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MAS Relations with Social Movements: The Yungas Cocaleros and the 2019 Crisis

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Abstract

The *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) emerged from a diverse coalition of social movements centered on *cocalero* unions and their participatory organizational structure. Some scholars argue that the MAS became a top-down ruling party that relegated and weakened social movements. This article challenges these predominate claims about MAS relations with social organizations. Based on a case study of the *Asociación Departmental de Productores de Coca* (ADEPCOCA), the article develops two main claims. First, it examines the political divisions within the *cocalero* sector, which contradict a common view of *cocaleros* as united with the MAS, and which therefore presented a governance dilemma for the MAS. Second, the article considers how, in the ADEPCOCA case, rural social organizations were able to both remain autonomous under the MAS and confront government power. These findings have implications for understanding how the MAS shaped Bolivian political development leading up to the 2019 crisis; namely, that there was significant tension between the MAS's commitments to state-building and participatory governance, and that this tension contributed to resistance from within the MAS coalition, leaving the regime vulnerable to overthrow in 2019.

Keywords
MAS, cocalero workers, ADEPCOCA, Yungas, Chapare, Morales, 2019 crisis

Resumen

El Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) surgió de una coalición diversa de movimientos sociales centrados en los sindicatos cocaleros y su estructura organizativa. Algunos estudiosos sostienen que el MAS se convirtió en un partido gobernante verticalista que relegó y debilitó a los movimientos sociales. Este artículo cuestiona estas afirmaciones sobre las relaciones del MAS con las organizaciones sociales. En base a un estudio de caso de la Asociación Departamental de Productores de Coca (ADEPCOCA), el artículo desarrolla dos argumentos principales. En primer lugar, examina las divisiones políticas dentro del sector cocalero, mostrando que contradicen la visión de los cocaleros como unidos al MAS y que, por tanto, le plantearon un dilema de gobernanza al MAS. En segundo lugar, el artículo analiza cómo, en el caso de ADEPCOCA, las organizaciones sociales rurales fueron capaces tanto de mantener su autonomía frente al MAS como de enfrentarse al poder gubernamental. Estos hallazgos tienen implicaciones para entender cómo el MAS dio forma al desarrollo político boliviano que condujo a la crisis de 2019; a saber, que hubo una tensión significativa entre los compromisos del MAS con la construcción del Estado y la gobernanza participativa, y que esta tensión contribuyó a la resistencia desde dentro de la coalición gobernante, dejando al régimen vulnerable al derrocamiento en 2019.

Pababras clave
MAS, cocaleros, ADEPCOCA, Yungas, Chapare, Morales, 2019 crisis

Introduction

The Bolivian political party *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) [Movement toward Socialism] emerged from a broad coalition of social movements to capture state power in 2006 with the election of Evo Morales Ayma (2006–2019). Since then, much has been written on MAS relations with its social base (Anria; Anria and Cyr; Crabtree and Chaplin; Goodale; Grisaffi; Laserno; McNelly 2019, 2020; Oikonomakis and Espinoza). A central perspective advanced by some scholars is that, despite its grassroots origins, the MAS conformed to the "iron law of oligarchy" principle, through which even the most democratic organizations succumb to oligarchic rule (Michels). Oikonomakis and Espinoza argue that the MAS government subordinated social movements to the state, and that "the party . . . returned as the main agent of change in Bolivia, replacing the movement and the peoples" (287). Likewise, McNelly describes how the MAS addressed governance dilemmas arising from the conflicting interests of coalition partners by incorporating social leaders into the party and government. This process of incorporation,

McNelly (2019, 2020) argues, concentrated power in the hands of party leaders, generating a more hierarchical party and weakening the influence of social organizations.

This article evaluates these claims about MAS relations with social movements through a focused analysis of the party's interactions with the *Asociación Departmental de Productores de Coca* (ADEPCOCA) [Departmental Association of Coca Producers], an organization representing *cocaleros*, an Andean term for farmers who cultivate coca leaf, from the Yungas region of La Paz. A primary support base for the MAS, ADEPCOCA and other cocalero organizations emerged in the 1990s as a result of coca farmers' struggles (*cocaleros*) against state efforts to eradicate coca leaf, a mild stimulant consumed in Bolivia but also used to make cocaine. However, MAS relations with ADEPCOCA were more contentious compared to those with the *cocalero* organizations in Chapare, Morales's home region since 1978, as well as the epicenter of forced eradication under previous governments. In contrast, the Yungas was protected from eradication because it was considered an area of traditional coca production for the domestic market. Hence, ADEPCOCA initially supported the MAS based on common opposition to government regulation of coca but later resisted the party's efforts to subjugate ADEPCOCA in order to pass legislation legalizing coca outside traditional zones. During the 2019 crisis, ADEPCOCA supported the opposition forces that ousted Morales and worked with the incoming government to overturn Morales's coca policy reforms.

Through an analysis of MAS interactions with ADEPCOCA, this article illuminates the coalition partners' response to MAS efforts to subjugate them, the impacts on party structure and civil society, and the implications for the 2019 political crisis. The article presents two main claims. First, that ADEPCOCA challenges the common view that *cocaleros* were unified behind the MAS by highlighting the political divide between *cocaleros* in "traditional" areas, where production is linked to the domestic market, and *cocaleros* in transitional areas, where coca is connected to the global market for cocaine. Most previous research focuses on transitional Chapare, with less attention paid to the more complex relationship between the MAS and the traditional Yungas.[1] Second, that ADEPCOCA challenges the claim that social movements were debilitated under MAS rule. Indeed, ADEPCOCA mobilized against the government,

[1] On the Yungas of La Paz under MAS see Brewer-Osorio (2021); Conzelman; Pellegrini Calderón.

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notwithstanding MAS efforts to co-opt movement leaders. Finally, the article finds that ADEPCOCA resistance to MAS efforts to reform coca policy elucidates the tension between the MAS's dual commitments to state building and participatory governance based on the principle of "leading by obeying." This tension contributed to the fragmentation of the MAS coalition in the lead-up to the 2019 political crisis.

The article begins with a review of the relevant literature on the MAS as a ruling party, the party's strategy for incorporating social movements, and the impacts on party structure and society. Informed by this literature, the following sections present a narrative on MAS relations with ADEPCOCA, drawing on news reports, regional historiographies, author interviews, and the published literature. The article's conclusion discusses broader implications for MAS governance and the 2019 crisis.

MAS and the Iron Law of Oligarchy

Sociologist Robert Michels argues that large-scale organizations such as political parties are bound by an "iron law of oligarchy," whereby the organization will inexorably succumb to domination by a "leadership class" because essential administrators—who are more invested in organizational survival than regular members are—come to control access to information and rewards over time. Michels identifies two main factors that lead to the concentration of power among organizational leaders. First, for practical purposes, Michels contends that all organizations end up with a small group of highly committed and, often, paid members, who prepare and carry out plans on behalf of the organizational membership. Over time, this smaller and better organized group develops specialized knowledge, access to organizational resources, and control over the agenda, which they can use to wield power over the base membership. Second, Michels argues that leaders accrue power and prestige from their position in the organization and, eventually, this corrupts leaders' interests and values such that they are more concerned with maintaining their position in office than with the organization's ideology and the interests of base supporters.

Michels's writing reflected on the trajectories of the first mass parties to incorporate the popular sector in his contemporary context in nineteenth-century Europe, but many mass parties in twentieth-century Latin America conformed to Michels's theoretical expectation as well (Collier and Collier; Silva and Rossi). For example, the participatory and radically progressive Brazilian

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Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) [Workers' Party] emerged from a coalition of workers and social movements to form a government under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010). However, in accordance with Michels's expectations, as a governing party the PT became more bureaucratic and moderate, sidelining its social movement base and centralizing decision-making power with party leaders (Anria 162-206; Gómez Bruera). The shift toward greater oligarchic rule within the Brazilian PT mirrors the path of other mass-based parties in Latin America such as the *Partido Justicialista* (PJ) [Justicialist Party] in Argentina (Levitsky 2003) and the *Acción Democrática* (AD) [Democratic Action Party] in Venezuela (Coppedge). Finally, in Bolivia, the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) [Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] was also a mass-based party that emerged from a coalition of middle-class professionals and organized laborers and whose leadership structure became more top-down after forming a government in the aftermath of Bolivia's 1952 National Revolution (Anria and Cyr).

As a mass-based party similar to the Brazilian PT and the Bolivian MNR, the Bolivian MAS developed in the 1990s from the bottom up through mobilized rural social movements such as *cocalero* and Indigenous organizations. However, the participation of Indigenous constituencies distinguished the MAS from other mass-based parties, including the Bolivian MNR (Anria 15). The MAS emulated the *cocaleros'* and other rural unions' embrace of grassroots participation and low levels of centralization (Anria 15; Grisaffi). Recognizing the oligarchic tendencies of political parties, the party's founders called the MAS a political "instrument" to emphasize its participatory internal structure as distinct from the traditional "elite-controlled" political party wherein party leaders dominate (Zuazo 38). Moreover, when the MAS took power in 2006, Vice President Álvaro García Linera committed to carrying this practice forward by subordinating the state apparatus to the authority of the movements (García Linera).

Nevertheless, numerous studies published since 2006 describe the MAS as increasingly top-down, centralized, and estranged from its support base of grassroots organizations outside of the *cocalero* unions at the center of the party (Farthing and Becker 133, 163; *La Mascarada del poder*; Lucero; McNelly 2019, 2021; Oikonomakis and Espinoza; Regalsky). In accordance with Michels's claims, and similar to most other Latin American mass-based parties such as the Brazilian PT, the Argentinian PJ, and the Venezuelan AD, Farthing and Becker suggest that the MAS evolved into a more top-down party due to social leaders' lack of government experience and training, which resulted in

dependence on career politicians and "technocrats" affiliated with previous governments who had specialized knowledge of the inner workings of government and control over resources, including foreign-funded contracts for mining and hydrocarbon projects (133).

Much research has found that this perceived shift toward top-down rule by party elites prompted the MAS leadership to adopt a range of incorporation strategies in order to gain ascendency over social movements, including policy reforms to address central demands (Goodale; Hertzel and Ledebur; McNelly 2020, 78, 83-84), institutional reforms (McNelly 2020, 81-82),[2] and especially co-optation of movement leaders by offering political appointments (Anria and Cyr; Oikonomakis and Espinoza 18-19).[3] Anria and Cyr argue that these incorporation strategies resulted in intensive links between the MAS and its social movement allies, which supported a stable coalition. However, other studies find that the MAS experienced significant coalition fragmentation (Fabricant and Postero; Goodale; Laserna). In the case of ADEPCOCA, government appointments of organizational leaders and their direct participation in policy decisions did not preclude the formation of an opposition movement against the MAS government.

Another central claim from the literature is that MAS incorporation of social leaders weakened the once-militant social organizations that propelled the MAS to victory in 2005, thereby undermining societal capacity to mobilize against the government (McNelly 2020, 87; Regalsky). For example, McNelly (2019) finds that access to government appointments transformed leadership positions in the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB) [Bolivian Workers' Center], a once-powerful national labor federation, into springboards to political careers (McNelly 2019, 898, 909-911). This perspective accounts for the many social leaders that assented to Morales's embrace of unpopular neoliberal policies, but it is also contradicted by evidence of frequent social mobilization against the government. In 2011 alone, the MAS confronted more than nine hundred anti-government mobilizations that secured large concessions from the government (Fontana; McNelly 2020, 89), including the delay of a highway project through the *Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure* (TIPNIS) [Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory] that violated

[2] Morales created two state institutions to channel social demands: the *Viceministerio para la Coordinación con Movimientos Sociales y Sociedad Civil* (VMCMSSC) [Vice-Ministry for the Coordination with Social Movements and Civil Society]; and the Coordinadora *Nacional por el Cambio* (CONALCAM) [National Coordinator pro-Change].

[3] In Morales's first cabinet, social leaders controlled ten of sixteen ministries.

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Indigenous rights under the 2009 Bolivian Constitution (Fabricant and Postero; Laing).

The TIPNIS conflict caused a shift in MAS relations with Indigenous organizations such as the *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia* (CIDOB) [Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia] that had hitherto supported the MAS. CIDOB organized a protest march against the highway project, which was brutally repressed by the Morales government. As a result, CIDOB leaders and a large faction of its members renounced the MAS. However, the Morales government supported a pro-MAS faction to form a new "parallel organization" to CIDOB. After TIPNIS, MAS leaders shaped further parallel organizations to suppress opposition to the government, including regime-friendly versions of the *Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu* (CONAMAQ) [National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu], the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB) [Unified Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia], the *Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto* (FEJUVE) [Federation of Neighborhood Councils-El Alto], and ADEPCOCA (McNelly 2020, 90).

Indeed, MAS leaders supported parallel organizations to address the many social movements that resisted subjugation to the party, suggesting that civil society remained stronger under the MAS than the literature implies. In fact, Anria finds that, far from succumbing to a leadership class, the MAS mostly escaped the oligarchic tendencies of most other mass-based parties precisely because rural organizations preserved autonomy and capacity to hold party leaders accountable (Anria 4). Moreover, though the MAS trajectory is unusual, the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio* (FA) [Broad Front] party evolved in a similar way after forming a government in 2005 (Anria 181-191). In the case of the Bolivian MAS, Anria argues that rural organizations such as ADEPCOCA were more resilient to party co-optation compared to their urban counterparts because of their more democratic internal structure that supported mechanisms to hold leaders accountable to the organization's social base, unlike the MAS party (18; see also Grisaffi). In the lead up to Bolivia's 2019 election, ADEPCOCA and several other rural organizations that formerly supported the MAS ended up backing the forced removal of Morales.

The Case Study: MAS-ADEPCOCA Relations

To evaluate the above claims, this article assesses predominant arguments about MAS relations with social movements based on a case study

of ADEPCOCA, a *cocalero* organization in the Yungas of La Paz. In response to increased government regulation of the coca market in the 1980s, the Yungas *cocalero* unions created ADEPCOCA to represent producers' interests with respect to commercialization of coca leaf. ADEPCOCA held its first meeting in 1984 and was legally constituted in 1989 ("*En defensa de la coca*"). As the economic wing of the region's *cocalero* unions, ADEPCOCA protected coca farmers against government efforts to control production, including threats of eradication, and prevented wealthy intermediaries from dominating the coca market (Spedding 1997). To that end, ADEPCOCA was tasked with organizing anti-government protest activities and controlling access to producer licenses that permitted farmers to directly market coca (Lema; Spedding 1997, 125). Over time, it emerged as a powerful organization representing the interests of traditional Yungas *coca* farmers at the national level. Finally, though most ADEPCOCA affiliates claim Indigenous Aymara and Quechua heritage, ADEPCOCA is not organized around members' shared interests as Indigenous people but rather their shared interests as *coca* farmers (Pellegrini Calderón).[4]

As a case study, ADEPCOCA addresses a weakness in the existing literature on MAS by bringing more attention to party relations with its stronghold region in the western highlands. This relationship receives less consideration than MAS relations with other rural organizations such as the *Seis Federaciones del Trópico de Cochabamba* [Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba] (Grisaffi; Oikonomakis and Espinoza) and the lowland Indigenous organizations CIDOB and CONAMAQ (Fabricant and Postero; McNelly 2020; Oikonomakis and Espinoza) that were differently positioned within the MAS coalition. Regarding the Six Federations, ADEPCOCA shares a similar participatory organizational structure and defensive position regarding coca (Grissafi; Pellegrini Calderón). However, the MAS emerged from the Chapare struggles against forced eradication, which did not impact Yungas equally, and therefore the Chapare benefited from a more organic relationship with party leaders. Regarding lowland Indigenous organizations, MAS relations with these groups were shaped by the historic conflicts between highland and lowland groups (Fabricant and Postero) that were not central to the MAS-ADEPCOCA relationship.

Finally, this analysis of ADEPCOCA provides some insights into how Bolivia's position in the global drug trade as a source country for illicit coca

[4] In fact, Pellegrini Calderón finds that many *yungueños* preface their socioeconomic identity as traditional *cocaleros* above their Indigenous identity.

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affected the MAS as a popular political movement. Beginning in the 1980s, US-led efforts to destroy coca leaf sparked social resistance from peasant coca farmers in Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia (Lehman). Although Bolivian *cocaleros* launched a successful political movement, Peruvian and Colombian *cocaleros* were politically marginalized (Durand Ochoa; Ramírez). Bolivia's distinct trajectory is attributed to several factors, including the greater historical and economic significance of coca in Bolivia (Léon and Sanabria), the low(er) violence associated with coca trading in Bolivia compared to armed conflicts in Peru and Colombia (Gillies), and the formation of politically powerful *cocalero* unions linked to regional and national peasant and Indigenous organizations (Durand Ochoa; Grisaffi). For example, ADEPCOCA was linked to CSUTCB, the national peasant organization (Spedding 1997, 127-128), and was historically involved with the MNR (Pelligrini Calderón 48; Spedding 1997, 130) and the Indigenous political party and movement *Eje Pachakuti* (MIP) [Pachakuti Indigenous Movement], whose presidential candidate, Felipe Quispe Huanca, ran against Evo Morales in the 2002 presidential election (Brewer-Osorio 2020; Pelligrini Calderón 48).

The political ascent of Bolivian *cocaleros* was a remarkable event that inspired much academic research (Brewer-Osorio 2020; Durand Ochoa; Grisaffi; Ramos Salazar). However, this article highlights the political divide between Chapare and Yungas *cocaleros* that challenged MAS governance. That divide stems from the regions' distinct histories with coca production and the effects of a US-supported law that legally distinguished the Yungas and other areas of historic production from the Chapare, where coca cultivation is more linked to the global cocaine market. MAS efforts to overturn this legal distinction after 2006 caused discord between Chapare and Yungas *cocaleros* (Brewer-Osorio 2021). A secondary objective of this article is to illuminate this clash and its implications for MAS governance and the 2019 political crisis.

MAS Relations with ADEPCOCA

This section presents the case study of MAS relations with the ADEPCOCA *cocalero* organization that largely supports Anria's (2018) argument about the enduring strength of rural social organizations under the MAS with evidence that organizational autonomy included *cocalero* organizations that were purportedly the rural movements most integrated with the MAS party. The narrative is organized around two major claims. The first demonstrates that the Bolivian *cocalero* sector was impacted by political divisions and, as a result, that

ADEPCOCA relations with the MAS party were more negotiated than "organic." The narrative links this political divide to outright conflict between the MAS government and ADEPCOCA leading up to the 2019 political crisis, which reemerged when the MAS resumed power under President Luis Arce (2020-present) ("Adepcoca evalúa asistir"). The second establishes that ADEPCOCA remained strong under MAS rule and used its political influence to stonewall Morales's efforts to reform coca policy. In 2017, MAS drug policy reform culminated in the adoption of the *Ley General de la Coca* (Law 906) [General Law of Coca] that gave Chapare and other nontraditional *cocaleros* the same legal status as traditional Yungas *cocaleros.* In response, ADEPCOCA joined the opposition and capitalized on the 2019 political crisis and subsequent installation of an unelected government to achieve a temporary rollback of Morales's reforms. ADEPCOCA's response to the new coca law elucidates a deeper tension between the MAS commitments to state building and participatory democracy that were key factors that contributed to the 2019 political crisis. In the case of ADEPCOCA, the MAS government used state power to change policy "from above" in a way that conflicted with ADEPCOCA interests and participation in decision-making "from below." Hence, ADEPCOCA backed the opposition that forcibly removed Morales in November 2019.

Claim 1: Cocalero Fragmentation

ADEPCOCA's defection from the MAS party in 2017 and support for the opposition during the 2019 political crisis was rooted in a long-standing political rift between *cocaleros* from traditional zones primarily in the Yungas of La Paz and *cocaleros* from the transitional zones in the Chapare and the Yungas periphery. This section attributes that political divide to two factors: the distinct regional histories of coca production and relations with the global drug trade, and the US-supported 1988 *Ley del Régimen de la Coca y Sustancias Controladas* [Law on the Regime Applicable to Coca and Controlled Substances] (Law 1008). Law 1008 criminalized coca cultivation outside the so-called traditional zones in the Yungas of La Paz and smaller areas in north La Paz and Yungas of Vandiola in Cochabamba.

First, the Chapare and the Yungas are divided based on their distinct histories of coca production. The Yungas of Laz Paz, Vandiola, and Apolo have

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been areas of coca cultivation since at least the time of the Inca Empire.[5] Indeed, Andean peoples chewed coca leaf centuries before the discovery of the potent drug cocaine in a German lab in 1860 (Gootenberg 2008). During the colonial period, Spanish conquerors valued coca as a stimulant to sustain forced labor and established large haciendas particularly in the Yungas to supply the largest mining town in Potosí.[6] The Yungas haciendas survived Bolivian independence in 1825, which left politically powerful Yungas landowners in control of both the Bolivian coca market and the local Indigenous communities that supplied the labor (Klein; Lema). The *hacienda* system predominated in the Yungas and throughout the western highlands until the 1952 Revolution and subsequent agrarian reform.

The 1952 Revolution brought to power the MNR, Bolivia's first mass-based party (Volk). The MNR government implemented sweeping reforms that generated the structural conditions for the emergence of powerful peasant organizations in the 1970s and 1980s, including ADEPCOCA, that would play a key role in the political ascent of the MAS and the 2019 crisis. As a mass party, MNR confronted similar challenges to the MAS with respect to leaders' subordination of its social base of organized miners and factory workers. The MNR incorporated these groups by nationalizing the mines and creating the COB before targeting the peasant sector with agrarian reform in 1953 (Anria and Cyr).

In the Yungas of La Paz, agrarian reform broke up the old and large *haciendas* and reapportioned the land to the peasant laborers. Subsequently, MNR party militants established an agrarian union for each hacienda community to facilitate the MNR's top-down control. Local unions were united under regional Centrals, which in turn were integrated under six provincial Federations (Grisaffi 17; Spedding 1997, 118; Spedding 2005). MNR party leaders used this structure to distribute party patrimony and mobilize the peasantry on behalf of the party (Crabtree and Chaplin 107; Heath). However, the agrarian unions in the Yungas and throughout the highlands quickly assumed the traditional participatory structure of Indigenous communities with direct election of leaders and collective decision making. This "bottom-up" structure generated some autonomy from the MNR party elite by creating mechanisms of accountability between union leaders and the base (Grisaffi).

[5] Author interview with academic expert and social activist, Carlos Crespo, August 5, 2016, Cochabamba.

[6] Workers chewed coca to stave off hunger and fatigue in the mines.

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The MAS party emerged directly from agrarian unions and adopted their participatory authority structure. However, after taking power in 2006, the MAS government grappled with tensions between its commitment to participatory governance, wherein social leaders participated in the policy process, on the one hand, and the party's commitment to implementing sweeping reforms, on the other. Paradoxically, the bottom-up authority structure of organizations such as ADEPCOCA, on which the MAS party was modeled, facilitated ADEPCOCA resistance to MAS efforts to reform national coca policy. Indeed, ADEPCOCA leaders have compared their resistance to co-optation under MAS with their historical experience of resisting co-optation by the MNR, which resulted in distrust between ADEPCOCA affiliates and Yungas leaders who were appointed to positions in the MAS government. Capturing this distrust, Dionicio Núñez, a Yungas leader and former Vice minister for Coca under Morales, explained, "They call us *oficialistas*, often a dirty word. . . . people need to realize it is not the same *oficialismo* as before," (Crabtree and Chaplin 107).

In contrast to the Yungas, the Chapare was not an important source of coca until after the 1953 agrarian reform. Until the mid-twentieth century, the tropical Chapare was a sparsely populated frontier. During the 1960s, the MNR government promoted colonization of the Chapare as part of the Alliance for Progress initiative to relieve peasant landlessness in the highlands (Crabtree and Chapin 96; Ramos Salazar 19). The first Chapare settlements created agrarian unions modeled on the bottom-up participatory structure of the highland union. New settlers joined the union in exchange for land, and some cultivated small quantitates of coca to sell at the regional market in Villa Tunari (Ramos Salazar 70). However, during the 1970s, skyrocketing global demand for cocaine triggered a coca boom in the Chapare to supply emerging drug trafficking circuits in eastern Bolivia (Gillies).[7] In the early 1980s, booming coca prices combined with economic crisis in the mining sector drew large numbers of migrants to the Chapare to make a livelihood based on coca cultivation.

As part of their resistance to MAS efforts to change coca policy after 2006, *cocaleros* from the traditional zones reference this historical link between the Chapare and cocaine trafficking as justification for criminalizing Chapare coca. They also stress the greater suitability of traditional coca for chewing as compared to Chapare coca, which they describe as low quality and better for

[7] Agrarian elites from Santa Cruz and Beni took up cocaine trafficking with support from the military government (see Gillies).

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making cocaine.[8] As cocalero from the Yungas of Vandiola explained, "the ancient leaf that we handle has a natural habitat that is subtropical. . . . Evidently, it can grow [in the tropics] but with defects. . . the coca in Chapare . . . is defective, it is tasteless."[9]

However, these arguments ignore how Yungas *cocaleros* also integrated into the illicit trade. Though the Yungas of La Paz and Vandiola produce better coca at higher altitudes and are historically tied to the legal domestic market, the narco-dictator General Luis García Meza (1980–1981) briefly supplanted the free market with a state-controlled, one-buyer system called the *acopio* in order to extract a rent from sales to traffickers (Léons 1993, 138).[10] Forced to sell at below-market prices, some Yungas farmers manufactured coca paste, the first step in making cocaine, to sell directly to drug traffickers on the black market. The Yungas coca paste industry declined significantly after the *acopio* was dismantled, but the region never entirely disengaged from the illicit market (Léons 1993; Spedding 1997, 119, 122).

The key factor behind the *cocalero* fragmentation in Bolivia was the politicization of a Chapare "nontraditional*" cocalero* identity under the Law on the Regime Applicable to Coca and Controlled Substances (Law 1008 of 1988). The controversial Law 1008 was an effort to balance domestic pressure from coca farmers and consumers with international pressure to clamp down on cocaine trafficking. The law recognized 12,000 hectares of legal coca in the historic or traditional areas of the old coca-producing *haciendas* in the Yungas of La Paz, Vandiola, and Apolo, and recognized two legal coca markets in Villa Fátima, La Paz, and Sacaba, Cochabamba. Conversely, Law 1008 called for eradication with remuneration of all coca farms in the so-called surplus zones, mostly in the Chapare, where coca expansion was linked to demand for global cocaine in the twentieth century. Finally, coca farms that were outside traditional and surplus zones were marked for immediate and uncompensated eradication (AIN; *Ley del Régimen de la Coca*).

Law 1008 was shaped by mounting US pressure on Bolivia to adopt more punitive policies to address the cocaine trade in a context of increased Bolivian

[8] Author interview with academic expert and social activist, Carlos Crespo, August 17, 2016, Cochabamba, Bolivia,

[9] Author interview with the executive leader of the Traditional Yungas Vandiola Federation, August 5, 2016, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

[10] The military allied with drug traffickers to bloc democratically elected President, Hernán Siles Zuazo, from taking office.

dependence on the US market and US economic assistance. The country's return to democracy in 1982 was strained by a severe economic crisis offset only by a booming coca/cocaine market. President Hernán Siles Zuazo (1982-1985) took steps to combat drug trafficking, such as creating the militarized counter-narcotics police unit *Unidad Móvil Policial para Áreas Rurales* (UMOPAR) [Mobile Police Unit for Rural Areas], but was constrained by economic considerations given that the thriving coca/cocaine industry was shielding thousands of Bolivian farmers from economic devastation (Léons 1993, 131-134). However, after 1985, President Víctor Paz Estenssoro (1952-1956, 1960-1964, 1985-1989) committed to an IMF austerity plan that drew Bolivia closer to the United States, and Paz capitulated under US pressure to impose regulation and voluntary eradication in the Yungas, forcibly eradicating surplus coca in the Chapare (Gilles 9; Lehman 13; Spedding 1997, 122; Spedding 2005, 278, 288).

The shift in Bolivian drug policy during the 1980s elicited organizational responses in the Yungas of La Paz and the Chapare even before the passage of Law 1008. In La Paz, increased government regulation of the coca market prompted the unions to create ADEPCOCA to represent producers' interests with respect to commercialization of coca leaf. Bolivian government required sellers to obtain a merchant license, a requirement that benefited wealthy intermediaries at the expense of farmers. ADEPCOCA was granted authority by the unions to issue producer licenses recognized by the state, which permitted ADEPCOCA affiliates to market their coca without a merchant license. This established ADEPCOCA as a powerful organization that controlled access to the legal market in La Paz, where it was headquartered. In addition, ADEPCOCA used market access as a bargaining tool to compel affiliates to reject government deals for voluntary eradication and mobilize against threats to eradicate or expand regulations of the coca market (Léons 1997, 142-143; Spedding 2005, 279, 284-285). In the lead-up to the 2019 political crisis, ADEPCOCA leaders again weaponized control over market access to stonewall MAS reforms that would expand market access to include coca farmers from surplus zones.

As La Paz *cocaleros* organized against regulation in the 1980s, Chapare *cocaleros* organized against the imminent passage of Law 1008. During a protest in Villa Tunari in June 1988, UMOPAR agents killed twelve protestors (Grisaffi 38). Law 1008 was adopted months after the massacre. Much is written about how Law 1008 supported the militarization of coca control in Bolivia, which led to violent clashes between state forces and *cocaleros* in the

Chapare (Grisaffi; Gutiérrez Aguilar 73-96; Santos). Indeed, Evo Morales rose to national prominence as executive leader of the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba, the organization that led the resistance against Law 1008 in the Chapare (Crabtree and Chaplin 94). Bolivia's so-called war on coca peaked under President Hugo Banzer Suárez (1997–2001) and the infamous *Plan Dignidad,* an accelerated, forced eradication campaign aimed at achieving "zero coca" in the Chapare (Crabtree and Chapin 96). *Plan Dignidad* left the Chapare economically devastated and stirred resentment among Chapare farmers toward the traditional *cocaleros* in the Yungas of La Paz, who, the Chapare farmers believed, benefited from forced eradication in the Chapare (AIN). Moreover, the *cocalero* struggle against *Plan Dignidad* and forced eradication more broadly contributed to a resurgence in coca nationalism, wherein the defense of the coca leaf is framed as part of a broader defense of Bolivian national identity against national and foreign elites (Ehrinpreis; Gootenberg 2017, 5; Mattos Vazualdo).

Compared to the Chapare, there are fewer studies on how Law 1008 impacted the Yungas of La Paz and the smaller traditional areas. Law 1008 led to the expansion of coca cultivation in the Yungas of La Paz, in sharp contrast to the Chapare, predominantly by attracting new migrants. However, it also created incentives for local organizations to regulate production and exclude new settlers from the market in order to avoid government interference (AIN; Conzelman 62-63).[11] Indeed, new settlements outside the traditional zone generated local conflicts between colonizers and traditional cocaleros over the physical limit of Law 1008 protections. ADEPCOCA leaders advocated for a strict delineation of traditional areas, but settlers organized to legitimize their coca by forming agrarian unions and integrating into the *Consejo de Federaciones Campesinas de los Yungas* (COFECAY) [Council of Yungas Coca Growers' Federations], a regional organization of *cocalero* syndicates formed in 1994. Within COFECAY, factions emerged representing traditional and transitional unions, but the conflict remained local until the MAS came to power (Brewer-Osorio 2021, 26-28; Crabtree and Chaplin 105). Just as Law 1008 politicized the Chapare cocalero identity, the MAS project to dismantle Law 1008 politicized the traditional *cocalero* identity.

Between 1985 and 2005, the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba emerged from a wave of social protest against neoliberalism and repression as

[11] Law 1008 established the Yungas as a safe zone for coca thereby encouraging new settlements.

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the "new vanguard" of the popular opposition to the Bolivian political elite (Brewer-Osorio 2020; Gutiérrez Aguilar). In 1994, Evo Morales and other leaders from the CSUTCB formed the "political instrument" that became the MAS (Ramos Salazar 22).[12] As part of the CSUTCB, ADEPCOCA helped form the MAS coalition. However, contrary to the depiction of *cocaleros* as united behind the party, MAS relations with ADEPCOCA were strained by the party's campaign to nationalize legal coca production (AIN).

Ultimately, the brutality of *Plan Dignidad* shifted ADEPCOCA support in favor of the MAS, which was then a nascent political party. In the 1997 election that brought Banzer Suárez to power, MAS electoral support was geographically limited to rural areas of the department of Cochabamba (Anria 63-64). After destroying nearly all the coca in the Chapare, Banzer Suárez sent troops to the Yungas, stoking ADEPCOCA protests that were supported by pro-MAS sectors, including the Chapare *cocaleros* (Brewer-Osorio 2020; Conzelman 64). Following *Plan Dignidad*, electoral support for the MAS expanded rapidly. In 2004, President Carlos Mesa Gisbert (2003-2005) gave in to public demand with the Cato Accord, a provisional decree that authorized Chapare farmers to cultivate a *cato* (1,600 square meters) of coca.[13]

The MAS party won the Yungas of La Paz region in the national elections in 2002, 2005, and 2009, signaling that COFECAY and ADEPCOCA had mobilized most of their base behind the party. Despite ADEPCOCA opposition to the MAS agenda to reform coca control, there were few alternatives for traditional *cocaleros* at the national level. In the watershed 2005 election, the MAS won 66.6 percent of the vote in the department of La Paz, compared to 53.7 percent nationally (Brewer-Osorio 2021, 22). However, support for Morales was stronger in settlement areas[14] as compared to traditional areas, where there was some support for the *Poder Democrático Social* (PODEMOS) [Social Democratic Power] candidate Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga Ramírez, who campaigned on the defense of Law 1008 (Conzelman 69).

The political divide between pro- and anti-MAS factions in the Yungas of La Paz portended ADEPCOCA's eventual break with the MAS party and its subsequent support for the opposition forces that ousted Morales in 2019.

[12] Aymara Indigenous leaders formed the CSUTCB in 1979 to unite the peasant and Indigenous sectors.

[13] The size of a cato was based on the calculated quantity of coca production needed to support a livelihood.

[14] The settlement municipalities are Coroico, Caranavi, Irupana, La Asunta, and Palos Blancos (Conzelman 69).

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However, because surplus *cocaleros* outnumbered traditional *cocaleros* even in the Yungas, early on the political divide was more visible in local elections and debates about how to address coca overproduction in the region, which had reached 23,550 hectares by 2003 (Conzelman 63). First, the political faction pitted ADEPCOCA against COFECAY due to the stronger representation of transitional *cocaleros* in the latter. COFECAY advocated for the MAS plan to nationalize access to the legal market while creating uniform standards for farm size. Conversely, ADEPCOCA adopted a "protectionist" position centered on eradicating coca outside the traditional area recognized by Law 1008 (Brewer-Osorio 2021, 25-28). ADEPCOCA and COFECAY separately and repeatedly petitioned the government for a regional strategy to reduce coca production that reflected their affiliates' preference, resulting in a string of blockades and counterblockades in the region that peaked in April 2004 (Conzelman 65).

Moreover, Conzelman describes how the political division between pro- and anti-MAS factions impacted local elections. For example, in the 2004 municipal election, "the fundamental question was . . . about whether the *cocaleros* in the traditional zones of Yungas should protect their legal status and therefore their economic monopoly at the expense of those in the Chapare and new production zones, or if they should adopt a more nationalist attitude and fight for the legalization of coca leaf cultivation in the entire country" (68). The protectionist faction formed "citizen groups," organized groups that could participate in local elections without formally registering as a political party, including an ADEPCOCA group, to compete against MAS party candidates in their municipalities who advocated for the nationalist position.[15] Predictably, citizen groups were electorally successful in municipalities at the center of the historic traditional zone.[16]

In sum, the MAS party benefited from high electoral support in all coca-producing areas of Bolivia, but national-level support masked important conflicts within the *cocalero* movement between traditional and transitional coca farmers. These conflicts were rooted in distinct regional histories of coca production that became politized under the US-supported Law 1008 that resulted in protections for Yungas cocaleros in traditional areas and repression

[15] The rights of citizen groups to participate in local elections was established in 2004 via the *Ley de Agrupaciones Ciudadanas y Pueblos Indígenas* (Law 2771) [Law on Citizen Groups and Indigenous Peoples] (Conzelman 68).

[16] The citizen group *Revolución Cocalera Yungueña* (RCOCA) [Yungas Cocalera Revolution] won in Coripata, and ADEPCOCA citizen groups won in Chulumani (Conzelman 68, n9).

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of cocaleros in the Chapare. The next section will capture how the political divide between traditional and transitional *cocaleros* deepened under the MAS government as a result of Morales's move to reform drug policy and ultimately replace Law 1008 with the General Law of Coca (Law 906). Despite MAS efforts to co-opt the Yungas *cocaleros*, Law 906 galvanized ADEPCOCA opposition to the MAS government with implications for MAS governance.

Claim 2: Resilience to Co-optation and Political Influence

This section offers empirical evidence to support the article's second claim that ADEPCOCA mobilized against the MAS government, notwithstanding party efforts to co-opt Yungas cocalero leaders. In keeping with Anria and Cyr's and McNelly's (2019, 2021) analysis on MAS incorporation, the section establishes that the Morales government offered Yungas leaders government posts and direct participation in policy decisions. However, contrary to Anria and Cyr's expectations, this co-optation strategy did not generate intensive linkages between MAS and ADEPCOCA that could prevent a break from the governing coalition. Instead, the empirical evidence demonstrates that ADEPCOCA maintained significant organizational autonomy and bottom-up influence over the party and formally broke with the MAS coalition in 2017 in response to Law 906.

In the aftermath of the 2005 election that brought the MAS to power, ADEPCOCA affiliates strategically reorganized under a MAS-aligned leadership. While a faction within ADEPCOCA opposed MAS on policy grounds, Bolivia's strong patrimonial tradition rewarded political alignment with the government, which gave social organizations access to power and favors (Conzelman 70-71). The Morales government thus tried to co-opt Yungas *cocalero* organizations with government appointments, policy concessions, and regular opportunities to participate in policy making.

In 2009, the Morales government created the *Viceministerio de Coca y Desarrollo Integral* (VCDI) [Vice Ministry of Coca and Integral Development] as a post within the Ministry of Rural Development and Lands that the MAS government reserved for MASista *yungueño* leaders. The incorporation of Yungas and other social leaders into high government positions aligned with the MAS's commitment to participatory democracy based on the model of the agrarian unions. However, it could also be used as a strategy for co-opting leaders from resistant sectors in order to overcome opposition to policy

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reform. Under Morales, the vice minister of Coca post was impacted by high turnover, but all appointees were MAS loyalists recruited from the most important organizations in the Yungas, including Dionicio Núñez (2012-2013), a former executive secretary of COFECAY and MAS deputy, and Ernesto Cordero (2016-2017), a former ADEPCOCA executive secretary (Aliaga; Bustillos Zamorano).

The continuous turnover of vice ministers of coca signaled discord between appointed leaders and their social base in the Yungas. For example, Ernesto Cordero renounced the post in 2017 due to conflicts over the new General Law of Coca and strong reprobation from ADEPCOCA (*La voz de Tarija*). Moreover, local Yungas leaders distanced themselves from their compatriots in the government and used the derogatory term *oficialistas* [officials] in reference to local leaders who accepted government posts (Crabtree and Chaplin 107). In the media, locals complained that Yungas leaders who accepted appointment as vice minister of coca were rewarded with more extensive land plots. The locals saw the transfer of land to "co-opted" vice ministers of coca as a strategy, wherein the vice ministers then authorized eradication campaigns without consulting the affected Yungas community (Chuquimia). To be sure, contrary to McNelly's (2019, 2021) argument that top-down co-optation worked to demobilize social organizations, ADEPCOCA maintained a critical stance toward the government and dissociated from leaders who "joined the government."

From the beginning, MAS government relations with ADEPCOCA exposed tensions between the MAS commitment to participatory democracy, which demanded the inclusion of ADEPCOCA and other *cocalero* organizations in policy decisions, and the MAS's commitment to carry out promised reforms, most notably overturning Law 1008. Hence, in addition to appointments to high posts, Morales deferred the creation of a new law to replace Law 1008 in order to appease the protectionists within ADEPCOCA. During the first decade of MAS rule, Morales respected Law 1008 and engaged with ADEPCOCA and COFECAY to devise a regional plan for cooperative coca reduction. However, though COFECAY was mostly cooperative, ADEPCOCA evoked Law 1008 protections and threatened mobilizations to stonewall any government proposal that regulated production in the traditional area (AIN; Brewer-Osorio 2021, 25-28). Indeed, the Morales government failed to impose any coca cultivation limit in the traditional Yungas prior to the adoption of Law 906 because, as Crabtree and Chaplin suggest, a limit "would lead to an insurrection" (107).

Conceding to the ADEPCOCA protectionists' plan to reduce coca in the Yungas, the Morales government set aside the new coca law and focused on delineating the traditional zone. In the outlying transitional area, ADEPCOCA permitted the government to impose a larger *cato* limit (2,600 square meters) and eradicate excess coca without provoking ADEPCOCA opposition (Brewer-Osorio 2021; Crabtree and Chaplin 107).[17] However, these measures failed to significantly reduce surplus coca in the Yungas and caused greater animosity between transitional and traditional areas.

Evo Morales began his second presidential term (2009-2014) with an established coalition of social support. In February 2009, he delivered on a core campaign promise of a more inclusive Bolivian constitution and went on to win the 2009 election with a remarkable 64 percent of votes (OEP). More secure in its hold on power, the MAS government loosened its commitment to participatory democracy after the 2009 election in favor of greater top-down governance. Leading up to the election, MAS candidates for municipal offices in the Yungas openly advocated for "rationalizing" coca production. These pronouncements drew the wrath of ADEPCOCA leaders, and MAS experienced losses in several Yungas municipalities (Crabtree and Chaplin 107). After the election, Morales shifted strategy to focus on market regulation to reduce coca in the Yungas and to initiate the process for replacing Law 1008 with a new coca law.

First, in August 2010, the MAS government passed a new Coca Commercialization Regulation that limited producers to five pounds of coca leaf sales per month, a significant decrease from the fifteen pounds previously authorized (AIN). ADEPCOCA opposed the measure and, in October 2011, about 6,000 cocaleros from transitional and traditional areas organized a roadblock, which caused major disruptions to transportation and forced the government to rescind the new regulation. During the protest, ADEPCOCA leaders also demanded the resignation of MAS officials, including the Vice Minister of Coca and Development, for supporting the new regulation and authorizing voluntary eradication without consulting ADEPCOCA, but this request was not granted (AIN). It was during this time that ADEPCOCA's then-executive leader Ramiro Sánchez initiated alliances with CIDOB and other rural social organizations in opposition to the MAS, marking the beginning of ADEPCOCA's break from the MAS coalition (AIN).

[17] The Yungas was permitted a larger *cato* because the higher altitudes result in lower density of coca bush (Conzelman 69).

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The difficulties confronted by MAS in the Yungas contrast with more successful coca control in the Chapare. After taking office, Morales upheld the Cato Accord as part of a broader reform called Coca Yes, Cocaine No [CYCN] that also supported "social control," or community policing, of the *cato* limit, and new infrastructure to encourage crop diversification (Farthing and Kohl 205). Further supporting Anria's claim about the importance of rural organizations, the success of CYCN in the Chapare is attributed to the local *cocalero* organizations that enforced compliance with the Cato Accord (Brewer-Osorio 2021). The Chapare federations, still under Morales's leadership, embraced the reforms that brought the Chapare more cooperative and effective coca control and improved living standards (Farthing et al.; Grisaffi; Grisaffi and Ledebur).

Second, in 2011, Morales initiated talks with *cocalero* organizations about a new law to replace Law 1008. ADEPCOCA and the Six Federations of Tropic of Cochabamba were even invited to draft versions of the replacement law. While contentious, the process was open, democratic, and based on direct participation of the coca farmers to debate key issues such as expanding legal production and commercialization. Reflecting the protectionist position, ADEPCOCA proposed legislation that prohibited coca cultivation outside traditional areas. Conversely, the Six Federations proposed nationalizing legal coca cultivation combined with social control to ensure compliance with limits set by domestic market demand for raw coca leaf (Pellegrini Calderón 110-116). Though the new law was negotiated, ADEPCOCA formed an independent political party to contest local elections in 2015 and selected Franklin Gutiérrez, a young union leader, as their executive secretary ("Ministro de Evo").

Importantly, while the Yungas of La Paz was the epicenter of the most consequential *cocalero* resistance to MAS, similar anti-MAS movements emerged in the smaller traditional zones. The Vandiola broke with the MAS after Morales imposed a *cato* limit and eradicated coca in their traditional area, which they viewed as a violation of Law 1008 protections. As one Vandiola leader explained, "Our Federation in not with the Six Federations [anymore] . . . . In the beginning we ourselves supported and many continue to support their party [MAS], but many people are realizing that it shouldn't be like this . . . ."[18] Likewise, cocaleros in traditional Apolo organized against eradication, resulting in deadly clashes with security forces. According to academic expert

[18] Author interview with the executive leader of the Traditional Yungas Vandiola Federation, August 17, 2016, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

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and activist Carlos Crespo, "This [leader] started to organize all of the traditional cocalero regions into a national federation of traditional coca Zones . . . . [T]they were openly confronting the yungueños and chapareños that are in power. . . . They are organizing [national] gatherings, and it's very strong . . . . [They are] dissidents from the cocalero movement that are in power today."[19]

While there were multiple local anti-government struggles by traditional *cocaleros,* ADEPCOCA executive Franklin Gutiérrez emerged as the most visible leader of the traditional *cocalero* resistance to the MAS government. Gutiérrez's political rise is sometimes compared to Morales's rise to prominence in the struggle against Law 1008. In statements to the press, Gutiérrez compared the ADEPCOCA party to the MAS based on their similar origins in resistance to government drug control ("Nace nuevo partido"; "Ministro de Evo"). ADEPCOCA candidates performed poorly in 2015 and in subsequent elections (OEP 59, 211), but it is notable that their electoral support came mainly from the peasant and Indigenous organizations that abandoned the MAS after 2006 (Veliz).

Notwithstanding ADEPCOCA opposition, the Bolivian Congress approved a new General Law of Coca (Law 906) in 2017 that reflected the Chapare agenda to nationalize legal cultivation. Law 906 defined two types of coca zones: authorized and unauthorized. The authorized zones included traditional areas legalized under Law 1008 in addition to other areas with "registration and cadastre," including the provinces of the tropics of Cochabamba: Chapare, Carrasco, and Tiraque. In addition, Law 906 legalized 22,000 hectares of coca production (compared to 12,000 under Law 1008), distributed to give 14,000 hectares to the authorized zones of La Paz and 8,000 hectares to the authorized zones of Cochabamba. Finally, Law 906 granted the national government legal authority to eradicate surplus coca in any authorized zone (Ley General de la Coca). With these changes, Law 906 created legal equality among *cocaleros* from traditional and formerly surplus zones, thereby eliminating the traditional *cocaleros'* monopoly over the domestic coca market. This ignited a more organized and sustained *cocalero* opposition to the MAS government during the last two years of Morales's presidency.

ADEPCOCA immediately responded to Law 906 with sustained protests during 2017. Its leader denounced Morales and Law 906, which he argued benefited the "illegal" coca sector in the Chapare ("Franklin Gutiérrez"). These

[19] Author interview with Carlos Crespo, August 5, 2016, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

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protests triggered a more autocratic response from the government than previous disputes (Ortiz). As occurred with CIDOB and other oppositional organizations, Morales supported a parallel ADEPCOCA in corporatist fashion, which thereby subverted the internal democracy of the unions, and also created a parallel coca market in direct violation of Law 906, which sanctioned only one regional market ("La Policía interviene"; Pomacahua). These government interventions stoked fierce confrontations between the ADEPCOCA factions, which triggered a cycle of violent displacements from the ADEPCOCA headquarters and constant alternation of control of the Villa Fátima market. Morales deployed police forces multiple times in 2018 and 2019 to assist the pro-MAS *oficialistas* against the so-called dissidents (Alanoca Paco).

Ultimately, government coercion failed to secure *oficialistas'* control of ADEPCOCA and the coca market. MAS thus turned to the legal system to quash the *cocalero* rebellion (Peñaloza Bretel). In June 2018, two months after seizing ADEPCOCA from the *oficialistas,* Franklin Gutiérrez announced his candidacy for president with the ADEPCOCA party in the 2019 elections ("Nace nuevo partido"; "Ministro de Evo"). However, in August, Gutiérrez was jailed on criminal charges after an UMOPAR lieutenant was killed in a *cocalero* ambush in the Yungas ("Franklin Gutiérrez"). Some questioned government motives for charging Gutiérrez, but the allegation was plausible. Nevertheless, in the weeks after Gutiérrez's arrest, MAS officials presented more farfetched claims, such as that Gutiérrez was connected with Colombian crime groups to arm cocaleros in the Yungas ("Dirigente cocalero"), and that immigration records purportedly confirmed that Gutiérrez had traveled to Colombia (Cajías; Peñaloza Bretel). The government's bizarre narrative gave standing to Gutiérrez and his supporters, who maintained that Morales was using the legal system to persecute the political opposition ("Franklin Gutiérrez").

Gutiérrez's incarceration triggered further ADEPCOCA protests and confrontations with state forces prior to the contentious 2019 general election ("Franklin Gutiérrez"; "La Policía interviene"). Meanwhile, Morales ran for a fourth presidential term, flouting constitutional term limits. The MAS was favored in the polls, and the opposition had fragmented into four separate presidential contenders (Veliz). However, within a month of the election, Morales faced public backlash over poor handling of the so-called chiquitano wildfires that devastated parts of the eastern countryside. The opposition took advantage of the wildfire debacle to stoke widespread protests across multiple Bolivian cities in October 2019. These protests were organized by the leading right-wing opposition group, the Pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee, but drew

participation from former MAS supporters, including Yungas *cocaleros* who took to the streets to demand the release of Gutiérrez (Somos; McNelly 2021, 84).

The MAS claimed victory in the election held on October 20, 2019, but the opposition immediately alleged fraud, thereby generating greater social unrest.[20] On November 10, Morales resigned at the entreat of military leaders and claimed asylum in Mexico. Afterward, other elected MAS officials in Congress fled the country, leaving Senator Jeanine Áñez of the *Movimiento Demócrata Social* (MDS) [Social Democratic Movement], a minor conservative party, as interim president (McNelly 2021, 85). Áñez's support came primarily from the lowland elites, including the Pro-Santa Cruz Committee. She governed for nearly a year before new elections restored the MAS to power in October 2020.

Under the Áñez regime, ADEPCOCA supported, and benefited from, the interim government's rollback of Morales's drug policy reform. Indeed, this article's analysis of MAS-ADEPCOCA relations illuminates the diametric positions of ADEPCOCA and the Chapare *cocaleros* during the 2019 crisis and the impacts on state violence. After taking power, Áñez negotiated Gutiérrez's release from prison (Agencia EFE), signaling a tacit alliance between ADEPCOCA and the new government. Notably, ADEPCOCA leaders did not object to Áñez's use of lethal military force to subdue Chapare protestors on November 15, 2019 (Farthing and Becker 187-189; Rosales). This tolerance of violence against Chapare protestors accorded with ADEPCOCA's historical support for government repression of nontraditional coca farmers. However, prior to Law 906, ADEPCOCA generally objected to more extreme repression such as that which occurred in the Chapare under Plan Dignidad (1998-2002) (Conzelman 64). ADEPCOCA's acceptance of violent tactics under Áñez suggests that Morales's reforms exacerbated preexisting conflicts among Bolivian *cocaleros* and radicalized ADEPCOCA as a political movement. When the MAS returned to power under Luis Arce (2020-present), ADEPCOCA violently resisted the reinstatement of Law 906, causing political and economic instability within the Yungas region.

Beyond clarifying how the political position of ADEPCOCA shaped state violence in the 2019 crisis, the ADEPCOCA experience also elucidates what Goodale describes as an inherent tension between MAS efforts to strengthen

[20] The opposition capitalized on recent electoral reform to foment distrust in the process (McNelly 2021, 84-85).

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the capacity and representativeness of the state and MAS efforts to govern according to the principle of "leading by obeying." Goodale claims that this tension fragmented the MAS coalition and left the regime vulnerable to breakdown. The MAS embraced leading by obeying as a conceptual framework that highlighted collective decision-making and "subjugation of individual leaders' power to the collective will" (Farthing and Becker 135). This principle resonated with highlands Bolivian culture and the participatory structure of agrarian unions. For example, leaders of *cocalero* unions such as ADEPCOCA are expected to comply with decisions made by the base (Grisaffi). When MAS formed a government, this expectation was scaled up to the national level with the creation of oversight mechanisms that ostensibly gave grassroots organizations power to hold the government accountable (Farthing and Becker 140-141).

However, leading by obeying broke down at the national level not only because of historic patterns of patronage that concentrated power in the state bureaucracy (Farthing and Becker 140) but also because the MAS state-building project embraced Western notions of representation and state autonomy that conflicted with participatory governance. Law 906 epitomized MAS efforts to strengthen the state, with the Plurinational Legislative Assembly's adoption of the law sidelining powerful interests to extend state protection and economic rights to hitherto marginalized communities. However, despite a democratic process and outcome, Law 906 flouted the collective will of ADEPCOCA affiliates who were, according to the principle of leading by obeying, justified in supporting Morales's forced removal in 2019 (Farthing and Becker 150). In this way, the participatory internal structure and organizational culture of ADEPCOCA may explain why and how it resisted subjugation to MAS more successfully than other subjugated movements with a greater top-down organizational structure such as the COB (135).

Conclusion

In his classic study of political parties, Michels concludes that the quest to eliminate elite rule, or domination by a small group of leaders at the top, within large-scale organizations is impossible, but the Bolivian MAS challenges this claim. This article establishes that the predominant argument that the MAS subjugated social movement partners is, at the very least, overstated. The analysis of MAS relations with ADEPCOCA reveals that some social organizations exercised powerful influence over the MAS government,

including the *cocalero* organizations that are often depicted as the most integrated into the MAS party. These claims align with Anria's conclusion that rural social organizations were more resilient to the MAS's co-optation strategies as participatory organizations in the internal mechanisms that hold leaders accountable to the rank-and-file membership. Although one might argue that the ADEPCOCA-MAS conflict resulted from the distinctiveness of coca politics in Bolivia, this objection is undercut by evidence of similar conflicts between MAS and factions within other rural coalitional partners, including CIDOB, CONAMAQ, and the CSUTCB. Moreover, while rare, other mass-based parties in Latin America have been resilient to the shift toward internal oligarchy, such as the Broad Front in Uruguay (Anria 181-191).

These findings from the ADEPCOCA case carry implications for broader questions about how MAS governance shaped Bolivian democracy and the 2019 crisis. As a social movement party, MAS rule deepened Bolivian democracy by building more democratic institutions to include historically marginalized groups (Grisaffi). However, the ADEPCOCA case elucidates the tensions between the MAS commitment to state-building and to participatory democracy based on the principle of leading by obeying. Though Law 906 was emblematic of MAS efforts to expand state capacity and representativeness, it flouted the collective will of ADEPCOCA affiliates and so vindicated their support for the authoritarian takeover that led to the overturning of Law 906 and to the repression of the Chapare cocaleros. Hence, the key lesson from the Bolivian MAS experience may not be the oligarchic tendencies of parties, but rather the dilemmas inherent in increasing participatory democracy while protecting and strengthening the autonomy of the state.

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