party which—by ‘marrying him’ as a political figure in 1992—gradually won it a predominant position in the party arena. Support for LDS grew from 14.5% in the 1990 election, to 23.5% in the 1992 parliamentary election, 27.1% in the 1996 parliamentary elections, to 36.2% in the 2000 parliamentary elections.

References


The 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections in Bolivia

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On 30 June 2002, elections were held to replace Jorge Quiroga as Bolivia’s president as well as to select the members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

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This is the fifth consecutive democratic election since Bolivia returned to democracy in 1983, a remarkable achievement given Bolivia’s history of political instability and social conflict. However, the election also represented the consolidation of several less positive trends: uneasy relations between the government and social organizations, dissatisfaction with administrations dominated by the traditional parties, and reliance on broad and ideologically incoherent coalitions to form governments. These trends culminated in protests that forced Gonzato Sánchez de Lozada to resign from the presidency in October 2003.

1. Background

Hugo Banzer, of the Acción Democrática y Nacionalista (ADN) party and former leader of the military regime 1971–1978, was elected to the presidency in 1997 with 22% of the vote and the support of five parties in Congress.1 Banzer’s reliance on a fragmented coalition limited his ability to implement policy and undermined confidence in his government. Public opposition to coca eradication and the privatization of water treatment facilities ignited a series of violent confrontations in April 2000, which led Banzer to declare a state of siege. Five protestors and one policeman died during the conflicts called the ‘water wars’.

Banzer resigned in August 2001, citing the effects of the cancer that would eventually kill him in May 2002. He was replaced by his 39-year old Vice-President Jorge Quiroga who finished Banzer’s 5-year term in accordance with the Constitution. Quiroga succeeded in avoiding the violence that plagued Banzer but was unable to calm the strikes and protests.

Fueling pre-election protests was a widespread perception that the government had done little to implement the promises negotiated with protesting groups in the past. Rising unemployment and little growth since 2000 (GDP growth of 1.2% in 2001, 2.5% in 2002) also reduced confidence in the ADN government.

Prior to the election, dissatisfaction culminated in rural pressure for a constituent assembly to replace the constitution. Demands included popular referendums and the recognition of candidates representing social organizations other than parties. Several thousand indigenous marchers arrived in La Paz a week before the election to push for an assembly, adding additional tension to the electoral contest.

2. Electoral system

Bolivia has a presidential system with a bicameral legislature. The current electoral regime was introduced by constitutional reform in 1996, which changed the terms of presidents and members of the legislature from four to five years. Pre-

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1 Banzer’s coalition originally included the ADN, MIR, UCS, CONDEPA, and NFR. The NFR subsequently withdrew its support.
Residents are prohibited from seeking re-election in consecutive terms, which prevented Quiroga from seeking the presidency. However, the 130 members of the Chamber of Deputies and the 27 senators face no restrictions on re-election.

Voters cast two votes. The first is a vote for a party’s presidential ticket, Senate candidates, and candidates for the Chamber of Deputies (candidatos plurinominales). The second vote is for an individual candidate for each of 68 single district seats (candidatos uninominales). Each of Bolivia’s nine provinces (departamentos) is a three-member Senate district. The party that receives the most votes in each district receives two Senate seats while the party with the next highest total receives the third seat.

The nine provinces are also multi-member districts for the Chamber of Deputies. Seats are assigned by d’Hondt proportional representation. The number of single-candidate seats won by each party is subtracted from the total number of seats awarded by the multi-member lists, with the remaining seats assigned by list position. If a party wins more single-member seats than its proportional quota, the number of multi-member seats assigned to other parties in that district is reduced, leaving the total number of deputies unchanged.

Votes for the various presidential tickets are tabulated at the national level. If no candidate achieves a majority (which no candidate has since the return to democracy), the newly elected legislature chooses between the top two candidates. The candidate who gets a simple majority of votes cast in the two chambers becomes the new president. There is no guarantee that the candidate who receives the plurality of the popular vote will be chosen as president by the Congress; in fact, it has been as common for candidates in second or third place to be chosen.

3. Parties and candidates

Three parties have traditionally dominated Bolivian politics. The oldest is the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), the key player in Bolivia’s 1954 revolution and responsible for the initiation of neo-liberal reforms in 1985. To the right of the MNR is the ADN, formed by Banzer in 1979 to support his military regime. To the left is the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), which began as opposition to the military regime and the voice of organized labor but has become increasingly moderate over time. During the administration of Jaime Paz Zamora (1989–1993), the MIR ruled in coalition with the ADN and deepened the neo-liberal reforms. On economic matters, there is very little difference between the three traditional parties.

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2 Prior to the 1996 reforms, the Congress chose between the top three candidates.

3 For a discussion of how the Bolivian presidential selection system has functioned in previous elections, see Gamarra (1992) and Mayorga (1997).

4 In 1985, Victor Paz Estenssoro was selected president in 1985 after finishing second in the popular vote; in 1989, Jaime Paz Zamora finished third in the popular vote prior to his election by the Congress.
In the last two elections, these traditional parties have been challenged by populist parties usually associated with single individuals. Two of these parties, Max Fernandez’s Unidad Civica Solidaridad (UCS) and Carlos Palenque’s Conciencia de Patria—Movimiento Patriotico (CONDEPA), combined to win a third of the popular vote in the 1997 elections and supported Banzer’s coalition government. For both parties, 2002 was the first election following the death of party’s founder and both subsequently finished well below their previous levels of support. However, new parties took their place in the electoral mix, particularly Manfred Reyes Villa’s Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR) and Evo Morales’ Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS).

In all, 11 parties nominated candidates for the presidency in 2002. The governing ADN’s candidate, Ronald MacLean (former Mayor of La Paz), was hampered by the economic and social crises and was never in contention. The candidates of the other two traditional parties emerged as early favorites. The MNR’s candidate was Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, an American-educated businessman known popularly as ‘Goni’. After designing the 1985 neo-liberal reforms as Finance Minister, Goni served as president from 1993 to 1997.Whilst very popular among segments of the population for the economic growth and political reforms achieved by his government, his reform program alienated the workers and peasant movements. Surveys showed that over a third of Bolivians identified him as the candidate they would never vote for. The MIR nominated Jaime Paz Zamora, who had defeated Goni for the presidency in 1989 and was defeated by Banzer in 1997.

Despite the high profiles of the traditional party candidates, however, much of the election revolved around two candidates from non-traditional parties. The NFR nominated its founder, Reyes Villa, who had broken with the traditional parties after beginning his political career in the ADN and in the small party Movimiento Bolivia Libre. Reyes Villa served as Mayor of Cochabamba from 1993 to 2001, implementing a series of public works programs and innovative policies designed to increase participation in policy making. Also drawing attention was a controversial candidate representing the indigenous and peasant sectors, the MAS’s candidate Evo Morales. He came to national prominence as leader of the national coca growers union, and was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 from the Chapare region of Cochabamba. He was expelled from the legislature in January 2002 for his involvement in protests against the government’s coca eradication programs.

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4. Election campaign

Three months before the election, Reyes Villa was the surprising favorite. Presenting himself as an outsider and as a break from the traditional parties, he urged voters to support ‘a positive change’ (un cambio positivo) without clearly defining the policies he would pursue in office. His message seemed to tap into the widespread political and economic discontent: by May, polls of voters in 10 cities showed his support approaching 40%, and observers publicly speculated on whether he would achieve an electoral majority and avoid the Congressional vote.7

As Reyes Villa’s lead grew, other candidates responded by attacking him. The MNR ran television advertisements and distributed flyers questioning how Reyes Villa accumulated his personal fortune. Further questions arose about Reyes Villa’s relationship with the religious sect of Sun Myung Moon, whether he employed foreigners in the Mayor’s office, and why he refused to attend political debates. These attacks were effective in shrinking Reyes Villa’s support during the final weeks of the election.

The main recipient of the NFR’s losses was Morales, who was polling at 6% only six weeks before the election but was clearly the fourth contender in the final three weeks of the campaign. Besides advocating the end of the drug eradication programs emphasized by the ADN government, Morales argued for the constitutional assembly, adjustments to the neo-liberal model, and increased Bolivian resistance to US and IMF initiatives. He was particularly popular with voters in rural areas and in the cities hardest hit by the recession.

The biggest boost to Morales’ campaign, however, came from the US Ambassador to Bolivia, Manuel Rocha. Four days before the election, Rocha urged Bolivians not to vote for Morales, warning that the election of a candidate aligned with ‘drug dealers and terrorists’ could result in the loss of US aid.8 While denounced by all parties, Rocha’s comment served to legitimize Morales’ standing as an electorally viable candidate and illustrated his contrast with the traditional parties. Meanwhile, support for Goni and Paz Zamora varied little throughout the campaign, with both emphasizing their experience in dealing with economic crisis in the past and their policy proposals.

5. Election results

Although the polls taken five days before the election confirmed that Morales’ support was rising and Reyes Villa’s falling, the popular consensus was that the NFR candidate would still gain a narrow victory over Goni.9 However, morning-after press projections showed Goni in first place, with Manfred dropping into

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7 La Razón, 2002. Receta final. 4 May.
8 La Razón, 2002. Los partidos piden a Rocha respeto a la soberanía y rechazan sus presiones, 27 July.
9 La Razón, 2002. Las distancias entre NFR, MNR, MIR y MAS se estrechan, pero sus ubicaciones no varían, 26 June.
second, and Morales passing Paz Zamora for third place. Early returns from the National Electoral Court showed that Morales was even closer than initial projections reported, but Reyes Villa still led Morales by 2000 votes for the second spot in the runoff after 99.2% of votes had been counted.10

While waiting for the last few precincts to report, Goni and Reyes Villa openly negotiated with the MIR for its support when Congress selected the president. Morales had previously declared that the MAS would not negotiate with any parties over government formation even if it finished among the top two.11 As it appeared increasingly likely that his strong showing would result in only a moral victory, Morales announced his intention to form a ‘government in the streets’ that would use social mobilization to achieve its goals.12

The final tally, released on 6 July (Table 1), confirmed that Goni received the most votes of any candidate, though his 22.5% fell far short of the 50% necessary to avoid Congress’ vote for the presidency. The final vote count also showed that Morales received 700 votes more than Reyes Villa and was only 1.6% behind Goni. Morales would be the other candidate considered by Congress, whilst Reyes Villa, who had openly talked of getting 50% of the vote only two months before the ele-

Table 1
Results of the presidential election, Bolivia, 30 June 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate (party)</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Votes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (MNR)</td>
<td>624,126</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evo Morales (MAS)</td>
<td>581,884</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manfred Reyes Villa (NFR)</td>
<td>581,163</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaime Paz Zamora (MIR)</td>
<td>453,375</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Quispe (MIP)</td>
<td>169,239</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Fernandez (UCS)</td>
<td>153,210</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald MacLean (ADN)</td>
<td>94,386</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Costa (U)</td>
<td>75,522</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolando Morales (PS)</td>
<td>18,162</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>René Blattmann (MCC)</td>
<td>17,405</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolás Valdivia (CONDEPA)</td>
<td>10,336</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible voters</td>
<td>4,165,082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters</td>
<td>2,994,065</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid votes</td>
<td>2,778,808</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank votes</td>
<td>130,685</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null votes</td>
<td>84,572</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Votes for president, senators, and multi-member lists.

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tion, was eliminated from the runoff. The NFR initially protested against the vote count, but later dropped any charges of wrongdoing.

The vote followed clear geographic patterns (Table 2). Both Morales and Reyes Villa received most of their support in the indigenous Western highlands (La Paz, Cochabamba, and Oruro), while Goni and Paz Zamora received most of their support in the economic center of Santa Cruz and the Amazonian lowland provinces of Beni and Pando. Besides reflecting cultural and economic differences across regions, this geographic pattern also demonstrates the success of the traditional parties in retaining their mobilizing networks in eastern Bolivia, while campesino and new labor organizations have superseded traditional networks in the west.\(^{13}\)

Besides competing for support in the same geographic regions, Morales and Reyes Villa also competed on the same issues of reforming the economic model and the rejection of the mainstream political elite. Both also represented protest votes against traditional parties. We should not be surprised, then, if Morales and Reyes Villa ultimately competed for the same electorate and that the success of the MAS came at the expense of the NFR. A comparison between the election results and support expressed for Reyes Villa and Morales in a survey a week prior to the election (Table 3) shows that the proportion voting for the two outsider candidates remained fairly constant. Morales gained the most votes, however, in areas where Reyes Villa lost the most support.

With no candidate winning a majority in the election, the distribution of seats in the Congress became crucial (Table 4). The MNR gained a slight plurality in both chambers, and Morales’ strong showing gave his party seven senators. Because the

\(^{13}\) For a description of traditional parties and the strength of their organizations in Eastern Provinces, see Gonzalo (2000).
Table 3
Comparison of election results and expressed support for Reyes Villa and Morales in a survey a week prior to the election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Results of survey released June 25, 2002&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Results of presidential election June 30, 2002&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Change in support for Morales</th>
<th>Change in support for Reyes Villa</th>
<th>Net swing in their combined support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morales</td>
<td>Reyes Villa</td>
<td>Support for both candidates</td>
<td>Morales</td>
<td>Reyes Villa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochabamba</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oruro</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarija</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuquisaca</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National vote</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> *Source:* Poll by *La Razón* with 1% margin of error (*Las distancias entre NFR, MNR, MIR y MAS se estrechan, pero sus ubicaciones no varían. 26 June, 2002*) NB: support for Morales in the departments Pando, Potosí, and Beni was not reported. The six departments reported in the table comprise 74% of the electorate and are the areas in which support for Reyes Villa and Morales was concentrated.

<sup>b</sup> *Source:* *Corte Nacional Electoral*; ([http://www.cne.org.bo](http://www.cne.org.bo)).
NFR was the strongest in regions dominated by the MAS, it captured only five single-member seats and two senators, whilst widespread support and the stronger collection of individual candidates running in the unipersonales districts gave the fourth-placed MIR larger representation than the third-placed NFR in both chambers.

6. Government formation

By receiving the most popular votes, Goni was considered the favorite to be chosen president by the Congress. Forming a government, however, proved difficult for the MNR candidate. Whilst the UCS and the ADN offered their support, neither provided enough votes in the legislature for the majority of Congressional votes he needed to be elected. Hence, Goni entered into negotiations with both the NFR and MIR. The discussions centered on constitutional reform and changes to the plan for privatizing state-owned utilities. After declarations by Reyes Villa that he would never vote to make Goni president, the MNR focused its attention on negotiating a coalition with the MIR but found reaching agreement on a governing program difficult. On 11 July, the MIR announced its intention to void their congressional votes, thus forcing the MNR to negotiate with NFR. That negoti-

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Table 4
Distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Chamber of Deputies</th>
<th>Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-member seats</td>
<td>Multi-member seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFR</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- The previous Congress included 19 seats for CONDEPA and four for Izquierda Unida.
- In Potosí, MAS won the plurality of votes but had nominated only one candidate for senator. The seat remains empty.
- CONDEPA had three seats in the previous Senate.

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ation broke down on 21 July, when the MNR and UCS announced they would not support the NFR’s proposal for a constituent assembly.

Meanwhile, Morales stuck to his position of not negotiating with the other parties, but invited other parties to support MAS. However, he refused to compromise on policies with other parties or to promise cabinet positions in exchange for support. This probably prevented him from gaining the support of the NFR, which had previously stated it would support Morales over Goni. The NFR ultimately decided to void its congressional votes rather than support the MAS candidate.

Following the NFR’s rejection, Goni negotiated again with Paz Zamora and the MIR. On 25 July, nearly four weeks after the election, the MNR, MIR, and UCS agreed to form a ‘Government of National Responsibility’. In exchange for supporting the MNR, the MIR received seven of the 18 ministries and leadership of the Chamber of Deputies. The coalition partners also agreed to implement constitutional reforms allowing for a public referendum and the nomination of independent candidates. Goni was officially selected as president by the Congress on 4 August, receiving 84 of the 127 valid Congressional votes.

7. Conclusion

It was apparent from the beginning of Goni’s term that many Bolivians felt unrepresented by their government and desperate at the continued lack of economic and social progress. Inauguration Day was marred by protests by the national confederations of laborers, teachers, medical workers, and peasants. Six months later, in February 2003, La Paz and other urban centers erupted in bloody protests against a proposed income tax. These social divisions exploded again in September 2003. Following Goni’s announcement of plans to export natural gas through Chile, Morales’ coca growers organization, the peak labor union, and other organizations called a general strike. They argued that the poor would not benefit from the deal because of corruption in the government, and that the deal would benefit Chile, Bolivia’s long-time rival. Road blockades prevented food, gasoline, and propane from reaching La Paz, and strikes spread to other areas in the Andean highlands where Goni was unpopular. Confrontations between police and protestors left dozens of civilians dead. Goni’s Vice-President, Carlos Mesa, announced his opposition to the government’s policies, as did Reyes Villa and the NFR, and then Paz Zamora’s MIR. Left without support and with thousands of protestors in La Paz’s streets, Goni resigned the presidency October 17, 2003.

16 La Razón, 2002. Manfred hasta apoyaría a Evo antes que a Goni, 6 July.
17 While the ADN had previously expressed its willingness to support the MNR and its members voted for Sánchez de Lozada, it did not join the government due to disagreement with the MNR’s refusal to support the call for a constituent assembly.
18 The final congressional vote break down as follows: total votes = 155; Sánchez de Lozada (Goni), 84; Morales, 43; blank, 2; and null votes (for Reyes Villa), 26.
With the tremendous upheaval, it is easy to miss the important and perhaps surprising point about the events of September and October 2003: for the time being, at least, democracy in Bolivia survived. Goni was succeeded by his Vice-President Mesa. Protests abated, and Mesa promised early elections and formed an interim cabinet composed entirely of non-partisans. He suspended plans for natural gas exports until he could hold a referendum on the subject (an announcement which quickly drew protest from supporters of the project in areas near Chile), and he also promised to reopen discussions about constitutional reforms.

Yet the political and social divides manifested in the 2002 elections obviously remain. Bolivia’s democracy is in a critical phase, and much will depend on Mesa’s ability to lead Bolivia peacefully to new elections, and of course the outcome of those elections.

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References