An Opportunity Squandered?

Elites, Social Movements, and the Government of Evo Morales

by
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Over its 12 years in power, Bolivia's MAS government has made significant advances in expanding inclusion and reducing poverty. In the process, it has steadily been transformed into a hegemonic force that is increasingly dependent on expedient and pragmatically based compromises with economic elites. Concurrently, social movement influence and participation in the government have steadily declined. After 2009, when an uprising by Eastern elites had been quashed and MAS gained a congressional majority, the MAS missed an opening to advance its original project of structural change, opting instead for a more expedient strategy that has kept it in power at the cost of accommodating elites and debilitating social movements.

Durante sus 12 años en el poder, el gobierno MAS de Bolivia ha logrado avances significativos en expandir la inclusión y reducir la pobreza. En el proceso, se ha transformado continuamente en una fuerza hegemónica que depende cada vez más de compromisos oportunos y basados en pragmatismo con las élites económicas. Al mismo tiempo, la influencia y la participación en el gobierno de los movimientos sociales ha disminuido continuamente. Después de 2009, cuando un levantamiento de las élites del Este se suprimió y el MAS ganó una mayoría en el Congreso, el MAS perdió una oportunidad para avanzar en su proyecto original de cambio estructural, optando por una estrategia más conveniente que lo mantuvo en el poder a costa de acomodar a las élites y debilitar los movimientos sociales.

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At the end of November 2017, Bolivia's Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal declared an end to term limits, ruling that all elected officials could run for office indefinitely rather than for the two consecutive terms authorized by the 2009 Constitution. The announcement had enormous implications for President Evo Morales, who has held Bolivia's highest office since 2006 and can now seek reelection in 2019 for a fourth term (Farthing, 2017b).

The court's move invalidated the results of a February 2016 referendum in which 51.3 percent of Bolivians voted against changing the constitution so that he could run again. These results stood in stark contrast to Morales's first three

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elections, which he won by comfortable margins of 54 percent, 64 percent, and 61 percent respectively. In part, the loss in the referendum can be understood as motivated by voter fatigue with Morales's party, the Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism— MAS) (Watts, 2016). The downturn also mirrors the process under way with self-defined left governments throughout the region, fueled by declining commodity prices and public disgust over often media-manipulated accusations of corruption.

But beyond these immediate tribulations, the MAS project is suffering from more profound disjunctures. Drawing on Steve Ellner's framing of this collection, my article explores two of the processes that have limited the MAS government's ability to transform Bolivian society into a more horizontal and participatory one. The first is the administration's rapprochement after 2011 with economic elites, particularly in the eastern lowlands, built on mutual interests centered on the expansion of resource extraction, the economic activity that has been at the core of Bolivia's export economy for over 500 years. The second is its steadily increasing reliance on a vertical caudillismo rather than the social control and participation by social movements[1] that was a central commitment of its original project. Taken together, they signal the MAS's shift toward the political center. Understanding how this occurred is critical because after it won the 2009 election the MAS was in a position to introduce more radical changes because it controlled both houses of Bolivia's legislature, but it generally failed to do so.

Bolivia under Evo Morales has frequently been characterized as radical left by mainstream researchers (see, for example, Castañeda, 2006; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter, 2010), a position most often reflected in Morales's international pronouncements and policy initiatives (for example, climate change justice for low-income countries and opposition to U.S. meddling in local politics). In practice, economic and social policies have been moderate: expanding many formal rights for women and indigenous people[2] in the Americas' most indigenous country and increasing social and infrastructure spending significantly. Fiscal policies are consistently conservative, with only relatively minor adjustments to underlying economic structures (Levitsky and Roberts, 2011; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2011). The MAS government has been fundamentally a political rather than an economic project (Wolff, 2016). As such, it has brought about impressive social changes in Bolivian society. This includes shepherding through one of the world's most radical constitutions, an extensive if incomplete land reform, and incorporating indigenous people into government. Social relations have changed dramatically: when I first went to Bolivia 35 years ago, a campesino, unless he was union leader, would always walk a few paces behind me, a white woman. In my experience, this no longer happens.

Even though Morales and Vice President Álvaro García Linera are widely reviled for their sexist jokes, women's rights have also advanced significantly under Morales. Bolivia now has the second-highest number of national women legislators in the world (after Rwanda), a significant accomplishment in a country where women won the vote only in 1953 (Farthing, 2015; IDEA, 2015).[3]

Revenue from natural gas soared after the government successfully renegotiated contracts with multinationals in 2006, even as it stopped shy of the full nationalization demanded by many left social movements. In a country whose export economy has provided minerals at disadvantageous prices to the world for over 500 years, this was the best deal a Bolivian government has ever cut. The move brought state coffers a huge injection of new funds that the government directed particularly to rural areas, where new schools, roads, and hospitals are evident everywhere, even if some have proven to be white elephants (Farthing, 2017a; Manzaneda, 2017).[4]

Increased funds have also gone into a conditional cash transfer program, known as Bonos, that has contributed in part to one of the greatest recent drops in poverty in Latin America (Vargas and Garriga, 2015). The decline is also due to the more than tripling of the minimum wage and economic growth driven by the worldwide boom in commodity prices during this century's first decade.[5] Bolivia has also dramatically reduced inequality, again outperforming other Latin American left governments (Vargas and Garriga, 2015).

However, unionization rates have dropped since Morales took power, undermining the Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central—COB), which in its heyday was one of the world's most powerful labor movements (Johnston and Lefebvre, 2014; Webber, 2015). The informal sector remains a significant part of the economy, with 46 percent of the labor force working informally. However this has declined dramatically from 62 percent when Morales assumed office (Medina and Schneider, 2018). Government failure to spur industrialization coupled with the fact that workers on large state-sponsored infrastructure projects are employed on short-term contracts under neoliberal labor laws are undoubtedly contributing factors. Many Bolivians work in small family businesses, often in temporary jobs with few benefits and below the threshold for union formation (20 workers).

The MAS government undertook the most significant land reform since the 1952 Revolution, primarily during its first five years, although most of the land allocated was under state control rather than expropriated from large landowners and technical assistance to the new owners was almost nonexistent (Urioste, 2011). Approximately 800,000 low-income peasants and indigenous people benefited, women's inheritance rights were enshrined, and for the first time since the Spanish Conquest smallholders control most of the country's land (BIF, 2016).

After two decades of conflict and human rights violations that failed to stem the flow of cocaine northward, a novel program involves local peasant unions in controlling coca production. This program has reduced violence in coca-growing regions to almost zero (Farthing and Ledebur, 2015). The MAS government took on long-standing UN conventions to insist on Bolivia's right to consume coca, part of indigenous culture for millennia, which it won in 2013 despite U.S. opposition.

The Morales government also brought economic and political stability to one of the region's historically most volatile countries. Bolivia now enjoys financial reserves that are the envy of its neighbors, with low inflation and an average annual growth of 5 percent over the past decade. Even though reserves

have dropped since the decline in commodity prices, they still represented 33 percent of the gross domestic product in 2016 (*La Razón*, September 26, 2016).

THE PRIVATE SECTOR: PRAGMATISM AND COORDINATION

When left governments come to power through elections, negotiating compromises with existing elites is unavoidable. This is particularly the case where governments drawn from economic elites have run the country almost entirely in their own self-interest for almost 200 years and especially where right-wing parties control the Senate and the judiciary as was the case when Evo Morales came to office in 2006.

Bolivia's private sector has historically exerted inordinate influence over the country's weak governments through close family and friendship ties grounded in the social exclusion of the indigenous majority. In the late 1970s an intraelite struggle emerged between domestically oriented businesses accustomed to government support for tariffs and credits and a loosely united, modernizing, technocratic and transnationally integrated bloc many of whose members were immigrants or descendants of immigrants from Europe. The modernizers promoted what became the dominant "neoliberal"' model from the mid-1980s to Morales's election in 2005 (Tsolakis, 2009).

Bolivia's principal business centers are the capital La Paz, where most of the banking, insurance, and investment are located, and the eastern city of Santa Cruz, where hydrocarbons and agribusiness are headquartered. La Paz's elite has dominated the country since the end of the nineteenth century, although Santa Cruz has steadily gained importance since the 1950s. In 2016, 132 of Bolivia's 250 largest companies (public and private) were headquartered in the capital, compared with 64 in Santa Cruz (*La Razón*, November 6, 2017).

A doubling of public investment by the national government generated an abundance of government contracts, and the La Paz elites' proximity to ministry headquarters created a boom for local construction companies and the banks that financed them (Johnston and Lefebvre, 2014). The expansion of public administration also benefited local housing construction companies as the number of public employees grew. While La Paz elites lament their loss of political control, the spike in government size and contracts has largely quieted their active opposition.

However, the MAS did introduce financial sector reforms and move to increase public ownership and control over investment after 2009. Bolivia's mostly family-based banks objected vehemently to the two subsequent tax increases and a financial services law, but, as continual economic growth combined with only a limited expansion of state banking institutions has led to record bank profits, their objections have steadily become less vociferous (Naqvi, 2018).

The changing of the political guard played out very differently in Santa Cruz, as the relationship with the national government has long been closely entwined with the fierce regionalism that has characterized Bolivia since its founding in 1825. The regional autonomy movement is one of the strongest

in Latin America, in part a result of a weak but highly centralized state in a poorly consolidated heterogeneous country. Uprisings against the central state initiated in Santa Cruz have occurred repeatedly (Pruden, 2012). While autonomy movements are the exception in Latin America, Eaton (2008) argues that their recent resurgence both in eastern Bolivia and in Guayas, Ecuador (the province where Guayaquil is located), is due to the locational disjuncture between political (La Paz and Quito) and economic (Santa Cruz and Guayas) power. At the core of both these movements is a push-back against the increased state share of the economy. In Bolivia's case, Wolff (2016: 6) notes that this proportion remains significantly lower than in most European social-democracies.

Santa Cruz's approximately 40 elite families first consolidated during the rubber boom at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century (Soruco, 2008). Claudia Peña (2007) characterizes them as living in a world bounded by agriculture, "correct" family names, and control over huge tracts of land, much of it obtained through either colonial land grants or as favors during the 1970s military dictatorships and never subjected to the 1953 agrarian reform (Urioste and Kay, 2007). Santa Cruz's economy expanded rapidly in the 1950s after a partly U.S.-financed connector road linked it to the rest of the country. Large landowners have successively grown sugar and rice and then cotton combined with raising cattle, followed in the 1990s by a boom in soy, which has become Bolivia's largest agricultural export (MacKey, 2011; Urioste, 2011).

As the region's economic star rose, Santa Cruz elites, centered politically around the Comité Cívico Pro-Santa Cruz (Pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee) and economically in the Cámara de Industria y Comercio, Servicios y Turismo (Chamber of Industry and Commerce—CAINCO), renewed their call for greater regional autonomy with more force (Prado, 2007; Wolff, 2016). Their criticism of a centralized state is neoliberal, viewing it as a hindrance to the economic dynamism of eastern Bolivia and the principal cause of the country's political, economic, and social difficulties (Centellas, 2016). Running parallel is a discourse that considers light-skinned peoples (which have historically been more numerous in the lowlands) superior to the "backward" indigenous peoples of the highlands (Soruco, 2008).

With the 2006 election of *el indio* (as Evo Morales is pejoratively called), these elites used this discourse to effectively organize large swaths of Santa Cruz's population against the central government. Bolivia's weak state bureaucracy had never functioned well, and popular frustration with La Paz government administration was understandable. At the end of 2006, over a million people took to the streets demanding greater regional independence as part of a Santa Cruz-centered coalition that dominated the four eastern lowland departments (Beni, Santa Cruz, Pando, and Tarija) and at its height was powerful enough to threaten to tear the country apart.

A series of missteps and Morales's solid social movement support throughout the country provoked a decline in the autonomy movement's fortunes. An uprising in September 2008 in which the U.S. ambassador was implicated led to neo-fascist youth group attacks on government offices and community groups, with 75 government institutions occupied during the conflict (Dangl,

2008; Webber, 2015). When local elites were shown to be behind a massacre of 17 indigenous people at Porvenir in the northern department of Pando, the already discredited right-wing-led autonomy movement stumbled again (Gustafson, 2009).

While this toxic brew of arrogance and racism led to significant political decline for the Eastern right wing, these elites managed to wrest several compromises from the MAS government. The most significant was a concession on land reform that had been passed only after considerable grassroots pressure in late 2006. The new law limited holdings to 12,500 acres in response to sustained social movement pressure against a government effort to woo conservatives by allowing 25,000, but it had a huge loophole: it could not be applied retroactively, which legitimized the ownership of large extensions of illegally acquired land (MacKey, 2011). Few estates have been expropriated,[6] and peasant farmers control only about a third of the good arable land, perpetuating Bolivia's severe inequality in landownership (Colque, Tinta, and Sanjinés, 2016; Mun, 2012).

By 2009 Santa Cruz elites had divided between an alliance tied to an extreme right political agenda, centered on an increasingly isolated Comité Cívico Pro-Santa Cruz, and one linked to centrist right-wing business organizations (Wolff, 2016). These businessmen[7] recognized economic opportunity in the rapid growth under way under the MAS government. While the commodity price boom was beyond the MAS's control, the government's negotiation of a bigger share of the profits from natural gas multinationals, principally Brazil's PetroBras and Spain's Repsol, was not. Suddenly the government had money to spend, and business wanted in. The location of gas fields within the Santa Cruz orbit strengthened regional economic opportunities, already buoyed by the rapid expansion of soy agriculture. Santa Cruz became one of the fastest-growing cities in the world (*Forbes*, 2015).

Thus began the reconciliation between the government and Eastern elites. Many among the elites of both La Paz and Santa Cruz appear to have concluded that in a majority-indigenous country having an indigenous person in political power could be tolerated as long as their economic interests remained unthreatened and their wealth continued to grow. For the MAS government's part, it has always contended that intensifying natural resource extraction was the only way to pull South America's poorest country out of centuries of hardship. These intersecting interests have united the MAS government's extraction-based economic policy with the private sector's goal of expanding the eastern agricultural frontier (Rafael Rojas, personal communication, Santa Cruz, February 5, 2016). Bolivia, which possesses the sixth-largest area of tropical forest in the world, now has one of the highest rates of deforestation in South America (UN-REDD Program, 2013).[8] A 2015 law opened up 20 million hectares, much of the land in 22 so-called protected areas, to exploration by oil, gas, and mining companies (Hill, 2015).

By 2013, autonomy leader and Santa Cruz Governor Rubén Costas was meeting with Evo Morales and participating in government-sponsored events, and the government is now in regular contact with almost all of Santa Cruz's business organizations (Webber, 2015). In 2013, the Morales government proclaimed Law 337, which legitimized the conversion of previously illegally

cleared land to agricultural use (Ormachea and Ramirez, 2013). Three years later, Vice President García Linera stated unequivocally that the government would be neither a rival nor a competitor of Santa Cruz business but an ally in promoting economic growth (*Los Tiempos*, March 18, 2016).

BOLIVIA'S POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND THE RISE OF THE MAS

When Morales was elected in late 2005, Bolivia's social movements were among the world's most militant, with defiant resistance traditions dating from the Spanish invasion. Throughout the twentieth century, various tendencies on the left exerted a powerful political influence on these movements (Molina, 2017). The most recent protest cycle (2000 to 2005) created the conditions and support that thrust Morales into the presidency. These movements incorporated neighborhood organizations and peasant, indigenous-oriented, workplace, and informal-sector unions. They tended to be male-dominated, hierarchical, highly structured, and prone to using fines and sanctions to control their members. They were also heavily shaped by patronage relationships and perceived as a route to individual advancement (Makaran, 2016; Zegada and Komandina, 2017).

Social movements have their modern roots in the union confederation, the COB, which from the 1952 Revolution until the 1980s incorporated almost all workers from street vendors to health care professionals under the leadership of the powerful left-wing-dominated Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Federation of Bolivian Miners' Unions—FSTMB). The battles to restore democracy during the 1970s military dictatorship and for economic justice were all spearheaded by the COB, which suffered continuous repression (Alexander and Parker, 2005).

In the early 1980s, the dictatorships ended, coinciding with increased organization by indigenous peoples in both the highlands and lowlands. The highland and valleys indigenous peasant Confederación Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Unified Confederation of Campesino Unions of Bolivia— CSUTCB) affiliated almost immediately with the COB. The much smaller Central Indígena del Oriente de Bolivia (Indigenous Central of Eastern Bolivia—CIDOB) did not emerge onto the national stage until its historic march in 1990 and has always been underpinned by an indigenist outlook rather than the mixed indigenist/class perspective that has characterized the CSUTCB (Lucero, 2008).

Neoliberalism, with its massive closures of state mines, largely demolished the COB in the late 1980s, leading new social movements spearheaded by coca growers resisting the U.S.-imposed War on Drugs and led by Evo Morales to step into their shoes in the early 1990s. Coca growers framed their demands around indigenous identity in addition to social class and successfully projected themselves nationally through highlighting the centrality of the coca leaf to indigenous culture (Farthing and Kohl, 2014). These new locally oriented movements achieved an important victory in 2000 by thwarting an attempt to privatize Cochabamba's water supply during what has come to be known as the Cochabamba water war (Assies, 2003).

The locus of protest then shifted to the highlands, where the CSUTCB played a critical role during the 2000–2005 protest cycle along with the city of El Alto, dominated by Aymara rural-to-urban immigrants. Forming a national alliance, these movements forced President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, a principal architect of neoliberalism, out of office in 2003 over an attempt to export natural gas via Bolivia's historical enemy, Chile. Then in 2005 they unseated his politically moderate successor Carlos Mesa as well. This militant coalition was led by neighborhood organizations that fused the political strategies of class-based indigenous and former miners' organizations with the long-standing patronage practices of urban community groups (Lazar, 2008). The enormous protests demonstrated that, despite the COB's disintegration, social movements could still form a national coalition that merged indigenous, nationalist, and working-class demands. The unity that these new social configurations accomplished enabled the MAS's national electoral victories, making Evo Morales's remarkable ascent from the coca fields to the presidential palace a reality.

Parallel to this popular protest was the gradual consolidation, beginning in the mid-1990s, of a "political instrument" (rather than a political party) of the social movements. The MAS was originally conceived as the electoral arm of the coca growers' union, and by the time it was formalized as a party in 1999 Evo Morales argued that there was no need for a separate party structure in places where strong social movement organizations functioned well (Komadina and Geffroy, 2007). Until 2002 it was rural-based, made up of what Do Alto and Stefanoni (2010) describe as small producers, many on the borders of legality, such as coca growers and informal-economy workers. It was largely horizontal in its decision making, although throughout its history it has lacked a coherent institutional structure and often operates without clear rules and established procedures (Zuazo, 2010).

In the 2002 presidential elections, Morales came in a surprising second, just behind the mining magnate and former president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who is widely considered the architect of neoliberalism in Bolivia (Kohl and Farthing, 2006). The social movements' "October Agenda" constituted key items of Morales's 2005 electoral campaign: nationalization of gas, a constitutional assembly, and an end to impunity for those (including Sánchez de Lozada) who had unleashed state forces against unarmed protesters. The intense pressure to honor these commitments defined the MAS government during its early years.

Beginning in 2002 but even more decidedly after winning the 2005 election with an astonishing 54 percent of the vote,[9] the MAS began a major transition from an indirect party affiliation (through belonging to a rural organization affiliated with the MAS) to a more "direct" urban party (Zuazo, 2010). The move increased clientelism in the party at the same time as it strengthened the importance of Evo Morales as mediator and arbitrator between the social movement organizations, the Constituent Assembly brigade, the parliamentary brigade, and the party's urban wing, often middle-class professionals in the state apparatus (Garcés, 2010: 95; Zuazo, 2010). These varying factions of the MAS have different political cultures, time horizons, social practices, ideological traditions, and often worldviews (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010).

Three political currents dominated the MAS. The first was linked to popular nationalism, which favored revitalizing the 1952 Revolution's project that placed the state front and center in the economy. The second represented the traditional left, centered on class and work-based demands, and the third was tied to indigenous demands and increased autonomy through formal access to land. These somewhat contradictory ideas are embodied in Evo as a person, as he is a strong nationalist and unionist who draws on enduring indigenous roots in his discourse. He is both Aymara and Quechua[10] but not owned by either (Archondo, 2007). Evo Morales is the glue that holds the MAS project together (Zuazo, 2010).

The MAS has always displayed a highly pragmatist, rather than ideological, approach to politics. In party congresses and meetings, participants rarely engage in ideological debates; rather, they address themselves directly to Evo. This has encouraged the division of party posts and government jobs on the basis of representation from different sectors of the MAS as well as the region in order to maintain party unity (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010). These *pegas*, as they are known, quickly became central to negotiations between party factions. While the MAS initially had a hard time attracting candidates, by 2004 it found itself with too many applicants as the party was increasingly perceived as the same route to access to resources and government jobs that parties have always been in Bolivia. The conflict and resentments inherent in this regulating of who obtains access to limited political and administrative posts served to further dilute the MAS's ideological orientation (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010).

The critical role played by this assumption that pegas are a government obligation was clearly illustrated when the MAS's leadership did not replace most public functionaries with MAS militants after the 2005 victory, largely because of concerns about the latter's inexperience. Social movement leaders were unable to produce the jobs expected by their grassroots and were furious that functionaries appointed through pegas granted by previous administrations retained their jobs. In response, the party moved more and more toward a corporativist structure (Do Alto and Stefanoni, 2010). Zegada and Komandina (2017) characterize this relationship as one shaped by the provision of public resources in exchange for political loyalty, now primarily expressed at the ballot box. Key to this interchange, they contend, is the symbolic representation of indigeneity that the MAS offers its supporters.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

By November 2004 a Unity Pact of indigenous peoples had formed, tying together the three indigenous peasant organizations that had made up the original MAS: the CSUTCB, the Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa" (National Confederation of Indigenous Peasant First Nations Women of Bolivia—Bartolinas), and the Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales (Confederation of Unions of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia—CSCIB or Interculturales), who are highland and valley peoples who migrated to the lowlands.[11] Along with a plethora of smaller organizations, two other organizations with a strong

indigenous orientation and territorial demands also joined the Unity Pact: the Confederación Nacional de Ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu—CONAMAQ),[12] and the lowland indigenous-oriented CIDOB. In many ways, the Unity Pact was a coalition in the best sense of the word: it respected the autonomy of its individual members while collectively forming something more than merely the sum of its parts (Garcés, 2010: 91).

These five organizations were, in their own words, "committed to a profound change in the structures of the Bolivian state" (Garcés, 2010: 13) and called for the formation of a plurinational, pluricultural, and plurilinguistic state to reflect the country's indigenous ethnic diversity. The Unity Pact played a critical role in the 2006–2007 Constituent Assembly, the most broadly participatory meeting in the country's history. The pact proposed institutionalizing indigenous political and judicial forms[13] within the state and legislative bodies (Garcés, 2010: 93; Schavelzon, 2013). The assembly was extremely contentious, as it was organized along party lines. Tensions arose primarily with the right wing but also between MAS party members and the "indirect" MAS affiliates from the Unity Pact. Evo Morales and several high-ranking government members regularly visited the Assembly to "impose the party line" (Garcés, 2010: 85). Nonetheless, the pact succeeded in functioning as a representative of its base organizations and not merely as an appendage of the government (Garcés, 2010: 94; Zuazo, 2010).

Initial proposals for incorporating social movements into the government focused on an oversight role that differed from the cogoverning between the COB and the MNR-led[14] government during the first four years of the 1952 Revolution. Cogoverning allowed the COB to push the revolution's most radical changes and block the most conservative tendencies of the moderate MNR government. The concept resurfaced during the Unidad Democrática y Popular government of Hernán Siles Zuazo in 1982, when the new government benefited from the full support of the then-powerful COB, which insisted that its role in restoring democracy granted it the right to cogovern. In contrast to the situation in 1952, when the COB was willing to accept a minority role, it demanded a 50-percent-plus-one-vote partnership that the government refused to grant, rupturing the alliance and leading to Siles Zuazo's premature resignation (Kohl and Farthing, 2006).

Social control by the grassroots in Bolivia is conceptually grounded in a largely essentialized understanding of indigenous community organization mingled with a socialist discourse (Farthing and Kohl, 2013). The first government-mandated local social control over municipal budgets was instituted with the 1994 Law of Popular Participation, which set up oversight committees that operated by consensus. These committees have proven problematic because of lack of preparation by members and the buying-off of their votes (Kohl, 2003). Social control was taken up again during the Constituent Assembly and is mentioned 18 times in the 2009 Constitution. Articles provide for oversight of government spending and policy and public contracts with private companies.

The 2007 Eastern uprising led the MAS government to create the Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio (National Coordinator for Change—CONALCAM),

made up of 13 rural and urban social movement organizations including mining cooperatives, retired and factory workers, landless peasants, petroleum unions, and neighborhood organizations (Zuazo, 2017). This move increased government control over the leadership of both rural and urban organizations as the president and vice president, MAS party members, and the MAS parliamentary brigade all participated in meetings that Evo often led (Zuazo, 2010: 130).

CONALCAM supposedly evaluated the government within the framework that Evo "ruled by obeying," but in practice he never accepted its recommendations for ministerial appointments or replacements (Mayorga, 2011). With few exceptions, a technocratic elite with no links to grassroots organizations was invited into the party and then appointed to key positions. While organizations allied with the MAS have managed to retain significant bottom-up influence in the selection of candidates for national and local office, there is no established, unified procedure that regulates the selection of nominees (Anria, 2016).

In 2010, with the Eastern crisis over, the government announced that CONALCAM would serve as a fundamental pillar for advancing the "process of change." CONALCAM was to channel demands from social movements, comment on proposed laws, train a new generation of leaders, and sanction any movement militants who created conflict (Mayorga, 2011). In practice, however, since 2011 the government has relied on a series of summits to solicit social movement input, a process that it controls because it sets the agenda, decides whom to invite, and writes up the results (Wolff, 2017: 13). This facilitates government control over the parts of the CONALCAM coalition that have proven unstable: the COB mining cooperatives and factory workers in particular have participated and then subsequently distanced themselves after disagreements with the government (Mayorga, 2011).

The government increasingly perceived the once-critical social movements as its foot soldiers rather than fundamental partners, a process that Zuazo (2010: 134) describes as "a domestication of social organizations." Postero (2017: 5, 186) takes this a step farther, contending that since the MAS preserved the liberal nation-state model instead of a more radical alternative its actions represent a new form of policing of social movements. Angus McNelly (personal communication, La Paz, April 13, 2016) argues that by 2009 social movement bases increasingly handed over daily governing responsibility to government as their representatives. Up to 2005 the social movements were "offensive," proposing radical change, whereas by 2008 they were "defensive," called on by the MAS to "protect the revolution." This increasing conservativism cannot be explained by shifts within the MAS alone; rather, movement leaders genuinely believed the MAS represented their interests. Freddy Condo, who worked as an adviser to the Unity Pact, said that "the social movements steadily lost their capacity to participate in the government, and were pressured to merely rubber-stamp government initiatives" (personal communication, La Paz, February 18, 2017).

After the MAS won reelection by a landslide in 2009, Bolivia's economy was booming, and the MAS finally controlled both houses of the legislature. This was the moment when the strongly consolidated MAS government could have implemented more radical change. It failed to do so, instead choosing to make

its project ever more exclusive. The former ambassador to the UN Pablo Solón (2016) argues that this was a lost opportunity: "The triumph against the right wing, rather than opening a new stage to redirect the process and recognize the errors we had made, accentuated the tendencies toward authoritarian leadership and centralization of power." Mayorga (2011: 30–33) argues that when the government was desperate for social movement support against the right wing, the coalition around CONALCAM held together, but once the right was defeated sectoral and local interests came to the fore. He cautions against pigeonholing relations between the MAS and the social movements solely in terms of the opposites of autonomy and co-optation, arguing that the "unstable and flexible coalition" the relationship encompasses involves "moments of collaboration, occasions of subordination to the MAS, and situations of autonomy."

CONALCAM fell even more tightly under MAS control when the crisis over the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory erupted in 2011. Indigenous organizations across the country divided over proposed road construction through this lowland indigenous territory. CIDOB and then CONAMAQ officially split with the government, although sectors of both organizations retained their government affiliation, occupying the organizations' headquarters by force. The pro-MAS groups received significant injections of government funds while those of the opposition, many of which had been in leadership positions, found themselves increasingly impoverished and isolated (Achtenberg, 2014).[15]

The remaining three organizations (the CSTUCB, the Interculturales, and the Bartolinas), known as the "triplets," evolved into the most loyal core of government support, enacting the latest version of state-indigenous paternalism that began during the colonial period but became focused on emerging peasant unions during the MNR government in the 1950s and early 1960s (Zegada and Komandina, 2017: 72). The clientelistic relationships they developed with the MAS, based on the unions' political culture and grounded in a shared political identity of greater social inclusion and economic equality, have been facilitated by their rigid and vertical organizational structure (Zegada and Komandina, 2017: 71, 82).

In 2013 the Law of Participation and Social Control ostensibly gave grassroots organizations more influence than the 1994 participation law by expanding grassroots social control to all three levels of government. The new law calls for the participation of social organizations (rather than social movements) in overseeing public institutions, although the definition of "social organization" is vague (Mayorga, 2017). Involvement in oversight originates with official government recognition of an organization and is initiated by government ministries or state entities. These institutions invite the organizations they deem relevant to meetings with predetermined agendas, resulting in complete government control over the process (Zuazo, 2010: 134). With no requirement that any funding be dedicated to operationalizing the law, entities such as the Central Bank largely fulfill their obligations through public presentations describing their operations (Banco Central, 2015; Osorio, 2013).

By 2017 social movements were a shadow of their former selves, with leaders either working within the government or in organizations controlled by the

government or demoralized. As Achtenberg (2015) puts it, "The MAS has evolved into a powerful corporative organization rooted in entrepreneurial as well as popular sectors in every region of the country, with a more centrist political agenda." Bolivia's once radical social movements now lack the independence, coherence, and mobilizing ability to force through the more radical changes they believed the MAS would adopt once they installed it in power. "This government makes me twice as angry as previous conservative ones," says Oscar Olivera, coordinator of the 2000 Cochabamba water war (interview, Cochabamba, February 14, 2017), "because it was brought to power through the sacrifice of the people. It has failed to live up to what we put it in power to do, which was to radically change our society."

Strengthening participatory governance has proven a contradictory process in Morales's Bolivia because the government has both extended and constricted democratic rights. Institutional controls and oversight tend to have deteriorated, while political participation, integration, and substantive equality have improved (Wolff, 2017). Constitutionally mandated if limited indigenous participation in the Legislative Assembly, increased use of referendum measures, mandated but uneven use of prior consultation, legislative parity for women, increased indigenous representation at the subnational level, and the possibility of indigenous autonomy[16] are all now part of the political landscape. This leads Mayorga (2017) to conclude that the "proceso de cambio" is characterized by both an expansion of democracy and a concentration of power.

CONCLUSION

Twelve years after the MAS took power, Bolivia's middle class had grown by a million people (10 percent of the population) and the economy had tripled (*Financial Times*, October 26, 2015). Poverty had dropped by half and income inequality by 17 percent (World Bank, 2014). In 2017 Bolivia's growth rate was among the region's highest, its natural resources served its population more than at any other time in its history, more land was in the hands of peasant farmers, and indigenous and women's rights had increased. By any measure and certainly compared with its predecessors, what the MAS government had achieved was remarkable. Nonetheless, the concessions the Morales government made to the Eastern elites in 2007 and 2008 fundamentally limited its options, though not as much as the subsequent general convergence of the MAS's economic strategy with that of the country's entire business class. Although the MAS brought the private banks under greater regulatory control, record profits have turned the banks into willing partners of the MAS. The late 2017 court decision to abolish term limits may signal a resurgence of explicit political opposition to Morales from traditional elites, particularly those in La Paz whose representatives have demanded respect for the 2009 constitution and the 2016 referendum (*El Diario*, December 7, 2017). In contrast, while some Santa Cruz business organizations participated in a February 2018 march against Morales's running again, the most powerful organization has remained silent. Overall, a national government committed to increasing public investment through taxes and royalties on extractive industry has

strengthened the traditional private sector, in the process undermining the transformative orientation of the MAS's political project and destroying Bolivia's natural environment.

What has primarily permitted the favoring of business interests within the MAS government has been the diminishing role of social movements. More than any other of the recent left-leaning governments in Latin America, the MAS was in a position to create a more participatory, bottom-up process because of the strength and breadth of the movements that propelled it to power. With no effective right-wing opposition since Morales's reelection in 2009, the MAS missed an opening for more radical transformation and Bolivia's social movements, absorbed, co-opted, or marginalized, lost the ability to force the party to achieve its original goals. The MAS increasingly reinforced traditional clientelism in response to the continued assumptions of both movements and militants of party and state patronage. It has never found an effective way to contest or reduce these deeply entrenched expectations, preferring a pragmatic emphasis on outcomes and immediate needs over any serious debate about ideology within the party. The result is an overdependence on a charismatic leader with maintaining the party and its leader in control a central, if not the central, MAS goal. The president, along with a small entourage, achieves cohesion through a combination of power and patronage, assigning the MAS party a minor role in decision making. Without the strong push that independent social movements bring, as both the recent MAS experience and the experience of COB cogovernance during the 1952 Revolution show, systemic change will be limited. While the MAS government has achieved significant improvements for the country's majority, the government's method has undermined the very groups it says it is working in the name of. This has in turn short-circuited the profound structural changes that it originally championed.

NOTES

1. Social movements in Bolivia encompass social and economic justice movements from labor unions to indigenous organizations.

2. But not all. The indigenous right to prior consultation (not consent) has been scaled back as neoextractivism expands (Fundación Tierra, 2015).

3. Despite these achievements, Bolivia suffers from the second-highest rate of femicide in the region.

4. Public housing and medical facilities have often been constructed without consultation with local populations and are at best underutilized and at worst abandoned.

5. Bolivia is one of the region's economies most dependent on commodity exports.

6. Only three by 2010, after which the pace of land titling and redistribution dropped (see Wolff, 2016: 9).

7. Very few women are involved in running agro-industry in Santa Cruz.

8. The principal causes are expanding cattle ranching and mechanized agricultural production, mostly for soy (Müller, Pacheco, and Montero, 2014).

9. This was the first time a candidate had gained an absolute majority since the end of dictatorship in 1982.

10. Bolivia's largest indigenous linguistic groups. Morales grew up in an Aymara region but moved to the Quechua-dominated coca-growing Chapare when he was 21.

11. While the CSCIB totals over a million members scattered throughout the country, they have never played a critical role in national leadership.

12. A highland indigenous organization that considers the CSUTCB campesino union structure alien to indigenous culture (Powşka, 2013).

13. In 2016 the government formed the National Council on Indigenous Justice.

14. The MNR, which spearheaded the 1952 uprising that nationalized the mines, broke up the large landholdings in the highlands and valleys and granted suffrage to indigenous peoples and women.

15. This strategy echoes attempts after the 1952 Revolution to make unions beholden to the MNR and mimics similar tactics in other parts of Latin America, for example, with organizations controlled by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional in Mexico.

16. Of the estimated 140 of Bolivia's current 337 municipalities that contain more than 90 percent indigenous people, only 11 have sought autonomy and only 1, Charagua, has passed through all the bureaucratic obstacles and become fully autonomous (in 2016).

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