2018b) proposed a distinction between political and economic populism. The economist argues that as for political populism any limit posed to the executive power is often perceived as a restriction to the popular will, for economic populism there is skepticism about restrictions on economic policies being them from regulatory agencies, independent central banks or external constraints. These two different populisms, in Rodrik's (2018b) vision, may or may not conflate, with the author proposing Bernie Sanders as an example of a politician who accepts pluralism and political constraints but on the other hand responds to his definition of economic populism. The main point of this brief article is that political populism is almost always dangerous for democracy, while a dose of economic populism may, under certain circumstances, be beneficial. This is especially the case when economic restraints instead of solving typical problems of the management of economic policies by politicians (time inconsistency as with discretionary monetary policy, regulatory capture) and then pursuing the common good, end up serving special interests as with global trade rules or investment agreements that often primarily benefit multinational corporations and financial institutions at the expense of labor and developing

countries. In such cases then Rodrik (2018b) concludes, some relaxing on constraints should be allowed and may also be beneficial.

Returning to the Latin American context, the most recent wave of populist governments, frequently called "radical populists" (de la Torre 2017), has been in part understood as a response to some failures of the above-cited "Washington Consensus" (Roberts 2007; Roberts 2008). The "revival" (Roberts 2007) of such populist forces, often identified with the victories of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1998), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006) and Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2007), took part in a more general "left turn" in Latin America at the beginning of the 21st century (Castañeda 2006). This left turn was unparalleled in the history of the region and captured the attention of several scholars. However, the diversity between these leftist governments for what concerns their rhetoric, attitude and policies was evident with the two extremes of Chávez and the more moderate center-left governments of the *Concertación* coalition in Chile. Castañeda (2006) was one of the first to highlight these differences, proposing in his famous article the so-called thesis of "two lefts" in Latin America. Briefly, the author asserted that in Latin American there were two lefts: the first is a social-democratic left, modern, open-minded, reformist and democratic that has his origins in the radical left of the 20th century (USSR and Cuba influence) and that learnt from its past errors;[18] the other is nationalist, close-minded and a danger for democracy and has its roots in the Latin American populism of the 20th century (Perón, Vargas).[19] The argument proposed is undoubtedly normative and probably a bit simplistic. Therefore, proponents with similar dichotomizations and critics followed.[20] However, entering this academic debate is outside the scope of this work. What is worth here is that, despite the differences in economic strategies, a common point among these leftist governments, and then present in radical populism, was an inspiration for a more egalitarian capitalism (Schamis 2006). Accordingly, empirical studies tried to analyze if there were differences between these two different

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[18] These were the cases of *Concertación*'s government in Chile with Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet, the Workers' Party (PT) in Brazil with Lula, and the Broad Front (FA) in Uruguay with Tabaré Vázquez.

[19] These were the cases of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Néstor Kirchner in Argentina, and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

[20] For similar dichotomization but with different argumentations, see Madrid (2009) and Schamis (2006). For critics, see Roberts (2007), Ramirez-Gallegos (2006), Cameron (2009).

approaches in fighting economic inequality and who obtained better results, although with discordant findings (Lustig 2009; Montecino 2012).

Thus, based on these argumentations, what key preliminary insights may emerge with respect to our case study? For what concerns the Dornbusch and Edwards (1991) thesis, differently from their analyzed cases but also from the Chávez/Maduro experience in Venezuela, where not only the political situation has clearly fallen into authoritarian tendencies but also the economic one turned out to be and still is a disaster, Bolivia's radical populist government did not present the commonalities of the populist cycle with rampant inflation and balance of payment crisis (Edwards 2019, 82). On the other hand, considering the historical ambivalent behavior of US and its multinational corporations with their direct or indirect interventionism in Latin American countries, and an influential presence of natural resources in the country,[21] the argument made by Rodrik (2018b) may result interesting. Finally, one of the main goals of Morales' governments has been the cited strong commitment in fighting inequality. For these reasons, the economic effects cited in the third chapter will be mainly related to the results obtained in reducing socio-economic inequality and if so, the policies adopted to achieve these results such as the management of the rich sector of natural resources.

1.5 Populism and Social Movements

Social movements may be conceived as "inclusive organizations comprised of various interest groups" (Tilly 2004, 1). Nowadays the term "social movements" evokes for the people a form of counterweight to oppressive power. Tilly (2004) understood social movements as a particular form of "contentious politics". Contentious because the claims made by social movements necessarily clash with others' interests; politics because the government usually appears in some way in these claims, either as objects of claims, or as an ally of the claimants or of the contested, or finally as a supervisor of the contention (Tilly 2004, 3).

The term "contentious politics" was coined by the same Charles Tilly in the 70s to encompass social movements but to extend the meaning to other forms of

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[21] For an application of the rentier state theory and its implication for economic policies to Latin American context, see Weyland (2009).

mobilizations as civil wars, revolutions, strike waves and insurgencies. Accordingly, rather than focusing on movements per se, Tilly and his collaborators studied episodes of contention. Such episodes vary in time and space. They may be short-lived or of longer term, as a cycle of contention or revolutionary episodes; and they may be local, national or transnational episodes of contention. Additionally, studies on contentious politics put stress on the processes and mechanisms of contention in a context of dynamic political process (Tarrow 2015). Political processes are understood as a number of intersecting "mechanisms", in turn defined as "delimited changes that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam et al. 2001, 24–25). The mechanisms considered are dispositional, environmental and relational. The former refers to mechanisms that took place at the internal individual level and that determine and shape their behavior. Environmental ones represent the context in which the contention happens. The focus of Tilly's analysis is however on the relational mechanisms of contention, those for example that analyze the dynamics between movements and other actors (populist parties in our case) or how a transition from one form of contention to another happens (from local to national in our case) (Tarrow 2015, 91).

After this brief review of the concept of social movements, and considering our conception of populism, it emerges that some liaison points are present between the two notions. After all, both may refer to a political mobilization of mass constituencies against a certain group of elites, or in other words as "non-institutionalized forms of contentious politics" (Roberts 2015, 682). Still despite this, scholarships on the two phenomena rarely communicated with each other (Roberts 2015). However, a comprehensive appraisal of commonalities and differences between populism and social movements, as good as their relationship, may enrich both research fields (Roberts 2015; Aslanidis 2017). In line with this reasoning, our minimalist ideational approach to populism is suitable for grasping such relation, since it leaves open the possibility of populism arising from a bottom-up mobilization.[22] As indeed argued by Aslanidis (2017) populism is not "the exclusive

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[22] Following a political-strategic approach to populism, Roberts (2015) analyzed the relationship between populism and social movements, especially in the Latin American context. In line with this approach, Roberts differentiated populism and social movements for the pattern followed in the mass

domain of political parties and their leaders", since party populism may also emerge as a consequence of mass mobilization.

Aslanidis (2017) proposes then the concept of populist social movements, a phenomenon he considered markedly under-researched. Populist social movements share with populism the Manichean vision of the society divided in good people and corrupt elite. Additionally, they differ from other movements for their claim to represent the social whole rather than the interests of particular groups and for their seek of "wholesale reform of the political regime to restore the sovereignty of the people" (Aslanidis 2017, 307). As populist mobilization in general, the mobilization of populist social movements may be explained through the concept of chain of equivalence of Laclau (2005). The process starts then with isolated grievances that may be grouped depending on the political opportunity structure and on the agency of populist leaders and/or (populist) social movements. These grievances even with a favorable political opportunity structure may remain latent until a strategic interpretation of them permits their grouping for an effective mobilization. This explains the variation on mobilization of social movements in countries that may share similar structural and social problems as the Latin American countries in the post-debt restructuring period (Aslanidis 2017, 308). The populist strategic interpretation of grievances might be interpreted as a master "frame" of them. The populist frame, or what in the previous paragraph we called a "populist lens", takes a snapshot of what is happening and reinterpret it and the grievances and emotions of people as due to an unjust system (Aslanidis 2017, 310). This allows to transform mere discontent into action and mobilization. And this is what actually happened with the populist anti-austerity social movements of the European *indignados* in Greece, Spain and Portugal (Aslanidis 2016), with the movements "Occupy Wall Street" in US and the several popular and indigenous movements in our case in Bolivia.

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mobilization., Top-down or in Barr's (2009) terms in plebiscitary ways for populism, while typically bottom up or "participative" (Barr 2009) for what concerns social movements. This differentiation may work for some cases as it will be seen for Ecuador and Venezuela, but not for the main case of the work, Bolivia, where the two phenomena and kinds of political mobilization conflated. The ideational approach rejects then this a priori differentiation, considering it more as an outcome to be demonstrated empirically than an underlying assumption.

Having said that, what can the relationship between these movements and populist parties and party system in general be? And how can it evolve? Schematically, these social movements may (1) influence to a certain degree the agenda of political parties or even forming their own political vehicle or party; (2) associate to some extent with existing political parties that empathize with their cause; (3) be co-opted by a political party and consequently lose their mobilizational force. Within the first case we can identify the European *indignados* for their influence in the rise of SYRIZA in Greece and the born of PODEMOS in Spain and to some extent the "Occupy Wall Street" movement's influence over the agenda carried out by Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary election of 2016 in US. The extreme and noteworthy case is then that of Bolivia considered in this work, with a party, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) of Evo Morales, born from the ranks of *cocaleros* movements and able to gain power electorally. A more recent movement, the Italian "Sardine" may be associated with the second outcome, considering its relationship with the Democratic Party (PD). Finally, within the third outcome we can group the sorts of the indigenous movements in Ecuador, whose ideas and programs were in part co-opted by the independent populist Rafael Correa, and that developed throughout its presidency a conflictual relationship with Correa, and also to some extent the top-down controlled civil society organizations in Venezuela with Chávez.[23]

Thus, what are the preliminary insights for the case of this work that emerge from this last theoretical section? Once again, the pros of the ideational approach to populism emerged and above all its suitability for treating the Bolivian case, a populism whose rise was pushed by mass mobilizations organized by (populist) social movements. The ideational approach allows for the analysis of such bottom-up populism and the similarities between the concept of social movements and populism show one more time that treating populism as a rigidly top-down phenomenon is restrictive. However, despite the ideational approach does not take for granted the organizational form of populism, it is evident how the top-down framework has been recurrent, especially in the Latin American context. Social movements and the last radical wave of populism (de la Torre 2017) in this region often shared a common

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[23] These last two cases will be analyzed and expanded in the section Left, Radical Populism and Social Movements in Latin America of Chapter 2.

political opportunity structure, "with mass social protest often preceding and setting the stage for populism" (Roberts 2015, 682). What differentiates the Bolivian case from the other two cases of radical populism (Ecuador and Venezuela) is its relationship with the social movements, both at its origins and in its evolution as a non-fully institutionalized (populist) party that maintained this grass-root and participative component. This difference will emerge in chapter 2, which contextualizes and substantiates the case selection of this work, and will represent a key variable for the analysis of the political consequences given in chapter 3.

2. Contextualizing the Case: Bolivia and the MAS

2.1 Introduction of the Chapter

On the 18th of December 2005 Evo Morales won the Bolivian presidential election. This date will then be a watershed for the Bolivian history. Evo Morales was not only the first indigenous president of Bolivia, but with his party, the Movement Towards Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo* MAS), also the first to get the majority of the popular vote (53,74%). Since then, the MAS basically won every successive election becoming the only party in the country with a truly national reach (Anria and Huber 2018). Evo Morales and the MAS have been typically grouped with Chávez in Venezuela and Correa in Ecuador as belonging to the most recent wave of "radical populism" in Latin America (de la Torre 2017). But how to explain the meteoric rise of a small local party, born mainly as a representative of the coca leaf growers (*cocaleros*) of the Chapare region of Cochabamba? And is the populist label fit to describe the MAS experience in Bolivia? These are some of the questions that this chapter will try to answer.

Given its long history of a poor country, afflicted by high socio-economic inequality and political instability, Bolivia might apparently seem as a most likely case of populism (Barr 2017, 79). However, since its transition to democracy in the 80s, despite an initial tumultuous situation of hyperinflation, the political system stabilized around the roles of three parties: the old and historic Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, MNR), the Nationalist Democratic Action (*Acción Democrática Nacionalista*, ADN) founded by the previous dictator Hugo Banzer, and the Revolutionary Left Movement (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*, MIR). Since 1985 and until the MAS victory in 2005 these parties basically alternated in the executive governments in a

period known as "Pacted Democracy" (1985-2003) in Bolivian politics history (Larson et al. 2008, 3). These years fundamentally reshaped state-society relation in favor of a neoliberal vision of the state, dismantling the previous framework of state-led capitalism that the same MNR had created since the Bolivian revolution in 1952. Neoliberal reforms were adopted with continuity regardless of who held the presidency. These clearly stabilized the hyperinflationary situation (1982-85) but at great social costs and with scant results in terms of economic growth (Klein 2011a, 246). From the beginning, anti-neoliberal protests from the factions touched did not miss but they were always in the end defeated (Silva 2009, 103). Similarly, challenges from populist parties in the 90s emerged but either they evaporated with the death of their leader, or they were co-opted in governments with one or more of the traditional parties, consequently losing their anti-establishment credibility (Madrid 2012, 48).

As it will be showed, this changed with the beginning of the new century. The MAS rose to power at the peak of mass social protests organized by several social movements against not only privatization measures per se, but the perceived political corruption and lack of transparency behind the deals stipulated by the government with foreign counterparts (Barr 2017). The MAS' victory was then both cause and consequence of the dismantle of the party system since it capitalized on the widening gap between traditional parties and popular interests (Madrid 2012, 36), what in the first theoretical chapter I called "failures of representation", and contributed to their final breakdown.

To understand the rise of the MAS it is then necessary to analyze the process that brought to this crisis of political representation. However, before to analyzing the case study of this work, this section starts with a regional contextualization of the MAS rise. Briefly reviewing some Latin American experiences of the beginning of the 21st century permits to show some similarities with the Bolivian case and above all differences. It is in other words a comparative work necessary to show the uniqueness of the Bolivian case, especially for what concerns the role of social movements and their relationship with the ruling populist party. After this, the chapter continues with a detailed historical overview of the decades that preceded Evo Morales' presidency. An historic view is useful to have a more comprehensive perspective about how the

Bolivian society evolved, the origins of the MAS, and permits to signal other institutional and structural factors that contributed to its ascendance. In other words, it permits to disentangle all the causes of MAS' rise providing a meticulous analysis of the demand-side of populism. Finally, to analyze the supply side of populism and why it finally succeeded, the particular nature of the MAS as an atypical populist party due to its origins and evolution is showed and analyzed.

Overall, this chapter tries to give a comprehensive analysis of the Bolivian society pre-MAS and of the MAS' origins, characteristics, strategies, and aspirations. Both are fundamental starting points for the analysis of the political consequences of the MAS rule under Evo Morales (2006-2019) that will be given in Chapter 3.

2.2 Left, Radical Populism and Social Movements in Latin America

From the late 1990s, Latin America experienced a region-wide wave of elections of left-of-center governments. This left turn was unparalleled in the history of the region and captured the attention of several scholars (Castañeda 2006; Ramirez-Gallegos 2006; Roberts 2007; Roberts 2008; Rodríguez-Garavito et al 2008; Cameron 2009; Madrid 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). The "two lefts" (social democratic and populist) thesis initiated by Castañeda (2006) was already mentioned in the first chapter. Diversities between these leftist governments for what concerns their rhetoric, attitude and policies were indeed evident with the two extremes of the radical Chávez and the more moderate center-left governments of the *Concertación* coalition in Chile. However, this work considers Castañeda's argument simplistic and agreed with French's (2009) argument that this dichotomization was more a "disciplinary move" of neoliberals "to bolster the claim that markets and democracy go hand-in-hand, that they are mutually reinforcing, and that progress involves a convergence of economic and political liberalism" (Cameron 2009, 336) than a useful analytical tool. This does not mean minimizing the differences among some of these leftist governments, as exemplified by the two abovementioned extremes. In this regard, the main message that this section wants to vehicle is that these differences reflected in part the economic, social, and political structures of the Andes and of the Southern Corn not just the mere personalities of their leaders (Cameron 2009; Roberts 2007). Furthermore, as duly noted by Cameron (2009), following a clear-cut dichotomization

misses a clear point: that neoliberalism in Latin America usually failed to create a sustainable and shared prosperity among its population.

The 80s and 90s of the 20th century in Latin America were indeed marked by two apparently contradictory trends: on the one hand, the double transition from a state-led development model to neoliberalism and from authoritarian regimes to democracy, and on the other, progressively vigorous social protests organized by diverse social movements (Bull 2013, 75). These gradually assisted and in part replaced the old corporatist organized labor in the push for collective action and included indigenous groups, environmental and feminist organizations along with peasant and workers' unions. Their seemingly different, sometimes divergent, claims finally converged around their opposition to the neoliberal economic model and its social implications A model implemented in the 80s by what were then increasingly perceived as distant and elitist governments. Social movements have played widely different roles in bringing these leftist governments to power, due both to different strategies pursued and the political contexts in which they arose.[24] Their action did not stop with the ascendance of these governments. Protests have sometimes indeed continued, and the governments' responses varied from negotiation and cooperation to co-optation and repression along with attempts to depict social movements as bearers of particular interests.

With these premises in mind, we can briefly differentiate among these leftist experiences in a more useful analytic way than the cited social democratic and populist categories. This serves to show that even within the most-agreed category of radical populism (de la Torre 2017) differences are present, especially regarding the roles of and the relationship between the populist party/leader and social movements. Finally, this overview gave a regional context before to pass to the analysis of the Bolivian case to show its uniqueness.

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[24] While the first transition from state-led development and authoritarianism to neoliberalism and democracy can be said to be a trend that characterized almost all the South American countries (Venezuela and Colombia were already democracies), the protests against this new order and the governments responsible for it assumed different forms presented themselves in different grades. As widely recognized (Madrid 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011) the political character of the Latin America's "left turn," varied dramatically across countries depending on the political alignments during the critical juncture of structural adjustment. Additionally, negative cases of mobilization or cases of demobilization (Roberts 2008) during the 90s, as Peru under Alberto Fujimori, should not be underestimated.

2.2.1 Established Left-Parties

Following Roberts (2007) we may differentiate the several leftist governments that arose at the onset of the 21st century using the origins of the party that took power as a starting point. Within the group of this subsection we find established parties, namely those founded before the adoption of structural adjustments and reforms. A first subgroup of this category includes Brazil, Chile and Uruguay where parties with roots in the socialist or Marxist tradition arose to power.[25] Each of these parties can be now classified as post-Marxist for the gradual process of renovation and moderation they have been through in the previous decades. They participated in a way or another to the increasing political polarization in a Cold War climate in the 60s and 70s and were then often targets of the military dictatorships categorized as "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism" (O'Donnell 1973). The repression they have endured changed these parties in favor of a democratic commitment and the belief of its possible coexistence with the socialist objectives and their role was indeed fundamental in the process of democratic restoration (Roberts 2007, 6). Furthermore, during the adjustment period following the debt crisis, none of these parties participated to the implementation of the structural adjustments and reforms, being on the other hand the main opposition parties to the centrist and conservative ones.[26] They articulated a constructive opposition, stressing above all the social consequences of these policies. Overall, in these countries grievances against the new model were then channeled through institutional ways and opposition. Once in power these renovated and moderated parties did not break with the order, they continued their commitment in fiscal responsibility and an open economy (Madrid 2009) and tried to improve the poverty and inequality problems through targeted social programs, often widening previous ones.[27] The role of social movements for their rise was relatively marginal, with some

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[25] These are the Workers Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT) in Brazil, the Socialist Party of Chile (*Partido Socialista de Chile*, PS) in Chile and the left coalition Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*, FA) in Uruguay.

[26] The PS in Chile was actually part of the center-left coalition *Concertación* with the Christian Democratic Party (*Partido Demócrata Cristiano*, PDC). However, in the 90s this coalition brought two presidents of the PDC. Overall, the Chilean case is a particular one due to its earlier adoption of the neoliberal model during the Pinochet's dictatorship and its Constitution approved by the military forces in 1980.

[27] Which is probably why sometimes the most radical followers have criticized these governments, accusing them of not proposing a real alternative to the neoliberal model. The Chilean case is probably

movements, as the Landless Movement (*Movimiento Sim Terra*, MST) in Brazil, openly supporting the party, but with an overall absence of wide mass social protests. Once radical leftist parties with revolutionary claims were then the protagonists of the democratization process and institutionalization of the party system. They can be classified consequently, following Levitsky and Roberts (2011), as "professional electoral left" parties, namely parties whose organization design is that of winning elections rather than mobilizing civil society.

A different case within these established parties is that of Argentina. Here, Nestor Kirchner won the 2003 presidential elections with the Front for Victory (*Frente para la Victoria*) coalition, the left-wing of the traditional Justicialist Party (*Partido Justicialista*, PJ), namely the Peronist party. Thus, the traditional populist party came back to power in this country. Argentina came back to democracy in 1983 and the first democratic government of Raúl Alfonsín from the Radical Party (*Unión Cívica Radical*, UCR) tried to enact a heterodox adjustment program for the debt and hyperinflation crisis. This failed and earlier election took place in 1989 with the victory of Menem of the PJ. Menem campaigned as a populist candidate and took advantage of the traditional ties of its party with the organized labor. However, once in office, in a classic bait and switch fashion (Stokes 2001) implemented an orthodox program of stabilization and subsequent market reforms. He won the 1995 elections and stayed in power until 1999. Subsequently, Argentina went through a terrible financial crisis in 2000-01 whose political costs were paid by the incumbent radical

the emblem of this continuity in the economic policies. However, recently a crucial change may have taken place. Gabriel Boric for the left-wing coalition *Apruebo Dignidad* (AD) won the presidential elections on the 19th of December. This was the first time since the return to democracy that none of the established parties (PS, PDC and the conservative *Renovación Nacional*, RN, of the incumbent Piñera) was present at the second turn of the elections. The AD coalition comprises the historic Communist Party of Chile (*Partido Comunista de Chile*, PCCh) and new left parties with strong grassroots with Chilean social movements. They had a fundamental role in the protests asking for a new Constitution and their political representatives received a substantial representation for the Constituent Assembly that will draft the new Constitution. Boric has immediately distanced himself from the comparisons with the authoritarian turn took by Venezuela. At the same time, he and his coalition seem to be willing to break the abovementioned continuity for a more progressive turn. See Martínez (2021) and The Economist (2021). Another challenge for Boric will be that of responding to claims for more participation. As it will be seen, from the case study of this work emerge an interesting insight, that of social accountability, whose implementation in an institutionalized and more stable context as the Chilean one may be interesting. See Luna and Vergara (2016) for the concept of "uprooted democracy" applied to Chile. See Luna (2021) and Stefanoni (2021) for the future challenges of Boric and what his victory means for Chile.

president and party, Fernando de la Rúa of the UCR. Vigorous social protests toppled its presidency and the country had three different ad interim presidents in more or less two weeks before to declare its default in January 2002. The aftermath of this crisis was a reconfiguration of the Argentinean party system with the collapse of the UCR that represented the main anti-Peronist faction (Roberts 2007) and the hegemony of the PJ for the subsequent ten years. Overall, the PJ was able to both reap the benefits of stabilization of the inflation and debt crisis of the 80s and avoid the political costs of the financial crisis paid by the UCR to turn then left ward with Nestor Kirchner. With regard to social movements, the role of the *piqueteros*, a movement of informal workers and unemployed formed in the 90s, was instrumental in the protests that toppled the de la Rúa presidency (Bull 2013, 86-87). During the Kirchners' governments (Nestor and then his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, CFK) the movements of the *piqueteros* fragmented and divided among supporters of Kirchner and those that continued their protest against the government. A process of fragmentation and cooptation by the government of the previous contentious social movements in a clientelist manner took then place in Argentina (Etchmendy and Garay 2011, 286-287).[28]

2.2.2 Radical Populism

The governments of Chávez/Maduro in Venezuela (1998-ongoing), Correa in Ecuador (2007-2017) and Morales in Bolivia (2006-2019) are commonly treated in the literature as the third wave of radical populism in Latin America (de la Torre 2017). These shared indeed some similarities. All three experiences represented new political movements whose candidates were to a certain degree or presented themselves as political outsiders. They arose to power in a fractionalized political system and were both cause and consequence of its final breakdown (Roberts 2007).

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[28] We focus here on movements that had a role in the protests against the consequences of the neoliberal reforms. To be fair, other social movements were and are present in Argentina as well as in the other cases considered in this section. Human rights activists, feminist organizations and other groups that resembled what in Europe are called the "New Social Movements" claiming for post-materialist values. These movements and their relationship with the Kirchnerist governments clearly should deserve a particular focus, but this is outside the scope of this paragraph. For an analysis of the relationship between social movements and the Kirchners' governments, see Retamozo (2013). For the relationship between the government of Nestor Kirchner and the first CFK government and labor unions, see Etchmendy and Garay (2011).

In these countries all major parties basically converged around the neoliberal model and the fact that even parties historically linked with the labor took an active part to this process created a political vacuum to canalize any kind of dissent in an institutional way (Madrid 2009; Roberts 2015). Scandals of corruption added to the increasing perception of governments distant from its citizens' needs. All this created a favorable political opportunity structure for both widespread social protests and the subsequent populist experiences. Once in power, these leaders engaged in permanent political campaigns, and consolidated their hegemony through several and repeated elections and recalls (de la Torre 2017). They convened Constituent Assemblies to draft new Constitutions with the aim of introducing a more participatory democracy and solving what they considered the faults of elitist liberal institutions. The new Constitutions increased the executive power and undermined the legislative check and balances of horizontal accountability in favor of vertical one (frequent elections, recalls and referendum). Compared to the cases described above, these experiences clearly represented the most radical, nationalistic, and anti-(neoliberal) system alternative of the region. All three leaders openly acclaimed images of the Latin American socialist and Marxist tradition (Roberts 2007) and used a Manichean language against the national elite and US hegemony.[29] From an ideational point of view and in discursive terms (Hawkins 2009) these experiences, although in different degrees, clearly fit the populist label.

However, despite the three cases may be labelled populist following the ideational approach adopted in this work, the populist experiences lived by these Andean countries differed for the role played by social movements and their relationship with the populist party or leader. As argued by Roberts (2015) in neither Venezuela nor Ecuador did social movements generate the political leadership of Chávez and Correa. Furthermore, the patterns of socio-political mobilization following their presidencies were undoubtedly different from the Bolivian ones. Movements either retained less

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[29] The rhetoric however was not always translated into bold economic policies. This will be clearer for the Bolivian case in chapter 3, where the main economic measures will be exhibited.

autonomy and followed a more classic top-down approach (Chávez) or fractionalized into coopted movements and hostile ones (Correa).[30]

Venezuela

The most known episode of social contention in Venezuela was the *Caracazo* of 1989. This term refers to the brutal repression of the popular protests against austerity measures and in particular against the rise in fuel's price, by the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez. Together with Colombia, Venezuela was the oldest democracy in Latin America, with a democratic continuity that endured from 1958. The Punto Fijo Pact created a two-party system in which for 40 years, until the ascendance of Chávez, the center-left Democratic Action (*Acción Democrática*, AD) and the centrist Social Cristian Party (COPEI) alternated in the presidency to guarantee a democratic continuity that had lacked before. In the last years of this political order, AD and COPEI were increasingly perceived as closed cartel parties (de la Torre 2013b). Unpopular policies that undermined not only the poor but also the middle classes, as the one that unleashed the *Caracazo*, added to this perception to create a full-blown crisis of political representation. However, apart from the *Caracazo* and other isolated episodes, social movements in Venezuela were relatively weak compared to Bolivian and Ecuadorian ones. During the so-called *Punto Fijo* era, Venezuela developed indeed as a corporatist and corrupted society with the increasing informal sector of workers excluded by this order. Once elected then, Chávez was able to create popular organizations from above to be mobilized in his support.

Chávez ran for the presidential elections of 1998 as a political outsider and as a symbol of the Venezuelan disillusionment due to his previous failed coup attempt in 1992 against the unpopular Pérez's government. His Fifth Republic Movement (*Movimiento Quinta República*, MVR) was mainly a vehicle for his personal leadership and no movement backed his candidacy.

Chávez's years of rule were characterized by high levels of social mobilization but with restricted autonomy (de la Torre 2017). Organizations as the Bolivarian Circles and Communal Councils had the objective of implementing a more participative and

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[30] The references to the Bolivian case are here deliberately vague since it will be analyzed in deep in the subsequent sections. Below the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian cases will be briefly presented.

decentralized democracy (*democracia protagónica* in Chávez's worlds) to replace the previous representative one. The Bolivarian Circles were inaugurated in 2001. These were small groups of people that studied the ideology of Bolivarianism, discussed local issues and represented the defenders of the Revolution (de la Torre 2013b). Overall, they gathered a relevant number of the most radical followers of Chávez, whose role was fundamental to reverse the attempted coup to Chávez in 2002 (Hawkins and Hansen 2006) In 2006 Chávez's government implemented the Law of Communal Councils that makes legal their formation by citizens. The Communal Councils were elected in an open assembly by groups of 200-400 families in the urban area, and a smaller number for the rural ones. The citizens' assembly might be considered as the sovereign body within which all decision of the community were discussed and then taken. These were especially local development plan as infrastructure and services projects and urban renewal (de la Torre 2013b). Thus, especially after the failed coup, Chávez decided to accelerate the organization of the poor and indigent in popular organizations controlled from above to push forward his plan of a Bolivarian Revolution for a Socialism of the 21st century. As in the Marxist vision the main actor of the revolution was the proletariat, Chávez's revolution was to be determined by the poor, the excluded, the unemployed, in a word a sort of *pueblo* (people) intended as the underdogs. The path undertaken by Chávez surely gave symbolic and material inclusion (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013a) to previously excluded groups. In this vein, the commodity boom surely helped him for the implementation of generous social policies whose sustainability has been judged questionable (Weyland 2009).

Overall, there are contrasting opinions about the work and the experience of Chávez in Venezuela. Some stressed grassroots participation (Ciccariello-Maher 2013). Others its authoritarian tendencies (Levitsky and Loxton 2013; Weyland 2013) and interpret the mobilization of people not as a real empowerment of them but rather as an empowerment and exaltation of Chávez himself (Weyland 2017). Still others consider the legacies of the Puntofijo era and underline the tension and contradiction between "the exercise of strong leadership from above and the objective of egalitarian self-management from below" (Stavrakakis et al. 2017, 70).

Through the years Chávez became the fulcrum of a political movement that was based on his leadership and was clearly subordinated to his authority. This seems all the more clear if considered the path taken by Venezuela under his handpicked successor Maduro. To be sure, adverse external conditions affected the political and economic situation after Chávez's death, alongside the debatable sustainability of his policies clearly based on and dependent upon oil revenues. However, it seems clear how the leadership and charisma of Chávez were fundamental in keeping together the government and maintaining relatively high levels of popular support even after several years. Maduro clearly lacked these qualities (Arenas 2016). Seen from a Laclauian perspective, the main fault of Chávez's transformative project was that he was not able to detach it from his person, rendering it highly dependent on its personal agency (Stavrakakis et al 2017, 71). Finally, while asking whether things might have been different with Chávez makes little sense, it is evident that today Venezuela may not even be categorized as a "competitive authoritarian" government (Levitsky and Loxton 2013). Several irregularities and charges of fraud characterized last elections in the country. Furthermore, the inflationary outlook, for which reliable data are missing, and the disrespect of basic civil rights and liberties situate Venezuela today in a clear humanitarian and economic crisis.

Ecuador

The Ecuadorian case is probably the one that presents more similarities with Bolivia, the case treated in this work. As in Bolivia, populism arose in Ecuador in a context of highly organized and autonomous civil society and this differentiates it from Venezuela and the conventional wisdom that associates populism with weak civil society (Collins 2014). Ecuador developed during the 90s one of the most powerful indigenous movements in Latin America (de la Torre and Lemos 2016). The biggest one is the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador*, CONAIE) formed in 1986. CONAIE in the 90s passed from being the representative of classic indigenous' grievances as land rights, and bilingual education to become the organizing fulcrum of opposition to the neoliberal state (Collins 2014, 73). Thus, in Ecuador protests against neoliberal reforms were not isolated as in Venezuela but organized, even more

than in Bolivia, with the indigenous movement forging linkages with other popular constituencies as public sector unions and other national social movements (Roberts 2007). In 1996 CONAIE even founded its own political arm, the indigenous Pachakutik Party.

The role of the indigenous movement was then fundamental for the deposing of two presidents, Bucaram in 1997 and Mahuad in 2000. In the midst of an economic crisis, Mahuad authorized in 1999 a bank bailout, froze depositors' account, and enacted other austerity measures. Protests by indigenous and social movements followed and some military rebels added to them in January 2000 for a tempted coup to install a triumvirate formed by the general Lucio Gutiérrez, CONAIE's president Antonio Vargas and the ex-component of the Supreme Court of Justice Carlos Solórzano. The key role of the indigenous movement in stopping austerity measures and deposing president Mahuad guaranteed CONAIE and the Pachakutik Party popular legitimacy for the 2002 presidential elections. However, internal division within and between CONAIE and Pachakutik left the party without a candidate. For this reason, Pachakutik finally decided to support Gutiérrez as candidate of a center-left coalition. With the benefit of hindsight, this decision resulted fatal for the party and the indigenous movement in general. After winning elections, Gutiérrez quickly reversed his campaign promises, broke with the indigenous ally, and moved to the right. Pachakutik and the indigenous movement came out of this internally weakened and even more fragmented (Collins 2014, 83). Furthermore, they lost the gained popular legitimacy as a credible alternative to traditional parties. This loss together with their decreased mobilizational capacity is exemplified by the lack of participation of the indigenous movement in the *forajido* protests that toppled president Gutiérrez in 2005.

As such, it is fair to say that Correa came to power in 2007 when the indigenous movements were clearly in a declining phase and had lost their capacity to engage in sustained collective action (de la Torre 2017). This is a first point of differentiation with the Bolivian case, where Morales was elected at the peak of social movements protests. As underlined by Roberts (2015) Correa did not emerge from the protest movements described above but as an independent and relatively outsider candidate in

the 2006 elections. Correa had served as an anti-neoliberal economy minister for a brief period in the government of Alfredo Palacio. In the campaign for the presidential elections, he formed the PAIS Alliance (*Movimiento Alianza PAIS*) that worked as his personalistic vehicle. He campaigned as an anti-party and anti-neoliberal candidate, a perception reinforced by his bold move to not present a Congressional list linked to its presidential candidacy (de la Torre 2013a). Despite Correa's leadership was not an organic expression of indigenous and the other contentious Ecuadorian social movements (Roberts 2007), he surrounded himself with people that had linkages with them. He gained the support of part of these activists along with that of the populous coastal region of the country that usually had not supported the indigenous movements and Pachakutik (Collins 2014, 84).

Expanding on the relationship between Correa and the indigenous movements and organized civil society in general shows further how the Ecuadorian experience is essentially different from that of Bolivia. De la Torre (2013a) described Correa's experience (2007-17) in Ecuador as one of techno-populism.[31] The strategies adopted by the leader to maintain a high level of support for such a long period of time and consolidate his hegemony were permanent political campaigns and elections and programs of socioeconomic redistribution (de la Torre and Lemos 2016, 226-228), typically financed by the high prices of oil during the commodities boom.[32] With regard to the first, the use of media was essential. Correa appeared once a week in the national television and radio with the program *Enlace Ciudadano*. During the program Correa presented himself both as a technocrat explaining technically his government's policies and programs through PowerPoint presentation, and a populist leader using a colloquial language, talking about the *Revolución Ciudadana* (Citizens' Revolution) and mocking his adversaries. In both parts of the program, people had the

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[31] Correa has a PhD in Economics from the University of Illinois, US. During his mandate, key positions were occupied by other "technocrats" as in National Secretary of Planning and Development (SENPLADES). Differently from the neoliberal technocrats who envisaged orthodox economics and had linkages with the international financial institutions and organizations as the IMF, these technocrats mainly had a past in the academia or NGOs and applied an interdisciplinary approach to economics (de la Torre 2013b, 37).

[32] Correa implemented a full-blown extractivist model of economic development. Svampa (2013) talked about a "Commodities Consensus" in Latin America during the commodity boom, juxtaposed to the previous "Washington Consensus". As showed below, the environmental consequences of such a model were part of the conflictual relation between indigenous and environmental movements and Correa.

simple role of acclaiming in a plebiscitary way Correa but were not considered by the same as active interlocutors (de la Torre 2013a, 30-33).

To understand the relationship between Correa and organized civil society, the concept of techno-populism (de la Torre 2013a) mentioned above is analytically useful. Indeed, as a technocrat and a populist, Correa proposed to be the only capable of finding the solutions to his country's problem and of representing the general will of the people. On the other hand, indigenous movements, unions and almost any form of autonomous organized civil society were depicted by Correa as bearer of special and particular interest and as remnants of a corporativist society (de la Torre 2013b). Thus, during his mandate, Correa developed a conflictual relation with them. They were part of the long list of enemies of the people, along with traditional politicians, the owners of private media, journalists, and the infantile left. Basically, anybody who questioned his policies (de la Torre 2017). Disagreements with indigenous and social movements arose above all regarding the extractivist model of economic development adopted by Correa. On one hand Correa claimed that Ecuador could not be a country of beggars living with such a wealth of natural resources. On the other hand, CONAIE and environmentalist movements asked for an alternative development, one that reconsidered the relationship between human nature and resources following the *sumak kawsay*[33] principle written in the new Constitution, implemented by the same Correa. Consequently, indigenous and social movements were not only objects of the inflaming rhetoric of Correa but were attacked through discriminatory legalism (Weyland 2013) and practices of cooptation, through clientelism, and fragmentation to reduce their capacity and autonomy (de la Torre and Lemos 2016, 228-30).[34]

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[33] Quechua for "living well" or "the good life" (*Buen vivir* in Spanish). Juxtaposed to the Western meaning of wellness that usually is conflated with economic wealth, the concept of *Buen vivir* claims the need for a revision and reinterpretation of the relationship between human beings, the environment and the nature. It can be then understood as a quest for living in harmony with nature. The concept of *Buen vivir* is formally present in the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution. In this sense it calls for the guarantee of rights as the rights to water and food, healthy environment, communication and information, culture and science, education and housing, health and work and social security. See Balch (2013).

[34] To regulate civil society and NGOs, Correa created a legislation that required all organizations to be registered with the state. The government had also the authority to sanction organizations that diverged from their "constitutive objectives". Practices of cooptation and fragmentation were instead implemented offering public works to indigenous people and reinforcing old indigenous movement to parallelize the adverse CONAIE (de la Torre 2013b, 39; de la Torre and Lemos 2016, 229-30).

Overall, Correa was elected as an independent populist outsider without direct linkages to indigenous movements. He capitalized on the general disillusionment with the traditional parties and liberal institutions, a climate that these movements had contributed to create, and brought forth an agenda that initially presented some commonalities with the indigenous one as the proposal of forming a Constituent Assembly and the principle of *sumak kawasy* within it. However, Correa never acknowledged the merit of these movements (Collins 2014, 84) and even considered them as one of the main problems of Ecuador together with the infantile left (de la Torre 2013b, 38). This conflictual relationship perdured through the entire Correa administration. Taking advantage of both a fragmented opposition and conciliatory economic conditions, Correa has established himself as a hegemonic president in Ecuador, enjoying of high levels of popular support. Yet, notwithstanding Correa's authoritarian tendencies that let some authors talk about "the slow death of democracy in Ecuador" (de la Torre and Lemos 2016), he was not able to entirely capture the state as in the Venezuelan case. Partly due to corruption scandals, Correa was not a candidate for the 2017 elections, won by his successor Moreno. Moreno campaigned on a continuity with Correa's agenda but once in office turned rightward and broke with Correa.[35] The last 2021 presidential elections were instead won by the conservative Guillermo Lasso. In this vein, considering the analyzed conflictual relation between Correa and the indigenous movements, it is worth to notice how their role was crucial for the defeat at the second turn of Arauz, the candidate supported by Correa. After charges of fraud and the call for a recount by the candidate of Pachakutik party, Yaku Perez, were ignored,[36] CONAIE and Pachakutik promoted indeed the null vote because neither Arauz nor Lasso were considered representative of their interests and agenda. This promotion resulted decisive for Lasso's final victory (Telesur 2021).

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[35] Correa was convicted on corruption charges on April 2020, accused of receiving bribes in exchange for public contracts in order to finance its political campaigns. Correa was sentenced to 8 years of prison and was banned to participation on politics for 25 years. However, since he left office in 2017 Correa lives in Belgium and has not come back to his country evading his charges. See León Cabrera (2020).

[36] At the first turn Yaku Perez classified third with a 19,39% below the 19,74% of Lasso. The difference was really small, amounted to a few thousands of votes and accusations of fraud to deny Perez the second turn followed.

Table 2.1. Venezuela and Ecuador: Similarities and Differences

	Venezuela	Ecuador
Popular Mobilization Prior to the Election	Few and unorganized	Significant and organized
Relationship between leader and CSOs	CSos created from above; Mainly Top-down	Leader external to them; Conflictual
Discourse/Rhetoric	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic
Definition	Radical Populism	Radical Populism; Techno-populism

Notes: CSOs (Civil Society Organizations). It refers to the ones mentioned in the Section.

Source: Author's Elaboration on Sources cited in the above Section

2.3 Bolivia: An Historical Perspective of MAS' s Rise

The years elapsing between the Bolivian democratic transition and the first MAS presidency were ones of fundamental changes for the country. Consequences of the shift toward neoliberalism encompassed a profound reshape of State-Society relations with the dismantle of State-led capitalism. At the same time, a shift in the associational power of civil society took place. Anti-neoliberal protests passed from being sectorial, inconclusive, and organized by the classic groups of the old corporatist Bolivia (unions) to involve broad groups of the Bolivian society under the impulse of diverse organizations (indigenous movements, rural and urban unions, neighborhood associations among others) (Silva 2009). Their impetus was essential since Evo Morales and the MAS rose to power at the peak of these mass social protests revolving around issues of privatizations of public utilities (Water War 2000 and Gas War 2003-05) and asking for radical changes in politics and economic policy. Madrid (2011, 239) argued that the MAS rose to power as a consequence of the "growing disenchantment with market-oriented policies and the parties that

implemented them". Accordingly, it is by an historical overview of the decades in which these policies were implemented, and these parties ruled that we start to understand the MAS ascendance.

2.3.1 Construction of the Neoliberal State

Hyperinflation and Orthodox Stabilization (1982-93)

Bolivia entered its democratic transition as a corporatist society with a serious economic situation. The first democratic government of the Democratic and Popular Union (*Unidad Democrática y Popular*, UDP)[37] headed by Siles Zuazo was faced with a public sector in bankruptcy and the economy in recession, both due to adverse external conditions and mismanagement of previous military governments (Klein 2011a, 240). Zuazo proposed a heterodox adjustment program, but this failed to stabilize the economy which soon run into hyperinflation. In this total crisis context, Zuazo lost piece by piece his governmental and popular support. Vice-President Paz Zamora and his party, the MIR left its position and the coalition in 1983. Finally, the principal trade union confederation, the Bolivian Workers Central (*Central Obrera Boliviana*, COB) and the campesino organization Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia (*Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos*, CSUTCB), both previously active and allied with Zuazo in the democratization process of the country, organized massive strikes that further deteriorated Bolivia's crisis (Silva 2009, 106).

In this context early elections took place in July 1985. Previous dictator Hugo Banzer and his party ADN got the majority of the popular vote (32.8%) but not enough to directly take the presidency.[38] After negotiations, a coalition, *Pacto por la Democracia* (Pact for Democracy), between the MNR and ADN was formed, and the Congress elected the MNR leader, Victor Paz Estenssoro, as President. The large congressional majority made easier the adoption of what is undoubtedly the most

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[37] This was a left-wing coalition whose two main components were the Zuazo's party, the Left-Wing Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda*, MNRI) and the MIR of the vice-president Jaime Paz Zamora.

[38] Until 2009, if no presidential candidate received more than 50% in the general election, the President was subsequently chosen by the newly elected Congress, usually among the three most voted. After the 1994 amendment to the Constitution, the election was between the two most voted.

influential measure of the Estenssoro's government, the New Economic Policy.[39] This was a package of measures that revolved around three central pillars: (i) control of the fiscal deficit and the freezing of prices and salaries; (ii) the liberalization of the economy, (iii) a progressive role for the private sector (Molina and Chávez 2005, 78). In line with an orthodox "shock" adjustment program, Estenssoro devalued the currency and imposed a uniform free-floating exchange rate, freed the interest rates and opened the economy to foreign capital, eliminated subsidies and increased fuel, utilities and services prices. A tax reform was added that encompassed the presence of value-added taxes. Estenssoro's government went further with a process of state reform to downsize the state bureaucratic apparatus and state's functions. The most important and controversial measure in this sense was the restructuration of the state agency Mining Corporation of Bolivia (*Corporación Minera de Bolivia*, COMIBOL) which caused the dismissal of 23,000 workers. This measure, as admitted by the same Minister of Economic Planning and future President Sanchez de Lozada, did have also a political end, weakening organized labor, especially the COB, considered in part responsible for the historical political instability of the country (Silva 2009, 109)

The package of adjustments and reforms obtained its main goals: ending hyperinflation and reducing the deficit of the public coffers. However, the social costs were high with two years of recession and subsequent limited economic growth, and above all, as exemplified by the COMIBOL case, a rise in unemployment and of workers in the informal sectors. Fired miners usually migrated from the declining mining areas of Oruro and Potosi to Cochabamba and became coca farmers. To partially reduce these costs, the government adopted an Emergency Social Fund funded by external sources, mainly the World Bank (WB) and the US. The external support was indeed among the factors that explained the feasibility of the stabilization measures and structural reforms. The neoliberal print of the package was strongly encouraged by the US that backed Bolivia with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to obtain a favorable renegotiation of its foreign debt with international

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[39] To be sure, the New Economic Policy did not involve legislative debates. It was enacted by Decree 21060 on August 1985. The Bolivian Constitution granted the executive broad power to enact by decree, this meant a bypass of the due legislative debate in the iter of approval of a law. The New Economic Policy was indeed designed and implemented by technocrats close to the international financial institutions, without including neither the traditional MNR politicians.

creditors. However, the back of US and the continuation of its aid was conditional on Bolivia joining the new US "Drug War" (Klein 2011a, 248). Accordingly, Bolivia, participated in joint operations of coca eradication (e.g. Operation Blast Furnace in 1986). The 1989 elections did not see again a clear winner with no candidate able to earn the absolute majority. The result was indeed a sort of "triple tie" between the three parties that will dominate Bolivian politics for the next decade, MNR (25.65%), ADN (25.11%) and MIR (21.86%) (Molina and Chávez 2005, 78). Worth to mention is the result of a new populist party, the Conscience of the Fatherland (*Conciencia de Patria*, CONDEPA), whose presidential candidate, Carlos Palenque, a TV celebrity with followers among the indigenous populations, received 12.23%. However, in line with the previous election, the President was elected by the Congress, after negotiations and the formation of a strange coalition, the *Acuerdo Patriótico* (Patriotic Accord, AP), between ADN and MIR, in the figure of MIR leader Jaime Paz Zamora.[40] Despite a campaign that focused on the shift from stabilization toward economic growth, Zamora's government fundamentally aligned with the previous one.[41] He continued the downsizing of the state and passed two important reforms, The Investment Law (1990) that granted a series of guarantee to promote foreign investment (Molina and Chávez 2005, 97), and above all the Privatization Law (1992) that started the process of privatization of small firms that will be continued with the big state firms in the Capitalizations of the Sanchez de Lozada's (1993-97) government (Silva 2009, 107).

Overall, the measures enacted in this period did not pass without protests. Despite the usual broad majority in Congress, the propensity to rule by decree and the foreign back of US and financial institutions, the Bolivian governments of Estenssoro and Paz Zamora did not hesitate to turn to violent repression of the social protests. Coercion

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[40] This coalition is strange, in primis, for the nature of the two parties, a center-left party (MIR) with a conservative right party (ADN). However, as it will be clear after this historical review, the three traditional Bolivian parties (MNR, ADN, MIR) went through a process of programmatic convergence. With the benefit of hindsight, this was among the factors that contributed to the breakdown of these traditional parties. Besides the nature of the parties, the coalition was an odd one considering the past relationship between them and their leaders. ADN was the party of the previous dictator Banzer, and Zamora and the MIR have been heavily repressed during his regime. Paz Zamora had always stated his repulsion towards Banzer and the impossibility of a coalition with him.
[41] His switch was probably in part explained by the strange coalition MIR-ADN that brought him to presidency, in which the MIR was the minor partner (Stokes 2001, 92).

and the use of state of siege to repress COB and CSUTCB-led protests were indeed the last factors that guaranteed the adoption of some unpopular measures. Additionally, the successes on the fiscal and inflation fronts and an adverse international environment that accelerated the collapse of the tin industry helped the governments since these protests remained sectorial and did not find wide support among the overall population (Klein 2011a, 248). Parallel to these were the protests organized by the *cocaleros* unions around the issue of forced coca eradication.[42] The consumption and production of coca leaf by indigenous highlands, especially Aymaras and Quechuas, date back to precolonial times and have symbolic, cultural and economic meaning (Silva 2009, 113). Their protests against Bolivia's alignment with US war against cocaine, a derivative of the coca leaf, were then consequential. These were mainly roadblocks and remained in those years regional protests, especially in the Chapare region of Cochabamba. However, with a clear weakened COB, a shift in the associational power was now in course with the *cocaleros* unions that would become the principal faction within CSUTCB and would start a new framing for the protests that mixed economic and class arguments with identity and cultural ones (Silva 2009, 113-15). This kind of framing, we will see, in the years to come would involve large sectors of Bolivian society.

Deepening the Market Reforms (1993-97)

1993 elections saw the return of the MNR in government with the former Minister of Economic Planning Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada as President. This latter was the presidential candidate under the ticket of an alliance between the MNR and the indigenous Katarista party Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupaq Katari (*Movimiento Revolucionario Túpaj Katari de Liberación*, MRTKL), obtaining 35,60% of the votes and a good presence in the overall Congress (Chamber and Senate). A subsequent coalition in the Congress, the *Pacto per el Cambio* (Pact for Change), with the center-left Free Bolivia Movement (*Movimiento Bolivia Libre*,

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[42] Pineo (2014) underlined the paradox of US recommendations to the Bolivian government. While one of the consequences of the neoliberal reforms was the dismissal of several miners, the implementation of programs of forced eradication reduced what was often the only available (informal) employment for them, the cultivation of coca. Thus, demanding both the adoption of neoliberal reforms and the forced eradication of coca fields contemporarily generated tensions that were among the triggering factors of the decline of the traditional parties and generated a favorable political opportunity structure for the rise of the MAS.

MBL) and the populist Solidarity Civic Unity (*Unidad Cívica Solidaridad*, UCS) elected him President with the indigenous leader of the MRTKL, Victor Hugo Cárdenas, as vice-President. This presidency enacted a series of bold reforms that deepened the market-society initiated under Estenssoro.

One of the most influential, considering the events of the subsequent years, was the Capitalization Law of 1994. Sanchez de Lozada continued indeed the process of privatization of small firms inaugurated by the Privatization Law of 1992 under Paz Zamora, but above all started a process of privatizations of the largest state companies through capitalization schemes (Klein 2011a, 259). This meant that 50% of the companies remained in state's hands while the other 50% together with their administration passed to private groups, mostly foreign ones. This kind of privatizations involved the state companies engaged in the national electricity, communication, railroads, the national airline company and above all the *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia* (YPFB) responsible for oil and the ever more important natural gas.[43] After the capitalization the YPFB reduced its workers, gradually renounced to active exploration, production and transportation of oil and gas signing agreements with foreign companies, and drastically reduced royalties for new finds of oil and gas (Klein 2011b, 56).

Other measures were reforms on education (1994), pensions (1996) following a private model similar to the Chilean one, an agrarian (1996) one that recognized communal property, a theme particularly dear to lowland indigenous communities (Silva 2009, 119), and the intensification of coca eradication under the Zero Option program that provided for the total eradication of illegal coca camps with compensation or even by force if necessary.

But the reforms that together with the Capitalization process will have more impact on Bolivian society were those regarding a revision of the state toward a more decentralized one. The process of decentralization was articulated through the Popular Participation Law (*Ley de Participación Popular*, LPP) of 1994 and its complement, the Administrative Decentralization Law of 1995. These established 311

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[43] With the collapse of the tin industry, starting from the 80s the exports of natural gas and products of commercial agriculture, especially soy, gained more and more importance in Bolivian economy. Natural gas will finally become Bolivia's principal export in 2001 (Klein 2011a, 251).

municipalities, urban and rural, a substantial increase compared to the previous limited number, and the direct election of their mayors and councils. The municipalities now had control over their own budget and 20% of state revenues were redistributed to them proportionally to their population. Furthermore, the municipalities were now controlled by local grass-roots organizations (neighborhood associations, peasant unions) that were formally recognized by the state (Klein 2011b, 58). These reforms brought both civil society and national parties closer to the local governments. The process of increased popular participation and actual and symbolic inclusion of indigenous populations, started with the nomination of an indigenous vice-President and the LPP, continued with an electoral reform that introduced uninominal seats in the Congress along with the plurinominal ones and the amendment of the Bolivian Constitution (1994) of 1967. With this amendment, for the first time Bolivia was not only a "free, independent and sovereign country" but also "multiethnic and pluricultural" one (Klein 2011b, 57).

The first Sanchez de Lozada government, as it could be noted, was probably the densest in terms of policies adopted. Thus, which were their consequences and how they were welcomed by the civil society? The Capitalization Law and LPP encountered an initial timid opposition by an increasingly weakened COB and the CSUTCB that was easily coopted by the government with early retirement offers and the like. Furthermore, the LPP on one hand undermined the CSUTCB since the latter in absence of efficient local governments, basically used to act as such (Yashar 2005), but on the other hand soon represented an opportunity for its members to start a political career at the local level.[44] Meanwhile, the Zero Option program of coca eradication continued the protests of the *cocaleros* demanding the demilitarization of the operations and the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to leave the country. The *cocaleros* unions in these years further confirmed as the main and leading faction

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[44] As noted by Anria (2018, 71) the LPP was a reform that bolstered rural civil since it partially addressed the historical indigenous exclusion firstly at a local level. Zuazo (2008) argued that all the institutional reforms described above had the effect of "ruralizing" Bolivian politics, namely of recognizing indigenous people as actors at the municipal level and of expanding citizenship rights to them. While these institutional factors cannot be regarded as direct causes of MAS' rise (Madrid 2012, 37) it is fair to say that created an institutional environment more favorable for the participation in politics of indigenous movements and the evolution of their local parties into national one. This is exactly the path that the MAS undertook.

within the CSUTCB with Evo Morales – the future three-times president – as one of their leaders. Differently from the COB and CSUTCB-led protests, the *cocaleros*' ones were more effective in bargaining negotiations with the government. And when these were not welcome, they were able to organize protests that encountered a wider support in the Bolivian population. This was the case of the "March for Life, Coca, and National Sovereignty" from Villa Tunari to La Paz in August 1994. The March was organized to protest the 1994 government decree that set the industrialization of coca in medicine, food, and cosmetics but only in some legal zones that excluded the Chapare region where the most militants *cocaleros* resided. The framing of the protest around the key words "life", "coca", and "sovereignty" guaranteed the following of diverse groups of the Bolivian society. Coca had a symbolic meaning for people of indigenous culture; "sovereignty" referred to the presence of US' DEA and troops in the Bolivian soil as an intrusion on internal affairs and thus a lack of national sovereignty, a lack that could be extended also to the loss of national strategic companies in favor of foreign businesses following the Capitalization Law; "life" represented both the negative consequences of neoliberal policies for the Bolivian public workers, namely the attacks to the organized labor and the rise in informal employment, and for the poor as a result of the liberalization and rise of the prices of goods and services (Silva 2009, 121).

Overall, protests were still episodic but a new framing for contentious politics on the streets, able to involve broader groups of the society, was emerging. As it will be seen, contentious politics will reach its peak in effectiveness in the first years of the new century, with social protests contributing to the resignations of two different presidents and the final breakdown of the traditional parties and party system

2.3.2 Through the End of the Constructed Order

Water War (2000)

Sanchez de Lozada was succeeded by the ex-dictator Hugo Banzer (ADN) in the 1997 presidential elections. In alliance with the center-right party New Republican Force (*Nueva Fuerza Republicana*, NFR), Banzer got most of the votes for the presidential elections (22.26%). A broad coalition, known then as the

"Megacoalition", involving the MIR and the populists UCS and CONDEPA gave him the sufficient votes in Congress for the presidency. With respect to the composition of the Congress, it is worth to mention here the election to the Chamber of Deputies of the future leader of the MAS and president Evo Morales. Morales run on an uninominal seat as a representative of the Chapare region of Cochabamba under the United Left (*Izquierda Unida*, IU) ticket.[45] A weak and cumbersome coalition for its large numbers, also plagued by and accused of corruption scandals (Assies and Salman 2003, 9), and adverse external economic conditions deriving from the Asian crisis and Brazilian currency crisis characterized this government (Silva 2009, 123). Within this context, unpopular policies triggered heated social protests able to reverse the unwanted political outcomes and to sign the start of the decline of the traditional parties and party system.

The "Megacoalition" government lacked a clear political program and committed to engage in a "national dialogue" with opposition parties and actors of civil society to draft the national agenda. However, confronted with a difficult economic situation, and under the pressure of US and IMF, Banzer's government did not fulfil its promise, disregarded the general insights from this national dialogue and adopted an orthodox stabilization program (Assies and Salman 2003, 18-21). Furthermore, Banzer intensified the coca eradication program under the Dignity Plan supported by US funding (Barr 2017, 88).

However, the decision that will cause more controversies was the privatization of water distribution in Cochabamba, the capital of its namesake department. In the previous decades Cochabamba has undergone a process of urbanization and migration, significantly increasing its population but without adapting its public services. The water distribution system in Cochabamba was then in the 90s poorly developed with the municipal company (SEMAPA) roughly able to cover half of the demand in the areas of wealthy and/or middle-class sectors. The remaining demand in

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[45] As leader of the *cocaleros* Morales had participated two years before at the 7th Congress of the CSUTCB. Following the LPP and the intention to create its own political arm, the Congress created the Assembly for the Sovereignty of the People (*Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, ASP), a political "instrument" to directly represent the peasants and coca growers of the CSUTCB under the leadership of Alejo Véliz. The ASP for legal reasons took then the IU symbol and legal status, a moribund leftist party, to participate to the municipal elections of 1995 and the general elections of 1997 (Anria 2018, 71-72).

the rural areas was fulfilled through individuals or cooperatives that managed private wells, family-owned cisterns, and water trucks. The arrangements of this kind of water supply did not follow a particular regulation but the so-called *usos y costumbres* (use and customs) (Assies 2003, 17). The owners and managers, or *regantes*, of these private wells, together with anybody involved in this informal distribution of water organized in the 90s around a federation to defend their rights, the FEDECOR. This shows how the water distribution and its legislation in Cochabamba was a very delicate issue. In this context, the government's decision to privatize water distribution in the city, the perceived unfavorable terms and non-involvement of the interested parties, and the opacity behind the contract caused the so-called "Water War" between January and April 2000 (five protestors and one policeman died during the protests). Agua del Tunari, a foreign consortium, was indeed the only to participate to the bid launched by the Banzer's government. Being the only interested counterpart, the final agreement, made legal by the Law 2029 on potable water and sewerage, was not in line with the government premises. It did not present enough guarantees for the implementation of the Misicuni Project (a pending project for the construction of a dam) it specified rates increases (they actually reached 150% raises in January 2000 in some cases) and threatened the distribution under *usos y costumbres* by demanding legal changes to ensure profitability. The Law 2029, passed in November 1999, provided for concessions of 40 years and 5 years licenses. However, the conditions for the concessions arguably favored big corporations, excluding the local cooperatives, and forcing them to contract for licenses with the former (Assies 2003).

How did civil society respond? A Committee for the Defense of Water and the Household Economy had already been created by July 1999, before the contract was official, and had expressed its concern about the future price increases. The Defense Committee and the FEDECOR forged then a link with a dynamic local union, known for its innovative methods to resist the crisis of organized labor and unions sparked by the neoliberal reforms, the Departmental Federation of Factory Workers of Cochabamba (*Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba*, FABRILES) headed by Oscar Oliveira. The FABRILES indeed reacted to the crisis of the unions by involving sectors before disregarded by unions as informal workers and

poor and by listening to them and their problems and integrating these with classic unions' claims. In so doing, in an assembly-style meeting in December 1999, the Coordinator for the Defense of Water and Life (*Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida*, Coordinadora from now on) was created (Silva 2009, 126). This organ with its president Oscar Oliveira played a key role in framing the protests, started as a local issue, and transforming them into a national one. The protests involved both the rural population scared of losing their water resources and urban one touched by the rate rises. They demanded for the annulment of the contract and the revoke of the Law 2029 and of the rate hikes. The answers of the national government: non-recognition of the Coordinadora and disposition to make negotiations only with a Civic Committee of Cochabamba, and finally repression and state of siege, only reinvigorated the protests with the emergence on the street of "Water Warriors" and confirmed the perception that the government favored the investment climate at the expense of the popular economy. The protests, started in Cochabamba in January, reached then national resonance involving the CSUTCB in La Paz now under the leadership of the radical Aymara leader Felipe Quispe, and the *cocaleros* unions in the Chapare region under Evo Morales (Silva 2009, 128-29). Mobilizations finally ended in April when the government decided to recognize the Coordinadora as a counterpart to negotiate with and an agreement was reached. The contract was nullified, and Agua del Tunari forced to leave; several modifications to the Law 2029 were appointed and negotiations with CSUTCB brought to the release of some prisoners (among these Felipe Quispe).

Overall, the Water War represented the first real victory of popular mobilization after years of defeats (Assies and Salman 2003, 9). Born as a local issue but involving different sectors of Cochabamba with new social actors as key players, the protests were infused by the FABRILES with anti-imperialism rhetoric and anti-globalist elements (Assies 2003). It then reached national resonance adding to other grievances formed in the years of the neoliberal reforms, becoming the focal point of all the disappointment for the evolution that the Bolivian society had taken since the New Economic Policy in 1985, one perceived to promote private and transnational capital at the expenses of ordinary people (Barr 2017).

Gas War and the End of the "Pacted Democracy" (2002-05)

After the agreement reached in April 2000, protests continued, although sectorial, with: demands of wage increase by teachers; highland peasants' grievances linked to the agriculture legislation of 1996 represented by the Quispe's CSUTCB; and confrontations for the forced coca eradication by the Chapare *cocaleros* headed by Morales. The latter escalated with the expulsion of Morales from the Congress in 2002, held liable for the deaths linked to the protests. Against this background, Banzer's government proceeded tumultuously among general demands of resignation due also to a rising unemployment and a meagre economic growth (Assies and Salman 2003). Banzer finally resigned in August 2001 due to ill health and the mandate was terminated by his running mate Jorge Quiroga. As it will be seen, these protests along with others will continue in the following government, coalescing around the issue of the export of natural gas through the Chilean ports, and will bring to the forced resignation of the president.

In line with this turbulent context, the results of the 2002 elections showed a completely different pattern vis a vis the previous ones since the return to democracy (See Table 2.1 below). Apart from the MIR, that gathered a 16% of the popular vote, the other parties of the incumbent "Megacoalition" exhibited, as expected, poorly results. ADN's candidate in primis gained less than 4% of the votes; UCS something more than 5%; and the populist CONDEPA, also at its first election after the death of its leader, basically disappeared with less than 1%. The most voted was the MNR's candidate, architect of the New Economic Policy of 1985 and former president, Sanchez de Lozada, albeit with a 22.5%. However, the real novelty was represented by the other three parties below the MNR, all conceived and self-presented, although with different degree, as "anti-systemic", the MAS (20.94%), the NFR (20.91%) and the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (*Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti*, MIP) (6%).[46] The MIP was the political vehicle of the nationalist Aymara factions within the CSUTCB created and headed by Felipe Quispe in November 2000. The MAS was the party of Evo Morales and the Chapare *cocaleros*. After the 1997 elections,

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[46] The votes in percentage reported above refer to the presidential elections. The table below refers instead to the distribution of seats (in absolute number) in the Chamber of deputies of the Congress.

disagreements between the two most representative leaders within the IU, Alejo Veliz and Evo Morales, brought to a rip with the creation by Evo Morales of the Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (*Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, IPSP). As the ASP with the IU, the IPSP borrowed for technical reasons the symbol, colors and legal name of a dying party, the MAS, and presented itself to the municipal elections of 1999 as MAS-IPSP. Finally, NFR presented as its presidential candidate the former mayor of Cochabamba during the Water War, Manfred Reyes Villa, who competed along a rhetoric of a "positive change" against the traditional parties (Singer and Morrison 2004, 176). In the end, a coalition between the MNR, the MIR and the UCS gave Sanchez de Lozada his second presidency in the Congressional runoff against Evo Morales. However, as the previous government, the new one will reveal a weak coalition, even a weaker one, considering now the presence in the Congress of two parties that had actively participated to popular mobilizations (MAS and MIP) (Silva 2009, 132-133). In the past, indigenous parties (MRTKL) or populist challengers (UCS and CONDEPA) have been easily coopted by traditional parties. Now a clear shift was evident with social movements strongly entering the political arena (Assies and Salman 2003, 59).

Table 2.2. Distribution Chamber of Deputies (N° of Seats), Main Parties, 1985-2002

Parties	1985	1989	1993	1997	2002
MNR	43	40	52	26	36
ADN	41	38	-	32	4
MIR	15	33	-	23	26
AP	-	-	35	-	-
CONDEPA	-	9	13	19	-
UCS	-	-	20	21	5
IU	-	10	-	4	-
MBL	-	-	7	5	-
MAS	-	-	-	-	27
NFR	-	-	-	-	25
MIP	-	-	-	-	6
Others	31	-	3	-	1
TOTAL	**130**	**130**	**130**	**130**	**130**

Notes: For the full names of the parties, see List of Acrnoyms

Source: Atlas Electoral, Órgano Electoral Plurinacional Bolivia (https://atlaselectoral.oep.org.bo)

The second de Lozada's government presented itself as a different one with a pledge to intervene in the economy. However, remnants of the Asian and Brazilian crises and the most recent Argentinian one placed the Bolivian economy in a difficult situation. Faced with a rising fiscal deficit and in need to reduce it to obtain a new IMF loan, Sanchez de Lozada, in contradiction to his vague promises, continued with the neoliberal direction and implemented a contested tax bill (*impuestazo*) that provided for an increase of 12.5% of the tax income and a freeze of the public sector wages. 2003 started then as a contentious year and, as it will be seen, it will conclude even worse. In January protests of the *cocaleros* continued with massive roadblocks in Cochabamba. Furthermore, the mentioned *impuestazo* caused the revolts of the

policemen in February 2003, who were asking for a wage increase from several years. These marched together with a group of students on the Presidential palace in La Paz. The military guard fired on them, and chaos erupted. The government negotiated the withdrawal of the police, but simultaneously other protests started with people attacking and burning the headquarters of the main governing Bolivian parties (MNR, MIR). In the end the bill was withdrawn but 30 people died and more than 100 were wounded (Silva 2009, 134; Assies and Salman 2003). Within this context, the two anti-systemic parties present in the Congress, MAS and MIP, did not actively participate to these protests but asked for the president's resignation.

Especially with the benefit of hindsight, these events cannot be categorized as isolated ones or an eruption. These were instead clear manifestations of a more generalized dissatisfaction with the current and previous government's handling of the socioeconomic crisis of the country (Assies and Salman 2003, 61-62). It is against this background that we indeed arrive to the final events, known as the *Gas War*, which generated the topple of Sanchez de Lozada and that for many symbolized the end of the post-democratic transition period in Bolivia known as the "Pacted Democracy" (*Democracia Pactada)* (Assies and Salman 2003).[47]

There are many similarities between the *Water War* of 2000 and the *Gas War* of 2003, and in a sense, the *Gas War* ended what the *Water War* had initiated (Silva 2009). In both cases different conflicts and grievances converged around a single issue to show the disillusionment towards policies perceived as unfair and the governments that enacted them. This time the issue was the sale of natural gas to US to be done through Chilean ports. As noted by Assies and Salman (2003) the contested nature of the export of gas has its roots in the hydrocarbon legislation and the shady capitalization process of the sector started during the first Sanchez de Lozada's administration. The capitalization process had restructured the state agency YPFB and reduced its functions at the minimum, so much that it was then known as

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[47] This refers to the years carefully described in this section in which the three traditional parties (MNR, ADN and MIR) alternated in the presidency forming different, often odd alliances. Until the victory of the MAS and Evo Morales, each presidential election was not able to elect a president with an absolute majority. Thus, these alliances were instrumental for the "Congressional turnoff" in which the president was then selected. Centellas (2008) defined this variant of presidentialism in Bolivia as a "Parliamentarized" one for the importance assumed by these alliances in the Congress for the governability of the country.

the YPFB "*Residual*" (Klein 2011a, 259). Furthermore, it had introduced a legislation that clearly favored private operators.[48] Within this framework an agreement with a consortium of foreign companies to sell gas to California through a Chilean port was reached. Not only there were reservations about the fairness and correctness of the regulatory framework, but even the outcome of the deal, the price of the gas at the pit (the basis for the calculation of fees and taxes), was perceived as extremely low compared with exports to other countries (Assies and Salman 2003). In other words, the way in which the government wanted to handle the gas issue was perceived once again as favoring local elites and foreign transnational companies at the expense of the Bolivian common people. Finally, exporting through the Chilean port reopened old grievances linked to the Bolivian's loss of access to the Ocean in the Pacific War of 1879 against Chile. Accordingly, the gas issue quickly became a polarizing one. Contrary to the executive's project and favorable to internally industrialize natural gas to create employment, the main opposition parties, MIP and MAS, proposed to hold a referendum on the gas issue, while the department of Tarija, where 85% of the natural gas reserves was located, defended the export argument (Assies and Salman 2003, 64).

As with the *Water War* a Coordinadora for the protection of gas was created. This linked the old water Coordinadora with Morales' MAS and claimed for a gas referendum to be held on a national level, the nationalization of the gas industry and the creation of a Constituent Assembly to increase popular participation in policy-making (Silva 2009, 138). The term *Gas War* was coined in August by the MAS as a call for mobilization and started in the department of La Paz in September. In Warisata, paesants organized by the Quispe's CSUTCB of El Alto had blocked roads by holding a tourist bus and demanded the release of fellow prisoners and protested the natural gas issue (Silva 2009). Simultaneously, the Gas Coordinadora and the

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[48] The hydrocarbons legislation had introduced a system of shared risk contracts between the residual YPFB and the private operators. The system of concessions was to be regulated by a newly created Superintendency for Hydrocarbons. The system was extremely generous with the private operators, since to promote private investment in exploration, exploitation and commercialization, it distinguished between "existing" and "new" hydrocarbons and provided a favorable regulation for the latter. While existing and already exploited fields continued to follow the fifty-fifty system of the previous legislation, newly discovered reserves paid only a 18% fee (*regalia*). Along with the *regalia*, operators had to pay a 12% in taxes on the value of oil or gas "at the pit". Aside from this portion "at the pit" the rest of the product was full-property of the private operators (Assies and Salman 2003, 62).

COB called for a general strike on 19 September that reached national resonance. On 20 September trying to rescue the tourists, military forces attacked Warisata paesants killing five of them. This repression added the president's resignation to the popular agenda and determined the final El Alto uprising in October. As shown by the figure 2.1 below in 2003 there was indeed a peak of distrust in the figure of the President.

Figure 2.1. Confidence in the President
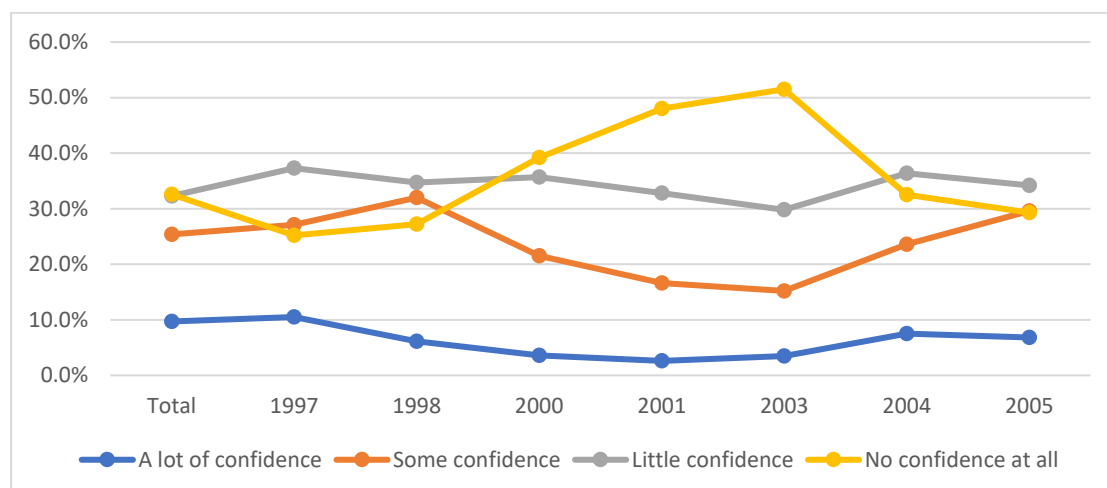
El Alto was for the *Gas War* what Cochabamba has been for the *Water War*. Key players here in the organization and framing of the protests were local neighborhood associations organized around a federation, the *Fejuve*, local unions as the regional branch of the COB (COR), women associations and the young, organized in student federations especially from the University of El Alto (Silva 2009, 135-137). Fejuve and the COR called for a general strike in October with the support of women and student associations. The strategic position of El Alto allowed the protest to block supplies to the capital La Paz, especially fuel. In a few days the roadblocks and strikes expanded in other depressed departments of Bolivia's highlands as Oruro and Potosí. As in September, the government's response was violence and repression, but this only reinvigorated the protests. Between 12 and 13 October, military fired on demonstrators killing 30 of them. The disproportionate repression caused first the resignation of vice-president Carlos Mesa and then Sanchez de Lozada to make some

concessions.[49] However, these were decidedly scant and belated. Meanwhile, the middle-classes, outraged by the violence of the military forces, added to the popular protests. NGOs leaders, human rights activists and intellectuals organized a hunger strike in La Paz asking for de Lozada's resignation. On 17 October, after Paz Zamora (MIR) and Reyes Villa (NFR) withdrawn their support to the government, Sanchez de Lozada had no other choice but to resign and fled the country to Miami. The presidency was then taken by the ex-vice-president Carlos Mesa.

Mesa immediately drew attention to longstanding problems of the country as the forms of ethnic exclusion and inequality and the challenge posed by regional differences. He promised to hold a binding national referendum on gas and to convoke a Constituent Assembly. The referendum has been held in 2004 and the result indicated more state control on gas resources and a rise on fees and taxes for the operators. However, the eastern departments, where most of national reserves of gas are located, seemed to be contrary to this outcome to the point that requests for regional autonomy started taking place. This regional polarization within the country will continue and characterize the first years of Morales' government too. Overall, Mesa has been a respected president, but he finally got caught in the middle of protests from eastern elites on one side and the Western departments that asked for more radical moves on the other. He finally was forced to resign in June 2005 (Silva 2009). Earlier election took then place in December 2005 and were finally won by Evo Morales and the MAS with an absolute majority of 53,74% of votes.

Mesa's short-term government was characterized by the complete absence of figures linked to the political parties to give them time to regain credibility in the eyes of the people (Assies and Salman 2003, 67). As it clearly emerged by this historical overview of pre-MAS Bolivia, traditional parties have been gone through a gradual process of decline. This is evident when looking at Figure 2.2. Traditional parties

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[49] After months of exclusion and weeks of violent repression, Sanchez de Lozada appeared on national television together with the leaders of the coalition parties, Paz Zamora (MIR) and Reyes Villa (NFR, that had recently joined the coalition in August) on 15 October. The president offered to hold a consultative referendum by department on the gas exports, to revise the hydrocarbons legislation but through a consensual process with the oil companies, to introduce the figure of a Constituent Assembly into the Constitution, following a constitutional procedure and, finally, reaffirmed his decision to uphold democracy and the constitutional order. In his speech, however, Sanchez de Lozada talked about a narcos conspiracy against him, implicitly minimizing the popular protests (Assies and Salman 2003, 66).

(MNR, ADN, MIR) had a clear hegemony in the 80s gaining together more than 70% of the votes for the presidential elections. In the 90s their accumulated percentage diminished in favor of two populist parties, CONDEPA and UCS. However, the historical analysis showed how these parties, despite an initial anti-system rhetoric, were then easily coopted in the game of the Bolivian "Pacted Democracy" and participated to several governing coalitions. Thus, despite the importance of individual leadership for these populist parties and even for ADN with Banzer and MIR with Paz Zamora, until the late 90s the Bolivian party system was not in crisis and in a sense was in an increasing institutionalizing path (Barr 2017). Things changed with the disastrous Banzer's administration, his handling of the socioeconomic crisis and above all of the events of the *Water War*. The collapse of the traditional parties was then finalized with the events linked to the *Gas War*. Indeed, the cumulated votes for traditional parties in 2005 as showed in Figure 2.2 (6,47%) refer only to the MNR since neither ADN nor MIR proposed candidates for the elections. The main adversaries for Morales in 2005 have been on the other hand Jorge Quiroga and Samuel Medina. The former, who had already been vice-president and ad-interim president during the Banzer's administration, was the candidate of *PODEMOS*, a political vehicle created by former members of ADN and MNR and centrist elements of MIR; the latter was the candidate of National Unity (*Unidad Nacional*, UN) formed by leftist elements of the MIR (Singer 2007). Thus, members of the traditional parties themselves understood that even the only link with the parties' name was unfavorable in electoral terms, and tried then to present under new electoral vehicles, even though with poor results.

Figure 2.2. Traditional and Populist Parties, Presidential Elections (1985-2005)
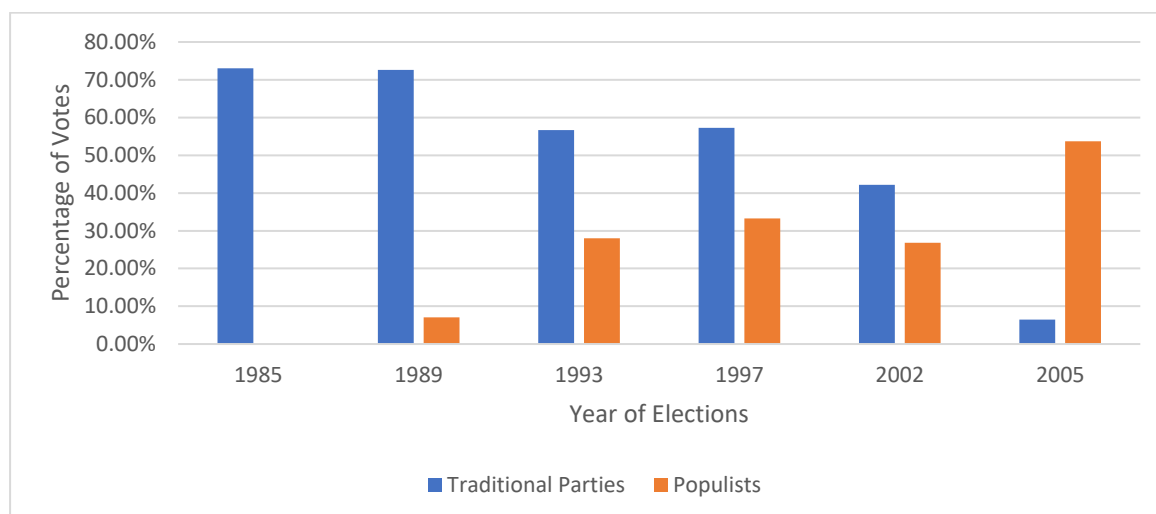

Notes: Traditional Parties refer to the accumulated votes of MNR, ADN and MIR. In 1993 ADN and MIR presented a unique candidate in the figure of Banzer under the AP coalition. Populists refer to CONDEPA, UCS and MAS.

Source: Author's Elaborations on Atlas Electoral, Órgano Electoral Plurinacional Bolivia Data (https://atlaselectoral.oep.org.bo)

The argument is reinforced if we consider some results from the *Latinobarómetro* surveys. Citizens' confidence on political parties and the main liberal institutions steadily decreased over time as exemplified by Figure 2.3 and 2.4 below. The distrust on political parties was such that in 2005, according to *Latinobarómetro*, 53% considered political parties not indispensable for democracy (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.3. Confidence in Political Parties

Source: Latinobarómetro (https://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp)
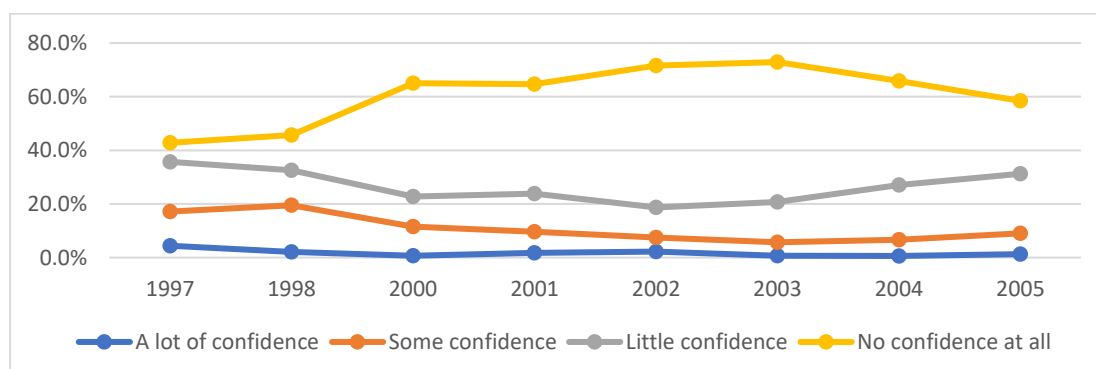
Figure 2.4. Confidence in National Congress

Figure 2.4. Confidence in National Congress

Source: Latinobarómetro (https://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp)

Figure 2.5. Importance of Political Parties for Democracy
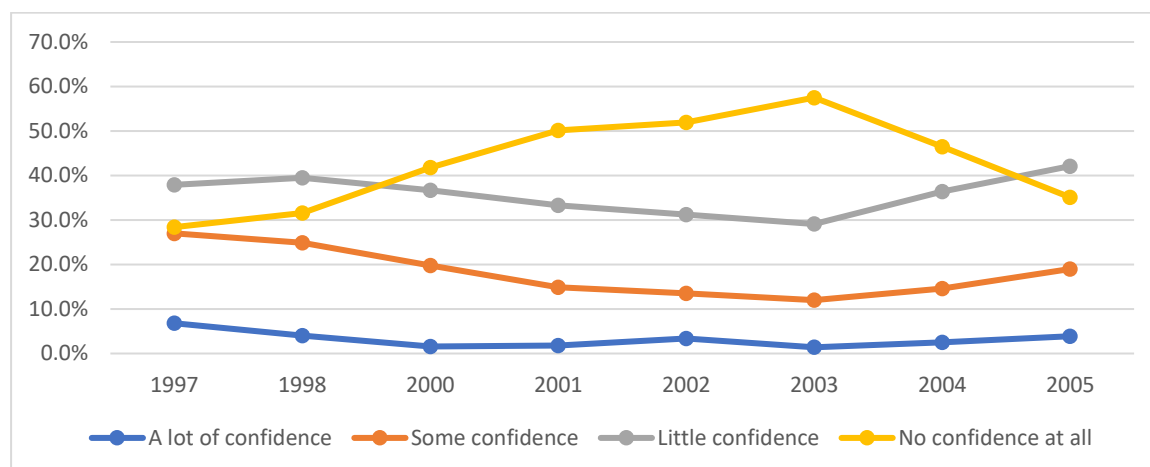
Figure 2.5. Importance of Political Parties for Democracy
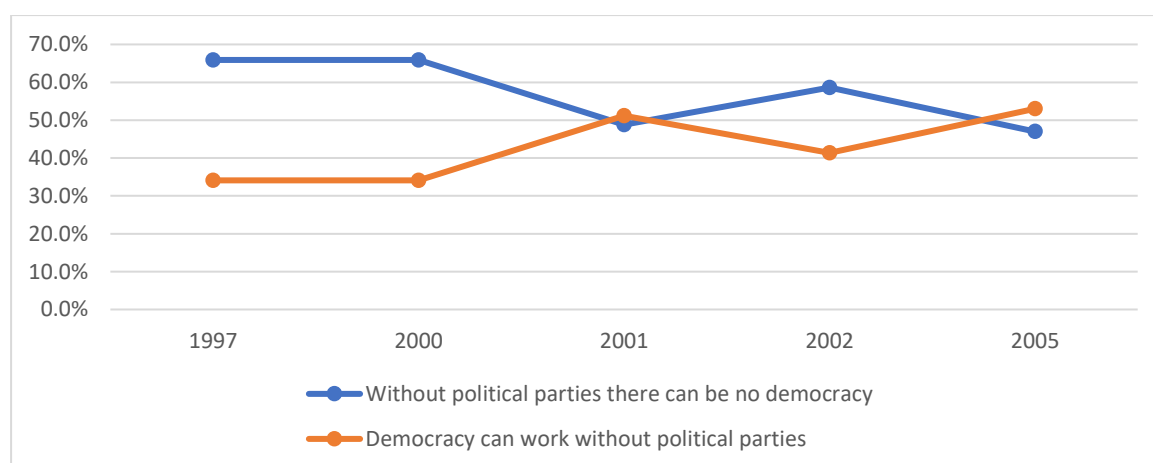
Notes: Respondents were asked to answer this question: "There are people who say that without political parties there can be no democracy, while others say that democracy can work without parties. What is closer to your views?"

Source: Latinobarómetro (https://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp)

Overall, this in-depth historical analysis showed the gradual process that created a favorable opportunity structure for the victory of the populist MAS in the 2005 presidential elections. It can be then regarded as what in the first theoretical chapter we have called an analysis of the demand-side of populism. Structural factors as the social consequences of neoliberal policies; institutional ones as the LPP reform and its consequences for local parties and movements; the associational power of new

collective actors and social movements; and finally, the breakdown of the traditional parties perceived as ever more distant and corrupted entities, all contributed to and generated a crisis of political representation.[50] What is left to be seen is now how the MAS was able to capitalize on this situation and why it appeared so appealing, namely an analysis of the supply side of populism.

2.4 The Bolivian MAS: An Atypical Populist Party

The final paragraph of this section represents a sort of analysis of the supply side of populism for the Bolivian case. The aim of this analysis is to show how the MAS exploited the favorable political opportunity structure detailed described in the section above and also what differentiates it from the other populist experiences in the region (Ecuador and Venezuela).

As emerged in the historical analysis, the MAS' antecedent was the Assembly for the Sovereignty of the People (*Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, ASP). The ASP participated to the 1997 general elections under the IU ticket, elected four deputies in the uninominal seats for the Cochabamba department (among these Evo Morales) but fared poorly in the presidential election with his candidate Veliz. After the 1997 elections, disagreements between the two most representative leaders within the IU, Alejo Veliz and Evo Morales, brought to a rip with the creation by Evo Morales of the Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (*Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, IPSP). The IPSP borrowed for technical reasons the symbol, colors and legal name of the dying party MAS, and presented itself to the municipal elections of 1999 and the general elections of 2002 as MAS-IPSP. The MAS was then born as the political instrument of the *cocaleros* of the Chapare region of Cochabamba. During the 90s the *cocaleros* movement affirmed as one of the most effective contentious movements, focalizing on the issue of forced

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[50] Talking about the "quality of democracy" in Bolivia, Assies and Salman (2003) noted how democracy in the country has been increasingly characterized by a "combination of symbolic integration and actual exclusion […] leading to electoral abstensionism and sympathy for 'anti-systemic' forces on the one hand, and the shift towards a *democradura* on the other" (57). *Democradura* (a Spanish word that mix the term democracy and dictatorship) refers to a formal democracy that guarantees elections but lacks the guarantee of civil liberties and various aspect of a liberal democracy. This shift towards *democradura* was particularly evident in the second de Lozada's government in which unpopular policies were carried on relying especially if not only on violent repression. Overall, Assies and Salman (2003) underlined how during the "Pacted Democracy" period, in Bolivia most of the population has been excluded from the process of political decision-making.

coca eradication. It then created linkages with other movements, added other grievances to their claims and between 1999 and 2005 its political vehicle, the MAS, transformed into a national party able to collect the absolute majority of the popular vote for the first time since the return to democracy.

How it did so? And does the MAS fit the populist label as it is meant in this work? In the paragraph **2.2.2 Radical populism** we have already seen the similarities between the experiences of populism in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. These shared similar political opportunity structures, some strategies as the draft of new Constitutions through Constituent Assemblies, and repeated elections or recalls to increase popular participation and consolidate the party hegemony. Above all, from a discursive/ideational point of view (Hawkins 2009), although in different degrees, Chávez, Correa and Morales depicted their societies in a Manichean way with a clear distinction between a benevolent *pueblo* and a corrupted and bad elite. In the case of Bolivia, Morales' targets were the traditional parties, the United States, multinational corporations, and a vague ethnic elite (Castanho Silva 2017, 108).

Using a definition of populism more similar to the political-strategic one of Weyland (2001), analyzed in chapter 1, Madrid (2008; 2012) described the experience of the MAS and Evo Morales as one of *ethnopopulism*. On one hand, the MAS fit the ethnic label in that it originated mainly from an ethnic group (Quechua) from which derived most of its leaders and supporters. Like ethnic parties the MAS made then ethnic appeals mainly addressed to the Quechua *cocaleros*. However, differently from ethnic parties that usually adopt exclusionary ethnic rhetoric (the MIP in the Bolivian case), the MAS adopted an inclusive one to collect votes from other ethnicities and social classes. On the other hand, the MAS fits the populist label, in Madrid's (2008) argument, in that it adopted a nationalist rhetoric and agenda, advocating state intervention and economic redistribution, and anti-system and anti-establishment appeals. All these characteristics are summarized in Table 2.2 taken from Madrid (2008), in which differences with classical and neoliberal populists are included too. Madrid (2008; 2012) argued that in a context as the Latin American one, characterized by a relatively low ethnic polarization and a fluid concept and vision of ethnicity, using an exclusionary rhetoric not only does not allow to reach the votes

necessary to win national government but it often alienates even the same people to which these ethnic appeals are addressed. By contrast, the MAS adopted ethnic appeals to its core base of Cochabamba Quechua *cocaleros* but including also white middle-classes and *mestizos* both in its rhetoric and action. This is exemplified by the 2005 composition of MAS candidates, that, compared with previous elections, presented a wider array of representatives, including a white left-intellectual, Álvaro García Linera, as vice-president, to reach white and mestizo votes.

Table 2.3. Differences between Populists and Ethnic Parties based on Electoral Appeals

	Ethnopopulist	Ethnic	Classical Populist	Neoliberal Populist
Makes Ethnic Appeals?	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**
Has an Ethnically Inclusive Platform?	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Adopt Nationalist Rhetoric and Ideas?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**No**
Advocates State Intervention and Redistribution?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**No**
Makes anti-system and anti-establishment appeals?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Employs Personalistic Appeals?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**Yes**

Source: Madrid (2008)

Anria (2018, 65-68) made an argument similar to that of Madrid (2008) by recognizing that MAS had and has a core constituency and a non-core constituency among its voters. Borrowing from Gibson (1996), Anria (2018) argued that the core constituency of a party is what provides the initial financial resources, political support and mobilizational power. However, this alone is not enough to make a party a viable government one. Here then, it is when the non-core constituency has to be reached. The strategy to do that is usually less ideologically impregnated to have a wider appeal. In the MAS case, Anria (2018) identifies its core constituency in the rural sectors of Bolivia, namely the *cocaleros*, the CSUTCB, several times mentioned in the previous paragraph, and other national peasant organizations. They conceive the MAS as their political instrument, and they are those who most distrust political parties and the liberal institutions of Bolivian democracy, having a more radical vision of it, as a direct participatory democracy that follows assembly-style processes as those implemented in the events of the *Water* and *Gas Wars*. On the other hand, the non-core constituency is represented by other popular, usually urban, organizations in the Bolivian cities. To appeal to these constituencies, we have already seen the argument made by Madrid (2008) about the ethnic and class composition of MAS candidates. Anria (2013), beyond the ethnic focus, stressed how the different electoral strategies of the MAS with their non-core constituencies are exemplified by the cases of two large and important, in electoral terms, Bolivian cities, El Alto and La Paz. As argued by Anria (2013), in these cities the MAS did not have and neither created organic ties as with their core rural electoral group, but entered into them through classic practices of alliances and cooptation of already active and influential collective local groups. The first strategy, a political alliance, specifically with the leftist Movement without Fear (*Movimiento sin miedo*, MSM), was implemented to gain consent in the middle-class La Paz. While practices of cooptation as offering places in their government to high rank of local associations, undermining their autonomy, have been carried out in the poorer El Alto (Anria 2013, 29-32).[51]

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[51] These were the local players that had a crucial role in the events of the *Gas Wars* in El Alto, mentioned in the previous paragraph, namely the neighborhood federation, Fejuve, and the regional branch of the COB, the COR.

According to Anria (2013), the different strategies adopted by the MAS with respect to their core and non-core constituencies are matched also by different organizational practices and patterns of mobilization. Thus, while "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 […] are more reminiscent of a populist machine" (Anria 2013, 35).[52] Following a similar vocabulary and focus on patterns of mobilization, Levitsky and Roberts (2011) made a distinction between a populist left and a movement left. The former refers to cases already mentioned and briefly analyzed as Ecuador and Venezuela, where mobilization was mainly enacted from above. The latter, in their view a perfect match for the Bolivian case, differs from the populist left in that its leadership is created within the popular movements that sponsored the party and follows bottom-up patterns of mobilization through their autonomous and independent social movements (15-16).

Our ideational definition allows us to treat Morales and MAS as populists, recognizing in this way that there are commonalities with the other two most recent experiences in the region (see Table 2.4 below). However, at the same time, despite the patterns of mobilization are not what constitutes populism in this work's conceptualization, it is fair to say that, at least in the Latin American context, top-down mobilization and a key role of a charismatic leader have been so far the rule.[53] For this reason, this work defines the MAS and Morales as an atypical populist experience. The origins of the party and the role of these social movements are instrumental in this sense to show MAS' uniqueness in the Latin American context. Anria (2013) accurately summarized this concept, arguing that Bolivia "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

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[52] It is fair to note that Anria (2013) used a different conceptualization of populism from the one adopted in this work. Its work followed Robert's (2007) definition, akin to that of Weyland (2001), characterizing populism as "the top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge established elites (either political or economic) on behalf of an ill-defined *pueblo*, or "the people" (4).
[53] Suffice it to say the cases of classic populism cited in the first chapter and the experiences of Chávez and Correa.

elections after leading a series of mass protests" (19). The same argument is made by de la Torre (2017) who asserted the difference between Ecuador and Bolivia exactly in the origins and the relationship between the populist leader and the movements. Whereas Correa rose to power when the Ecuadorian indigenous movements were in crisis and was an external figure to them, Morales created his leadership within the *cocaleros* unions and rose at the peak of protests to which he and his party often actively participated.

Finally, this work argues that this particular nature of the MAS as a movement and a (populist) party, wherein bottom up and top-down patterns of mobilization intertwine and are sometimes in tension among each other, is what explains the different fate of the Bolivian populism with respect to the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian cases. The role of social movements may have been one of "societal accountability" (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000) or "social accountability" that was able to temper the personalistic and sometimes authoritarian tendencies of Morales and in a sense shape the political and economic consequences of his government's experience. This will be analyzed and tested in the final chapter of this work.

Table 2.4. Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador: Similarities and Differences

	Venezuela	Ecuador	Bolivia
Popular Mobilization Prior to the Election	Few and unorganized	Significant and organized	Significant and organized
Relationship between leader and CSOs	CSos created from above; Mainly Top-down	Leader external to CSOs; Conflictual	Organic, leadership created within the CSOs; Hybrid of Top-down and Bottom-up
Discourse/Rhetoric	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic
Definition	Radical Populism	Radical Populism; Techno-populism	Radical Populism; Ethnopopulism; Movement-based Party

Notes: CSOs (Civil Society Organizations). It refers to the ones mentioned in the dedicated Sections.

Source: Author's Elaboration on Sources cited in the dedicated Sections

3. Analyzing the Case: The Bolivian MAS in Power

3.1 Introduction of the Chapter

The victory of the MAS and Evo Morales in the 2005 Bolivian elections marked a watershed in the history of the country. This is reflected in the comparison of this experience with the Bolivian National Revolution of 1952 that some authors made early on (Koehler Zanella et al. 2007; Crabtree 2020).[54] The expectations of the Bolivian people that elected them (54%) but also of enthusiastic, local and not, left-wing intellectuals were high, probably unrealistic, as if centuries of exploitation and exclusion of the indigenous population and all the long-lasting problems of the country could be solved within a few years (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 144). To be sure, Morales' triumphalist rhetoric of a "democratic and cultural revolution" (Mayorga 2006, 7) helped to fuel these hopes.

No less high were the challenges that awaited their government. Bolivia in 2005 was still the poorest country of the South American region (Barr 2017). It was a landlocked country with a non-diversified economy, mainly based on export of low-value primary products. Moreover, as emerged by the historical analysis of chapter 2, the MAS inherited a weak state and weak liberal institutions that were totally delegitimized in the eyes of much of the Bolivian people. Society was polarized between a more indigenous, poorer West that followed the "national-popular"

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[54] With the Bolivian National Revolution of 1952, we refer to the popular uprising that ended a cycle of oligarchic and/or military rules that excluded most of the Bolivian population. After this, the MNR formed a government with Paz Estennsoro as president (1952-56). His first presidency is remembered for bold reforms that changed the Bolivian society, trying to respond at least in part to the popular expectations after their armed revolt. It is worth to mention the introduction of the universal suffrage, an agrarian reform that aimed to redistribute land, and the nationalization of the tin industry. Overall, these measures were not able to change the political, social and economic structure of Bolivia, and the country remained an instable one, prone to military coup as its history testifies. However, this period is for Bolivia what Roberts (2008) called the first mass "political incorporation" for the Latin American region in the 20th century. For a brief review of Bolivian National Revolution, see Koehler at al. (2007, 132-36).

(Mayorga 2006) mandate of Morales and a richer, "wither" business-oriented East that claimed more regional autonomy from La Paz's centralism. The social and political polarization in Bolivia assumed then territorial, ethnical and class traits. With these premises in mind, this chapter aims to make an overall balance of the Morales and MAS contribution, as a populist party, to the evolution of the Bolivian democracy.

The chapter starts with a brief overview of Morales' years of government (2006-19) and most important policies. This first section is propaedeutic for the subsequent one since it touches arguments that are then analyzed in detail. It permits also to signal, even though not in-depth, the main economic effects of thirteen years of a populist government in Bolivia. In a few words, it sets the political, social, and economic contexts in which the Morales' governments ruled alongside the main measures enacted that are of interest for this work. Mainly based on secondary sources, and an in-depth reading of the new Bolivian Constitution (2009), and democracy indexes as primary sources, the second section analyzes the political consequences of populism in Bolivia. Following the theoretical framework enunciated in the section **Populism, Democracy, and Its Political Consequences** of the first chapter of this work, and expanding on it, the paragraph shows the negative and positive consequences for the Bolivian democracy linked to the populist executive of Evo Morales. Furthermore, the role played by social movements as a possible counterbalance to the most negative tendencies of a populist ruler is considered. The final section concludes the chapter and this work with a semi-structured interview to Manuel Canelas, a Bolivian political analyst, and former Minister of Communication in 2019 in the last Morales' government. As such it represents an elite interview. Elite interviews are indeed targeted to people directly involved in the political process (Dexter 1970). For their role, these people "may have special insight into the causal processes of politics" (Beamer 2002) and their testimony may represent a useful tool to generate unique data (Dexter 1970). Finally, the semi-structured nature of the interview allows to use it both as a hypothesis testing to complete and corroborate the analysis of the previous section, and as a catalyzer of interesting new insights regarding our case study.

3.2 Political, Social, and Economic Contexts of Morales' Governments

Evo Morales and the MAS stayed in power from January 2006 until October 2019. Throughout these years, they repeatedly won several elections and by high margins and enjoyed of relatively high popularity. Before to analyzing the broader implications for the Bolivian democracy of such a long period of consecutive ruling, this section aims to exhibit an overview of these 13 years highlighting the political, social, and economic contexts in which the MAS operated and their evolution. We can summarize Morales' experience by dividing it into three periods: 2006-09, 2009-16, 2016-19.[55] These differ in terms of the above-mentioned contexts but also of the government's attitude, strategies, and actual measures.

The first period covers the entire Morales' first term. These years represented the most contentious (Wolff 2016) in which Morales and the MAS had to face a regional opposition made of political and economic elites from the eastern departments of the country (Pando, Beni, Tarija and above all Santa Cruz) known as the *Media Luna* (see Figure 3.1).[56] The regional political elite was represented by the prefects (then governors) of the departments, above all Santa Cruz's prefect Rubén Costas, and civil committees, while the economic elite by "wealthy export-oriented agro-industrial elites located mainly in the eastern region of Santa Cruz" (Bowen 2014, 102). Even at the national level, despite the landslide victory at the presidential elections, the MAS had to face an opposition-controlled Senate (Singer 2007). Probably due to this political context, in these years the Morales and the MAS exhibited the most confrontational attitude and strategies to pursue their objectives.

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[55] For reasons of space, this overview cannot be as rigorous as the historical analysis of pre-MAS Bolivia given in chapter 2 and thus it may seem incomplete. However, this chapter is more interested in disentangling the broader implications of 13 years of populist rule for Bolivian democracy. This section has the only purpose of giving a brief introduction of the most recent political, social, and economic contexts of Bolivia for readers who know nothing about them. For an historical analysis of the first two Morales' mandates (2006-14) see Farthing and Kohl (2014). For an analysis of the economic policies see Arauz et al. (2019). To understand Bolivia's development model, see Valencia (2015) and Svampa (2013).

[56] *Media Luna* (halfmoon) refers to the Eastern departments of Bolivia where initially Morales and the MAS received the least support and where the most radical opposition is situated. These are the departments where most of the natural gas of Bolivia is concentrated (Bowen 2014, 102). The name refers to the shape that these departments (Pando, Beni, Tarija and Santa Cruz) recall, as forming a halfmoon.

Figure 3.1. Bolivia's Map

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica
(https://www.britannica.com/place/Bolivia#/media/1/72106/62256)

The object of most dissent has been the drafting of the new Bolivian Constitution through a Constituent Assembly formed in 2006. The disagreements between the MAS and the opposition forces regarded both procedures of the Assembly and contents of the new constitution (Molina 2010, 58-64). At the national level, on the one hand the MAS tried to adopt tactics to sideline the opposition in the process of constitution-

building to accelerate it (Lehoucq 2008).[57] On the other hand, the opposition resorted to the needed 2/3 majority to stale the process and avoid any major changes of the old constitution. In the end an agreement was reached at the Congress (October 2008). This new draft of the Constitution severely downsized the first. The Constitution declared Bolivia a Pluri-National State with autonomies and provided for a more active role of the state in the economy.[58]

In the meanwhile, the demands of autonomy from the eastern departments had generated a national referendum (2006) in which the overall results objected this claim but regional outcomes in the east confirmed it. Consequently, regional referendums were illegally convened in these departments that claimed to proclaim regional autonomy especially in terms of management of natural resources and land. Violent conflicts, showing a strong racist and tense climate, followed in the streets between MAS supporters and most radical objectors. These culminated in the attacks (recorded by video) against highland immigrant peasants in the department of Pando in September 2008. The video shocked national public opinion, a state of siege was declared, and the Pando's prefect Leopoldo Fernández was arrested (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 50). Coupled with the previous results of August of the recall referendum called by Morales and the MAS, in which Morales and the vice-president García Linera were reconfirmed with more than 60% of the votes, 2008 ended with a totally delegitimized right. In January 2009, the new Constitution was approved by a national referendum in which more than 60% voted in favor. Finally, the results of the 2009 elections, under the new constitution, further strengthened the MAS with Morales receiving more than 60% of the votes and the MAS obtaining super-majorities (more than 2/3) in both chambers of the renominated Pluri-National Assembly (previous Congress) (Alpert et al. 2010). The road for a hegemonic government was set.

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[57] A first draft of the Constitution was approved in Sucre and then Oruro only by MAS delegates. This first draft was clearly influenced by the advisory work of the Unity Pact (*Pacto de Unidad*). The latter was an alliance of grassroots organization that had supported Morales and comprised: CSUTCB, the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia (*Bartolinas*), the Syndicalist Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia (*Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia*, CSCIB), the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (*Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia*, CIDOB), and the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (*Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu*, CONAMAQ).
[58] The contents of the new Constitution of interest for this work will be deeply analyzed in the subsequent section focused on the broader implications for the Bolivian democracy of the Morales' governments.

Despite a climate of high political and social polarization, probably the boldest measures of the whole Morales' experience, such as the Nationalization of the Hydrocarbons sector, a new agrarian reform law and the 2009 new Bolivian Constitution, were taken within this period (Anria 2018, 93). The Nationalization of the Hydrocarbons sector took place on 1 May 2006. It was not a nationalization as usually meant, namely through expropriation or a change in the property asset, but more a change in the terms with the foreign multinational corporations that advantaged the Bolivian State, and a new central role for the YPFB (Valencia 2015, 126-27). This turned out to be a fundamental measure for the future economic policies of the country, since coupled with the commodity boom of those years permitted a serious increase in the State coffers to finance social programs, public investment and maintain macroeconomic stability in terms of financial reserves, a stable exchange rate and a sound balance of payment (Arauz et al. 2019). The three main social programs were enacted in this first period. These are two conditional cash-transfers aimed toward certain disadvantaged portions of the population: children (*Bono Juancito Pinto*), and pregnant women (*Bono Juana Azurduy*), and a minimum universal pension (*Renta Dignidad*).[59] Overall, these distribute modest sums and must be complemented by other more structural measures, but they reached and helped the poorest sections of Bolivian society (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 100-103).

The period 2009-16 may be summarized as that of the political retreat of the national opposition. In these years, the opposition was incapable of proposing a credible alternative to the hegemonic government of the MAS and political elite retreated in their regional departments. In the meanwhile, in an effort to further widening its consensus and aware of the structural economic power of eastern economic elites, Morales' government changed attitude and started a period of cooperation with them

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[59] The *Bono Juancito Pinto* (2006) provides for an annual payment for each child of a family until the fifth grade, with the aim of helping numerous families and reducing school dropping (Farthing and Kohl 2014). The *Renta Dignidad* (2008) is an annual payment for elderly Bolivians and is an expansion of an already present program of the 90s (*Bonosol*). It provides for an annual payment of about US$320 for people without a retirement income and one of about US$240 for who already possesses one (Molina 2010). Finally, the *Bono Juana Azurduy* (2009) is directed towards women that attend pre- and post-natal care, mainly aimed toward uninsured women and to reduce infant mortality rate.

(Wolff 2016; Crabtree 2020).[60] While polarization and opposition from the right had quieted down, the first problems and protests from within the broad popular support group that formed the MAS appeared. They manifested first in one of the strongholds of the party, Potosí, for lack of investment that generated employment (Farthing and Kohl 2014). However, the two most important events were the *gasolinazo* protests (2010) and the TIPNIS dispute (2011).[61] Overall, Morales' attitude in this period shifted from that of the challenger toward one of statesman (see Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas at section 3.4). Helped by the commodity boom, Bolivian economy in these years ran with an average GDP per capita growth of 3,35% (World Bank Data).[62] Backed by his policies' success, Morales confirmed his shift by running in the 2014 elections as the candidate of political and economic stability in the country (Centellas 2015).[63]

The 2014 elections confirmed Morales and the MAS as the first and unquestioned national party with more than 60% of the votes for the former and a confirm of the super-majorities in both chambers for the latter.[64] The distribution of votes seemed also to confirm the premises made above, of a MAS that tried to approach the eastern business elites and had some internal problems with historical supporters. Morales gained indeed votes in all the *media luna* departments, and the MAS was the most voted party in all the departments but Beni. However, these results are coupled with losses in the historical strongholds in the Andean departments of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí (Centellas 2015). These losses may be explained by the difficulty of the MAS of renovating after 8 years of mandate (Stefanoni 2019a). The transformative project of the party in this period starts atrophying (Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). This last term saw also the clear emergence of plebiscitarian and authoritarian tendencies of Morales. The Constitution provided for one consecutive re-election, meaning that this

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[60] This translated mainly into favorable policies regarding the development of the agricultural industry following a public-private partnership and favorable concessions in the field of land redistribution. See Wolff (2016, 129-133).

[61] Section 3.3 will expand on these and on the relationship with social movements.

[62] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?end=2016&locations=ZJ-BO&name_desc=false&start=2006&view=chart

[63] In this regard there have been critics from international intellectuals of the left. Morales was accused of having turned too much conservative and having abandoned the initial project for which he had received popular support. See Webber (2015) and Petras (2013).

[64] See the results at: https://atlaselectoral.oep.org.bo/#/subproceso/17/1/1

would have been the last mandate for him. In spite of that, convinced by his strong consensus and with the high ranks of the party that backed him,[65] Morales and the MAS called for a Referendum in 2016 to abrogate the presidential term limits. This attempt was in line with a more general tendency in the Latin American region (Kouba 2016). The Referendum took place on February 21st, but the results were not those expected. Even if by a low margin (51%) the Bolivians rejected the MAS's proposal. Supporting the claim made above that the MAS was struggling in carrying on its transformative project and was losing consensus in its strongholds, both Driscoll (2017) and Blanchard (2019) showed how one of the reasons that explained the defeat was a decline in the votes from its strongholds, especially the mining departments of Oruro and Potosí. However, instead of acknowledging the result and prepare a Morales' substitute, the MAS chose to turn to the Pluri-National Constitutional Court that finally declared the candidacy possible as it was a human right of Evo Morales.[66]

In a prophetic article in 2018, Molina (2018a) commented on this "strategy" warning about the risks for Morales of being remembered not for the objective improvements of the country within his mandates but for being an authoritarian *caudillo* too much attached to the power. Furthermore, Molina (2018a) recalled how in the history of the Latin American countries, forcing to stay in power for an indefinite time did not bring any good. One year later, his suspicion did not prove to be so far from the truth. The decision of the MAS had left discontents among the population and had created the right context for what in the country was missing for a long time, a united opposition. These backed the moderate ex ad-interim president Carlos Mesa for the 2019 presidential elections, presenting them as a crossroad for the democracy in the country. For the first time in a decade, the results of the election could not be taken for granted. The initial results seemed to point to the necessity of a second round with Morales as the most voted but not being able to pass the 50% or detach Mesa with more

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[65] Even though the interview dates back to 2018, so after the 2016 referendum, the vice-president Alvaro García Linera declared in the same that losing Morales as a candidate would be a "political suicide". See Molina (2018b)

[66] The Court declared that the Bolivian Constitution provides for the superiority of international treaties over the Constitution. Thus, referring to the Article 23 (Right to participate in Government) of the American Convention on Human rights, stated that the attempt to pursue another mandate was a human right of Morales despite the disposition on presidential term limits present in the Bolivian Constitution at the article 168.

than 10%. When the transmission of the results was strangely shut down for the entire night of the 20ᵗʰ of October, and showed the official results the day after, Morales received 47,08% and Mesa 36,51% meaning that Morales had won at the first round. From then on, accusation of electoral fraud followed by the opposition, and protests on the street started, especially fomented by the Presidents of the civic committees of Santa Cruz and Potosí, Luis Fernando Camacho and Marco Antonio Pumari but also by groups that had previously supported Morales. When the Organization of American States (OAS), in its quality of independent official observer of the elections, expressed doubts about the regularity of the electoral process,[67] a mutiny started among the police and armed forces that forced Morales and García Linera to leave the country.[68]

After several resignations from the MAS side, the senator of Beni Jeanine Añez was declared ad-interim president with the objective of calling soon new elections. Her government will instead last for over a year also due to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite being a caretaker government, the Añez's executive assumed a clear right conservative attitude and tried to reverse several policies of the MAS (Carvalho et al. 2021). It was also responsible, giving immunity to state forces, of several violations of human rights with racist violence especially directed towards MAS's supporters.[69] In the end, elections were taken in October 2020 and the MAS was able

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[67] See OAS (2019a). For the final report, see OAS (2019b).

[68] There has been and still is today a heated debate regarding the 2019 Bolivian elections. At the national level, as can be expected, on one hand, the opposition claimed that what happened was electoral fraud and the subsequent events saved Bolivian democracy from an authoritarian path like Venezuelan one; on the other hand, the MAS claimed that what happened after the elections was a full-blown coup with the involvement of the armed forces. Entering this debate is outside the scope of this section and work. However, even at the international level the OAS declarations and report have been criticized and refuted by other independent reports. Its role as a legitimator of the violent events that invested Bolivia has also been discussed and criticized. For a rich review of this critical position, see Carvalho et al. (2021) and the works there cited. As always, when a balance has to be made for similar complicated events, the answer may lie in the middle. For an argumentation of this kind, see Stefanoni (2020).

[69] See Alvelais et al. (2020), Amnesty International (2021, 89-91), Human Rights Watch (2019).

to come back to power with Luis Arce, the ex-Minister of Economy, author of the "Bolivian miracle",[70] as president.[71]

3.3 Populism, Democracy, and Accountability in Bolivia under the MAS

Part of the transformative project of Evo Morales and the MAS was certainly that of revitalizing a democracy perceived as distant and making the interests of few local and international elites at the expense of most of Bolivian people. As evidenced by the historical analysis of chapter 2, the MAS inherited weak and delegitimized institutions. The period of the "Pacted Democracy" (1985-2003) had the merit of bringing political stability in a country previously noted for its coup propension and ungovernability. The provision of the old Constitution that provided for the election of the president by the Congress in absence of a candidate able to collect 50% of the popular vote and the multi-party Bolivian system favored the emergence of a sort of "parliamentarized" presidentialism (Centellas 2008) in which post-electoral coalitions guaranteed the majorities needed to govern and pass policies. This in turn centralized the role of the Congress rendering it a relatively effective counterbalance to the strong power of the executive, typical of presidential systems and especially of young democracies. Nonetheless, this did not impede that some of the most significative measures that revolutionized the Bolivian society were taken by executive decrees. This was the case of the Estennsoro's New Economic Policy, enacted by Decree 21060 in 1985.

Overall, governability and political stability were achieved at the cost of responsiveness with a programmatic alignment of all the major governing parties, and of representation and participation with women, popular classes and indigenous mostly excluded by the high ranks of the legislative and executive. The lack of responsiveness became all the more clear in the last years of the "Pacted Democracy" when popular

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[70] As already pointed out above, Morales' government passed from being a challenger in the first years toward the government of economic and political stability. Bolivia in the 2006-19 period saw the fastest economic growth among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The increased revenues from the natural gas and coordination between the Minister of Economy and the Central Bank with a fusion of orthodox and heterodox monetary policies also permitted to achieve macroeconomic stability. Overall, even though Bolivia is still one of the poorest countries in Latin America, this growth was even relatively shared with significant improvements in terms of reduction of poverty and inequality. See Arauz et al. (2019) for an economic analysis of the 2006-19 period. See ECLAC (2019) for information on poverty and inequality in Bolivia and in Latin America and the Caribbean.
[71] To have a more general idea of the context that brought to the 2020 elections, see Molina (2020). For an overview of the current political situation, see Molina (2021).

demands and protests were ignored and violently repressed, letting some authors talk of a period of *Democradura* (Assies and Salman 2003). The democratic status of Bolivia when the MAS's government started was then anything but rosy. While previous failures, malfeasances or abuses do not certainly justify subsequent ones, recalling the reference point of the Bolivian democracy is a good starting point to make an overall balance of the recent decade.

Several studies and with different approaches made partial analysis of Bolivia under the MAS trying to characterize the political regime of the country. This has been labelled as competitive authoritarian (Levitisky and Loxton 2013, Weyland 2013; de la Torre 2020; Sánchez-Sibony 2021)[72] or as different kinds of "democracy with adjectives" (Wolff 2013; Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán 2015; Anria 2016a; Cameron 2018). Especially the first kind of categorization is made upon a conception of liberal democracy, namely what is usually simply labelled as democracy in the Western "modernized" world.[73]

The normative basis of the post-Pacted Democracy era, what Centellas (2008) called a "pure presidentialism", is the new Bolivian Constitution approved in 2009.[74] As in the other two radical populist experiences of the region briefly analyzed in chapter 2, the constituent power was understood by the MAS as a revolutionary instrument and force to change the relationship between State and society (de la Torre 2020). The art. 11 of the Bolivian Constitution states that Bolivia "adopts a participatory democratic, representative, and communal form of government". This commitment to pluralism in the systems of government reflects a society which is not homogenous but one in which a plurality of cultures and peoples coexist. This concept of pluralism is emphasized already in the art 1 of the Constitution in which Bolivia is described as "founded on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism" and of course in the renaming of the country as the Plurinational State of Bolivia. All this represents the

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[72] Cameron (2018) disagreed with the "competitive authoritarian" label for the Bolivian case. Furthermore, he expressed doubts regarding the process of definition of such hybrid regimes. For the definition of "competitive authoritarianism", see Levitsky and Loxton (2013). For a critical review of the concept and of its application in the Latin American context, see Cameron (2018).

[73] What we mean by liberal democracy will be briefly recalled at the beginning of section 3.3.1.

[74] This is the last of 17 Constitutions that the country has had since its independence. For a timeline of previous constitutions, amendments and features of their building-process, see Negretto (2013, 21, 74, 245).

formal, normative basis of a process of "decolonization of the State", as theorized by the ex-vice-president of Bolivia (García Linera 2020), in which the MAS supposedly engaged.[75] Of course these are theoretically bold intentions but practically difficult to implement. The main point here is that evaluating the Plurinational State of Bolivia with liberal democracy as the only reference point may be restrictive. This does not certainly mean downsizing its principles[76] but trying to adopt an overarching framework which entails "the liberal in liberal democracy" (Rhoden 2015) but also expanding on it to achieve a framework that may then be more adapt to the case in question.[77]

Leaving aside the communal form which refers to indigenous practices of self-government usually based on deliberative assemblies,[78] this section will try to make an overall balance of the effects of MAS endurance on the first two stated forms, representative and participatory. Considering the vast literature review on populism and in particular its relationship with democracy analyzed in chapter 1, we may expect negative effects especially in the liberal component of democracy and thus the representative form. This will be verified focusing on the horizontal dimension of accountability. On the other hand, positive contributions may be expected with respect to the participatory form. This work argues then that the populist experience follows the general hypotheses made by Rovira Kaltwasser (2012). In this vein a key role is played by social movements and organized civil society in general. An autonomous, organized, and mobilized civil society is what differentiated Bolivia from Ecuador and

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[75] Pointing to the existence of several cultures and peoples which in turn entail different political cultures and conceptions, but also to the political history of the country, the former vice-president García Linera (2020) argued that even a liberal, representative democracy of the best quality would not be able to fully represent this kaleidoscope of peoples with their differences. This should explain the commitment to complement the representative nature of the democratic system with other forms.

[76] Beyond their normative intrinsic value, the representative and liberal form of democracy is of empirical relevance for the case in question. The appreciation of the liberal principles by the same Bolivians is evident considering their increasing uneasiness toward the more explicit authoritarian tendencies showed by Morales in his last term with his intention to candidate for a fourth mandate and also by the linked widespread feelings of electoral fraud in 2019 and subsequent heated protests.

[77] See Exeni Rodríguez (2012) on the concept of "demodiversity" and the normative hegemony of the liberal-representative conception of democracy.

[78] There is much to say about this dimension of democracy too. For reasons of space and continuity with the former sections, this work focuses on the representative and participatory dimensions. For more information on the communitarian dimension and its concrete application, see Tockman (2017) and Tockman and Cameron (2014). For an indigenous perspective on the transformative project and the process of Constitution-making in Bolivia, see del Campo et al. (2011).

Venezuela and that might have relatively counterbalanced the most authoritarian tendencies of Morales, performing a role of social accountability. The deterioration of the relationship between Morales and CSOs and the consequent non-mobilization in his favor as in the golden times during the protests surrounding the post-2019 elections may be among the explanatory variables for the Morales' forced exile.

3.3.1 Representative and Liberal Democracy: Erosion of Horizontal Accountability

We can briefly think of liberal democracy as the Dahl's (1971) concept of polyarchy (which may also be conceived as an "electoral democracy") defined in chapter 1[79] reinforced by two elements: protection of individual and civil rights and the concept of horizontal accountability (O'Donnell 1998). In the liberal conception of democracy, a particular emphasis is given to the protection of individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state or of the "majority". To achieve then the liberal label, a democracy must guarantee by constitution certain protected rights,[80] and should present strong rule of law, an independent judiciary and legislative checks and balances to limit the executive power (horizontal accountability). The Bolivian Constitution of 2009 entails all these dispositions with dedicated sections to civil rights (artt. 21-25) and political rights (artt. 26-29). Moreover, the new Constitution did not make any relevant changes to concentrate power in the executive (Negretto 2013), maintaining an overall formal stable situation for what concerns the division of powers between executive, legislative, and judiciary.

But what the Bolivian political reality tells us about this 13 years of populist ruling? The timeline made in the previous section serves here as a general guidance. During the first mandate there were practices aimed at delegitimizing the opposite political

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[79] As already recalled in chapter 1, these were the guarantees of a 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) eligibility for public office; (6) alternative sources of information; (7) free and fair elections; (8) institutions for making government policies depend on vote and other expressions of preference.

[80] These are the ones already present in Dahl's (1971) definition plus individual rights that "grant legal protection of life, liberty, and property, as well as protection against illegitimate arrest, exile, terror, torture, or unjustifiable intervention in personal life" (Merkel 2014, 14). For a brief overview of different conceptualizations of democracy and a categorization between minimalist, mid-range, and maximalist models of democracy, see Merkel (2014).

force on behalf of both MAS and opposition parties. On the one hand the MAS exhorted its supporting social movements to mobilize and put pressure on the Congress to pass legislation (Anria et al. 2010). Furthermore, there have been attempts within the Constituent Assembly at passing first drafts without opposition delegates. On the other hand, as emerged by the several testimonies gathered by Farthing and Kohl (2014), right-wing conservatives assumed obstructing attitudes to prevent any real change in the status quo (41). Overall, what configurated in these first years was a clear absence of "competitive cooperation" (O'Donnell 1994) typical of institutionalized democracies. Despite this, the representative body of the legislative power, the Congress, retained in these years a crucial role. As opposed to the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian Constitution-building processes, the Bolivian Constituent Assembly did not bypass the Congress in the other legislative processes and in the end the final draft submitted to referendum in 2009 was one negotiated between the MAS and the opposition forces and approved by the Congress. What instead represented a more worrying situation since the first years was a dysfunctional judicial system. Controversial measures as the lowering of salaries had generated several resignations and disputes over the new nominations' procedures and an impasse at the Congressional level caused the inactivity of the Constitutional Tribunal for the whole period of Constitution-making.

By 2009 and until the end of Morales' last mandate, period in which the MAS enjoyed of supermajorities in both chambers of the Plurinational Assembly, Bolivian liberal and representative form of democracy has been eroded. As a first more general measurement of that, Figure 3.2 shows the trend of the Liberal Component Index from the Varieties of Democracies Institute (V-Dem)[81] of Bolivia and the other two populist experiences with which was usually compared (Venezuela and Ecuador).[82] As shown

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[81] The Indexes of the V-Dem Institute try to capture different dimensions and conceptions of democracy, as the electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian. This differentiates them from other democracy indexes that express a vision of democracy restricted to the liberal one as Freedom House Democracy Index or the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy (EIU) Index. For these reasons, V-Dem Indexes and other measurements represent, in the author's view, the most useful ones for this work given the objectives and the framework applied in this section.

[82] The liberal component index focuses on the liberal understanding of democracy. The Index captures two measurements that are of interest for us here: strong rule of law and effective checks and balances to limit executive power. For more information regarding the coding of V-Dem Indexes and

the index was 0.67 in 2005 and had a fall to 0.47 in 2019. The high margins by which Morales and the MAS repetitively won elections until 2014 may in part be explained by real popular support due to a sound management of the economy, ever increasing public investments and popular social policies that helped the poorest layers of the population. As already mentioned, after a first confrontational phase, the MAS also approached to the economic elites of the country. This certainly guaranteed the party a broad and heterogenous support added to its core constituencies.

Figure 3.2. Liberal Component Index: Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, 1998-2020 (V-DEM Scores)
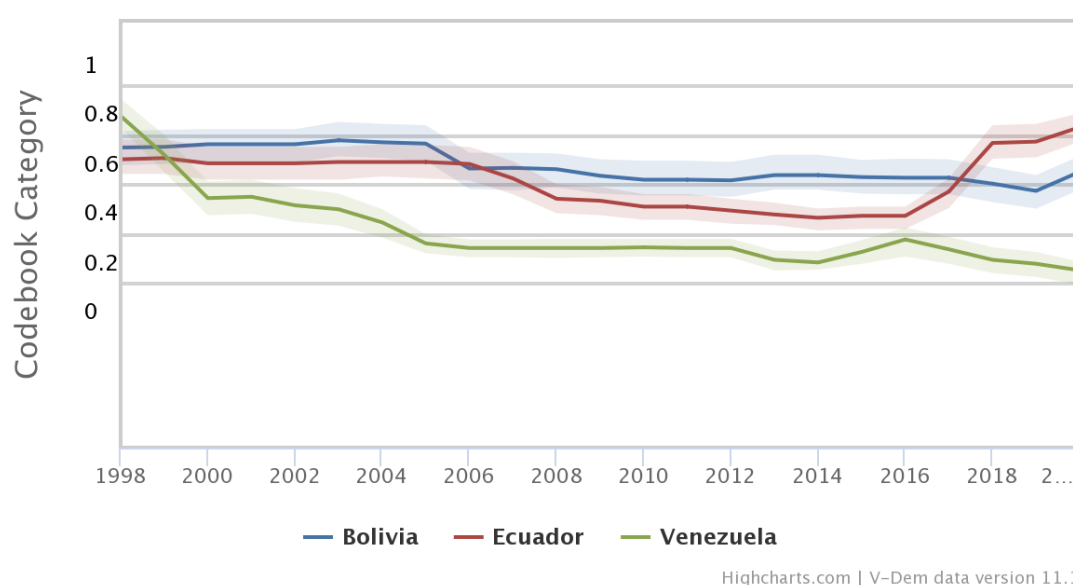
Notes: Chavez won elections in 1998 and died in 2013; Morales won in 2005, and left the country in 2019; Correa won in 2006, in 2017 was replaced by Lenín Moreno, former vice-president.
Source: V-Dem Institute (http://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/)

However, it is fair to note that from this advantageous position the MAS and Morales acted in ways to further weakening and discrediting an already atomized opposition from 2009. First, the 2/3 majorities in the Plurinational Assembly[83] virtually neutralized any checks and balance of the legislative toward the executive. These majorities allow Morales' executive to pass some organic laws that, despite the alleged anti-corruption role, were used to persecute old and current political opponents. This

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Measurements, see Coppedge et al. (2021a). For more information regarding the methodology on definitions, data collection and measurement, see Coppedge et al. (2021b).

[83] From now on the terms Plurinational Assembly, Assembly or Congress will be used interchangeably.

was the case of the Anticorruption Law (*Ley de lucha contra la corrupción*) which allowed for retroactive enforcement.[84] Four previous presidents (Quiroga, Sánchez de Lozada,[85] Mesa and Eduardo Rodríguez) faced criminal charges and former mayor of Cochabamba and 2009 opposition candidate Manfred Reyes Villa flied to US to escape prosecution considered as political persecution (Levitsky and Loxton 2013).

If the role of the newly Congress and political opposition were downsized, the already worrying status of the Judicial system deteriorated even further. In line with other populist experiences, Morales assumed an earlier confrontational approach towards the judiciary. Not only their salaries were downsized but aggressive rhetoric was used against them, depicted as a corrupted elite detached from the real country (See Figure 3.3). The problem of corruption within the Bolivian Judicial system is a noted one. However, such attitudes surely worked in Morales' favor to further delegitimize a traditional conservative category (Madrid 2011, 252), probably hostile to him and replace them with partial figures (Aguilar-Aguilar 2020). The first step was a law (*Ley Corta*) approved by the newly MAS-controlled Assembly that granted the executive the power to directly make appointments for the vacant posts in the judicial to recover the lost quorum in the high courts of the country. In 2010 this law was used to appoint five Supreme Court justices, ten Constitutional Tribunal judges, and three members of the Judicial Council (Sánchez-Sibony 2021). Finally, the MAS-controlled Assembly allowed Morales to further undermine judicial autonomy and independence. The new Constitution provided for the popular elections of the judices of the Supreme Court of Justice, the Agro-Environmental Court, the Pluri-National Constitutional Court, and the Council of Ministers of Justice. Presented as measure to enhance popular participation and a way to vertically fight corruption by theoretically breaking the direct linkage between a Congress that has suffered from corruption scandals and the judiciary, its implementation works poorly.

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[84] This was however reversed in 2012 since the principle of retroactivity infringed international agreements on human rights (Farthing and Kohl 2014).

[85] Sánchez de Lozada in reality was never processed. After he fled to US, he remained there in exile and was never extradited despite several requests from Morales' government.

Figure 3.3. Government Attacks on the Judiciary: Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, 1998-2020 (V-DEM Scores)
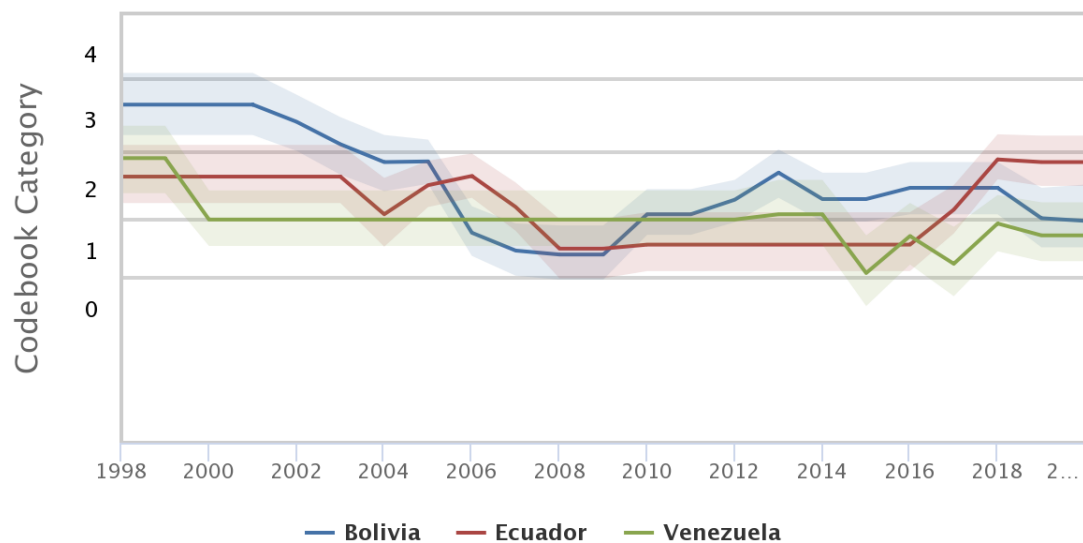
Notes: Scales: 0: "Attacks were carried out on a daily or weekly basis"; 1: "Attacks were common and carried out in nearly every month of the year"; 2: "Attacks occurred more than once". 3: "There were attacks, but they were rare"; 4: "There were no attacks on the judiciary's integrity." See Coppedge et al. (2021a). *Source*: V-Dem Institute (http://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/)

A pre-selection of the candidates was indeed made by the Assembly with a requested 2/3 majority. Given MAS's numbers in both chambers, the preselection had basically no control and the popular election was transformed just in a plebiscitary way to approve candidates that were successively accused of being pro-MAS. The attitude of packing state institutions did not limit to the high courts but also undermined the autonomy of the Electoral Management Body (Sánchez-Sibony 2021). The credibility of these institutions was definitively undermined when the Pluri-National Constitutional Court granted Morales the right for a fourth mandate with a controversial sentence, and the Pluri-National Electoral Organ accepted Morales' candidature.[86]

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[86] For the substance of the sentence, see supranote 66. It is fair to note that even the third Morales' mandate has been object of controversy. The Pluri-National Constitutional Court in that case basically ruled that the retroactivity nature of art. 168, which provided for one consecutive re-election, had to be established by Congressional deliberation. The latter, controlled by the MAS, established that the new 2009 Constitution had refounded the nation with the Plurinational State of Bolivia and thus Morales' presidency of 2006 had to refer to the old Bolivian Republic. This gave Morales the possibility of a third mandate in 2014.

Overall, Morales' governments often assumed "semi-loyal" attitudes toward political opposition and the liberal institutions of the country. The results were a politicized and dysfunctional judicial system and a political panorama that even for oppositions own faults did not present any credible alternatives to the MAS for almost a decade. The downsized role of the legislative and unreliable institutions are of course bad news for the liberal representative form of Bolivian democracy and suggest that one form of accountability, the horizontal one has been severely weakened.[87] But Morales' authoritarian tendencies, disregard for the rule of law and the disreputable institutions of horizontal accountability which he contributed to deteriorate, also played against him. First, they were able to revitalize and unite the opposition forces. Second, they generated widespread malcontent and a fear of electoral fraud even before the strange events of 2019. Finally, considering the absence of significant mobilization in his favor in the tumultuous climate post-elections, they probably alienated even his most ardent supporters. In the end, when even police forces and the military mutinied and this latter "advised" him to resign, Morales had no choice but to fly the country as the hated Sánchez de Lozada has done 16 years before.

3.3.2 Participatory Democracy: Inclusion, Social Movements, and Social Accountability

The disposition of the new Bolivian Constitution for a participatory form of democracy was in line with the increasing popular demands during the first years of the 21st century regarding an amendment of the institutional framework. It responded to such pressures and, as already argued above, follows the principle of "demodiversity" (Exeni Rodriguez 2012) considered at the base of a long process of decolonization of the State. More generally, expanding political participation beyond the electoral mechanisms is part of the concept of "deepening democracy" (Roberts 1998). Probably nowhere more than in Latin America, innovations of this kind have been implemented,

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[87] After all this is what differentiates a representative democracy from a "delegative democracy" in O'Donnell's view (1994). The principle of representation necessarily "involves an element of delegation" (O'Donnell 1994, 61). However, O'Donnell (1994) stressed that representation implicates accountability. The authors referred to and differentiated between vertical and horizontal one focusing on the benefits of the latter as the basis for a well-functioning representative democracy. As it will be seen in the next paragraph, there is a kind of accountability that O'Donnell did not considerate at that time, social accountability.

although in different ways, degrees and with different results. Balderacchi (2017) stressed for example how participatory mechanisms were used in manipulative ways in Venezuela and Ecuador with the main result being a further concentration of power in the executive and a control of civil society. The Bolivian constitution states that the direct and participatory democracy is to be enacted through "referendum, citizen legislative initiative, revocation of terms of office (recall), assembly, councils and prior consultation" (art 11 .II). An entire Title (Title VI) is then nominated and dedicated to "Participation and Social Control" (artt. 241-42). The main points there are that through organized civil society, people "shall participate […] in the design of public policies" (art. 241) and shall exercise public monitoring (social control) at all levels of state (state administration, public enterprises, and state institutions).

But what the Bolivian political reality tells us about this 13 years of populist ruling? Let's first make a premise. As at the beginning of the section the limits, abuses, and malfeasances of the governments of the "Pacted Democracy" (specially in its last years) were recalled as a reference point, it is fair to note here that some advancements in the inclusion and participation of excluded sectors had been achieved even before the MAS with the LPP (1994). This limited at the local level but started a "ruralization" of the Bolivian politics (Zuazo 2008). The same MAS, as already mentioned, rose in this context. Having said that, a first indicator that may signal a more inclusive nature of the MAS's governments is the composition of the Congress. As argued by Zegada and Komadina (2014) this was more heterogenous in the MAS's terms and better reflected the composition of Bolivian society, obtaining then a better descriptive representation of Bolivian people. This is showed in table 3.1. It is evident that groups previously mainly excluded (workers, artisans, and primary sector and transportation sector) by the state institutions, now have representatives. To this an increase in the participation of women (Wolff 2018), and the 7 seats reserved to indigenous minorities as provided by Constitution must be added. This is also indicated in a slight increase in the "egalitarian component index" of V-Dem Indexes from 0.56 (1993, 2005) to 0.64 (2014). While a better descriptive representation does not necessarily mean more responsive policies and an effective increase in participation, this should be assessed as an improvement with respect to previous patterns of exclusion.

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Table 3.1. Composition of Bolivian Congress, 1993-2014.

Sector	1993–97	1997–2002	2002–2006	2006–10	2010–14
Public Administration	14%	16%	22%	17%	19%
Middle-Class Professionals	49%	38%	28%	25%	18%
Politician	4%	4%	8%	7%	11%
Workers, Artisans, and Primary Sector	4%	11%	11%	19%	26%
Transportation	-	2%	1%	4%	5%
Business and Private Sector	24%	27%	27%	27%	19%
Retirees, Students, Other	5%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Sample Size	74	98	80	96	97

Source: Zegada and Komadina (2014, 57)

The picture outlined by Zegada and Komadina (2014) was the result of direct and indirect participation of social movements to the process of candidates' selection for the legislative (Anria 2018; Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). In this regard a differentiation has to be made between the uninominal and plurinominal seats of the Chamber. As emerged by the illuminating study of Anria (2018) and also by the direct testimony of Manuel Canelas (see more on this at section 3.4) there is a great percentage of representatives that come from both social movements that supported the MAS since its origins and those that join the coalition in a second moment. This is especially true for the uninominal seats that represent the deputies with a closer grip with the local territories since directly elected by popular vote. Through several interviews Anria (2016b) showed that the process of candidates' selection here appears quite decentralized with the movements deciding their own candidates. This is especially true in parts of the country where civil society is highly organized and in support of the MAS. Where instead civil society is weak or it is strong but support opposition forces, other patterns emerge as MAS's alliances with local parties or organizations or a more centralized decision of candidates by a restricted group or even by the same Morales. To achieve a descriptive representation like the one showed in Table 3.1, even the sectors not belonging to the "core constituencies" of the MAS (Anria 2013) must be represented and this is usually achieved through the plurinominal seats which are commonly more representative of the middle-classes and people less interested to the

collective identity (Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). Here the process follows a more hybrid patterns with top-down decision making as in the cases of *invitados* (invited) by Morales or the high ranks of the executive (Anria 2016b. Silva 2017). It must be noted however, that the role of the Congress has been downsized in the last decade in favor of a stronger executive as emerged in the previous paragraph. Following what former vice-president García Linera defined as "democratic centralism", party discipline, something that per se is not totally uncommon in parliamentary system, seems to be the rule and to reach high levels at the legislative (Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). If this may indicate party unity, it is also a characterization of a party/movement that despite having gained hegemonic majorities for years, essentially remained poorly bureaucratized and formalized. Thus, the inclusion and increasing participation gained through the formal channels of the legislative may often be more of a symbolic nature than an actual one.

It is indeed more in the informal practices that advances in participation and the social control mechanism took place.[88] Especially during the first Morales' mandate the MAS and the supporting social movements have been in close contact to enact the boldest measures mentioned in section 3.2. This was particularly true for the process of constitution-making. As highlighted by Farthing and Kohl (2014) this process involved a huge number of movements' representatives directly in the Constituent Assembly or indirectly through consultation. The MAS's first draft was actually prepared by the Unity Pact (*Pacto de Unidad*), an alliance of peasants, indigenous and popular organizations.[89] Even though downsized after the Congressional discussion with the opposition forces, themes present in the constitution as indigenous autonomy and the inclusion of the indigenous collective rights and cosmology as ethical and moral principles of the state[90] is due to the advisory role of the Unity Pact. Another central informal organization has been the National Coordination for Change (*Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio*, CONALCAM) (Balderacchi 2017) even though served more

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[88] The culture of political informality in Bolivia and in particular in the MAS, and their consequences are discussed in the summary of the interview to Manuel Canelas at section 3.4.

[89] This included the CSUTCB, Bartolinas, CSCIB, CIDOB, CONAMAQ. In general, from now when referring to "popular organizations" CSOs or social movements we will refer to the totality of indigenous, peasants and urban movements. Of course, each of them assumes different importance and power.

[90] Among these the Aymara principle of *suma qamaña* (*vivir bien*, living well) similar to that analyzed in the Ecuadorian constitution in chapter 2.

as a mobilizational instrument to parallel the institutional work made in the Congress and in the Constituent Assembly.

Grass-roots influences in the process of policy decision-making continued even after the implementation of the Constitution. Anria (2018, 136) described these informal practices as the "creative capacities" of the movements. As emerged by his work and by my interview to Manuel Canelas ("Honestly, I believe that there are some decisions that the executive makes that do not have to be always negotiations with the organizations") these influences varied depending on the policy area. Both Anria's (2018) work and the direct testimony that I gathered converged in pointing out that some Minsters, especially the one of Public Finance and Economy are usually restricted and immune to popular pressures even for their technical nature. Here, decisions are made by a restricted group of experts in cooperation with the Bolivian Central Bank, whose independence was restricted with the new constitution.[91] In other areas which directly touch interests of popular sectors that are usually highly organized as the Mining Minster and the Agricultural Development and Land Minster, the influences from below are more felt. Here, through direct representative of the main organizations, unionized miners or cooperative miners for the former and mainly the CSUTCB for the latter, or through pressure in Congress or in the streets, decisions can hardly be imposed from above. Silva (2017) considers this pattern as reminding in a sense old practices of state corporatism with the MNR in the 50s, even though here the mechanisms are informal and less hierarchical. The ordinary mechanisms of the internal politics of the MAS are showed in the summary of my interview to Manuel Canelas. Overall, from his testimony emerged a general pattern of informal and complicated processes of negotiation and consultation.[92]

The collaboration between the MAS and the social movements as argued by Silva (2018) and as emerged in section 3.2 started teetering during the second mandate when differences among the "project from above" and the "project from below" appeared sometimes (43). In absence of a valid common enemy as it was individuated during the

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[91] This restricted independence and the coordination with the Minster, hardly in line with the orthodox economics, did not lead to a politicized management of the economy nor to inflationary policies as the mainstream economics would claim. See Arauz et al. (2019).

[92] For further information, see *Popular Participation* at section 3.4 of the interview with Manuel Canelas.

constitution-building process years, the first fissures emerged within the broad MAS coalition. The most explanatory events for the mobilizational power of social movements in Bolivia and the impossibility for Morales to act as he pleased are the *gasolinazo* protests and the TIPNIS dispute. The former was the consequence of the government's attempt to lift the fuel's subsidies. The measure was in line with the Public Finance and Economy Minster's objective of enacting sound macroeconomic policies since the subsidies represented a huge burden for the state's coffers. However, the measure was enacted almost by surprise the day after Christmas, 26 December 2010 without any prior consultation as the informal rules provided. The consequences of the lift, an increase for fuel prices and a linked uncertainty regarding food and other essential goods' prices triggered heated protests from sectors that had supported the MAS until then as truckers, middle-classes and even the participation of the COB. In the end, the measure was reversed, demonstrating that the allegedly principle of "leading by obeying" that Morales inherited from its past in the *cocaleros* unions, even if not always the rule, was something more than mere rhetoric.

The TIPNIS disputes regarded the construction of a highway linking Cochabamba and Beni, that passed for the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure*, TIPNIS) and to which the indigenous communities of the park were adverse. The project, as the attempts with the removal of fuel subsidies, responded to economic necessities of the MAS since it would have represented a great improvement in the infrastructure of the country and for the local and regional economy of the interested areas. However, the Park was recognized as an indigenous territory and was home to three different indigenous groups. These were contrary to the construction because of the environmental damages that it would have caused. They argued that the construction would opened up the park to mining and oil and gas exploration, alongside loggers and coca farmers (Collyns 2017). The main results would be then damages for the biodiversity of the zone and the country and usurpation of an indigenous territory. What indigenous groups lamented more however was the absence of previous consultation by the government as theoretically expected by the constitution for measures interesting indigenous territories and collective rights. CONAMAQ and the CIDOB, representing respectively high-land indigenous groups more alienated to the market logic and more identity oriented, and

low-land indigenous communities, backed also by international environmentalist NGOs defended the rights of the local indigenous, and led the protests that culminated with a march for life to La Paz in October 2011. On the other hand, other movements more interested in the economic outcomes of the highway as the *cocaleros* and the CSUTCB supported the government's measure and organized counter-protests. Overall, differently from the *gasolinazo* protests, the TIPNIS dispute was managed poorly, in a confused way and occasionally violently repressed with armed forces by the MAS. Morales tried also to discredit the protests as a form of "environmental colonialism" by foreign NGOs (Collyns 2017) and adopted tactics that split the CIDOB into loyalists and dissidents. In the end the construction was blocked but wounds and delusions remained within the MAS coalition, with CIDOB and CONAMAQ leaving the Unity Pact.[93] Finally, the event demonstrated how Morales and the MAS used to privilege the interests and the vision of the indigenous identity closer to that of the majority (Aymara and Quechua *cocaleros*) disregarding minorities. Postero (2015) read this event as the example of tensions between different actors who claim to represent the indigenous people and identity, on one side Morales and on the other autonomous indigenous movements.[94]

These events demonstrated what Anria (2018, 152) defined the "constraining capacities" of movements and Silva (2017, 102) interpreted as forms of "contestatory interest intermediation". Despite handled in different ways by Morales and the MAS (in an occasion concentration of power and co-optation practices were attempted) these events attest the autonomy and the vivacity of the Bolivian CSOs. In the end the outcome was a reversal of the initial measure. These are just the most blatant events of what happen when attempting to force decisions that do not enjoy of popular support.

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[93] The TIPNIS dispute is actually an ongoing issue. A process of consultation took place in 2012 but after the protests was seen as a prior consultation for an already made decision. The process theoretically found agreements to continue the construction of the highway but was heavily criticized in Bolivia by the Ombudsman for lack of transparence and disloyal practices, and generally abroad. After that the construction of the infrastructure seem in a period of stalemate. See Collyns (2017).

[94] Another insight that the TIPNIS dispute has revealed is the tension between a formal framework, the constitution, and a rhetoric, that of Morales, that emphasized the *suma qamaña* (*vivir bien*, living well) principle and the defense of the *Pachamama* (Mother earth) and political practices that instead mainly follow an extractivist development model. While not being strictly related to the purpose of this work, the search for an alternative sustainable development model that goes beyond the Washington Consensus and the "Commodities Consensus" (Svampa 2013) is much needed given the times we live in and represents an interesting topic for further research.

The most recent attempt was the fourth Morales' candidature at the 2019 election. Without entering the debate whether what happened in those days was a coup or not, it is evident that the last years of the indigenous leader had alienated even his most ardent supporters. Since after the 2016 referendum, Morales and the high ranks of the MAS spent most of the time finding ways to pursue Morales' re-election. The broader implications have been already analyzed in section 3.2. What matters here is that in the end the "government of the social movements" as commonly they like to be referred, organized a campaign based on the use of state resources and on demobilization (Stefanoni 2020).[95] This finally caused that when most needed, the collective actors that historically had backed him, and had enjoyed of a great mobilizational power, stepped aside (Stefanoni 2020).

Overall, this work argues that the blatant events cited and analyzed, even in part the unexpected end of Morales in 2019, the informal mechanisms of consultation and negotiation and in a lesser extent the better descriptive representation in the Congress exercised a role of "social accountability". So far, as evinced by the analysis social accountability took an informal, non-institutionalized form. On one hand, it necessarily follows that it could not assume a universal character and depended mainly in the mobilizational force of the movements (Wolff 2013). For these reasons, social accountability cannot be regarded as a real and complete substitute of horizontal accountability. On the other hand, considered what happened to the more institutional and formal mechanisms as explained in the previous section, it can be argued that social accountability, even if with mixed results, probably worked precisely for its informality.

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[95] The demobilization part is relatively confirmed by Canelas. See section 3.4.

3.4 The Interview

3.4.1 Methodology

On 28 January 2022 I conducted a remote interview with Manuel Canelas, former MAS deputy (in the plurinominal section for La Paz) (2015-18), vice-Minister of Development Planification (2018-January 2019) and Minister of Communication (January 2019-October 2019) during the last Morales' mandate.[96] For his direct role in the Bolivian political process, this constitutes an example of elite interview. As such, his personal testimony may be a useful tool to generate unique data (Dexter 1970) especially for the next future of the MAS as a party/movement and of Bolivia. The interview followed a semi-structured scheme with some prepared questions but leaving the interviewee the possibility to freely expand on different arguments when needed. The semi-structured nature of the interview allows to use it both as a sort of hypothesis testing to complete and corroborate the analysis of the previous section, and as a catalyzer of interesting new insights regarding our case study.

The interview touched mainly four broad arguments: (1) (populist) rhetoric and communication; (2) power concentration and related (political competition, the relationship between legislative and executive, and the judiciary); (3) political participation (formal and informal, role of and relationship with social movements); (4) the role and the leadership of Evo Morales. For all of them, their evolution and prospects for the future were discussed. The interview was conducted through the Microsoft Teams platform. The interviewee has given its consent to its registration. The interview has been conducted in Spanish. The final registration has then been written down, translated in English, and the most important parts have been extrapolated and paraphrased to write down a summary of the same. A summary of the interview follows below. After that, based on the confirmed and/or new information, some final considerations are drawn.

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[96] The interviewee agreed to the disclosure of his personal information under the Luiss Privacy policy on disclosure of personal data in accordance with Reg. EU/2016/679 Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

3.4.2 Findings

Rhetoric and Communication

For what concerns the communication strategy and the (populist) rhetoric of the party and their evolution, it emerged how a common challenge and difficulty for a party that stays in power for such a long time is to maintain a strong link with its grassroots, especially for the MAS and its origins as a party/movement and its claim to enact a transformative project. From the perspective of the interviewee, when you are within the state you follow a certain kind of discourse, a state liturgy. Basically, a country changes faster than the State and when you are the governing party it is more difficult to keep up with the rapid changes of the society. Under the MAS, Bolivia saw a rapid increase of the middle-classes. Another big change for Bolivia was a process of urbanization. The challenge that the MAS had to face, argues Canelas, was that to approach, as a mainly rural (*campesino*) party/movement in its origins, to these new middle-classes. These, especially younger generations, are not interested in participating in the *sindicato*, the core organizations of the MAS, they already have mobile phones, they travel, they have other different and higher expectations from the state. In sum, they usually share a more individualistic attitude and way of thinking and are less interested in the collective. The MAS had then to change but without losing its original nature. This was evident in the figure of Morales himself, from the Morales challenger in 2006 to the "Evo (Morales) statesman in 2014", guarantor of the unity of the nation, and above the political conflicts.

From that point, as admitted by Canelas, the party and also Morales found hard to continue changing, and to renovate the progressive nature of their project. There was a gap, argues Canelas, between the communication and attitude of the MAS, still closer to a rural atmosphere and the expectations of the new middle-class. On the other hand, losing this communication would have meant losing the epic rhetoric (*la épica*) that in their view maintained the core bases of the MAS. To understand the change in the MAS communication, Canelas considers the 2016 referendum as central. In Canelas' words "After the referendum, half of the country perceived us as an elite, that just want to stay in and maintain power". Surveys showed that vote intention for Morales was still the first, but it was decreasing. At the same time, satisfaction with the government and the

country status was still high. For the first time then, there was a gap between support for the way the things were handled and that for Morales and the MAS. Before, they usually converged. For this reason, the communication tried to be less focused on Evo and more on what Bolivian people liked. They wanted a really normal, "anti-epic" election in Canelas' words. Accordingly, they elaborated an electoral campaign more focused on the status of the country. The message to carry on was not do you want or like Morales or the MAS, but do you think you live better now than 5-10 years ago? Do you want to continue this? On the other hand, according to Canelas, the opposition and the main candidate Carlos Mesa wanted to present the election as a crossroad for the future of democracy of the country. They wanted a climate of "exceptionalism" around this election and that the rhetoric and messages focused on Morales and the MAS as an authoritarian threat for the country and responsible of all the evils and problems of Bolivia. According to Canelas, their electoral strategy worked until August 2019 when the surveys gave the MAS in clear advantage towards Carlos Mesa. The fires that broke out in the Amazonian Chiquitano Forest in August 2019 changed this. The fires, argues Canelas, created the conditions for the "exceptionalism" wanted by the opposition. Here the opposition forces were clever to blame Morales for the fires and turning the campaign as more centralized on Morales and the threat that supposedly posed for the country. Overall, this explains, in Canelas' view, the climate that surrounded the 2019 elections. However, the former Minister also recognizes their contribution to this heated political polarization due to probably wrong tactics and strategies, one on all that of forcing the Morales' candidacy.

Power concentration

Over the years, the MAS won several elections and with a great gap from the second political force. Trying to understand the relationship between the MAS and the political opposition from the point of view of one of the representatives of an affected part, seems interesting to make sense of the common critic made to MAS, that of concentrating the power in the executive. The interpretation of Canelas for such landslide victories seems to be that the increasing popular and indigenous identity from the 90s and the decay of the party system created a context such that who won the election (MAS) was carrying on a new transformative project that enjoyed of a high support. It wasn't, argues

Canelas, electoral circumstances that generated the victory of the MAS, this was more the result of a previous long process of cultural and social transformation. Canelas accuses then the opposition for not being able in these years to question itself, admit its errors and recognize first that the country was transforming and second that it was now different. Recognizing that, argues Canelas, would have meant recognizing some MAS's merits and then legitimizing the MAS as a political force.

With respect to a supposed imbalance in favor of the executive at the cost of the legislative, Canelas seems to follow a classic institutional view arguing that in a presidential system even fragile executives have advantages over the legislative. The legislative power is still key for the elections of members of the other powers of the state. Thus, the main point of Canelas seems to be that the super-majorities (2/3) enjoyed by the MAS from 2010 obviously guaranteed them a strong position in decision-making. This is, according to Canelas, the big political difference with the "Pacted Democracy" period, that never an executive enjoyed of such a great majority in the Congress like the MAS. For this reason, the role of the Congress may have been more central, for the necessary parliamentary alliances to govern. However, Canelas goes on, a common practice during the *Democracia Pactada*, and one that contributed to discredit it, was that of buying votes ("*las maletines de dinero para comprar votos*") to form governments. With respect to the relationship between the executive and the MAS deputies, having been on both sides, Canelas argues that after consultation in the end most of the times party discipline prevails, but considers it as a normal pattern of relation between a governing party and its parliamentary group. Overall, Canelas confirmed the fact of an executive with strong powers and, even though not touching the argument if they contributed to further increase this tendency of presidential systems, the Minister admits "I accept a critic that may say that we did not do much to avoid a concentration of power in a strong executive".

When talking about the judiciary, it is easier instead to catch the negative status of the system. The Judicial power, Canelas admits, is corrupted and politicized. There are diverse mechanisms through which corruption persists. Prosecutors and judges know or feel that if they act benevolently towards the executive, they can move up. This is a problem that affects Bolivia since years, but now, Canelas goes on, it is worse for the

magnitude of the problem. Even at the highest levels (Supreme Court of Justice, Agro-Environmental Court, Pluri-National Constitutional Court, and Council of Ministers of Justice) where the popular election of judges was introduced by the MAS, the situation has not improved. The popular election was an attempt to fight vertically corruption in the judiciary, argues Canelas, by letting the people decide and break the direct linkage between judges and the Congress. However, the former Minister admits, it did not work. People are hardly interested and mobilized for this kind of elections and corruption persists even at the higher level of the system which overall functions poorly.

Political Participation and Social Movements

Political participation has been increased in both formal and informal ways. Even the mentioned popular election of magistrates, points out Canelas, was not just a measure (even though ineffective) to try to fight corruption but also one to increase popular participation. Among the other formal mechanisms of direct and participatory democracy Canelas remembered the referendum enabled also by popular proposal and the recall election already mentioned in the analysis of the previous section. Interestingly, Canelas made an example of an ongoing attempt by lawyers and other actors of the civil society to change the judicial system through a referendum. The proposal would be to eliminate the popular vote and change the responsible of the candidates' preselection from the Assembly to a group of experts coming from the civil society, leaving then the Assembly the role of validating the selection made by these independent experts.

However, Canelas confirms that the real advances in the participatory nature have been and still are of informal nature. The MAS itself is not a party, points out the former Minister, but a broad coalition of social movements and organizations. Most of these organizations has direct representation in the legislative with deputies and senators. Referring to his experience as deputy, Canelas recalls how this kind of representatives often presented a tension between being holder of particular interests, those of their organization, and being representative of a project that must be national. Thus, even though popular or indigenous representation may be less pronounced in the executive, Canelas explains how the process of decision-making is actually a continuous negotiation. No other party in Bolivia seems to present this permanent negotiation and

involvement of sectors as the MAS. It is true, admits Canelas, that negotiating from the position of Minister or President gives a leverage and a stronger position over the representative of the collective, but this does not mean having absolute power in all decisions as sometimes depicted. Morales and the executive knew that they cannot always act as they want without considering particular interests. It stays in the ability of the executive, continues Canelas, how much to force the negotiation in its own favor and for what concerns. In this, according to the former Minister, "Evo" has unquestionable qualities. From his experience of Minister, Canelas recalls how when Morales was president, used to meet once a week with the officials of the main organizations as a kind of informal cabinet parallel to the formal one of the executive Ministers. Remembering one of these negotiations in which the list of deputies and senators' candidates had to be decided, Canelas says "I've been with him (Morales) in some negotiations, and contrary to common belief about the individual decision-making of the populist leader, that if he wants, Evo chooses the entire list, actually he couldn't do this, he could choose a small number of candidates for deputies and senators, he could suggest and struggle for some other names, but the rest was chosen by the social organizations".

Answering to the critic that the MAS is not a party of the social movements but a party of the heads of the social movements, Canelas admits the risk of these movements' leaders of pursuing personal careers and being co-opted by the government but underlies how in Bolivia there are a lot of informal ways to reach the minister or the deputy if they do not take into account your interests. Social movements have collective protest tactics that may be really effective as roadblocks. Overall, explains Canelas, Bolivia is not like European countries where collective spaces and actions are now rarer. Even though with the urbanization and the increase of the middle-classes an individualistic culture is emerging, the collective identity has not entirely declined. Bolivia, argues Canelas, is still a country with a strong collective culture and identity and neighborhood associations, unions are active and independent actors.

When asked about an opinion on these participatory mechanisms, Canelas points out that these are theoretically innovative and positive instances of "social control" but they also entail some cons. They can sometimes slow the process of decision-making

and above all excessively corporatize the State. However, he does not think that the MAS will change them, considering them "part of the DNA of the MAS". Furthermore, the people want and like that, "if your social base feel that you are excluding them, if the minister does not answer the phone, they organize a protest in the street" in Canelas' words. In considering then a possible future formalization of these practices, Canelas seems skeptic. He thinks that these will probably remain informal practices that yet for their frequency and repetitive nature have already become *costumbre* (custom) which in a sense, in his view, is a kind of formalization. Canelas believes that a formalization of these practices should be anchored to a formalization and bureaucratization of the MAS itself. And this, in turn, is even less likely in the next future in his opinion. Even though, there are discussions of this kind at the high ranks of the MAS, the former Minister believes that the political culture of informality which characterizes both MAS and Bolivia and the historical period which they are witnessing (post-2019 coup) render improbably a near formalization of the party.

The Role and Leadership of Evo Morales

Considering the elective affinity between populism and leadership (Mudde 2017) the last topic treated was that of the figure of Morales within the MAS and in Bolivia more generally. What emerged by Canelas' testimony is that Morales was and still is today, despite not assuming any official position within the Arce's government, the most important leader of the MAS. This in turn reveals the very informal nature of the party/movement. This informality, almost the colloquiality within the MAS mechanisms and structures, is evidenced in the first place by the way Canelas appeals when talking about the former President as simply "Evo".

The importance and the centrality of Morales emerged above all when trying to analyze two events from the perspective of one of the interested parties: the 2016 Referendum, and the post-2019 elections. With respect to the former, the reader may find counterintuitive forcing the candidacy of Morales and the kind of electoral campaign that then the MAS tried to implement, with Morales himself sidelined.[97] Why

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[97] The question about the legality and/or fairness of such candidacy is here set aside. What seems more interesting is understanding the political strategy, probably wrong, from one of the representatives who knows the MAS's internal dynamics.

do not just propose a different fresher candidate, one may ask. Conversing with Canelas, it turns out that from the point of view of the MAS, the referendum, and the will to continue with "Evo" was based on two beliefs and fears. First, obviously Morales had won all the elections until then and with huge margins, so why to change? Second, in the indigenous movements there is a strong tradition of factionalism, and Morales was perceived by the party/movement as the glue to maintain all different popular and indigenous organizations together. The theme of factionalism vis-à-vis unity is typical of leftist parties and his reinforced in Bolivia by this strong propensity towards factionalism of the indigenous movements, especially the Aymara. Basically, there was no one else within the MAS that could be accepted contemporarily by middle-classes in the eastern departments and all the popular-indigenous organizations and factions in the West. The fears were then: if Evo is not the candidate the MAS may break, and then we may lose elections, Canelas argues. With the benefit of hindsight these were false premises because in the 2020 elections the MAS was able to win without Morales. However, at that time, when they lost the referendum, this result was instead read as a confirm of their fears and beliefs, as if now after the referendum, proceeding without Evo would have certainly meant creating different factions, breaking the unity of the MAS, and losing the elections.

Turning to the post-2019 elections, Canelas signals how the significance of Morales was once again revealed. Recalling those tumultuous days, the former Minister affirms "after we left the government, there were plans from the most radical sections of the opposition to murder Evo, […] if these worked, the MAS would have collapsed for sure". Even by his position of exiled in Argentina, Morales was then able to put order in a party in chaos and help deciding a unique candidate (Arce) and avoid the break of the party. The key role of "Evo" within the party, asserts Canelas, is due both to his person and abilities but also to things that go beyond that. It is here that the most classic associations with populism and a certain way of doing politics in Latin America emerge. "It is not just the Evo person – Canelas says – but the Evo figure, […] I believe that the kind of charismatic leadership, *caudillista*, still represents something that is not replaceable". The MAS seems then to be still anchored to the leadership of Morales, but Canelas clarifies "if then this leadership has to mean being the president or not, this is another argument".

Today however, Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca are the President and vice-President of Bolivia. When analyzing the possible future relationship with the social movements, Canelas warns that at least initially this could prove more difficult and challenging now that Arce replaced Morales. "It is not easy – Canelas admits – they are politically clever sectors, their officials are skillful in negotiation, and their political culture is challenging". One of the particularities and skills of Morales to which Canelas referred was this, that of knowing the organizations for a long time, having been and to be part of them. Yet, the former Minister points out that even for Morales, with his leadership, and years of experience, "the relationship with the movements was neither entirely vertical nor easy". Arce for his history and experience, does not seem to have the same skills of Morales with the movements. For this reason, Canelas thinks that it will normally take him more time and effort to find agreement with them. In this the vice-President Choquehuanca given his history in the movements may help. Choquehuanca, explains Canelas, knows the movements, he may not have the same national appeal of Morales since, as asserted by Canelas, the vice-President's leadership is more "Andean", it has more weight in the departments of Oruro, La Paz and Potosí, but he knows how to deal with them.

Considering the new arrangements within the MAS, with Arce and Choquehuanca as the two with more actual power given their positions and Morales who still remains the figure with most influence upon the popular movements, Canelas does not sound overly pessimistic about the future unity of the MAS. The future of the party, admits Canelas, is certainly linked to these three persons and their relationship. However, the former Minister considers the risk of a break of the party because of their personal aspirations as present but not probable or imminent. On one hand, compared to the past, there is now more competition in the high ranks of the party with Arce, Choquehuanca and Morales. Before the leadership of Morales was undisputable. Now there is a competitive level among the three. "Evo", argues Canelas, is probably still a step up for what he means symbolically, but Arce and Choquehuanca are not Morales' puppets. In a sense then, Morales now has more obligations to talk and confront with Arce and Choquehuanca when deciding the future of the project of the MAS. On the other hand, after the opposition took power, they governed poorly. Canelas says that the Áñez's government was an exam and an opportunity for the opposition to show the country

that they were better than the MAS. Instead, comments the former Minister, they acted in really undemocratic ways, it has been a violent government, responsible for several violations of human rights, a corrupt government, and "a government that kills the popular sectors".[98] And what seems to be worse for them, continues Canelas, is that the people perceived this government as the government of the opposition, because the whole opposition united and backed the government of Jeanine Áñez. Canelas then concludes that even if there can be temptations or personal aspirations from Morales, Arce or Choquehuanca, "the memory of what the right has done against the popular movements in 2020 is the best antidote to keep the MAS united".

3.4.3 Final Considerations

The semi-structured interview to Manuel Canelas aimed to corroborate the analysis of the previous section and generate interesting new insights regarding the Bolivian case study. With respect to the first objective, the two broad arguments of political competition and participation were addressed. New insights regarded instead the MAS's rhetoric and communication strategy and their evolution, and the role and figure of Evo Morales within the party and in Bolivia. Especially the latter permits to make some speculations about the future of the MAS and of democracy in Bolivia.

Starting from already analyzed and noted information, it can be said that the direct testimony of Canelas relatively corroborates the outcomes of the previous analysis. This is true for the participatory form of democracy. The internal dynamics and mechanisms explained by Canelas seem to match the view that the executive in Bolivia is strong, and Morales had a grip on the movements but despite this, especially in certain matters, he had to negotiate and consult the social partners which generally retained their autonomy and mobilizational power. In a country in which horizontal accountability works poorly like Bolivia, these patterns, even though informal, functioned as a mechanism of social accountability and may continue in the near future considering the still strong collective identity present in the country. Precisely for the informality of these mechanisms, the interview was necessary to corroborate results mainly drawn from a rich review of qualitative studies based upon interviews, and field studies.

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[98] The former Minister here refers to the Sacaba (in the Chapare Province) and Senkata (El Alto) massacres. See Alvelais et al. (2020), Amnesty International (2021, 89-91), Human Rights Watch (2019).

Indeed, corroborating this part of the analysis through quantitative measures as democracy indexes has proven to be difficult because they rarely gauge these informal mechanisms.[99] For what concerns power concentration and then the negative implications associated with the MAS, as expected it resulted more difficult to extrapolate significant and insightful information from a part that even though now not directly involved, has a recent past of affiliation with the party. Especially treating the relationship between executive and legislative resulted complicated. Beyond the truthfulness of the institutional view given by the interviewee that a presidential system entails a strong executive, it is fair to note that the MAS contributed to this model by adopting practices that were at best "semi-loyal" toward the representative form of democracy (Lehoucq 2020).[100] The result was an erosion of horizontal accountability in terms of a diminished role of the legislative and a seriously undermined judicial power. The politicized and poorly functioning Judicial System emerged indeed in the interview as one of the issues that the current MAS government should tackle in a different and more efficient way. In this regard, the mentioned discussion about a referendum of popular initiative (lawyers and other linked sectors of the civil society) to change the election method rendering it more independent from political dynamics seems a good starting point. Overall, it is fair to mention the risk of the interviewee's bias toward the more positive aspects related to the past experience of the MAS. This was an expected risk and justifies then the preliminary analysis made in the previous section, especially for what concerns the liberal representative form of democracy in Bolivia, to deliver the most impartial balance of the MAS's implications for the Bolivian democracy.

Turning to the new information gathered, interesting insights emerged. The two macro-arguments Rhetoric and Communication and the Role and Leadership of Evo Morales are strictly correlated. Maintaining the vast and heterogenous support that the

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[99] This is in line with Wolff (2018) who lamented an individualistic focus of the methodology and measurement of democracy indexes that does not allow to catch other facets of democratic quality. Bringing the Bolivian example, Wolff (2018) argued that these quantitative assessments, even the one with different conceptions of democracy as the one adopted in this work, are not able to show and explain the important advancements for Bolivian democracy in terms of what he called (second) "political incorporation" following Silva (2017). For the concept of political incorporation see supranote 16.
[100] As argued by Wolff (2021) "Democracy is a battle of ideas, but one that depends on treating opponents as legitimate adversaries not treasonous enemies". For the importance of a "loyal opposition", something which actually lacked too in Bolivia, but also, I would add of a "loyal governing party", see Wolff (2021).

MAS gathered throughout the years has entailed challenges not only for the substance of the transformative project but also for the party's rhetoric and communication strategy. In this respect, the tensions in the MAS reflected a tension within the Bolivian society where a strong collective identity and culture persists but a growing individualist one is emerging. These challenges are even more pronounced if a party chooses to endure with the same leadership for more than 10 years. Morales was indeed perceived by the party/movement as the glue to maintain all different popular and indigenous organizations together and thus the will to continue with him as a candidate despite the presidential term limits is partially explained. This political-strategic view gives an alternative rationale to the populist conceptual framework for the late more authoritarian tendencies as the infringement of constitutional dispositions.[101]

Thus, even though the MAS has never been the personalistic vehicle of Morales as the cases of the parties of Chávez and Correa in Venezuela and Ecuador, the leader's authority within the party/movement had no equal. What the key role of Morales and its leadership reveal is the very informal nature of the party/movement. This represents a clear weakness of the MAS. A more formalized (institutionalized) party would create the opportunities to create internal competition to Morales and in turn democratize the party/movement from within. A more autonomous party with internal competition should disincentivize or in the worst-case block personalistic and authoritarian behaviors as the evasion of term limits (Kouba 2016, 452-3). Considering that the MAS is still the most popular party in Bolivia, this would have functional benefits for liberal and representative democracy itself.

However, it must be remembered that the same informal nature that guaranteed Morales' strong grip of the MAS, also allowed advances in political participation in form of mechanisms of social accountability, even though informal. It has even been argued that social accountability worked precisely for its informality. Overall, this represented an improvement not only for the participatory nature of Bolivian democracy but in presence of a weak horizontal accountability was the strongest check on Bolivian executive. In the end the most deleterious aspects of the Bolivian

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[101] In a sense this view corroborates the hypothesis that populists may disregard some formal liberal rules because seen as a restriction to their mission. In this case indeed political strategies assumed more importance than the respect of and belief on the value of constitutional rules.

democracy in the last ten years were more linked to Morales' authoritarian tendencies and not to the practices of participatory democracy, where these mechanisms of informal social accountability emerged. More generally, innovative and improved mechanisms of social accountability should be seen as complementary to the functioning of the two traditional horizontal and vertical ones.

Conclusions

This work applied the concept of populism to analyze the path of the Bolivian MAS, from challenger of an established order to a governing party/movement that has ruled for more than 10 years. In doing so, the analytical concept of populism was intertwined with that of social movements. In the end the Bolivian case allowed to analyze both the causes of populism and some of its main implications for democracy. Some results of this work are in line with the general understanding and literature on populism, others signal the uniqueness of this case in the delineated regional context of Latin America.

Following Sartori's (1970) emphasis on the importance of concept formation, the first chapter is dedicated to the building of the theoretical framework then applied to the rest of the work. This process of theory-building has been made through an intense and deep literature review of theoretical and empirical works on populism, with an emphasis to the Latin American region. From this section emerged the definition of populism applied in this research, a more general theory for its causes, a theoretical framework to understand its implications for democracy, and liaison points between populism and social movements and their possible relationships.

In Chapter 2 a deep historical analysis shows how different structural and institutional factors, and the agency of social movements produced the "perceived crisis of democratic legitimacy" in Bolivia for the rise of the MAS. The overall outcome that led to the victory of the MAS at the 2005 elections is in line with the general theory enunciated in Chapter 1 and, with contextual differences, with what happened in other regional experiences of populism (Correa in Ecuador and Chávez in Venezuela). Morales, Correa, and Chávez share their anti-imperialistic, anti-establishment, and Manichean (in different degrees), rhetoric and may be defined as populist following the ideational approach adopted in this research. However, the Bolivian case differs from the other two for the patterns of mobilization that characterized the ascendance of its populist leader. It was indeed a bottom-up mobilization, and the leadership of Morales,

himself part of one movement (*cocaleros*), was created within the movements. This is the first point that detaches Morales and the MAS from the populist tradition in Latin America, and for this reason the work labels the MAS as an atypical populist party/movement.

Chapter 3 passes to analyze the MAS in power and in particular the implications of 13 years of populist ruling. Part of the transformative project of Evo Morales and the MAS was certainly that of revitalizing a democracy perceived as distant and making the interests of few local and international elites at the expense of most of Bolivian people. In the "Pacted Democracy" period (1985-2003) governability and political stability were achieved at the cost of responsiveness with a programmatic alignment of all the major governing parties, and of representation and participation with women, popular classes and indigenous mostly excluded by the high ranks of the legislative and executive. In one of the most "indigenous" countries of Latin America, the process of change had to pass through a "decolonization" of the state. The new Bolivian Constitution (2009) was understood as the legal framework to achieve that. The art. 11 of the Bolivian Constitution states that Bolivia "adopts a participatory democratic, representative, and communal form of government". From this conception of "demodiversity" (Exeni Rodríguez 2012) that enriches the framework defined in Chapter 1, we analyzed the implications for the liberal representative and the participatory form of democracy in Bolivia. The qualitative analysis was corroborated and enriched by the semi-structured interview to Manuel Canelas, former Minister of Communication (2019). These results emerged.

Morales' governments often assumed "semi-loyal" attitudes toward political opposition and the liberal institutions of the country. The results were a politicized and dysfunctional judicial system and a political panorama that even for opposition's own faults did not present any credible alternatives to the MAS for almost a decade. The downsized role of the legislative and unreliable institutions are of course bad news for the liberal representative form of Bolivian democracy and suggest that one form of accountability, the horizontal one has been severely weakened.

Morales' governments increased political participation in formal and informal ways. With respect to the former a better descriptive representation of Bolivian society

was achieved, especially at the Congressional level. While a better descriptive representation does not necessarily mean more responsive policies and an effective increase in participation, this should be assessed as an improvement with respect to previous patterns of exclusion. It was however in the informal mechanisms that most advancements were made, and an interesting insight emerged. Through informal practices of negotiation and consultation grass-roots influences can reach the process of candidates' selection and decision-making of some policy areas. The interview to Canelas was crucial to understand these internal dynamics that for their informality are hardly caught by quantitative assessments as democracy indexes. Furthermore, the strong collective identity that characterizes Bolivia, their retained autonomy despite attempts of co-optation and management from the top, and the mobilizational power of some Bolivian CSOs allow them to check the government even with "street politics". Two past events (*gasolinazo* and TIPNIS dispute) and in part the most recent fall of Morales in 2019 were bring as examples of that.

Overall, this work argues that the blatant events cited and analyzed, the informal mechanisms of consultation and negotiation and in a lesser extent the better descriptive representation in the Congress exercised a role of "social accountability". Alongside the patterns of mobilization, this other finding marks the difference of the Bolivian case vis-à-vis the Ecuadorian and Venezuelan ones. So far this form of accountability took an informal, non-institutionalized form. On one hand, it necessarily follows it could not assume a universal character and depended mainly in the mobilizational force of the movements (Wolff 2013). For these reasons, social accountability cannot be regarded as a real and complete substitute of the weak horizontal accountability. On the other hand, considered what happened to the more institutional and formal mechanisms, it can be argued that social accountability, even if with mixed results, probably worked precisely for its informality.

In the end, the most deleterious aspects of the Bolivian democracy in the last ten years were more linked to Morales' authoritarian tendencies than to the practices of participatory democracy, where these mechanisms of informal social accountability emerged. More generally, innovative, and improved mechanisms of social

accountability should be seen as complementary to the functioning of the two traditional horizontal and vertical ones.

Now that the MAS came back to govern in 2020 with Luis Arce as president, one of the main objectives of the government seems to be the reform of the politicized judicial system to change it and recover the rule of law. Moreover, considering the still strong collective identity present in the country, the patterns of social accountability may be expected to continue. Then the main challenge for the MAS and the Bolivian party system, and one that if achieved would have beneficial effects for the Bolivian democracy in both of its two forms, representative and participatory, seems to be to maintain a balance between informality and institutionalization to recover horizontal accountability and combine it with informal mechanisms of social accountability.

Considering the recent discontent about the state of democracy in the region, even for one of the most stable and institutionalized democracy, Chile, where more participation was asked and important changes happened and seem to be ongoing, it is worth wondering whether informal mechanisms of social accountability may work in support of traditional ones to help the legitimation process of democracy and its deepening.

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Summary

Introduction

To understand populism, no better context can be considered but Latin America, the "land of populism" (de la Torre 2017). Several countries of this region have seen throughout their history the rise and fall of different populist leaders, parties, or movements. The most recent was the forced exile of the first indigenous president that Bolivia ever had, Evo Morales of the leftist Movement Toward Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, MAS) after 13 years of consecutive ruling (2006-2019). After one year of the interim government of the conservative Jeanine Añez, on 18 October 2020 general elections took place in Bolivia. Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca were elected president and vice-president of Bolivia and the party (MAS) came back to power. The timing seems then perfect to make an overall balance of the Morales' and MAS's 13 years in terms of their effects upon the state of the Bolivian democracy.

The division of the work is the following. The 1st Chapter provides a rich state of the art of the theoretical literature and some empirical findings on populism. Following Sartori's (1970) emphasis on the importance of concept formation, the chapter starts by reviewing the several definitions proposed and employed with a special emphasis on the Latin American region to finally justify the one chosen by this work, a "discursive-ideational" one (Mudde 2004; Mudde 2017; Hawkins 2009). The causes of populism are then analyzed. Structural, emotional-individual, and institutional factors intertwine and contribute to form what this work calls "failures of representation" or "perceived crises of democratic legitimacy" (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017b; Hawkins et al. 2017). What happens when populists get to power is the third section of this first chapter. The effects considered are both on the political-institutional side (effects for democracy) and briefly on the policies side (economic policy). The arguments made for the relationship between populism and democracy constitute the theoretical basis to be applied in the analysis of the Bolivian case study in Chapter 3. Finally, given the key role played by social movements in the Bolivian experience both at the origin and evolution of the populist party/movement, a section that mixes literature on populism and social movements concludes the chapter.

Chapter 2 contextualizes the case. Firstly, it gives a regional contextualization by briefly reviewing other contemporary leftist (populist and not) experiences and their differences in the relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs). A special emphasis is given to the other two populist experiences with which Bolivia and Morales are usually grouped, Venezuela with Chávez and Ecuador with Correa. The focus then shifts to the case of the work, Bolivia. An in-depth historical analysis of the Bolivia pre-MAS is given to show the different structural and institutional factors and the agency of social movements that produced the "perceived crisis of democratic legitimacy" for the Bolivian case. The chapter concludes by analyzing the nature and the strategies of the MAS as a populist party/movement and its early relationship with social movements in the country. This allows to signal some key differences of Morales and the MAS with respect to the cases with which are commonly grouped (Chávez and Correa). It then concludes in part the first comparative section of the Chapter and further justifies the case-selection.

While the 2nd Chapter analyzed the cause of MAS's rise and then the MAS as a challenger of an established order, Chapter 3 passes to analyze its consequences, and then the MAS as a governing party. The Chapter starts by setting the political, social, and economic contexts in which the Morales' governments ruled alongside the main measures enacted that are of interest for this work. 13 years of ruling is a long time, within which not only these contexts but also the government's attitude, strategies and actual measures changed. The second section passes to analyze the effects for the Bolivian democracy of 13 years of populist ruling. Considering the pluralistic form of the Bolivian democracy as both representative and participatory, as stated by the new Constitution of 2009, and based upon the theory-building of Chapter 1, this essay argues that negative effects are expected for the liberal representative form, while positive ones for the participatory form. With respect to this last, the role of social movements is of paramount importance. While they cannot entirely be substitutive to the erosion of horizontal accountability, these can in part counterbalances the most authoritarian tendencies linked with a populist governor, performing a role of "social accountability" (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000; Anria 2018). The last section of the Chapter provides a summary of the personal interview made with Manuel Canelas, former Minister of Communication in 2019 in the last Morales' government. Based on this and the

previous analysis, some insights and final considerations for the whole research are drawn. The Conclusions summarizes the work and, based on the findings, makes some conjectures about possible future research and the next future of the MAS and Bolivia with the return of the MAS with Luis Arce.

The nature and the methodology of this work are clearly qualitative and in particular follow those of a single-case study with a brief comparative section in Chapter 2. The qualitative analysis is enriched in Chapter 2 by opinion surveys of the Latin American NGO *Latinobarómetro* and in Chapter 3 by various Democracy Indexes from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute and by the interview to the Minister of Communication as primary sources

1. Populism: A state of the art

After an overview of the first works on the definition of populism, the Chapter presented the two most used and influential theories on populism for the Latin American context: the political-strategic definition (Weyland 2001) and the one followed in this work, the ideational one (Mudde 2004). Weyland (2001) defined populism "as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland 2001, 14). Populism in this sense is seen as a political strategy to gain and retain power as many others shown in Table 1.1. below. On the other hand, According to Mudde (2004), populism is defined as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004, 543). This definition, differently from previous conceptualizations, put the attention to a given set of ideas if not properly understood as an ideology. The use of the term ideology is indeed a controversial one, and together with "people", "elite" and "general will" constitutes the key elements of the ideational definition. Populism is a "thin-centered ideology" (Freeden 1998) that rarely exists by itself, and it is often anchored to other ideologies, the most common differentiation being between left-wing and right-wing populism. The terms "people" and "elite" are "empty signifiers" (Laclau 2005) whose meaning and substance vary according to the context in which populism

emerges. The justifications for using the ideational definition are described in-depth in the first Chapter. The most important thing seems to be that the ideational definition allows to analyze both the supply-side of populism of leaders, parties, and political elite in general, regardless of their sincerity or not, and the demand-side of it from the people.

Table 1.1. Political-Strategic Definition of Populism

TYPE OF RULER	PRINCIPAL POWER CAPABILITY			RULER'S RELATIONSHIP TO SUPPORT BASE
	Numbers	Special Weight		
		Economic Clout	Military Coercion	
Individual Person	**Populism**	Patrimonialism	*Caudillismo*	Fluid and Unorganized
Informal grouping	Clientelism	Oligarchy	Government by Military Faction	Firm Informal Ties
Formal Organization	Party Government	Corporatism	Government by Military Institution	Stable Organizational Links

Source: Weyland (2001)

Literature on populism abounds on the causes to clarify its emergence and support. This work follows the categorization made in Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017b) into Durkheimian, Downsian and Institutional theories to explain populism's appeal. Overall, following Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017b) and Hawkins et al. (2017), we may understand populism more generally as a byproduct of "failures of representation" or a normative response to "perceived crises of democratic legitimacy".

Given the prevalence of majoritarian populism in Latin American's history and the case treated in this work, the section on the political effects of populism emphasized the Latin American context. A general tip that emerged from a review of theoretical and empirical works is that both political and economic consequences of populist rule should be deducted by empirical analysis rather than by normative assumptions as it

often happened.[102] In analyzing populism's impact on democracy, it is fair to say that not only populism but also democracy itself is a debated and controversial concept to define (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). Based upon Dahl's (1971) definition of polyarchy and following Rovira Kaltwasser (2012), this work argues that populism may theoretically be a threat for public contestation and a corrective for political participation. Empirical studies (Huber and Schimpf 2016; Houle and Kenny 2018) point to the fact that populism seems to have a strong preference for vertical accountability over horizontal one.

Social movements may be conceived as "inclusive organizations comprised of various interest groups" (Tilly 2004, 1). Tilly (2004) understood social movements as a particular form of "contentious politics". Even though an understudied topic, there are some liaison points between the concepts of populism and social movements. They both can be understood as "non-institutionalized forms of contentious politics" (Roberts 2015, 682). The populist strategic interpretation of grievances might be interpreted as a master "frame" of them. The populist frame allows to transform mere discontent into action and mobilization. This is what actually happened with the several popular and indigenous movements in our case in Bolivia. Overall social movements may interact with populist parties and the party system in general in three ways :(1) influence to a certain degree the agenda of political parties or even forming their own political vehicle or party; (2) associate to some extent with existing political parties that empathize with their cause; (3) be co-opted by a political party and consequently lose their mobilizational force. Within the first case we can identify Bolivia with a party, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) of Evo Morales, born from the ranks of *cocaleros* movements and able to gain power electorally.

2. Contextualizing the Case: Bolivia and the MAS

Before to analyzing the case study of this work, this section started with a regional contextualization of the MAS rise. Briefly reviewing some Latin American experiences of the beginning of the 21st century permits to show some similarities with the Bolivian case and above all differences. It is in other words a comparative work necessary to

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[102] Populism is usually considered as a democratic disease or pathology (Rummens 2017) or romanticized as the purest form of democracy (Laclau 2005). This in turn depends on the ideal conception of democracy from which the authors start their thesis, liberal for the first, radical for the latter.

show the uniqueness of the Bolivian case, especially for what concerns the role of social movements and their relationship with the ruling populist party.

From the late 1990s, Latin America experienced a region-wide wave of elections of left-of-center governments. This left turn was unparalleled in the history of the region and captured the attention of several scholars (Castañeda 2006; Roberts 2007, 2008; Rodríguez-Garavito et al 2008; Cameron 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). The governments of Chávez/Maduro in Venezuela (1998-ongoing), Correa in Ecuador (2007-2017) and Morales in Bolivia (2006-2019) are commonly treated in the literature as the third wave of radical populism in Latin America (de la Torre 2017). These shared indeed some similarities. All three experiences represented new political movements whose candidates were to a certain degree or presented themselves as political outsiders. They arose to power in a fractionalized political system and were both cause and consequence of its final breakdown (Roberts 2007). In these countries all major parties basically converged around the neoliberal model and the fact that even parties historically linked with the labor took an active part to this process created a political vacuum to canalize any kind of dissent in an institutional way (Madrid 2009; Roberts 2015). All this created a favorable political opportunity structure for both widespread social protests and the subsequent populist experiences. Once in power, these leaders engaged in permanent political campaigns, and consolidated their hegemony through several and repeated elections and recalls (de la Torre 2017). All three leaders openly acclaimed images of the Latin American socialist and Marxist tradition (Roberts 2007) and used a Manichean language against the national elite and US hegemony. From an ideational point of view and in discursive terms (Hawkins 2009) these experiences, although in different degrees, clearly fit the populist label. However, the populist experiences lived by these Andean countries differed for the role played by social movements and their relationship with the populist party or leader. As argued by Roberts (2015) in neither Venezuela nor Ecuador did social movements generate the political leadership of Chávez and Correa. Furthermore, the patterns of socio-political mobilization following their presidencies were undoubtedly different from the Bolivian ones. Movements either retained less autonomy and followed a more classic top-down approach (Chávez) or fractionalized into coopted movements and hostile ones (Correa).

Given its long history of a poor country, afflicted by high socio-economic inequality and political instability, Bolivia might apparently seem as a most likely case of populism (Barr 2017, 79). However, since its transition to democracy in the 80s, despite an initial tumultuous situation of hyperinflation, the political system stabilized around the roles of three parties: the old and historic Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, MNR), the Nationalist Democratic Action (*Acción Democrática Nacionalista*, ADN) founded by the previous dictator Hugo Banzer, and the Revolutionary Left Movement (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*, MIR). Since 1985 and until the MAS victory in 2005 these parties basically alternated in the executive governments in a period known as "pacted democracy" in Bolivian politics history (Larson et al. 2008, 3). These years fundamentally reshaped state-society relation in favor of a neoliberal vision of the state, dismantling the previous framework of state-led capitalism that the same MNR had created since the Bolivian revolution in 1952. Neoliberal reforms were adopted with continuity regardless of who held the presidency. These clearly stabilized the hyperinflationary situation (1982-85) but at great social costs and with scant results in terms of economic growth (Klein 2011a, 246). From the beginning, anti-neoliberal protests from the factions touched did not miss but they were always in the end defeated (Silva 2009, 103). Similarly, challenges from populist parties in the 90s emerged but either they evaporated with the death of their leader, or they were co-opted in governments with one or more of the traditional parties, consequently losing their anti-establishment credibility (Madrid 2012, 48).

As it will be showed, this changed with the beginning of the new century. The MAS rose to power at the peak of mass social protests organized by several social movements against not only privatization measures per se, but the perceived political corruption and lack of transparency behind the deals stipulated by the government with foreign counterparts (Barr 2017). The MAS' victory was then both cause and consequence of the dismantle of the party system since it capitalized on the widening gap between traditional parties and popular interests (Madrid 2012, 36), what in the first theoretical chapter I called "failures of representation", and contributed to their final breakdown.

Finally, to analyze the supply side of populism and why it finally succeeded, the particular nature and the strategies of the MAS are analyzed. Madrid (2008; 2012)

described the experience of the MAS and Evo Morales as one of *ethnopopulism* (see Table 2.3. below).

Table 2.3. Differences between Populists and Ethnic Parties based on Electoral Appeals

	Ethnopopulist	Ethnic	Classical Populist	Neoliberal Populist
Makes Ethnic Appeals?	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**
Has an Ethnically Inclusive Platform?	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Adopt Nationalist Rhetoric and Ideas?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**No**
Advocates State Intervention and Redistribution?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**No**
Makes anti-system and anti-establishment appeals?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Employs Personalistic Appeals?	**Yes**	**Sometimes**	**Yes**	**Yes**

Source: Madrid (2008)

Anria (2018, 65-68) made an argument similar to that of Madrid (2008) by recognizing that MAS had and has a core constituency[103] and a non-core constituency[104] among its voters. According to Anria (2013), the different strategies adopted by the MAS with respect to their core and non-core constituencies are matched also by different organizational practices and patterns of mobilization. Thus, while "the rural dynamic that shaped the emergence of the MAS was one of bottom-up mobilization

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[103] The *cocaleros*, the CSUTCB, and other national peasant organizations.
[104] Other popular, usually urban, organizations in the Bolivian cities.

and organic party-movement linkages, the dynamics in the urban areas […] are more reminiscent of a populist machine" (Anria 2013, 35). Despite the patterns of mobilization are not what constitutes populism in this work's conceptualization, it is fair to say that, at least in the Latin American context, top-down mobilization and a key role of a charismatic leader have been so far the rule. For this reason, this work defines the MAS and Morales as an atypical populist experience. The Table 2.4 below shows main differences between Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

Table 2.4. Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador: Similarities and Differences

	Venezuela	Ecuador	Bolivia
Popular Mobilization Prior to the Election	Few and unorganized	Significant and organized	Significant and organized
Relationship between leader and CSOs	CSos created from above; Mainly Top-down	Leader external to CSOs; Conflictual	Organic, leadership created within the CSOs; Hybrid of Top-down and Bottom-up
Discourse/Rhetoric	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic	Manichean; Anti-establishment; Anti-imperialistic
Definition	Radical Populism	Radical Populism; Techno-populism	Radical Populism; Ethnopopulism; Movement-based Party

Source: Author's Elaboration on Sources cited in the dedicated Sections

Notes: CSOs (Civil Society Organizations). It refers to the ones mentioned in the dedicated Sections.

3. Analyzing the Case: The Bolivian MAS in Power

Evo Morales and the MAS stayed in power from January 2006 until October 2019. Throughout these years, they repeatedly won several elections and by high margins and enjoyed of relatively high popularity. Before to analyzing the broader implications for

the Bolivian democracy of such a long period of consecutive ruling, the chapter gives an overview of these 13 years highlighting the political, social, and economic contexts in which the MAS operated and their evolution. We can summarize Morales' experience by dividing it into three periods: 2006-09, 2009-16, 2016-19.[105] These differ in terms of the above-mentioned contexts but also of the government's attitude, strategies, and actual measures. The first period covers the entire Morales' first term. These years represented the most contentious (Wolff 2016) in which Morales and the MAS had to face a regional opposition made of political and economic elites from the eastern departments (*Media Luna*) of the country. Probably due to this political context, in these years the Morales and the MAS exhibited the most confrontational attitude and strategies to pursue their objectives. The objects of most dissent have been the drafting of the new Bolivian Constitution through a Constituent Assembly formed in 2006 and the demands of autonomy from the eastern departments. In the end an agreement for the Constitution was reached at the Congress with draft that severely downsized the first. The August 2008 recall elections, the January 2009 Constitutional Referendum and the 2009 elections strengthened Morales and the MAS. Morales received more than 60% of the votes and the MAS obtained super-majorities (more than 2/3) in both chambers. The road for a hegemonic government was set. The period 2009-16 may be summarized as that of the political retreat of the national opposition. In these years, the opposition was incapable of proposing a credible alternative to the hegemonic government of the MAS and political elite retreated in their regional departments. In the meanwhile, Morales' government changed attitude and started a period of cooperation with the eastern economic elites. While polarization and opposition from the right had quieted down, the first problems and protests from within the broad popular support group that formed the MAS appeared. Overall, Morales' attitude in this period shifted from that of the challenger toward one of statesman (Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). The 2014 elections confirmed Morales and the MAS but presented losses in the historical strongholds in the Andean departments of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí (Centellas 2015). The transformative project of the party in this period starts

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[105] For an historical analysis of the first two Morales' mandates (2006-14) see Farthing and Kohl (2014). For an analysis of the economic policies see Arauz et al. (2019). To understand Bolivia's development model, see Valencia (2015) and Svampa (2013).

atrophying (Personal Interview to Manuel Canelas). This last term saw also the clear emergence of plebiscitarian and authoritarian tendencies of Morales. Morales and the MAS called for a Referendum in 2016 to abrogate the presidential term limits. Even if by a low margin (51%) the Bolivians rejected the MAS's proposal. Both Driscoll (2017) and Blanchard (2019) showed how one of the reasons that explained the defeat was a decline in the votes from MAS's strongholds (Oruro and Potosí). However, Morales and the MAS chose to turn to the Pluri-National Constitutional Court that finally declared the candidacy possible as it was a human right of Evo Morales. The decision of the MAS had left discontents among the population and had created the right context for what in the country was missing for a long time, a united opposition. These backed the moderate ex ad-interim president Carlos Mesa for the 2019 presidential elections, presenting them as a crossroad for the democracy in the country. A strange shut down of the transmission of the electoral results generated accuses of electoral fraud from the opposition, and protests on the street started. When the Organization of American States (OAS), in its quality of independent official observer of the elections, expressed doubts about the regularity of the electoral process,[106] a mutiny started among the police and armed forces that forced Morales and García Linera to leave the country.

Preliminary Analysis

Part of the transformative project of Evo Morales and the MAS was certainly that of revitalizing a democracy perceived as distant and making the interests of few local and international elites at the expense of most of Bolivian people. During the Pacted Democracy governability and political stability were achieved at the cost of responsiveness with a programmatic alignment of all the major governing parties, and representation and participation with women, popular classes and indigenous mostly excluded by the high ranks of the legislative and executive. In the last years of the Pacted Democracy when popular demands and protests were ignored and violently repressed, letting some authors talk of a period of *Democradura* (Assies and Salman 2003). The democratic status of Bolivia when the MAS's government started was then anything but rosy. The normative basis of the post-Pacted Democracy era is the new

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[106] See OAS (2019a). For the final report, see OAS (2019b).

Bolivian Constitution approved in 2009.[107] The art. 11 of the Bolivian Constitution states that Bolivia "adopts a participatory democratic, representative, and communal form of government". The concept of pluralism stressed in the whole Constitution represents the formal, normative basis of a process of "decolonization of the State", as theorized by the ex-vice-president of Bolivia (García Linera 2020), in which the MAS supposedly engaged. Considering the vast literature review on populism and in particular its relationship with democracy analyzed in chapter 1, we may expect negative effects especially in the liberal component of democracy and thus the representative form. On the other hand, positive contributions may be expected with respect to the participatory form. This work argues then that the populist experience follows the hypotheses made by Rovira Kaltwasser (2012). In this vein a key role is played by social movements and organized civil society in general. An autonomous, organized, and mobilized civil society is what differentiated Bolivia from Ecuador and Venezuela and that might have relatively counterbalanced the most authoritarian tendencies of Morales. The deterioration of the relationship between Morales and CSOs and the consequent non-mobilization in his favor as in the golden times during the protests surrounding the post-2019 elections may be among the explanatory variables for the Morales' forced exile.

The Interview, Findings and Final Considerations

On 28 January 2022 I conducted a remote interview with Manuel Canelas, former MAS deputy (in the plurinominal section for La Paz) (2015-18), vice-Minister of Development Planification (2018-January 2019) and Minister of Communication (January 2019-October 2019) during the last Morales' mandate.[108] For his direct role in the Bolivian political process, this constitutes an example of elite interview. The interview followed a semi-structured scheme with some prepared questions but leaving the interviewee the possibility to freely expand on different arguments when needed.

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[107] As in the other two radical populist experiences of the region briefly analyzed in chapter 2, the constituent power was understood by the MAS as a revolutionary instrument and force to change the relationship between State and society (de la Torre 2020).

[108] The interviewee agreed to the disclosure of his personal information under the Luiss Privacy policy on disclosure of personal data in accordance with Reg. EU/2016/679 Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

The semi-structured nature of the interview allows to use it both as a sort of hypothesis testing to complete and corroborate the analysis of the previous section, and as a catalyzer of interesting new insights regarding our case study. The interview touched mainly four broad arguments: (1) (populist) rhetoric and communication; (2) power concentration and related (political competition, the relationship between legislative and executive, and the judiciary); (3) political participation (formal and informal, role of and relationship with social movements); (4) the role and the leadership of Evo Morales. For all of them, their evolution and prospects for the future were discussed. The interview was conducted through the Microsoft Teams platform. The interviewee has given its consent to its registration. The interview has been conducted in Spanish. The final registration has then been written down, translated in English, and the most important parts have been extrapolated and paraphrased to write down a summary of the same. After that, based on the confirmed and/or new information, some final considerations were drawn.

Starting from already analyzed and noted information, it can be said that the direct testimony of Canelas relatively corroborates the outcomes of the previous analysis. This is true for the participatory form of democracy. The internal dynamics and mechanisms explained by Canelas seem to match the view that the executive in Bolivia is strong, and Morales had a grip on the movements but despite this, especially in certain matters, he had to negotiate and consult the social partners which generally retained their autonomy and mobilizational power. In a country in which horizontal accountability works poorly like Bolivia, these patterns, even though informal, functioned as a mechanism of social accountability and may continue in the near future considering the still strong collective identity present in the country. Precisely for the informality of these mechanisms, the interview was necessary to corroborate results mainly drawn from a rich review of qualitative studies based upon interviews, and field studies. Indeed, corroborating this part of the analysis through quantitative measures as democracy indexes has proven to be difficult because they rarely gauge these informal mechanisms.[109] For what concerns power concentration and then the negative

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[109] This is in line with Wolff (2018) who lamented an individualistic focus of the methodology and measurement of democracy indexes that does not allow to catch other facets of democratic quality. Bringing the Bolivian example, Wolff (2018) argued that these quantitative assessments, even the one with different conceptions of democracy as the one adopted in this work, are not able to show and explain

implications associated with the MAS, as expected it resulted more difficult to extrapolate significant and insightful information from a part that even though now not directly involved, has a recent past of affiliation with the party. Especially treating the relationship between executive and legislative resulted complicated. Beyond the truthfulness of the institutional view given by the interviewee that a presidential system entails a strong executive, it is fair to note that the MAS contributed to this model by adopting practices that were at best "semi-loyal" toward the representative form of democracy (Lehoucq 2020).[110] The result was an erosion of horizontal accountability in terms of a diminished role of the legislative and a seriously undermined judicial power. The politicized and poorly functioning Judicial System emerged indeed in the interview as one of the issues that the current MAS government should tackle in a different and more efficient way. In this regard, the mentioned discussion about a referendum of popular initiative (lawyers and other linked sectors of the civil society) to change the election method rendering it more independent from political dynamics seems a good starting point. Overall, it is fair to mention the risk of the interviewee's bias toward the more positive aspects related to the past experience of the MAS. This was an expected risk and justifies then the preliminary analysis made in the previous section, especially for what concerns the liberal representative form of democracy in Bolivia, to deliver the most impartial balance of the MAS's implications for the Bolivian democracy.

Turning to the new information gathered, interesting insights emerged. The two macro-arguments Rhetoric and Communication and the Role and Leadership of Evo Morales are strictly correlated. Maintaining the vast and heterogenous support that the MAS gathered throughout the years has entailed challenges not only for the substance of the transformative project but also for the party's rhetoric and communication strategy. In this respect, the tensions in the MAS reflected a tension within the Bolivian society where a strong collective identity and culture persists but a growing individualist one is emerging. These challenges are even more pronounced if a party

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the important advancements for Bolivian democracy in the terms of what he called (second) "political incorporation" following Silva (2017). For the concept of political incorporation see supranote 16.

[110] As argued by Wolff (2021) "Democracy is a battle of ideas, but one that depends on treating opponents as legitimate adversaries not treasonous enemies". For the importance of a "loyal opposition", something which actually lacked too in Bolivia, but also, I would add of a "loyal governing party", see Wolff (2021).

chooses to endure with the same leadership for more than 10 years. Morales was indeed perceived by the party/movement as the glue to maintain all different popular and indigenous organizations together and then the will to continue with him as a candidate despite the presidential term limits. This political-strategic view gives an alternative rationale to the populist conceptual framework for the late more authoritarian tendencies as the infringement of constitutional dispositions.[111]

Thus, even though the MAS has never been the personalistic vehicle of Morales as the cases of the parties of Chávez and Correa in Venezuela and Ecuador, the leader's authority within the party/movement had no equal. What the key role of Morales and its leadership reveal is the very informal nature of the party/movement. This represents a clear weakness of the MAS. A more formalized (institutionalized) party would create the opportunities to create internal competition to Morales and in turn democratize the party/movement from within. A more autonomous party with internal competition should disincentivize or in the worst-case block personalistic and authoritarian behavior as the evasion of term limits (Kouba 2016, 452-3). Considering that the MAS is still the most popular party in Bolivia this would have functional benefits for liberal and representative democracy itself.

However, it must be remembered that the same informal nature that guaranteed Morales' strong grip of the MAS, also allowed advances in political participation in form of mechanisms of social accountability, even though informal. It has even been argued that social accountability worked precisely for its informality. Overall, this represented an improvement not only for the participatory nature of Bolivian democracy but in presence of a weak horizontal accountability was the strongest check on Bolivian executive. In the end the most deleterious aspects of the Bolivian democracy in the last ten years were more linked to Morales' authoritarian tendencies and not to the practices of participatory democracy, where these mechanisms of informal social accountability emerged. More generally, innovative, and improved mechanisms of social accountability should be seen as complementary to the functioning of the two traditional horizontal and vertical ones.

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[111] In a sense this view corroborates the hypothesis that populists may disregard some formal liberal rules because seen as a restriction to their mission. In this case indeed political strategies assumed more importance than the respect of and belief on the value of constitutional rules.