Mass Protest and State Repression in Bolivian Political Culture: Putting the Gas War and the 2019 Crisis in Perspective

Carwil Bjork-James

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Mass Protest and State Repression in Bolivian Political Culture: Putting the Gas War and the 2019 Crisis in Perspective

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Carwil Bjork-James
Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University

Confrontations between large-scale protest movements and the governments they challenge are critical events in contemporary politics. Such events—like Bolivia's 2003 Gas War protests—can be both pinnacle moments in the life of social movements and the crime scenes for severe human rights violations. Over six weeks in September and October 2003, the country experienced both an unprecedented scale of political participation and the deadliest period out of four decades of democratic rule. One in seven Bolivians joined protests demanding the end of neoliberal economic policies, the nationalization of gas resources, a new constitution, and political inclusion of the country's indigenous majority. However, President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada moved to criminalize longstanding forms of protest, and orchestrated a military response that killed at least 59 civilians. Only when this crackdown failed did Sánchez de Lozada resign his office and seek exile in the United States.

This white paper presents and extends the results of a report I drafted as an expert witness for the plaintiffs in the *Mamani et al v. Sánchez de Lozada and Sánchez Berzaín* case before the United States Federal Court for the Southern District of Florida. My goal in that report was to examine and contextualize the Bolivian government's use of repressive force in response to protest during the September–October 2003 mass mobilization, popularly known as the Gas War. To do so, I explored the country's political culture of frequent mass participation in disruptive protest, which had developed over preceding decades. This culture consists not only of actions undertaken by protesting members of the population, often organized in unions or other community organizations, but in laws, legal precedents, traditions of tolerance, popular attitudes toward protest and repression, and the words and actions of politicians and other leaders. There is a long history (since at least 1936) of popular participation in mass protest and government actors who claimed their legitimacy in part on behalf these grassroots outbursts, but this history has been interrupted many times by military and authoritarian rulers who cracked down on protest. During the shorter, but current period of electoral democracy (since 1982), politicians of various political stripes have contrasted their values and actions with those of the pre-1982 dictatorships, creating a certain space for protest and an incomplete but nonetheless real aversion to deadly repression of protest.

In the democratic period, then, vigorous and disruptive protest was the norm in Bolivia, but suppression of that protest through deadly repression and massacre was not. In 2003, in preparation for an expected season of protest over his economic policies, including gas privatization, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada promulgated a new law banning widely used forms of protest and authorized the Bolivian military to intervene with lethal force to control protests, culminating in the especially deadly days of September 20 (in Warisata and Sorata) and October 11–13 (in El Alto and La Paz). Quantitative analysis of the entire democratic period confirms that the 2002–2003 Sánchez de Lozada administration constituted a major outlier in the deadliness of state–movement conflict and in killings by state security forces. My analysis is based on my database of deaths in Bolivian political conflict, which has been significantly expanded since the filing of the expert witness report. All of the analysis presented here uses the expanded dataset.

Putting Sánchez de Lozada and Sánchez Berzaín on trial in the United States was a vital move to prevent impunity. It's all too common for the heads of repressive or corrupt governments to flee their home countries when the political winds shift against them. Abel Escribà-Folch and Daniel Krcmaric found that

one-in-five dictators found exile during the period since World War II,[1] with the United States as the leading destination (11), followed by the UK and USSR/Russia (7 each), Argentina (6), and France (5). The United States has an ambivalent relationship to what has been called the emergent "global accountability regime" (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2007; Sikkink 2011). On one hand, there has been little enthusiasm for asserting universal jurisdiction for crimes against humanity on the lines of Spanish jurist Baltazar Garzón's prosecution of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. And, concerned with the vulnerability of its own military commanders, the United States has maintained an arms-length distance from the International Criminal Court (that is until the open hostility of National Security Advisor John Bolton). On the other hand, two United States laws, the Alien Tort Statute enacted in 1789 and the Torture Victims Protection Act of 1992, enable victims of torture, extrajudicial execution, and violations of "the law of nations" to seek civil damages from their abusers in United States federal courts. Since a 1979 case involving torture in Paraguay, dozens of lawsuits have been brought under these statutes. In short, the United States has become a significant arena for victims of human rights violations to seek civil remedies for the tangible harm done to them.

My expert report largely limited its vision to the period ending with Sánchez de Lozada's resignation on October 18, 2003, and did not consider the Evo Morales administration, which began on January 22, 2006. Morales initially pledged to avoid bloodshed during his rule, but many of his fourteen years in office saw further deaths in political conflict. Overall, the 1982–2018 period is still characterized by a singular outlier in the level of state violence. However, comparing the Mesa and Morales years with the 1982–2000 period, we see an important distinction: there was a higher number of deaths per year from 2004 to 2019, but much less direct killing by the military and police.[2]

This paper also includes an analysis of deaths during the 2019 political crisis in Bolivia. In late 2019, following highly disputed elections on October 20, Morales' government encountered a new and challenging mass mobilization, which ultimately demanded his resignation as well. Following a police mutiny and pressure from the military high command, Morales resigned his office on November 10, 2019. Several dozen people were killed in this conflict, the first on October 29, and the last so far on November 19. Four of the deaths were caused by civilian supporters of Evo Morales before he resigned, while one pro-Morales journalist suffered a likely fatal beating. Eight civilians and two police officers died during two days of interim military rule. Finally, twenty-two civilians were killed after the swearing in of President Jeanine Áñez, all but one of them by joint military-police operations in response to protests. These disparate outcomes would seem to reflect the very important role of presidential decisions in human rights outcomes. Moreover, the interim military government and that of President Añez decisively reversed the order given by President Carlos Mesa in January 2005 to restrict military involvement in policing protest. Reversing this order and passing a Supreme Decree implying total impunity for the military in its policing role served to dramatically shift the environment in a direction that favored increased repression and likely precipitated more deaths.

While analysis of the most recent period remains preliminary, we can see without a doubt that *presidents matter* in the course of state repression in Bolivia. A recent joint statement by human rights experts has reminded the Bolivian government of presidential responsibility for the use of deadly force and the observance of human rights (Aceves et al. 2019). For moral, practical, and political reasons, many Bolivian heads of state—across partisan lines—have helped to build a culture of relative respect for human rights during the democratic period, certainly to a much greater degree than during the period of dictatorship that preceded it. In the wake of a troubled and bloody 2019, actors on all sides will once again be challenged to

[1] 20.1%, or 98 leaders out of 560. (Escribà-Folch and Krcmaric 2017, 560)

[2] Including actions by non-state actors allied with the Morales government does not significantly change this fact.

take proactive steps to rebuild the traditions that have contained violence in the country's turbulent political life.

I. Summary and Outline:

This white paper offers an analysis of Bolivia's political culture, centered around three key issues: the role of mass protest in politics, the expectations around government responses to protest, and both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the use of deadly force in response to protest. In the main section of the paper, I evaluate the police and military response to the September–October 2003 protests. (The event is often remembered as the Gas War since protesters opposed gas privatization and export, and as Black October due to the large number of deaths.) My analysis finds that the response applied by President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and Defense Minister Carlos Sánchez Berzaín was a quantitative outlier, far outside the general approach of Bolivian democratic governments in its lethality. In the remainder of the paper, I extend that quantitative analysis to consider the years that have passed since 2003, including the presidencies of Carlos Mesa and Evo Morales, and the October–November 2019 political crisis that overthrew Morales and installed an interim government headed by Jeanine Áñez. Overall, the Mesa and Morales years represented a return to the limits on lethal repression that prevailed between 1982 and 1999. However, the month after the October 20, 2019, election was the bloodiest thirty-day period since Black October. The interim government re-authorized the military to police mass protest and to use deadly force. The conflict ended with two major killings of protesters, the latter outside the Senkata refinery, which also saw the deadliest day of state violence in 2003. The paper thus ends with an analysis of acts that brought Bolivian political violence, tragically, full circle.

The white paper begins with a discussion of my methodology and then puts forward a contextual analysis of the 2003 violence which is laid out in six sections, each headed by a proposition. The first section describes Bolivia's particularly high level of participation in public protests and large, grassroots organizations and the expectation of governments to negotiate with these protests. The second section concerns protest actions and tactics that are common parts of political protest in Bolivia. The third section discusses the formal legal rights authorizing an unusually broad right to engage in disruptive strikes, and the informal policing patterns that have accompanied them in Bolivia. Fourth, the paper describes how the mobilizations of September and October 2003, while unusually large, followed the overall outline of mass protest in Bolivia. The fifth section turns to the policing of protest, and show that the application of deadly force in 2003 was an extreme anomaly in Bolivia's post-1982 democratic era. In the sixth section, I discuss how politicians, state managers, and commentators throughout the post-1982 democratic era view the use of lethal force by the state in response to protest as either a return to the discarded methods practiced under dictatorships or a failure of governance. Actors across the political spectrum have developed mechanisms to avoid or limit the use of deadly force, resulting in dramatically less lethal outcomes even when mass protest has reached historically high levels. In final two sections, I extend this analysis, with an emphasis on the quantitative facts of political violence, to the Mesa and Morales presidencies and to the 2019 political crisis.

II. Methodology:

I was asked by Plaintiffs' counsel in *Mamani et al. v. Sánchez de Lozada and Sánchez Berzaín* to provide an opinion about the protests of September and October 2003 in Bolivia, placing them within the context of Bolivia's political culture, and about the responses of the Bolivian government, then headed by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, to those protests in relation to formal and informal norms of Bolivian political life. This white paper and my expert report in the case draw on my anthropological fieldwork and historical research on mass protest in Bolivia (Bjork-James 2013; 2020a; 2020c). My work centers on space-claiming protests which physically control or symbolically claim urban space through occupations of plazas and roads, sit-ins, blockades, and other measures. It explains how space-claiming protests work as political tools, and the

ways that practices of cooperation, coordination, and decision-making within protest have become an ongoing part of Bolivia's political culture. Other areas of my research include the nature of protests in Bolivia, public attitudes towards protests and the policing of protests, social movement tactics and strategies, the norms and traditions of Bolivian political culture, the symbolic meaning of protest, and the use of violence in Bolivian political conflict.

Cultural anthropologists use multiple methods to gather evidence, but one of the most prominent and important is ethnographic fieldwork. As ethnographers, anthropologists go out and live within a culture or community, participate as a community member or continuously present observer, seek to learn the meaning of culturally specific concepts through both observation and dialogue, document their experience in writing through field notes, and analyze their experiences. The intended result is an understanding of a society from the point of view of its participants. Ethnographic fieldwork is therefore particularly useful for understanding the expectations and regularities that organize social life, some of which may not be formally documented, or which may be so familiar to community members as to go unnoticed to them, but which appear as highly notable to an outsider seeking to understanding how the community works.

My anthropological fieldwork also involves interviewing participants in social movements and protest. Interviews are a common technique across the social sciences and preparation, prior knowledge of the subject matter, and interview design are important to the results obtained from interviews. The interviews I performed in my research on space-claiming protest in Bolivia used techniques of oral history, a discipline that uses interviews to create a permanent record of the individuals subject experience and recollections of historical events. The discipline of oral history has accumulated knowledge of the uses of this kind of interview data, in which original events are filtered through the imperfect memories and subjective concerns of individual narrators. Oral history interviews offer powerful access to the meanings, personal importance, and lasting effects of historical events, while precise details and particular facts must usually be corroborated with other sources according to the historical method.

In this paper, I will describe a number of attitudes, protest practices, and expectations as part of the contemporary Bolivian "political culture." The cultural framework is a reminder that a given society has enduring patterns of political behavior that change either slowly or rarely, and that what is acceptable, legitimate, or routine may vary from one culture to the next. While there is no singular formal definition of "political culture," the term is widely used by historians, anthropologists, and political scientists to describe the ensemble of behaviors, attitudes, values, and cultural meanings routinely associated with political life in a given society. In one widely cited definition, Keith Baker writes that political culture defines the social "positions from which individuals may (or may not) legitimately make claims upon one another, and therefore [defines] the identity and boundaries of the community to which they belong" (Baker 1990, 4). When I refer to Bolivian political culture in this paper, it is to describe beliefs and attitudes broadly held in Bolivia, and behaviors that are routine parts of Bolivian political life.

In this paper, I have quoted political actors and public opinion polls as evidence of a political culture with a particular relationship to disruptive protest and state violence. I have done so throughout the paper not to present their opinions as arguments, but as evidence. Law, legal precedents, and constitutional principles are also relevant to political culture. Therefore, anthropologists and historians use these things as sources of evidence to describe a society's political culture. However, I am not a lawyer and do not have formal legal training in the Bolivian context. While I will make references to Bolivian law, I do not offer my opinion here on the legality of government actions or those of the defendants.

Since my fieldwork in Bolivia in 2010 and 2011, I have been compiling information on deaths in political conflict in that country. Initially, this work was prompted by press coverage of deaths under the Morales administration, an effort to understand the scale of the east–west conflict within the country, and an attempt to situate the political violence in the country comparatively. Since 2015, I have been systematically building

a database of individuals who have died in Bolivia for reasons related to political conflict. I estimate there were between 590 to 620 deaths associated with Bolivian political conflict from October 1982 until December 2019. As of February 2020, the project had identified 577 of these deaths, including those of 535 named individuals.[3] The database includes deaths of protesters and security forces during confrontations, assassinations, deaths in of social movement participants while in state custody, accidental deaths of people engaged in protest, and incidental deaths caused by the process of conflict. It was compiled through multiple sources including media reports, governmental, intergovernmental, and private human rights reports, and use of the research literature on political conflict. Search strategies for the dataset have included my regular monitoring of the Bolivia press since 2008, as well as searches in post-2004 press databases, so the project has likely been more effective in detecting all deaths (particularly accidental and indirectly caused deaths) during the Mesa, Rodriguez, and Morales administrations than during earlier presidencies.

The database is organized to consider variables related to victims, perpetrators, cause of death, domain of protest, responsibility for killings, intentionality, and accountability in Bolivia. To put the large-scale violence of 2003 into context, it is helpful to divide several broad categories of deaths out of the dataset: (1) incidental and accidental deaths, which occurred as indirect results of social movement actions rather than through violent force; (2) conflicts between the state and armed actors such as guerrilla organizations and paramilitaries; and, (3) the conflict with coca growers in the Chapare, which is the only long-term two-sided confrontation in which a social movement was frequently armed and engaged in lethal violence. Where appropriate below, I will mention summary data that either includes or excludes these categories.

In this paper, I trace shifts in Bolivia's repertoire of contention by turning to the data produced by social scientists who monitor the country's protest actions. Since 1970, the Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES) has maintained a database of Bolivian social conflicts, drawing on press reports. (Several research groups have kept quantitative records of Bolivian protests, including UNIR Bolivia's project on Governability, the Defensoría del Pueblo, and private academics, but CERES offers the longest-running dataset.) Their methods of data collection are described in Laserna and Villarroel (2008, 11–12). I have translated a number of relevant items from their summary data, as published in the appendix to Laserna and Villarroel 2008, in Table 1. While no dataset lists every social conflict, data from press sources can reliably chart quantitative surges in protest activity and reveal which types of protest are common parts of a country's political culture (Silver 2003, 35–38). There are reasons to suspect that press coverage is not a complete record of social movement activity, and press censorship may have caused an undercount during the pre-1982 era of military dictatorship. Accordingly, this data may slightly underestimate the frequency and variety of protest, particularly in that earlier period.

I also use survey data taken from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), a high-quality scholarly polling project based at Vanderbilt University. (I have not been involved with the design or selection of any polling questions used here.) LAPOP has conducted biannual surveys of public opinion in twenty-six Latin American countries, including Bolivia, where the first polls were conducted in 1998. Each annual sample is about 3,000 interviewees, corresponding to a margin of error of around 2.0%. In each case where results are cited, I have queried LAPOP's online results tool.[4]

Shortly before President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada left office, hunger strikers, led by Ana María Romero Campero, who called for President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada to resign in October 2003 issued a manifesto. In it, they expressed their "indignation and condemnation of President Sánchez de Lozada and his cabinet for their antidemocratic acts and the crimes of the military and police forces who murder our

[3] This total includes twelve unconfirmed deaths in three instances where the death toll is uncertain. For example, the database includes all twelve of the reported 8 to 12 deaths in the 1988 Villa Tunari massacre. In summary data by event, year, and presidency, these uncertainties are indicated as ranges.

[4] The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

people and compromise the democratic, participatory and inclusive future of this country."[5] What exactly constitutes "antidemocratic acts" and which kinds of protests are seen as legitimate are questions whose answer depends to a great extent on the shared cultural and political expectations of the society in which those acts are carried out. The quantitative data, insights gained from ethnographic experience, and quotes from political actors presented here are intended to clarify where exactly the protests and state actions of September and October 2003 fit, when viewed from within Bolivia's post-1982 democratic political culture.

III. Analysis of the Gas War in Context

A. Bolivia has a highly contentious political culture marked by high levels of participation in protest, high levels of involvement in large grassroots organizations, frequent intervention of these organizations in matters of public policy, and the expectation that governments will negotiate with, rather than criminalize or physically disperse, protesters.

Very high numbers of Bolivians participate in protest. Polling by the Latin American Public Opinion Project in 2004 found that 36% of Bolivian adults said they had participated in protest. This lifetime participation rate equals or exceeds that recorded in 30 of 31 countries surveyed in the Pew Research Center's Spring 2014 Global Attitudes Survey (See table on "Political Engagement" in Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project 2014). Consistently high proportions of Bolivian society report having participated in protests in the last twelve months, although this number has varied over the years. The numbers are consistent with the particularly high number of protesters involved in the 2003 events and in the very contentious year of 2008.

Table 1: Have you participated in protest in the last twelve months?

2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
20.70% some times 15.16% almost never **35.86%**	**11.08%**	21.97% some times 7.59% almost never **29.57%**	**11.37%**	**16.94%**	**14.14%**

Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

LAPOP asks this question throughout the hemisphere, and Bolivia consistently ranks as the Latin American country with the highest level of protest participation (M. Moseley and Moreno 2010; M. W. Moseley 2015; Dunning et al. 2011, 16). Bolivia, Peru and Argentina are also the countries with the highest rate of protest in Latin America (United Nations Development Programme 2013, 23).

Bolivian grassroots protest is organized through sectoral organizations. With government backing in 1936 and 1952, Bolivia's trade unions (*sindicatos*) organized the vast majority of workers as their members. Bolivian unions operate in a broadly democratic way in which assemblies of all workers are the highest authority, officers are elected and recallable, and decisions are made in meetings of workers, their representatives, or their elected officers. Ideally, membership in such organizations is contingent on nothing more than one's residence, occupation, or other status. That is, an urban teacher's union consists of all teachers in the city, and an irrigation user's association includes all farmers in a given area who receive irrigated water. The union structure is widely replicated, federating school and neighborhood councils and rural community unions into city and nationwide networks. Unions, "grassroots territorial organizations" (*organizaciones territoriales de base*, or OTBs), and civil society associations are a conduit for resources and projects from the state and for demands from their constituents (Lazar 2006, 188–89; Bjork-James 2018).

[5] Primer Comunicado "Por la paz, la vida, y la dignidad," de la huelga de hambre. Reprinted in Miranda Espinoza (2013, 207).

The Bolivian government has provided official recognition for these grassroots organizations. Neighborhood and rural organizations were given formal recognition as "grassroots territorial organizations" (*organizaciones territoriales de base*, or OTBs) in the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (Postero 2007, 123–63). This law was passed by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's first administration and has been called "the most successful part of [his] neo-liberal reform strategy" (Seemann 2004). Around twenty thousand OTBs were recognized, including twelve thousand rural communities and eight thousand neighborhood organizations. The law gives these local committees a significant role in governance: "The OTBs supervise municipal services, participate in public hearings, oversee government expenditures, and have the responsibility to comment on development decisions and bring legal claims under relevant environmental and financial laws" (Seemann 2004:13).

Like trade unions, all these forces can be mobilized into protest actions, principally including strikes — the suspension of work — but also concerted labor directed towards marching, sitting-in, blockading, building community infrastructure, or supplying basic needs. Their protest actions all serve to create a break from normal arrangements of economic life that can only be resolved when the state, employers, or other powerful entities agree to concessions. Like conventional union organizers, participants stage their protests in a set sequence: collective organization, proclamation of demands, striking, escalation, negotiation, and concessions. Conventional understandings allow unions to sanction their members for nonparticipation and exempt actions during collective conflict from normal criminal laws. That is, trade unions are treated as part of the political mechanism of collective representation.

In Bolivia, peasant organizations modeled themselves on urban unions from the early twentieth century onward (Hylton 2003). In the 1930s and 1940s, peasants began to engage in work stoppages and other collective actions under the term sit-down strike (*huelga a brazos caídos*) (Rivera Cusicanqui 1986; Gotkowitz 2007). While formal government recognition for rural unions was canceled in 1943, it was reinstated after the 1952 Revolution, and soon became effectively compulsory. During the 1970s, peasants reorganized the national union confederation (which had become intertwined with the dictatorship) and created the independent CSUTCB in 1979 (Albó 1987).

From the 1930s onward, the vision of both union organizers and frequently the government has been comprehensive inclusion of all members of a given sector of the economy in trade unions. Obligatory unionization was instituted by decree on August 19, 1936, requiring all workers to join unions and all employers to form federations. The decree converted the union card (*carnet sindical*) into "an essential requisite for the extension of" formal citizenship (Lora 1980, 57–60). Agrarian unions include all peasants living in a given community. There are sectoral unions of traders and shopkeepers of all kinds (organized by product and then into confederations of shopkeepers by area), of taxi and privately owned bus drivers, and of course of workers in the private and public sector. While many parts of the economy operate informally and other formal jobs have been subcontracted, or restructured to treat workers as independent contractors, the ideal of unionization persists and is widespread. Moreover, the form of union organization and collective governance echoes in neighborhood associations, grassroots territorial organizations, tenants' associations, and committees that administer resources, notably the water and school committees that organize local infrastructure in the poorer neighborhoods of Bolivia's largest cities. These organizations often federate into campaigning alliances for demands such as the closure of Cochabamba's municipal dump or to oppose the privatization of municipal water companies.

All of these organizations share the same model of obligatory participation, mass membership, collective assemblies, elected leadership, collective protest (which is usually some form of going on strike), demand making, negotiation, and signing agreements. In short, unions and union-like mass grassroots organizations are central to how politics is done and how the basics of public policy are demanded and negotiated.

In the 1970–2008 database maintained by Roberto Laserna and colleagues at CERES, *governments* at all levels constitute the "adversary" or main target in 87.7% of the protests recorded in Bolivia. The national government is far and away the principal target of protests in all of the years surveyed (see the second line of Table 2). So while the form of protest and negotiation is modeled on labor protest, Bolivian national governments have long been familiar with facing and negotiating with mass protest.

Based on my ethnographic experience and interviews I have conducted, it is clear that Bolivian social movements undertake protest with the expectation of securing a response from the government, often including the changing of policies, and occasionally of executive officeholders. Bolivian social movements treat negotiating with the government over goals, legislation, implementing regulations, and other areas of government conduct as a serious part of their work. Many social movement organizations have officers specifically charged with managing protests and negotiations: for example, the Secretary of Conflicts of the La Paz Federation of Factory Workers, whom I interviewed in 2010. Numerous grassroots organizations have staff collectively called *técnicos*, whose role is to be experts in such details and present in negotiation. Considerable time and resources are devoted to the training of técnicos, often through the assistance of NGOs such as Proyecto Nina, the Center for Research and Promotion of Farmers (*Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado*, CIPCA), the Land Foundation (*Fundación Tierra*), the Center for Juridical Studies and Social Investigation (*Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social*, CEJIS), or universities like Universidad de la Cordillera.

In turn, the government directly engages with protesters and responds to their demands, as can be seen in the correspondence between the Unified Union Confederation of Bolivian Peasant Workers (CSUTCB) and government ministries in plaintiffs' documents in the Mamani case (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia 2003; Quevedo and Añez Moscoso 2003). To name a few representative examples, national governments have negotiated with the 1990 indigenous March for Territory and Dignity, 2000 Water War, and the 2000 CSUTCB mobilization. Both executive and legislative branches of government have each participated in such negotiations. In each of these three cases, the government agreed to pass new laws or revoke old ones as part of its agreement with protesters and proceeded to do so.

This process of negotiating is expected by the public, as confirmed by LAPOP interview data. In 2002 and 2004, survey participants were asked, "Sometimes there are protests that provoke difficulties because the streets are closed. In those cases, what should the government do? [*A veces hay protestas que provocan dificultades porque se cierran las calles. En esos casos, ¿qué debe hacer el gobierno?*]" Large majorities (76.48% in 2002; 71.89% in 2004) chose "Negotiate with the protesters although this may take days or weeks, affecting the economy of the country" over "Order the police to open the roads." As will be discussed below, tolerance of disruptive protest during negotiations is a frequent stance of the national government.

Very large protests are seen by Bolivians across the political spectrum as having a broad political legitimacy. During the 1999–2000 political conflict in Cochabamba known as the Water War, the centrist media began to refer to the movement as simply "Cochabamba" as in "Cochabamba decided to continue protests" (a February 5, 2000, *Los Tiempos* headline) or "Cochabamba bent the arm of the government" (an April 1, 2000, *Los Tiempos* headline). For Cochabamba's Archbishop, Tito Solari, speaking in an interview on January 30, "The social reality, which is to say the social fabric of Cochabamba, must be taken into account by the authorities. I wish to appeal to the government, to the maximum authorities, and also the intermediate authorities that they should have their eyes and ears and heart on the side of people" (*Los Tiempos*, January 31, 2000). My analysis of the Water War (Bjork-James 2013, 100–164) found that creating the widely understood sense that a protest campaign represents the public at large is a vital part of mass protest. This is pursued by assembling large crowds, coordinating protest actions over a wide geographic area, and involving people from a diverse array of segments of society. Amid the April 2000 mobilization, Vice Minister José Orías, who commanded the police and security forces, confirmed to the press that the

mobilization was not a handful of narcotraffickers and vandals—as other government ministers had alleged—but "one hundred thousand people in the streets and ready to do anything" (Paraphrased in Olivera 2004, 45).

B. Frequent, disruptive protest is the norm in Bolivia's political culture. The September–October 2003 protests were largely comprised of common elements within Bolivia's so-called repertoire of contention.

My work on the tactics and meaning of protest fits within the scholarly framework of "contentious politics," which seeks to understand social movements and other collective actions that make political demands in a society (Tilly 1998; Tilly and Tarrow 2007; Miller 2016; Edelman 2001). Contentious politics scholars draw attention to the fact that the practices used to advance political claims are always a very narrow subset of all possible actions. They call this set of commonplace forms of political protest the "repertoire of contention." As Charles Tilly observed, "although ordinary people found vigorously vital ways of making their voices heard … they clung to the same few forms of collective expression and modified those forms only slowly" (Tilly 2008, xiii). Tilly defines the repertoire of contention as the "fairly limited and well-established set of means for action on shared interests," elements of which can endure for decades or centuries (Tilly 1978, 232). While certain forms of action can appear (and even feel to their participants) as highly spontaneous, participants are often choosing among long-established forms of political action as the means for putting forward their demands.

In my work, I study tactics within the Bolivian repertoire of contention, and describe them both in terms of their tactical activities and their social established meanings. My doctoral research was particularly concerned with space-claiming protests, those in which protesters physically control or symbolically claim the space of the city. In Bolivia, major forms of space-claiming tactics include: occupations of plazas and roads; mass marches; distributed hunger-strike "pickets" (coordinated groups of hunger strikers in different locations); sit-ins; takeovers of offices; blockades of roads; and the construction of physical barriers. By

	Ovando-Torrez	Hugo Banzer (1st)	Juan Pereda—Luis Garcia Meza	Hernan Siles Zuazo	Víctor Paz Estenssoro	Jaime Paz Zamora	Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (1st)	Hugo Banzer (2nd)	Jorge Quiroga	Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (2nd)	Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert	Eduardo Rodriguez	Evo Morales	Total, January 1970 – January 2008
Rejection of the government	15	5	22	4	132	141	196	220	47	83	157	33	259	**1,314**
Adversary: National Government	412	563	663	1,069	875	612	506	748	169	248	613	95	458	**7,031**
National scale	39	23	123	224	186	148	90	103	17	31	31	9	29	**1,053**
Civic Strike	12	16	42	41	49	47	53	62	13	16	21	3	38	**413**
Urban Blockade	19	19	25	71	23	11	11	97	27	44	101	17	92	**557**
Rural Blockade	16	15	22	68	20	14	16	84	45	44	157	52	136	**689**
Takeover or Riot	178	37	34	135	32	31	13	90	37	96	221	39	165	**1,108**
Total events	**734**	**952**	**1,107**	**1,825**	**1,180**	**968**	**631**	**1,364**	**355**	**518**	**1,042**	**248**	**969**	

Table 2: Consolidated event data from Laserna and Villarroel (2008). Data in this chart appears in multiple tables in the appendix of their report. The study period does not include the complete terms of either General Ovando or President Morales. The "total events" line refers to the number of conflict events recorded in the database for each presidency and is not a total of the overlapping categories listed above it in the table.

taking over the streets of urban centers, blockading inter-provincial roadways, and occupying symbolically important spaces, Bolivian protesters are both exerting pressure to win their demands and symbolically claiming parts of the city, or metaphorically the political system, as their own. Other, non-space-claiming protest tactics include: labor strikes, unions and other organizations declaring themselves in "a state of emergency," labor strikes, hunger strikes, and so-called crucifixion (standing against a wall or pole with one's arms hanging up as a form of protest) (Laserna and Villarroel Nikitenko 2008, 79). In general, there has been a slow but steady trend through which more passive forms of protest, such as stay-at-home labor strikes, are replaced by active forms of protest in which participants must actually do something to participate, with the latter reaching over 80% of all reported protests by the 2000s (Laserna and Villarroel Nikitenko 2008, 23).

a) Strikes

From the 1920s to the 1980s, labor strikes were the paradigmatic form of protest in Bolivia. Workers go on strike by staying at home, or by engaging in protest marches or other public actions (which is known as a "mobilized strike"). Bolivian unions traditional enacted a series of declarations before going on strike. A union could declare itself in "a state of emergency," then "on the road to strike" (*en pie de huelga*), and then call strikes of 24, 48, or 72 hours. An "indefinite strike" is a strike that goes on until its demands were met. Workers unions collaborated and federated together into larger organizations since at least the 1920s, and all labor unions were incorporated into the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) in 1952. The COB has regional affiliate organizations for each of the nine departments and for many smaller regions and large cities, as well as Confederations of workers in each major sector (e.g., factory workers, health workers, urban teachers). These structures facilitate joint strikes by sector or region, and general strikes. The indefinite general strike was the form of protest with most economic and political leverage for most of the twentieth century. While strikes have declined in the relative importance since the mid-1980s, they continue to be a part of contemporary Bolivian protest. Perhaps more importantly, labor unions and strikes provide the template for other forms of protest in the country.

b) Road blockades

Road blockades are a globally significant form of protest. Blockades have been important features of Chinese labor protests, Thai political conflicts, urban and rural conflicts in the Andean region, the Canadian indigenous movement, North American environmental and antiwar movements, and European opposition to austerity measures. Like a general strike, road blockades offer participants a powerful economic tool. By occupying roads, they can slow or interrupt vital supplies of food or fuel, make travel more difficult, and draw attention to their struggles. Blockaders have also influenced the political process more directly by blockading political important sites such as central squares and the national legislature. In the terms of social movement studies, blockades may work according to the logic of a demonstration—in which participants assemble prove their worth, unity, numbers, and commitment (Tilly 1999)—and of a disruption—in which people, especially poorer people with fewer political connections interrupt daily life to press their claims (Piven and Cloward 1979).

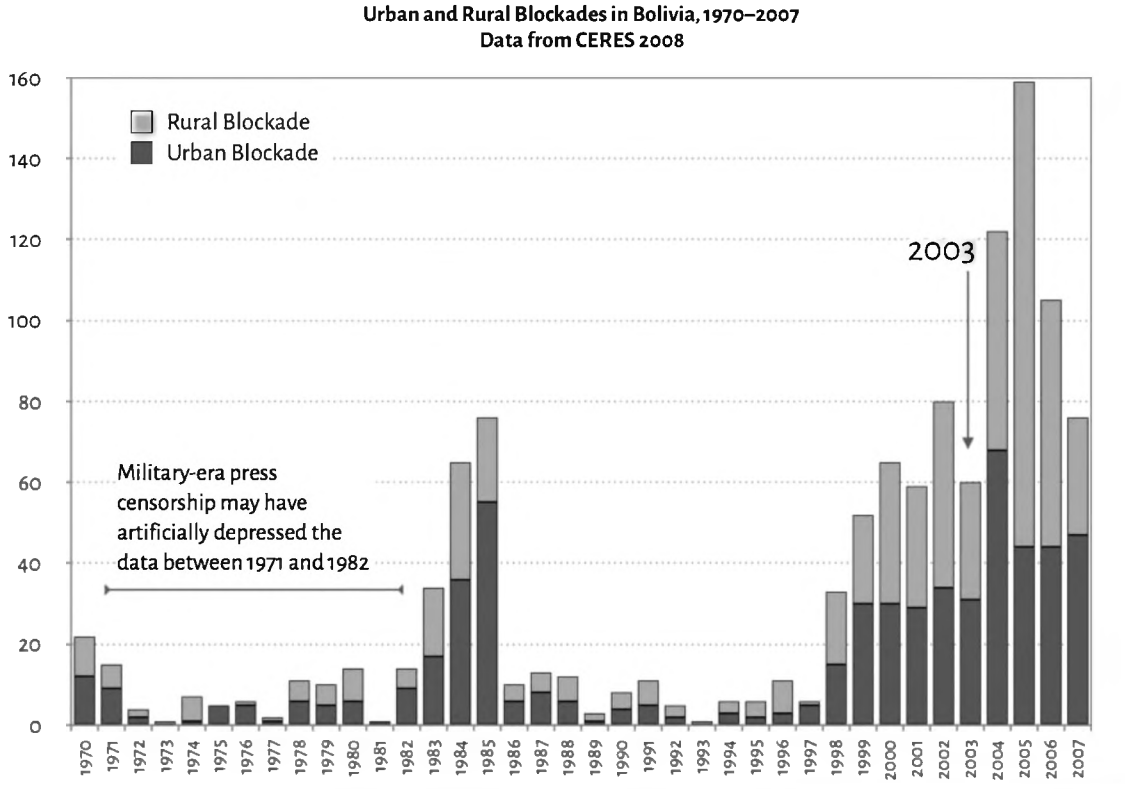

Figure 1: Number of urban and rural blockades in Bolivia for each year from 1970 to 2007 from Laserna and Villarroel (2008).

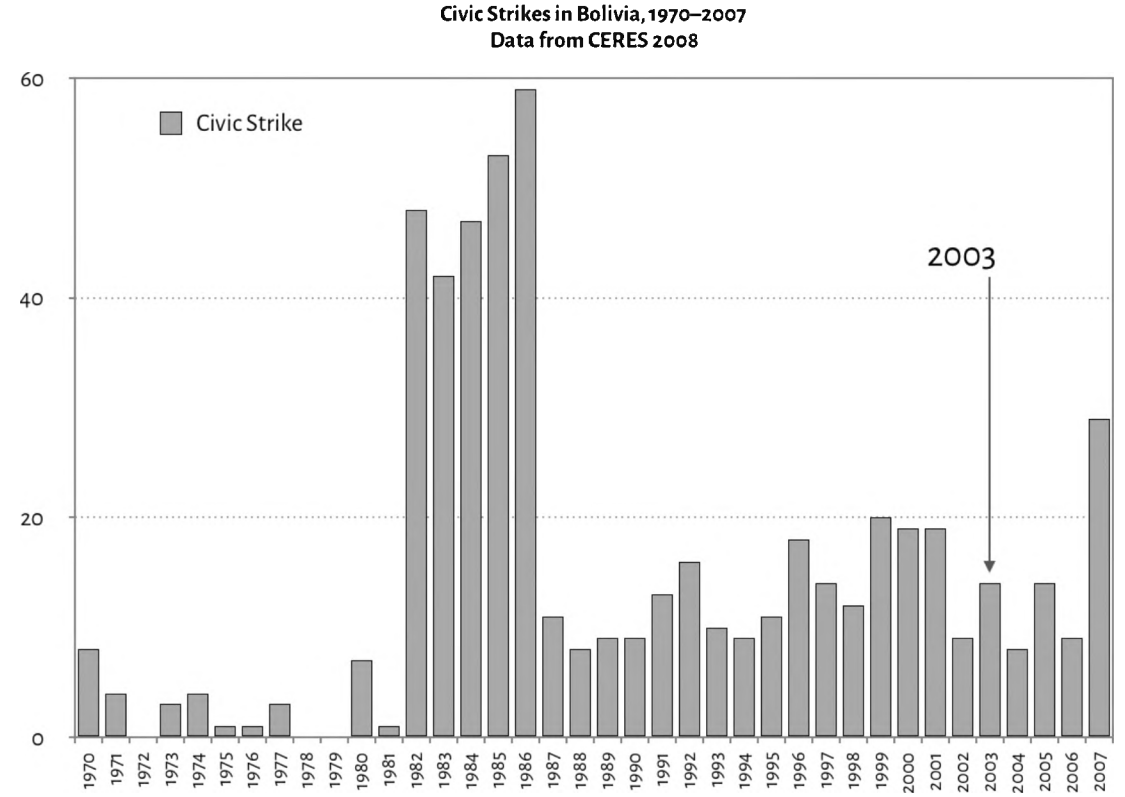

Figure 2: Number of civic strikes in Bolivia for each year from 1970 to 2007 from Laserna and Villarroel (2008).

In rural areas, road blockades are very simple to organize: combine an isolated, strategically significant roadway and an organized population nearby that is willing to cut it off with their bodies, or use their labor to put obstructing objects onto the roadway. Rural road blockades became common after the 1953 land reform; prior to that year, peasant protests targeted powerful local landlords directly, rather than through interrupting commerce. After highland estates were divided among their formerly landless workers, the roads suddenly became the spaces in rural Bolivia of greatest value to elites and the state, and thereby the center of protest. Significant peasant blockades were held in La Paz department in 1953, 1961, and 1962. Urban movements—led by trade unions—began to collaborate in region- and nationwide blockade campaigns in the 1970s. Protests against economic austerity and price increases in January 1974 involved urban and rural strikes working together to paralyze the inter-city road network by concentrating protests on main roads, thereby causing shortages of food. Participation was massive, involving the factory workforce and rural communities in far greater numbers than needed to staff these blockades, and interrupting each road with blockades at dozens of sites. While Hugo Banzer's military regime squelched these protests in the city and organized outright massacres of peasant demonstrators in the Cochabamba High Valley, the memory they left behind would become a template for future protests.

Neoliberal economic reforms (called "shock treatment" by the Sánchez de Lozada-led team that designed them), initiated in 1985, greatly weakened the power of Bolivian workers' unions (Kohl and Farthing 2006; Conaghan and Malloy 1994). A "free contracting" regime enabled layoffs, including firings that targeted union officers and activists; trade protections for domestic industries were eliminated; and state enterprises lost their subsidies and became subject to closure (Torrico 2008, 58–62). Bolivia's publicly owned mining conglomerate Comibol, the strongest bastion of its labor movement, threw tens of thousands of its employees out of work. Where unionized workplaces were once central to the national economy, informal employment has multiplied. Since relatively few workers hold a union contract with a large employer, mass strikes have become less effective. To make the same impact they once did, workers had to not just strike, but engage in mass protest, often through road blockades.

Meanwhile residents of the swelling, generally poorer outer neighborhoods began to organize collectively through neighborhood associations. The peripheral neighborhoods of Bolivian cities took in vast numbers of migrants from the countryside, downsized mines, and small towns. Local neighborhood organizations, informed by the rural community and labor organizing traditions, organized themselves into powerful local organizations. They demanded protection from metropolitan governments, managed the division of local land and organization of schools, and provided many of the basic services that would be organized by the government in other countries. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, they discovered the power of road blockades, notably through struggles against water privatization in Cochabamba and El Alto.

The CERES dataset shows that rural and urban blockades were relatively common in the early 1980s, and then began to proliferate in 1997 after a decade in which they were relatively infrequent. It records 138 urban blockades and 151 rural blockades in the five years from 1998 to 2003. See Figure 1.

c) Civic strikes

The civic strike (*paro cívico*) is a composite form of protest carried out by urban and rural movements, typically working in collaboration. Civic strikes combine road blockades, marches, organizational endorsements of demands, hunger strikes, grassroots-organized referenda, open public meetings, and numerous symbolic actions carried out upon property, persons, and space. Like conventional union organizers, participants stage these events in a regular sequence of collective organization, striking, escalation, negotiation, and concessions. However, civic strike actions paralyze commerce at the scale of the metropolis or region, rather than the workplace or industry. Civic strikes sometimes escalate into a total shutdown of commercial and civic life through coordinated marches, road blockades, enforced closures of businesses, and a general strike by unionized and non-unionized workers. Civic strikes in Bolivia date to

mobilizations in Cochabamba in January 1974 (amid a national protest wave over price hikes) and La Paz in November 1979 (which turned back a military coup by Germán Natusch Busch). Four nationally coordinated waves of civic strikes pushed for the return of Bolivian democracy in 1981 and 1982. They flourished under President Hernan Siles Zuazo from 1982 to 1985, and returned in a new cycle of activity early in 2000. The CERES data set found 413 civic strikes from 1970 to 2008, including 16 in the second presidency of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. See Figure 2.

Civic strikes consist of a combination of pressure tactics like blockades and demonstrations of popular support, like marches and mass gatherings. The most significant mass gathering is the *cabildo abierto*, a kind of open public meeting in which large crowds are empowered to decide the direction of the movement. What sets these meetings apart from others is the open call for participation and attendance. The name is also significant. Every Bolivian schoolchild learns of the cabildos abiertos called in cities across the continent during the struggle for independence from Spain. The common-sense meaning of a cabildo abierto is a mass gathering that puts the will of the government in question. Unions, students, and other sectoral organization hold their own cabildos abiertos, an infrequent open meeting calling on the entire membership of the community or profession to be involved in a decision. This tradition was renewed with the Cochabamba Water War in April 2000, which held several citywide cabildos, and in several national cabildos held in the years that followed, including during the September-October 2003 events. The democratic legitimacy of cabildos is recognized in the 2009 Constitution whose Article 12(1) includes them as a form of "direct and participatory" democracy.

d) Takeovers, riots, property destruction, and street confrontations

Tactics that involve the occupation of public buildings, destruction of property, and confrontations with security forces are all relatively common in Bolivian protest. The CERES dataset records 1,108 "takeovers and riots" (*tomas y motines*) between January 1970 and January 2008 (see the seventh line of Table 2). Destruction of property during protest is not uncommon. Based on my ethnographic observation and interviews with protest participants, I have noted three typical forms of property destruction: attacks with stones on symbolic targets, typically the front facades of building representing institutions being protests (*apedrear*, "stoning"); stoning, looting the goods of, or otherwise damaging the property of businesses that are open during a strike (*saqueo*); and using materials that are available in public space, such as construction materials in the course of street confrontations. These tactics tend to be used only after a confrontation has continued for an extended period of weeks, and are incidental to overall participation in a strike or protest march. The practice of looting is relatively rare, but the implicit or explicit threat of looting serves to amplify the economic impact of strikes. Members of unions, neighborhood associations, and other such groups practice all three of these tactics openly. During the time of my fieldwork, such acts were typically either tolerated by police, or came during moments of confrontation between police and protesters. When police arrest protesters for participating in destructive acts, final agreements between protesting organization and the police often involve setting the arrested protesters free and exempting them from prosecution. The same cannot be said for the small number of serious violent acts, which the government will often continue to prosecute after a protest has concluded. Whether legally recognized or not, there is de facto tolerance for property destruction in the course of mass protest.

Confrontations between protesters and security forces are not an unusual part of protest in Bolivia. While police tolerance of protest is the most common form of interaction, organized attempts by police to demobilize protesters or open up blockades is also a frequent occurrence. At such points, demonstrators may physically resist being dispersed or directly confront security forces blocking their path. When they occur, physical confrontations between police and protesters typically involve the use of non-lethal projectiles, such as rubber bullets, and tear gas by the police and stones by demonstrators. Both sides may build barricades in the streets. Mass arrests, on the other hand, are uncommon. (Bolivia's overcrowded prisons hold fewer than 9,000 people, so major protests typically outnumber the entire prison population.)

When protesters are arrested—in my experience, arrestees number no greater than 100—their collective release is usually a part of negotiations ending the protest. As I discuss in section F, particularly heavy use of force by police is often seen as inappropriate by the press and independent observers.

e) The role of armed action, martial language, and militaristic symbols

While mass protest is commonplace in Bolivia, the role of armed revolt in 20th century Bolivian history is more limited, but is still of historical significance. Rural uprisings in the first half of the twentieth century continued many of the patterns of indigenous rebellions and anti-landlord uprisings that had have characterized Bolivian history since the colonial era. In the first half of the twentieth century, workers' movements formed militias, as did political parties, and rural uprisings were frequently violent. So too were state reprisals against both armed and unarmed protests, resulting in long series of massacres, the largest of which fell upon mining camps, the center of the Bolivian labor movement. The only successful armed takeover of the state came in the three-day 1952 uprising, led by the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR). The MNR coordinated with the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) labor confederation, and endorsed a wave of rural uprisings by proclaiming a 1953 land reform that redistributed land to peasants. The MNR government also provided weapons to union and peasant militias. During a 1969–71 leftward shift by military rulers, workers and peasant movements formed a "Popular Assembly" of their organizations that met in the National Congress building. Their calls for the government to arm them went unheeded by the governments of Alfred Ovando Candía and Juan José Torres. When Hugo Banzer led an August 1971 coup against the Torres government, the armed forces rapidly crushed labor strikes and popular militias.

Since the 1960s, there have also been a handful of guerrilla and paramilitary movements in Bolivia. The five efforts at leftist guerrilla movements have all been small and had marginal impact. The Ñancahuazú guerrilla movement initiated by Che Guevara in 1966–67 and the Teoponte guerrilla movement led by student radicals in 1970 were both militarily devastated and failed to attract a broad grassroots following. The Liberation Armed Forces of Zarate Willka and Néstor Paz Zamora Commission each conducted lethal attacks claiming two lives before being disarticulated by the state in 1989 and 1990, respectively. And the Túpac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK) carried out substantial but nonlethal attacks in 1991 and 1992, before suffering the arrest of its leadership and disarticulation of the organization. While several EGTK members—Felipe Quispe, Álvaro García Linera, and Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar—later became significant political and intellectual figures in Bolivian social movements, they did so after the movement was disarmed. Guerrilla warfare has remained a marginal phenomenon in Bolivia's post-1982 democratic era. The last deadly actions by left-wing guerrillas in Bolivia occurred in 1990.

The use of martial terms such as *war* and *battle*, and symbols of confrontation such as antique rifles and dynamite in Bolivian protests must be understood in the light of this history. Many of the recent turning points in Bolivian history are termed wars by their participants: the War of the Wells (rural Cochabamba, 1990s), the Water War (Cochabamba, 1999-2000), the Coca War (Sacaba and Cochabamba, 2002), the Gas War (2003). There were "warriors" (*guerreros de agua*) in the Cochabamba water conflict: young men and women who fought physically for control of the central plaza. Participants in the September–October 2003 protests declared the city of El Alto the "General Staff Headquarters" of the popular struggle ("Estado Mayor del Pueblo").

These words of war are neither casual nor literal. Rather, martial language recognizes the presence of open, physical confrontation, the extended nature of the conflict, and the danger of participation. In Bolivian grassroots politics, this language is also a legacy of past struggles. It is commonplace for a union leader or someone referring to their hometown to mark them as *combativa* ("combative") or *luchadora* ("fighting" or "struggling"), that is prepared by history to keep up the fight.

Across Bolivia, certain civil society organizations—such as the Aymara indigenous community of Achacachi (known as the Ponchos Rojos for their traditional red coats) and the Cooperative Miners' Federation in Potosí—cultivate a particularly militant profile. These groups claim traditions of armed revolt as their political inheritance (Mamani Ramírez 2004, 121–27; Arbona 2008). During the 2003 protests, elders who fought in the 1936–39 Chaco War brought their antique rifles to protests against gas privatization in 2003. These weapons were a reminder that they had been conscripted to fight in the war that secured the gas-rich region for the Bolivian nation. The Ponchos Rojos have carried slingshots, wooden rifles, and antique guns from the time of the 1952 Revolution. In 1952 and 1953, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (the party to which Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada belongs) armed peasant militias in their region to defend it. Unionized miners were also armed by the Bolivian government at that time. They also use dynamite in their work to break open tunnels within the ground. In demonstrations and marches, miners toss this tool of their trade above them in a manner that is similar to firecrackers. When these groups carry these martial traditions and objects with them, they use them primarily as threatening symbols of their historical claims and political identities. These fearsome objects and martial terms are frequently used for their symbolic resonance and are ways of invoking the foundational place of past rebellions in cementing the political order.

However, the methods used in the 2003 protests and today differ from the guerrilla and militia efforts of the past. The vast majority of Bolivian protest participants are unarmed, with a tiny minority armed with symbolically significant firearms (as discussed in the previous paragraph). They do not meet the state security forces as comparable adversaries, but instead deploy their larger numbers in ways that offset the weapons that soldiers and police carry. When they drag objects across a street, or face off using slingshots or stones against well-armed police, protesters know that their tactics would be useless unless very large numbers of people stand behind them. Unlike the MNR in the 1950s or the guerrilla movements of the 1960s and 1970s, their tactics do not aim to overwhelm the army or seize the headquarters of power, but rather to interrupt economic life and illustrate the state's lack of control over politically important spaces. These mobilizations cannot succeed by force alone, but must instead demonstrate their political legitimacy through widespread participation and public events that establish that they represent the public at large (Bjork-James 2020c).

f) Strike and political change in Bolivia

Strikes, blockades, and rural unrest have played an important role in Bolivian national politics since at least the 1930s. Unlike in the United States, strikes in Bolivia frequently have political goals. The inclusion of political demands does not make a strike illegitimate in Bolivia, and there have been numerous political strikes in the country's history.

International labor laws and human rights conventions protect the right to strike for economic ends (including both workplace demands and economic policy demands on governments). The right to strike is recognized in the United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Organization of American States' Protocol of San Salvador, and the International Labor Organization's Convention 87 (Gernigon, Odero, and Guido 1998; Compa et al. 2014). However, these bodies are silent on the legality of strikes that seek political ends. Many national governments have acted to criminalize political strikes.

The Public Prosecutor's Office report of July 2004 draws attention to the political nature of the 2003 strike (Herrera et al. 2004, DEF-0000477). They note that after the deaths in Warisata on September 20, 2003, "the social movements became radicalized, demanding as their sole condition for national reconciliation the resignation of then President Sánchez de Lozada." They further argue that, "when the threat is aimed at toppling the legally established government [or] removing a public official, or undermining the rule of law,

the action becomes criminal, unlawful, and negligent." These claims are inconsistent with actual political practice in Bolivia.

As mentioned earlier, the national government is the most common target of Bolivian protest. Political demands include changes to particular laws and norms, support for governing officials, and rejection of officials, including both opposing their actions and calling for them to step down. According to the CERES data, during his second term President Sánchez de Lozada faced 248 protests making demands upon the central government, of which 83 voiced rejection of his government altogether. Neither figure is out of the ordinary for post-1985 presidents in Bolivia. The first line of Table 2 shows that rejection of the national government was the cause advanced by 1,314 protest events over 38 years. While not all such events called for the resignation or ouster of a president, many recent presidents have faced such calls. Moreover, the historical record shows that important figures in the political system have recognized the political legitimacy of protests calling for a change in government, especially when backed by a substantial public outpouring.

Relatively frequently, new Bolivian governments have come to power in the wake of popular upheavals. In fact, at least eighteen changes of government followed these forms of popular pressure between 1936 and the present. Seven times the new government claimed the protest agenda as their own; five interim caretaker governments took on the role of conducting elections or referenda on the government's direction; and six moved to counter the popular movement, typically with greater use of the security forces. (See Table 3, extracted from Bjork-James 2013).

Until the early 1980s, however, grassroots pressure could only succeed in tandem with military coup d'états, political party intrigue, and in the exceptional case of 1952, through armed insurrection. Even in military coups, popular mobilizations and strikes were an influential factor from below. Popular resistance interrupted coup attempts by Gen. Rogelio Miranda (October 1970), Cols. Hugo Banzer Suárez and Edmundo Valencia (January 1971) and reversed Col. Alberto Natusch Busch's coup in November 1979. During the 1980–82 dictatorship, the COB and CSUTCB led the campaign for democracy through major strikes January, May, and July 1981. A final general strike on September 17, 1982, successfully demanded that the military leaders immediately turn power over to the parliament elected in

Term start	Term end	Name	Political Party	Days in Office
May 20, 1936	July 13, 1937	▲ David Toro	Military	419
December 20, 1943	July 21, 1946	▲ Gualberto Villarroel López	Military/Fatherland's Cause-Nationalist	944
July 21, 1946	August 15, 1946	Néstor Guillén	Non-party	25
March 10, 1947	October 22, 1949	▼ Enrique Hertzog (E)	Socialist Republican Union Party	957
October 22, 1949	May 16, 1951	▼ Mamerto Urriolagoitia	Socialist Republican Union Party	571
April 16, 1952	August 6, 1956	▲ Víctor Paz Estenssoro	Nationalist Revolutionary Movement	1573
November 5, 1964	May 26, 1965	▼ René Barrientos	Military	202
October 7, 1970	August 21, 1971	▲ Juan José Torres	Military	318
August 22, 1971	July 21, 1978	▼ Hugo Banzer	Military	2525
July 21, 1978	November 24, 1978	Juan Pereda	Military	126
November 1, 1979	November 16, 1979	▼ Alberto Natusch	Military	15
November 17, 1979	July 18, 1980	Lydia Gueiler Tejada	Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left	244
October 10, 1982	August 6, 1985	▲ Hernán Siles Zuazo (E)	Democratic and Popular Union	1031
August 6, 1985	August 6, 1989	▼ Víctor Paz Estenssoro (E)	Nationalist Revolutionary Movement	1461
October 17, 2003	June 9, 2005	Carlos Mesa	Non-party	601
June 9, 2005	January 22, 2006	Eduardo Rodríguez	Non-party	227
January 22, 2006	November 10, 2019	▲ Evo Morales (E)	Movement Towards Socialism	5040
November 12, 2019		▲ Jeanine Áñez	Bolivia Dice No / Democrats	105

Table 3: Presidencies begun in the wake of popular upheaval

Bolivian heads of state since 1936 who came to power in the wake of popular upheaval. ▲ Red indicates leaders who came to power to carry forward the agenda of protesters. ▼ Green indicates those who came to power to step up repression against the movement. Black indicates government caretakers charged with carrying out elections or mediating an ongoing conflict. Regardless of agenda, **(E)** indicates they were elected to the role of head of state.

Regime	*Year*	*Change in Leader/State*	*Disruptive Justifying Action*	*Represented Constituency*	*Symbolic Handover*
Military Socialism	1936	David Toro presidency through Germán Busch coup	April-May strike wave	Organized labor	1938 National Convention
	1945	Villarroel decrees of May 1945 abolishing rural servitude	Late 1930s, early 1940s strikes and rural unrest	Indian campesinos	National Indigenous Congress in La Paz, May 10–15, 1945
National Revolution	1952	MNR assumes power	1947-52 "Cycle of rebellion"; April 1952 popular insurrection	Organized labor, campesinos	Worker and party militias parade through La Paz
	1952	Tin mining nationalized	Miners' assistance in April insurrection	Organized labor	Decree-signing ceremony in Catavi Siglo XX complex
	1953	Agrarian Reform	Wave of land takeovers; armed presence of campesinos in Cochabamba	Campesinos	August 2, 1953 signing in Ucureña, Cochabamba.
Popular Assembly	1970	Proposed co-government by labor and left parties	October 7 general strike in defense of military populism	Organized labor, left parties	Left accepted co-government with conditions; offer was rescinded.
	1971	Popular Assembly	October 1970 and January 1971 defense against right-wing coup	Organized labor, left parties, independent campesinos	Assembly held in National Congress building, June–July 1970
Democratic Transition	1978	Political prisoner release & elections	Hunger strike campaign supported by rural blockades	Miners' wives, miners, campesinos	—
	1979	Reversal of Natusch Busch coup; Lidia Guieller becomes president	General strike; urban and rural road blockades	Organized labor, campesinos, urban middle class	Guieller's inauguration in Presidential Palace
	1982	Restoration of democratic rule; UDP takes office	Accelerated by COB, peasant strikes	Organized labor, peasants	Post-inaugural address in Plaza San Francisco
Plurinational State	2003	VP Carlos Mesa assumes presidency	Gas War: general strikes, urban and rural road blockades, hunger strike wave	Organized labor, indigenous campesinos, urban popular masses	Mesa attends El Alto memorial and campesino gathering in Plaza San Francisco
	2005	Supreme Court head Eduardo Rodriguez becomes interim president	May-June crisis: general strikes urban and rural road blockades.	Organized labor, indigenous campesinos, urban popular masses	—
	2006	Evo Morales becomes President	Previous disruptions plus December 2005 electoral mandate	Organized labor, indigenous campesinos, urban popular masses, electoral majority	Triple inauguration: Tiwanaku, Congress, Plaza San Francisco
	2008–09	Plurinational State affirmed through new constitution	September 2008 crisis; March on National Congress	Indigenous, campesinos, urban popular masses	Surrounding Congress; Plaza Murillo proclamation

Table 4: Regime transitions and their relation to social movement disruptions

the July 1979 election rather hold new ones. These interruptions then authorized the surviving government to consider the grassroots movement that carried them out as a major political player. (See Table 4, slightly revised from Bjork-James 2013).

Many new governments have orchestrated dramatic public moments, replete with crowds and ceremony, to acknowledge the movements that intervened in politics, and to connect new state officials or policies to them. For example, the carefully crafted nationalization of the mines in 1952 was decreed not in La Paz, but in the Siglo XX mining complex at Catavi, followed by a Sunday miners' mass atop Potosí's Cerro Rico; miners offered a twenty-one-blast dynamite salute and labor leader Juan Lechín joined President Paz Estenssoro in signing the document. Following Natusch Busch's November 1, 1979 military coup, the Bolivian Workers Central (COB) and Sole Union Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB) initiated a general strike and national wave of road blockades. The strike extended to factories, mines, universities, and schools, and was accompanied by mass demonstrations and street clashes. Demonstrators attacked security forces with cobblestones and threw up barricades in La Paz and El Alto, while a military crackdown included armored vehicles and helicopters, attacks on the COB headquarters and the home of the deposed civilian president, and machine gun killings of demonstrators in the streets (Dunkerley 1984; Zavaleta Mercado 1983). After protracted three-party negotiations among the COB, Congress, and coup leaders, the military returned to their barracks on November 16. At Lidia Gueiler's inauguration, thousands of demonstrators gathered in the Plaza Murillo and hundreds entered the Palace of Government. The president then took her oath of office before a social movement crowd rather than before the National Congress.

On other occasions, social movements have informally and formally been invited into state spaces to craft the new government's policies. Formal institutions include the 1945 National Indigenous Congress and the 2006–2008 Constituent Assembly. Informal examples include the inclusion of labor unions in the Labor Ministry in 1936 and 1937, and of MNR-COB "co-government" after the 1952 Revolution.

Seen in this light, the events of October 2003 continue significant traditions in Bolivian politics. In his inaugural address the night of October 17, Carlos Mesa began by leading the Congress in a moment of silence "to render [the] most profoundly felt and admired homage to the women and men of Bolivia who in these days offered up their lives for the homeland, for democracy, for the future, and for life" (Mesa Gisbert 2003). This speech effectively placed the protesters of the previous month on par with the armed forces of the state, nationalizing their deaths as part of Bolivia's history. On October 18, President Mesa joined a gathering of some eight thousand people in El Alto in memory of the fallen from the Gas War. There he read the names of each of those killed, with his voice joining "in a duet with one of the family members," stirring the emotions of those gathered (*El Diario* 2003). Mesa recognized El Alto as "a sentinel of Bolivia" and pledged to promote its role as "the guarantee of the unity and the defense of the interests of Bolivia" during his inaugural tour of the country. Further, the grassroots movements' demand for a Constituent Assembly independent of Congress and political parties also continues the process of re-construction of the Bolivian state that has gone on for generations.

C. Bolivian legal traditions authorize the country's widespread unionization, its variety of civil society organizations, and these organizations' unusually broad right to engage in disruptive strikes. Informally, policing and prosecutorial practice have usually respected these rights during the democratic period. When they occur, large deployment of force by the police or army may attract public criticism.

Looking across eight decades of mass mobilization in Bolivia, there is a recurring pattern in which mass protests have given legitimacy to major political projects embraced by Bolivia's leaders. Popular upheaval accompanied: the 1936 rise of military socialism; the 1952 revolution led by the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement; the 1978-82 restoration of parliamentary democracy; and the 2005 arrival of the Movement

towards Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*; MAS) to power; as well as the brief 1969-71 leftist political opening. In each case, disruptive protest was led by new, or newly defined political actors: a unionized working class, a national-popular alliance of workers and peasants, an ethnically conscious peasant movement, and an indigenous-identified urban-rural alliance. Each of these political projects—namely, military socialism, nationalist revolution, the Popular Assembly, parliamentary democracy, and MAS plurinationalism—went on to create new representative institutions (often constitutional conventions of some kind), redefine state policy, and/or institute new legal norms that acknowledge the public's right to collective action. They also each organized large symbolic events in which the government accepted the endorsement of mass protest movements. Over time they have extended legal recognition to worker's unions, the expulsion of landlords, campesino organizations, and an expansive repertoire of collective actions (many of which would be regarded as criminal in other countries). In short, Bolivians are familiar with mass disruptive protest as a legitimate form of participating in politics. It has been recognized historically by acts of Bolivian presidents and (often) legally through formal recognition of grassroots organizations and their tactics.

The Bolivian state first recognized trade unions during the military socialist governments of David Toro, Germán Busch Becerra, and Gualberto Villarroel López. Busch's Labor Code (*Código del Trabajo*; enacted May 24, 1939) legitimized the right to strike, forbidding employers from dismissing their workers for participating in work stoppages. A more expansive view of the right to strike is the concept of the *fuero sindical,* which was also recognized in Colombia, Chile, and Panama. Under medieval Spanish jurisprudence, certain professional or corporate groups, notably clergy and the military, could not be punished in conventional courts, but had to be brought before their own separate court systems. In countries with the *fuero sindical*, collective and direct action in the course of strikes and union organizing is recognized as legally distinct from the acts of private citizens. So picket lines controlling entry into a workplace, sit-down strikes, and collective participation in blockades are all considered collective strike actions. The *fuero sindical* specifically forbade employers from firing union officials and the government from prosecuting them for acts carried out in their official capacity. The Villarroel government recognized the *fuero syndical* in February 1944 (Gotkowitz 2007:175; Lora 1980:415), and the MNR government reinstated it after the 1952 Revolution (Alexander 2005:89-93). Rural leaders began to invoke the *fuero sindical* in their protests as early as 1953 (Dunkerley 2003, 103).

This model of union-centered democracy is influential enough in Bolivia that even military governments have accepted its legitimacy. While some military dictators ordered the army, police, or paramilitaries to attack trade unionists, they did not legally dismantle the system of unions, strikes, and the *fuero sindical.* The regime of René Barrientos, which crushed the autonomy of trade unionists and massacred striking miners, drafted a 1967 Constitution that reaffirmed unions, strikes, and the *fuero sindical*: "Unionization is recognized and guaranteed as a means of defense, representation, assistance, education, and culture of the workers, just as the *fuero sindical* [is recognized and guaranteed] as a guarantee for union leaders for the activities which they carry out in the specific exercise of their mandate, for which they can neither be persecuted nor imprisoned. The right to strike is established as the exercise of legal faculty of the workers to suspend work for the defense of their rights having previously fulfilled the legal formalities" ("Constitución Política de La República de Bolivia" 1967, Article 159).

This article was reaffirmed in the Constitutional Reform of 1994, which Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada carried out, and remained the law of the land at the time of his second presidency. President Evo Morales confirmed Villaroel's decree on the *fuero sindical* in the first new law of his presidency (Agencia Boliviana de Información 2006). It was amplified further in the 2009 Constitution. Union leaders have repeatedly proclaimed that "the right to strike is sacred" (Gómez Balboa 2004). The fuero sindical was in active use in the period prior to September and October 2003, and was interpreted by both union members and the state to apply to road blockades, mobilized strikes, and other combative actions. In mid-2003, the Federation of

Small Traders (*Federación de Gremialistas*; literally, "guild members") applied the *fuero* in defending its Executive Secretary from charges of inciting the burning of El Alto's town hall (Lazar 2006:189). Despite extreme conflict between the state and unions, seven attempts to begin prosecution against strikers for impeding public transit were refused by Bolivian prosecutors between 2000 and 2003, in recognition of the right to strike (Gómez Balboa 2004).

The Citizen Security Law (Law 2494) promulgated on August 4, 2003 represents an exception to this pattern. It imposed severe criminal penalties on those who block road, river, or air transportation of multiple years in prison. The Permanent Assembly of Human Rights of Bolivia objected to the law, because (in keeping with the concept of the *fuero sindical*), "the Legislature should distinguish between what is common delinquency and what a contesting act by civil society, which is not a crime" (*Correo Del Sur* 2003). The Movement Towards Socialism immediately acted to challenge the constitutionality of the law and claimed, seemingly with great foresight, that it was intended to disable protests over the gas export issue. Early in the events of September and October 2003, communities in the Lake Titicaca region (to take one example) included Law 2494 among "five damned laws" whose repeal they demanded through their blockades (*La Razón* 2003). In the end, the constitutionality of Law 2494's anti-blockade provisions was never tested; in November 2003, the National Congress passed legislation that removed the provisions from the penal code. This removal was accomplished with Law 2625, promulgated on December 22, 2003.[6]

It is not surprising that Bolivian civil society groups continued to press for their demands disregarding this law, whose constitutionality was untested, and which deviated from well-established norms of political conflict dating back decades. The July 2004 Prosecutor's Office report stated that, "Various labor leaders, teachers, industrial workers, neighborhood associations, Bolivian Workers' Union representatives, etc. were called in; they stated that their actions were representative actions, given that they were elected by the rank and file, further stating that at the time of the social conflict in defense of the gas, they were merely doing what popular outcry demanded" (Herrera et al. 2004, DEF-0000473). This stance illustrates the widely held understanding of the *fuero sindical* in relation to disruptive protest.

D. The events of September and October 2003, while larger in scale than in prior years, generally involved the use of tactics within the Bolivian repertoire of contention, and were conducted in the expectation of negotiating with the Sánchez de Lozada government. Calls for the president's resignation were also consistent with longstanding political traditions.

Participants in urban and rural blockades and civic strikes successfully pressed the government to agree to policy changes during the years prior to 2003. Both longstanding organizations and ad hoc coalitions convinced the government to sit at the bargaining table and discuss policy changes on issues ranging from agrarian reform to municipal water privatization to taxation.

As discussed above in Section A, there is a well-established sequence of collective organization, proclamation of demands, strikes and other forms of pressure, demonstrations of popular support, escalation, negotiation, and concessions, which Bolivian social movements follow as they press their demands. This familiar structure was replicated in the September–October 2003 protests.

I concur with anthropologist Sían Lazar's assessment of 2003:

> "I contend that the Bolivian uprising was not a spontaneous upsurge of popular anger with government, politicians and political parties, but rather an event that built upon well-established patterns of political behaviour, where corporate groupings – the 'social sectors' – have become used to direct negotiations with the government. This created a 'normal' democratic cycle of protest–negotiation–agreement–government reneging on its promises–renewed protest, which broke down

[6] Bolivia: Ley Nº 2625, 22 de diciembre de 2003. http://www.lexivox.org/norms/BO-L-2625.xhtml

once the army started to kill demonstrators. In response, Bolivian citizens turned on their government, and forced the President and his chief ministers to resign" (Lazar 2006, 185).

The 2003 Gas War came about as a cascade of actions by rural and urban unions, neighborhood associations, and civil society groups of all kinds, as well as individuals who became involved through mass protests. Particularly important within this broad sweep of actions were: a peasant movement making demands on agrarian issues and for greater indigenous autonomy; a national alliance of organizations pressing demands against the privatization and export of gas; the massive mobilization of residents of the poor city of El Alto; and the late support of largely middle class demonstrators and political elites through an October hunger strike. The following account synthesizes details reported in the press and scholarly accounts (Hylton and Thomson 2005; 2007; Mamani Ramírez 2005; Rivero 2006).[7]

Beginning on September 2, seventy-five leaders from the CSUTCB and urban movements in El Alto marched from Caracollo towards the capital (Ramos Andrade 2004). From September 6 to 8, a 3,000-strong CSUTCB march trekked 50 kilometers from the shores of Lake Titicaca to El Alto (where the two marches merged) demanding government action on the 72-point agreement reached in September 2000. There, some 500 to 1000 Alteños and peasants joined CSUTCB leader Felipe Quispe in a hunger strike at Radio San Gabriel beginning on September 10. Campesinos in the CSUTCB organized road blockades throughout the Altiplano from early September, including the Lake Titicaca region where the government would intervene militarily on September 20.

A wide array of Bolivian grassroots organizations had formed a National Committee for the Defense and Recovery of Gas in mid-2002. Its members included the Cochabamba Coordinadora for the Defense of Water and Life (the organization that emerged from the 2000 Water War), CIDOB, COB, CSUTCB, national organizations of retirees, and the Six Federations of Chapare cocaleros, among others. On September 5, a Coordinadora for the Defense and Recovery of Gas was consolidated at a gathering in Oruro, combining grassroots organizations and political parties like the MAS into a national mobilization that they already called the "guerra de gas" (Contreras Baspineiro 2003).

The Gas Coordinadora called a nationwide strike on September 19. That day, an estimated 60,000 people marched into Cochabamba's Plaza 14 de Septiembre (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 211). In La Paz, a large but festive morning demonstration, in which demonstrators dressed as oil barrels danced waving a *wiphala*, an indigenous flag, as the military put three rings of troops onto the streets to defend the Plaza Murillo (*Correo Del Sur* 2004). Transport drivers, teachers and war widows in in the city of La Paz, CSUTCB-affiliated peasants and agrarian colonists in La Paz Department, indigenous peoples in the north of the country, and the Potosí Civic Committee all conducted simultaneous strike actions, each with local demands (*La Prensa* 2003).

The regional labor federation Central Obrera Regional-El Alto and the Federation of Neighborhood Councils (FEJUVE El Alto) organized a series of marches, roadblocks, and civic strikes: paralyzing public transit, blockading arterial roads, and closing access to outside regions beginning in September, and escalating to an indefinite civic strike from October 8. Six thousand merchants marched from Oruro and three thousand miners left from Huanuni, and over a thousand cocaleros departed from the Yungas. The various groups put forward a platform that refused the export of natural gas, the new tax code, and joining the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Organizations agreed not to make separate agreements with the state, and to support one another's demands.

[7] Major press summaries include: "Se sentó un precedente contra el abuso de poder," *Opinion*, October 18, 2003, "Informe Sucesión" Section, p. 10. "Los Últimos Días," *La Prensa*, October 26, 2003. (Sunday Section, page 5). "Las organizaciones sociales juraron que no traicionarán la lucha social," *El Diario*, October 19, 2003. "Edición Especial: Un Año," *Correo del Sur*, October 17, 2004.

Moments of armed intervention by government security forces led to street confrontations. The armed confrontation in Warisata and Sorata on September 20, and deadly encounters between armed soldiers and massive crowds in El Alto on October 11–13, each prompted calls for President Sánchez de Lozada to resign.

A new wave of hunger strikes was initiated in October by former Human Rights Ombudswoman Ana María Romero de Campero. As churches opened their doors to host hunger strike pickets, over fifteen hundred people swore off food at 83 different sites in eight departments, including the cities of La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Sucre, Tarija, Trinidad, Potosí, Riberalta, Camiri, Bermejo, Tupiza, Yacuiba, and Llallagua. Members of parliament went on hunger strike, including Elsa Guevara, the ranking legislator from the MIR party, a partner in the government (Rivero 2006, 80).

The September–October 2003 protests were in category of protests so large and sustained they imply a political mandate, as described above in Section A. The crowd attending the five converging marches that filled the Plaza San Francisco on October 16 has been estimated at some two hundred thousand people, as of that date possibly the largest protest gathering in Bolivian history. Large protests were held simultaneously in Cochabamba, Potosí, and Oruro. In the 2004 LAPOP survey, 14% of those surveyed said they personally had participated in protests against Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in the previous 12 months.

Accordingly, there is widespread recognition of the September–October 2003 as marking a historically important expression of Bolivian public sentiment. The collective demands of the movement—principally, public control over natural resources, a Constituent Assembly to redefine the state, and decolonization of the state's relationship with indigenous peoples—have become known as "the October Agenda," and this term was used frequently by social movement participants and politicians through the next decade.

Hugo San Martín, a congressional deputy of Sánchez de Lozada's party, said on October 14, "Governability is not just a matter of having a majority in Congress, it is legitimacy before the population. This is the end of one stage of democracy and the beginning of a second, with greater public participation." Similarly, Ana María Campero, former Congress member and former Human Rights Ombudsperson, observed, "A maturation of the collective conscience has been produced and I believe that October [2003] brought this awaking with it, although not just October, but rather all of the social movements since 2000. … The people had been accustomed to only certain people governing, who controlled the [political] parties. In this moment we are seeing a rebirth of social conscience." Despite his very different political stance, Manfred Reyes Villa, a coalition partner with the Sánchez de Lozada government, also saw the mobilization as the voice of the public. On October 16, 2003, he spoke to the media while visiting the presidential palace and stated, "I have come to tell the president to listen to the Bolivians. We cannot go against the current. What are we waiting for? Greater spilling of blood?" and "It is too late; the people no longer believe in the government" (quoted in Rivero 2006, 220, 267, 228).

James Dunkerley, a highly respected historian of Bolivia, observed, "The overthrow of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and the 'neo-liberal patrimonial state' … did not, though, take the form of direct armed attack on the institutions of that state, either in October 2003 or in December 2005." Instead, he points to a symbolic moment: "at midnight on 16 October 2003, at the village of Patacamaya, some 109 kilometres from La Paz, when a colonel and miner embraced, and the army allowed 58 trucks of workers through to the seat of government to demand the removal of the president" (Dunkerley 2007, 139).

While popular pressure led to Sánchez de Lozada's resignation, the fact that power changed hands through resignation maintained the constitutional order of Bolivia. This pathway was embraced by both Ana Romero de Campero's hunger strikers and by the Movement Towards Socialism, the future governing party led by Evo Morales. Both made public statements endorsing a "constitutional exit" to the crisis (Rivero 2006, 214, 260–61). A similar solution was found when the May-June 2005 protests, also backed by a hunger strike of prominent politicians, demanded that Carlos Mesa in turn step down. Indeed, in a long series of political crises in the last fifteen years, each major turn—replacing neoliberal parties with the MAS,

rewriting the country's constitution, and ending the separatist demands of the eastern departments—has been resolved by both a moment of mass mobilization and a national vote. In the view of participants, two kinds of democratic traditions—of political change through electoral means, and of government responsiveness to massive protest—have both been respected.

E. The police and military response to the September and October 2003 protests is a quantitative outlier, far outside the general approach of Bolivian democratic governments in its lethality. This is true even though other democratically elected presidents have faced more frequent and more intense protests.

At the most basic level, the database of deaths in political conflict shows that the year 2003 was an exceptionally deadly and violent year for protest in Bolivia during the democratic period (see Figure 3). A total of 139 deaths were recorded in 2003, the highest in any year, with only the 54 to 69 deaths in the year 2000 being remotely comparable. The year 2000 saw a different kind of exceptional event: between 27 and 42 people were killed in inter-ethnic violence between the Laymi and Qaqachaka ayllus in Potosí and Oruro in a string of deadly incidents, each in retaliation for the last. (None of the Laymi–Qaqachaka deaths involved state security forces.) The number of deaths in 2003 was more than triple the number of deaths in any other year since 1982. Only seven years in the dataset, including 2000 and 2003, saw 20 or more deaths.

Further, the number of deaths perpetrated by state security forces in 2003 was 105, nearly five times as many as any other year. (For attribution purposes, I treated the deaths involving the police and military shooting at one another in the February 12–13, 2003, events as events with state perpetrators and state victims.

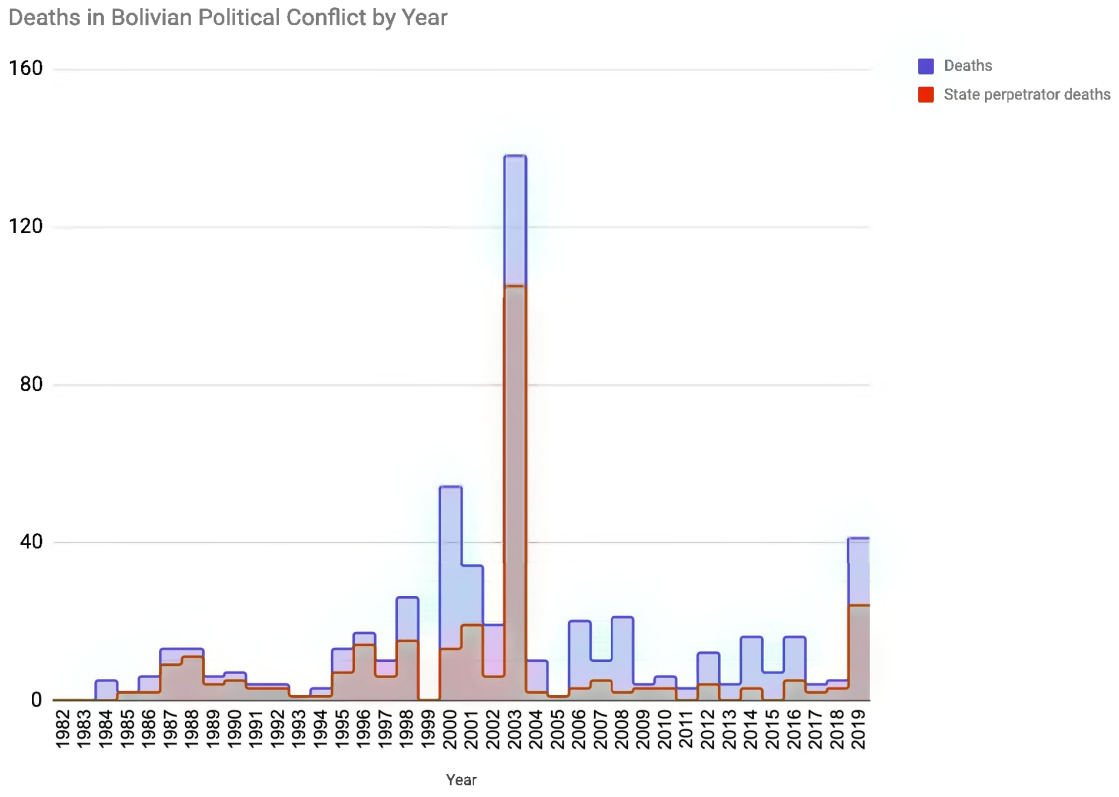

Figure 3: Deaths per year, from 1982 to 2019, as tabulated in the database of lethal consequences of political conflict. Blue bars include all deaths. Red bars include all those killed by state security forces. The 1982 total only covers deaths after the October transition to democracy.

Excluding these sixteen deaths from either category does not make 2003 any less exceptional.) State security forces were responsible for at least 24 deaths in 2019 and 19 deaths in 2001.

Viewed by presidency instead of by year, the second administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada continues to stand out as a particularly deadly time (See Table 4). The 139 deaths during this fourteen-month-long administration are the most of any administration during the post-1982 democratic era. They narrowly exceed the 137 deaths recorded during the Evo Morales administration (which has lasted eleven times as long), and the 96 to 125 deaths during Hugo Banzer's four years in office from 1997 to 2001 (which include the Laymi–Qaqachaka violence).[8] No other president in the democratic era oversaw more than 42 deaths. To find a leader of Bolivia who presided over a comparable number and pace of deaths requires turning to the era of military dictators. Estimates from a APDH-Potosí report (Navarro Miranda 1999) in Table 6 illustrate the scale of deadly violence under military dictatorship.

Calculating the number of deaths per year, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's second term stands out from all others (116 deaths per calendar year), only distantly followed by Jorge Quiroga's one-year term (32/year) and Hugo Banzer's 1997–2001 term (24–31/year).[9] Again, the Sánchez de Lozada presidency is more comparable to years of military dictatorship, and is this time greatly eclipsed by the disastrous two weeks of Alberto Natusch Busch in November 1979.

Turning to deaths perpetrated by state security forces, the second Sánchez de Lozada administration was even more exceptional (See Figure 4 and Table 5). The 106 deaths caused under his presidency greatly exceeds the 36 caused by the army and police under Hugo Banzer, the 33 under Evo Morales, and the 28 under Sánchez de Lozada's prior term. Excluding confrontations with coca growers, guerrillas, and paramilitaries, the 96 deaths under this presidency make up half of all deaths caused by state security forces since 1982 and two-thirds of all such deaths between 1982 and 2005.

Analyzing the deaths in terms of individual events, again the September-October 2003 period tops the list with 71 deaths, followed by the Laymi–Qaqachaka violence of 2000 with 27 to 42 deaths, and the February 12-13, 2003 events with 33 deaths. The other events with more than ten deaths were the violence associated with the Plan Dignity coca eradication plan in 1998 (20), clashes among miners at Huanuni in 2006 (17), the 2008 Porvenir massacre of peasant marchers by right-wing allies of the Pando governor (12), and the raids on the mining communities of Amayapampa, Capasirca, Llallagua in December 1996 (11), and the Villa Tunari massacre of cocaleros occupying a government base in 1988 (8 to 12).[10] Again there is simply no comparable use of deadly force. It's worth noting there are just eleven events in the democratic era in which state security forces caused ten or more deaths; four of those occurred in the presidencies of Gonzala Sánchez de Lozada. (See Table 7.)

[8] All of the uncertain deaths during this period are associated with the Laymi–Qaqachaca violence

[9] For this comparison, I also tabulated numbers of deaths estimated by the Permanent Assembly of Human Rights, but not confirmed for in our database. These missing deaths occurred during the presidencies of Jaime Paz Zamora and Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's prior presidency (1993–97).

[10] The database lists Sánchez de Lozada's crackdown on coca grower, pensioner, and campesino protests in January 2003 as separate events; combined they account for 13 deaths, 11 of them perpetrated by security forces.

Presidency	First	Last	Days in Office	Deaths per year	Death per year (including deaths counted only by APDH)	State perpetrator deaths per year	Deaths in our database	APDH totals	State-perpetrator deaths	State-victim deaths
Hernán Siles Zuazo	10-Oct-1982	6-Aug-1985	1031	2.5	2.5	0.7	7		2	0
Víctor Paz Estenssoro	6-Aug-1985	6-Aug-1989	1461	9.5	9.5	6.2	38	15	25	2
Jaime Paz Zamora	6-Aug-1989	6-Aug-1993	1461	4.0	7.5	3.0	16	30	12	2
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (1st)	6-Aug-1993	6-Aug-1997	1461	10.5	12.0	7.0	42	48	28	4
Hugo Banzer (2nd)	6-Aug-1997	7-Aug-2001	1462	24.0	24.0	9.0	96	28	36	16
Jorge Quiroga	7-Aug-2001	6-Aug-2002	364	32.1	32.1	16.0	32	30	16	4
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (2nd)	6-Aug-2002	17-Oct-2003	437	116.1	116.1	88.5	139	119	106	22
Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert	17-Oct-2003	9-Jun-2005	601	9.7	9.7	1.8	16		3	9
Eduardo Rodriguez	9-Jun-2005	22-Jan-2006	227	0.0	0.0	0.0	0		0	0
Evo Morales	22-Jan-2006	10-Nov-2019	5040	10.0	10.0	2.4	138		33	8
Interim military government	10-Nov-2019	12-Nov-2019	2	1,642.5	1,642.5	547.5	9		3	2
Jeanine Añez	12-Nov-2019		163	51.5	51.5	47.0	23		21	0
Totals							**556** Current total count		**285**	**69**

Table 5: Deaths by presidency in the post-1982 democratic era (excluding unconfirmed upper estimates and non-conflict-related accidents). The higher numbers of deaths found by APDH in the 1989 to 1997 period may represent counting errors or deaths not yet included in the database.

Presidency			Days in Office	Deaths per year (maximum)	Frequency (deaths in our database)	Estimate from ASOFAMD/ APDH	Estimate from Navarro Miranda 1999
René Barrientos	11/5/1964	4/27/1969	1420	133.66			520
Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas	8/6/1966	4/27/1969	995	9.90			27
Alfredo Ovando Candía	4/27/1969	9/26/1969	152	461.05			192
Juan José Torres	10/7/1970	8/21/1971	318	59.69			52
Hugo Banzer (1st)	8/22/1971	7/21/1978	2525	67.65		146	468
Alberto Natusch	11/1/1979	11/16/1979	15	7,835.33		76 to over 200	322
Lydia Gueiler Tejada	11/17/1979	7/18/1980	244	0.00			
Luis García Meza Tejada (2nd	7/18/1980	8/4/1981	382	95.55		100	196
Disappeared 1979-1982						*164*	
Hernán Siles Zuazo	10/10/1982	8/6/1985	1031	2.48	7		
Víctor Paz Estenssoro	8/6/1985	8/6/1989	1461	9.49	38	15	
Jaime Paz Zamora	8/6/1989	8/6/1993	1461	7.49	16	30	
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (	8/6/1993	8/6/1997	1461	11.99	42	48	
Hugo Banzer (2nd)	8/6/1997	8/7/2001	1462	23.97	96	28	
Jorge Quiroga	8/7/2001	8/6/2002	364	32.09	32	30	
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (	8/6/2002	10/17/2003	437	116.10	139	119	
Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert	10/17/2003	6/9/2005	601	9.72	16		
Eduardo Rodriguez	6/9/2005	1/22/2006	227	0.00	0		
Evo Morales	1/22/2006	11/10/19	5040	9.99	138		
Interim military government	11/10/2019	11/12/19	2	1,642.50	9		
Jeanine Añez	11/12/2019		163	51.50	23		
Totals (1982-present)					**556**		

Table 6: Deaths by presidency in the 1964–82 era of military dictatorship (Lyida Gueiler is the only democratically elected president listed in this period) and the 1982– democratic era. Not all presidents are included. Jeanine Áñez's "final" date represents the day this white paper was submitted.

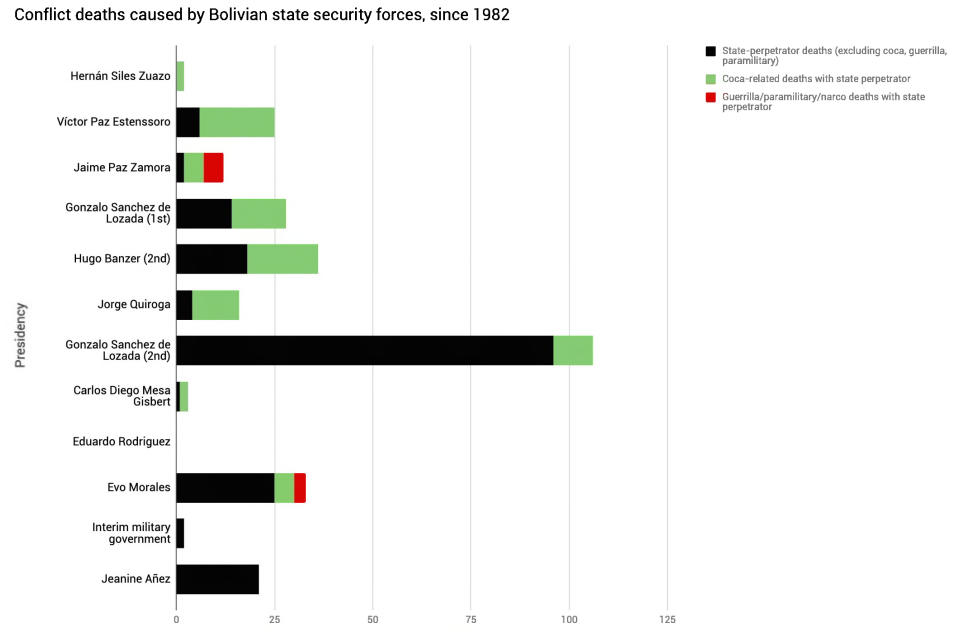

Figure 4: Deaths caused by Bolivian state security forces (military and police) during each presidency of the post-1982 democratic era.

Event	Year	Deaths	State perpetrator deaths	State victim deaths
Gas War	2003	71	59	2
Laymi-Qaqachaka Conflict	2000	35	0	0
La Paz Tarifazo Tax Protests	2003	33	32	15
Plan Dignity Coca Conflict	1998	20	15	4
Huanuni Clashes	2006	17	0	1
Villa Tunari Massacre	1988	12	12	0
Porvenir Massacre	2008	12	0	0
Amayapampa, Capasirca, Llallagua	1996	11	10	1
Retiree Bus Crash	2003	11	0	0
Senkata Massacre	2019	11	11	0
CSUTCB September Strike	2000	10	9	0
Jan 2003 Coca Clashes	2003	9	8	1
Sacaba Massacre	2019	9	9	0
Sacaba Coca War	2002	8	3	4
Eterazama Eradication Resistance	1997	7	6	1
Raid on MST at Pananti	2001	7	0	0
Parotani UMOPAR clash	1987	6	5	1
Laymi-Qaqachaka	1998	6	0	0
Cocalero kidnapping	2000	6	0	6
El Alto Municipal Arson	2016	6	0	0
Cooperative Miner Strike	2016	6	4	1
La Paz post-resignation violence	2019	6	0	2

Table 7: The deadliest events in the post-1982 democratic era. Events during the two presidencies of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada are highlighted in yellow. Those during Evo Morales' presidency, there of which involved no killing by state security forces, are highlighted in blue. Those during Jeanine Áñez's presidency are highlighted in orange.

Moreover, the disproportion of deadly violence between the security forces and the protesters is exceptional. While in Warisata one of the five deaths was a soldier, the remainder of the Gas War saw one (or perhaps two) soldiers die while at least fifty-four civilians were killed by security forces. This imbalance occurred despite the massive mobilization of protesters, and a major escalation of tactics by protesters beginning on October 11–13. As Raquel Gutierrez summarizes, El Alto residents "made pedestrian bridges fall upon some avenues, dragged old railway cars to reinforce certain blockading points, dug trenches in the principal avenues, [and] constructed walls in the entryways of the neighborhoods" (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 224). This suggests that the protesters' approach was not to attempt to defeat the police and military by intensifying their use of deadly force. Rather, protesters engaged in prolonged street confrontations and sought to reinforce the blockade, while limiting their exposure to the live ammunition that the security forces were shooting at them.

Large-scale violence by state security forces in Bolivia has precedents. The Bolivian labor movement endured numerous massacres during the first seven decades of the twentieth century, notably the Massacre of Catavi in 1943, and the Massacre of San Juan in 1967. Mass mobilization in January 1974 ended in the Massacre of the (Cochabamba High) Valley, in which the army killed scores of rural protesters. The successful resistance to the Natusch Busch coup in 1979 has become known as the Massacre of All Saints Day. Those who remember October 2003 as "Black October" place the actions of the Sánchez de Lozada administration in the context of these deadly military crackdowns.

Examining the deaths in 2003 in the context of the thirty-eight years of democratic rule also allows us to ask whether the protests that Sánchez de Lozada faced were exceptional enough to explain the massive disparity in state violence. If we consider the incredible anomaly of either deaths or state perpetrator deaths alongside the record of protests, as illustrated in Section B, we see that 2003 was likely the year with the highest attendance at protests (edging out 2008), but was not an exceptional year in terms of the number of rural or urban blockades, the number of civic strikes, the frequency of protests that rejected the national government, or the number of national scale protests. What makes September and October 2003 stand out is not the form or scale of mass protest, but the scale and lethality of the state response.

Presidency	First	Last	Days in Office	Deaths (excluding coca, guerrilla, paramilitary)	State-perpetrator deaths (excluding coca, guerrilla, paramilitary)	State-victim deaths (excluding coca, guerrilla, paramilitary)
Hernán Siles Zuazo	10-Oct-1982	6-Aug-1985	1031	5	0	0
Víctor Paz Estenssoro	6-Aug-1985	6-Aug-1989	1461	12	6	0
Jaime Paz Zamora	6-Aug-1989	6-Aug-1993	1461	4	2	1
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (1st)	6-Aug-1993	6-Aug-1997	1461	20	14	1
Hugo Banzer (2nd)	6-Aug-1997	7-Aug-2001	1462	62	18	1
Jorge Quiroga	7-Aug-2001	6-Aug-2002	364	15	4	0
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (2nd)	6-Aug-2002	17-Oct-2003	437	125	96	18
Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert	17-Oct-2003	9-Jun-2005	601	10	1	5
Eduardo Rodriguez	9-Jun-2005	22-Jan-2006	227	0	0	0
Evo Morales	22-Jan-2006	10-Nov-2019	5040	122	25	3
Interim military government	10-Nov-2019	12-Nov-2019	2	9	3	2
Jeanine Añez	12-Nov-2019		163	23	21	0
Totals				**407**	**190**	**31**

Table 8: Deaths by presidency in the post-1982 democratic era, excluding the coca conflict and conflicts with organized armed actors.

F. In the current democratic era, other Bolivian presidents have responded to large-scale and highly disruptive protests by exercising greater restraint, avoiding or limiting bloodshed. The impulse to do so is an important part of Bolivia's post-dictatorship democratic political culture.

Looking beyond purely quantitative measures of the challenges faced by Bolivian presidents, it is evident that parallel circumstances were faced by at least four other presidents during the current democratic period.

- In 1984 and 1985, Bolivian workers' movements organized general strikes with the express goal of forcing President Hernán Siles Zuazo resign. Committed to avoiding a deadly crackdown, Siles eventually called for early elections.
- In 1985 and 1986, workers organized general strikes and a cross-country march in opposition to the "shock therapy" economic initiatives of the government of Víctor Paz Estenssoro. The 31-day strike in September–October 1985 was the longest in the history of the COB. The August–October 1986 mobilization was capped by a march of thousands of mine workers from Oruro to La Paz. In both cases, the government declared highly controversial state of siege, jailed union leaders, and raided their homes and organizational offices. However, in neither case did it use lethal force against the demonstrators. No violent deaths occurred during these crises. (Navarro Miranda 1999)
- In 2005, a wave of protest quite similar to 2003 pressed Carlos Mesa to resign and demanded a Constituent Assembly. Protest actions were as numerous as in 2003, involved greater takeovers of public property, and twice surrounded the meeting site of the National Congress. Mesa negotiated the succession of a caretaker government and new elections. Security forces were responsible for one death.
- In 2007 and 2008, right-wing protesters acting in concert with five departmental governors opposed the constitutional reform led by the government of Evo Morales. At the peak of the crisis (in August and September 2008), protests had deterred the president from visiting five of the nine departments, protesters took over or looted government buildings in four departmental capitals, and anti-government forces massacred a eleven pro-government marchers at El Porvenir in Pando department on September 11, 2008. Throughout this period, the Morales government restrained its use of force, abandoning the city of Sucre after police shot three anti-constitution protesters, and otherwise keeping security forces out of left-right clashes for power. The government's response to the El Porvenir Massacre—sending soldiers to arrest Pando's governor for organizing the massacre—resulted in two further deaths in a clash with armed civilians. In all, the crisis over eastern autonomy saw 21 deaths, just five of them at the hands of state security forces (Bjork-James 2019).

Each of these presidents expressed an interest in avoiding deadly consequences of protest. Hernán Siles Zuazo refrained from cracking down on protest out of principle, declaring, "I don't care if I'm judged as indecisive or a bad administrator. What's important to me is having my hands clean of repression and that history recognizes the extent of my commitment that Bolivia continue to be a land of free men" (quoted in Conaghan and Malloy 1994, 123–24). Carlos Mesa likewise expressed a desire to avoid bloodshed in his autobiography: "My decision was that I would renounce my office before having to bring out the Armed Forces with instructions to use [lethal] force" (Mesa Gisbert 2008, 293).

This kind of reaction to violence in political conflict plays an important role in post-1982 Bolivian politics. During the 1985 crisis, many politicians opposed the state of siege by equating it with dictatorship. Guillermo Capobianco, later Minister of Government, said simply, "army tanks ought never again fire upon the defenseless people." Benjamín Miguel, a co-founder of the Christian Democratic Party said, "The state

of siege has no reason for being and opens the way for negotiating fundamental rights, for negotiating the freedom of the law that rules in our country." The MRTKL, which would later partner in Sánchez de Lozada's 1993–97 government, declared that it "rejects authoritarian and repressive methods as a way of treating the serious problems of the country." (All quoted in Navarro Miranda 1999, 57)

More recently, the use of violent but non-lethal force by state security forces has attracted public condemnation. In February 2000, the government sent the Special Security Group to Cochabamba with orders prevent anti-water privatization marchers from reaching the central square. In just two days, they launched 7,000 teargas canisters and fired 10,000 rounds of rubber bullets. The mainstream, center-right newspaper *Los Tiempos* described the scene under the headline, "Like in the dictatorship": "At least three airplanes on low-passing flights, tossing out pro-government pamphlets, the sound that military boots make when they march in step, police trenches in the middle of downtown, clouds of gas, people running without direction with symptoms of asphyxiation, daring demonstrators with sticks and stones in hand, lamentation, violence, and desperation. That was Cochabamba yesterday, an immense battlefield in which police repression had no limits. The atmosphere was unmistakable. That is why the people shouted, 'Murderers, murderers… This is dictatorship!'" (February 5, 2000). The events of those two days served to galvanize Cochabamban public opinion behind the protesters, and moved the establishment-oriented Civic Committee to align itself more closely with the more radical Coordinadora in Defense of Water and Life. During the larger protests in April, the Prefect of Cochabamba (equivalent to a state governor in the United States), Hugo Galindo, urged the national government to accede to protesters demands, and resigned when they refused, declaring on television that he did not want to be responsible for any bloodshed.

In October 2003, numerous public figures came forward to reject the government's use of lethal violent force in managing the wave of protests. In addition to those described in the Plaintiff's complaint, and Ana Maria Romero Campero and Manfred Reyes Villa (as quoted above), they included the following:

- Minister Jorge Torres, son of former president Juan José Torres, upon resigning on October 13: "Nothing can allow such an extreme situation as has come about in the country, where a military solution is sought, which means the pain and mourning of the Bolivian people."
- Former President and coalition partner in the government Jaime Paz Zamora, leader of the MIR party, on October 13: "Neither I nor the MIR have anything to do with the deaths of the people." (Both quoted in Rivero 2006, 217)

In January 2005, President Carlos Mesa signed a Supreme Decree regulating the "use of force in internal conflict." It requires that, unless directly attacked, the Armed Forces may only use force after "the processes of negotiation carried out by the government have been exhausted, as well as the persuasive and dissuasive actions of the police." It requires their actions to be (in Mesa's paraphrase) "be proportional to the aggression received and limited to the neutralization of the aggressor(s). … It should not be accompanied by reprisals of any kind" (Mesa Gisbert 2008, 292–93).

Similar views are also reflected in a burgeoning set of studies produced by nongovernmental and governmental organizations around the term *conflictividad* (conflictive-ness). In these works, written by mainstream think tanks such as Fundación UNIR and the government's Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (Defensoría del Pueblo), the use of deadly force results from the unsuccessful management of government demands. Bolivia's post-2003 governments have all devoted substantial resources, including dedicated personnel and a new vice ministry, to maintaining active communication with social movements and managing conflicts.

In short, patterns of practice in crisis situations, statements by national leaders and prominent politicians, reactions of the press, and legal restrictions imposed upon the Armed Forces after the 2003 events all reflect

a political culture in which large-scale use deployment of deadly force represents either a dangerous return to the period of dictatorship or a failure of governance.

IV. The Evo Morales Administration and Lethal Political Violence

Evo Morales, who was elected by a 54% majority in December 2005 in the wake of the political upheaval reflected in the 2003 Gas War, went on to become the longest-serving president in Bolivia's history, serving for nearly 14 years. In this brief section, I offer an overview of political violence including state repression during the Morales years.

Ultimately, 138 people[11] would die in social movement-related events during the Morales years, the second highest total of any president during the democratic era, and a close runner-up to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's fourteen-month death toll of 139. However, in nearly all other respects, the Morales years were quantitatively very different from Sánchez de Lozada, and more in line with the 1982–1999 period of limited violence in Bolivian political life. In fact, the chart of annual deaths (in Figure 3) suggests a three-part division of the democratic era: the 1982–1999 period with relatively few annual deaths (averaging seven per year, and never exceeding 20), the turbulent years from 2000 to 2003 (averaging over sixty), and the October 18, 2003–November 10, 2018 period of presidents Carlos Mesa and Evo Morales in which deaths averaged 9.8 per year and reached a maximum of 21. Direct state responsibility for deaths varied greatly as well: about 5.1 per year in the first period, 36 per year in the second and 55%; and 3.6 per year and 23% in the third.

	October 1982–1999 (*17.25 years*)	**2000–2003 (*4 years*)**	**2004–October 2019 (*15.83 years*)**
Deaths	128 (7.4/year)	245 (61.3/year)	155 (9.8/year)
State-perpetrator deaths	88 (5.1/year)	144 (36/year)	36 (2.3/year)
Share of deaths caused by security forces	69%	59%	23%

Table 9: Deaths in three periods of the democratic era.

So, the Mesa and Morales years saw a significant number of deaths in social mobilization, but state security forces killed less often and were responsible for a smaller share of deaths than even during the relatively calm 1982–2000 years. (To some degree, the higher overall death rate since 2004 may be an artifact of our research's greater access to daily reports of events during the recent period.) Carlos Mesa effectively withdrew as Sánchez de Lozada's vice president in October 2003 rather than bear responsibility for bloodshed and crafted a January 2005 decree limiting military repression. Evo Morales' personal biographer Martín Sivak recalls his initial "conviction that [his] administration would never suppress protesters" and reports that when Morales first heard that police had killed protesters in a confrontation, he called his Minister of Government to demand (in Sivak's narration, "almost desperately"), "What have you done? How can you dirty us with blood?" (Sivak 2010, 198). These commitments were not kept, but the intention likely shaped police responses. There were three years under Morales in which state security forces didn't kill anyone associated with social protest, and several incidents, notably the June 2005 succession crisis (under Mesa) and the 2010 Caranavi blockade (under Morales), in which these presidents claimed to have specifically forbidden the use of deadly force but were apparently countermanded by local officers.

The deadliest events of the Morales administration were the Huanuni mine clashes of October 2006 (16 deaths), the El Porvenir massacre of September 2008 (12 deaths plus 2 in aftermath events), the El Alto municipal arson in February 2016, and the Cooperative Miner strike of August 2016 (6 deaths each). In the

[11] Excluded from this total are seven non-conflict-related accidents, mostly car crashes with uninvolved parties during prolonged episodes of protest.

first three, the bulk of deaths were caused before state security forces arrived: sixteen locals and one police officer were killed at Huanuni; after 12 people were killed on September 11 at El Porvenir, one soldier and one civic movement member died in a shoot-out at the Cobija airport; and six municipal workers perished in a protester-set arson in El Alto. In the 2016 strike, security forces killed four cooperative miners, who then killed a government negotiator in retaliation. This was the maximum number of protesters killed by security forces in any single event between October 2003 and November 2019.

In addition, a half-dozen events involved social movements allied with the Morales government clashing with its opponents. This include the January 11, 2007 clashes in Cochabamba, El Porvenir (September 2008), a September 13, 2008, confrontation in Tiquipaya, Santa Cruz that led to the beating death of a civic movement demonstrator, the partisan assassination of opposition politician Clemente Paco on March 1, 2015, and the El Alto arson by the pro-MAS Federation of Parents of El Alto. Finally, during the 2019 post-election protests, armed pro-MAS protesters shot two anti-MAS protesters dead in Montero (Santa Cruz) on October 30, 2019, and fatally beat protesters in La Paz and Quillacollo. Altogether, pro-MAS civilians killed seven anti-MAS civilians and six municipal workers in El Alto. In turn, MAS supporters suffered two deaths at the hands of armed civilians in the January 2007 Cochabamba clashes, eleven deaths inflicted by the armed Pando civic movement at El Porvenir in 2008.

At its broadest, then, partisan political conflict was responsible for twenty-six deaths during the Morales years, with the president's partisans responsible for half those deaths.[12] From 1987 to 2004, eight people died in partisan political conflicts, so this represents a major escalation in the deadliness of partisan conflict. On the other hand, rural land disputes and clashes between miners and local community members all led to deaths both prior to and during the Morales years. Given the outsized role of one event (the Huanuni mine clashes), I would hesitate to discern some general uptick in such violence during the Morales era.

V. Analysis of the 2019 Political Crisis

The year 2019 witnessed a new political crisis in Bolivia as well as levels of deadly violence not seen since the events of September and October 2003. Following early announcements of President Evo Morales' first-round victory in the October 20, 2019, elections, hundreds of thousands of Bolivians participated in three weeks of protest against alleged electoral fraud and other abuses of power. Hundreds of thousands more rallied to the president's defense during these weeks generating a national scenario of mobilization and countermobilization not seen since the 2008 political crisis. Renewed violence accompanied this crisis: first in the form of heightened violent conflict among civilians, in which five were killed; then in a much bloodier period after Morales' ouster, during which the security forces were apparently responsible for the vast majority of the 32 deaths (See Table 9 for an enumeration of deaths and responsible parties).

During the earlier period, while Morales was still president, four people were killed in clashes between the two sides, and hundreds more were injured in a variety of circumstances. Violence among civilian factions as well as property destruction as an element of protest were both significant during this period. Rather than simply mobilize in separate and competing demonstrations, protesters also attempted to break up one another's blockades or to physically confront opponents. Arsons, targeting electoral offices, local government buildings, organizational headquarters, and the homes of political opponents occurred in unusually large numbers, initially set by opponents of the Morales government but later by both sides. In the town of Montero, pro-MAS forces attacked their opponents with firearms, killing two anti-government protesters (Romero 2019a; *Los Tiempos* 2019a). Another death came in Cochabamba during a daylong series of confrontations between equally militant pro-MAS rural protesters and anti-MAS urban street-fighting groups, resulting in the death of a twenty-year-old anti-MAS student (*Los Tiempos* 2019c). The fourth death of this period was set in motion on October 29, when pro-MAS demonstrators attacked a

[12] Should anti-Morales assailants be responsible for the November 9-10, 2019, beating of journalist Sebastián Moro, it could be added to this total.

former political prisoner who was part of a longstanding vigil in downtown La Paz; the senior citizen died of medical complications from his injuries over a month later (*Erbol* 2019b). On the night of November 9–10, unknown assailants severely beat an Argentine journalist who worked for the pro-Morales newspaper *Prensa Rural*; he died on November 16 (Lanza 2020).

Police intervention initially targeted only opponents of the government, but the security forces largely stood down from repressing protest and the police did act to arrest the pro-MAS armed actors in Montero. While police–protester confrontations were significant, the police rarely if ever used lethal force. If anything, the police were criticized early on for allowing violent confrontations to spiral among civilians. After the student's death on November 6, anti-Morales protesters reached out the police and military for an alliance, and a police mutiny began on November 7 in Cochabamba and rapidly spread to other cities (Cuiza 2019; *El Deber* 2019). That night, Cochabamban protesters set fire to the MAS party and cocalero union headquarters in the city (*Los Tiempos* 2019b). As the police mutiny spread, a new form of potentially deadly violence arose: protesters in anti-MAS caravans from Potosí and Sucre (on the road to protest in La Paz) were taken captive and beaten on November 9, and attacked by pro-MAS sharpshooters on November 10, wounding at least six (Aguilar A 2019). No one was killed but all of these events shocked and destabilized the country and contributed to the demand for Evo Morales to resign. Significant organizational members of the MAS's grassroots left coalition joined in these calls.

During this time, the Morales government publicly disavowed the use of the military to either attack the protest movement or quell the police mutiny. Defense Minister Javier Zavaleta declared that "Evo Morales and our government have given a strict order to the Armed Forces that under no circumstances … will there be any operation in the streets of any city," while Government Minister Carlos Romero said that deploying the military was totally ruled out (Corz 2019a). As of November 9, neither the police nor the military had killed a single Bolivian in 2019. Morales resigned on November 10, as demanded by the protest mobilizations, some organizations within his own grassroots base, and a nationwide mutiny of the police, and as "suggested" by the head of Bolivia's Armed Forces, Williams Kaliman (Bjork-James 2020b).

Morales' resignation did not serve to resolve the crisis; rather, the level of violence dramatically escalated, both during a two-day period of acephalous government and during the first ten days of interim president Jeanine Áñez's tenure. Supporters of Morales escalated their protests and, in some locations, began a campaign of direct (if largely unarmed) resistance to all police and military presence, looting and destroying police stations in El Alto and Cochabamba. Irregular pro- and anti-Morales forces battled for the streets, sometimes with deadly consequences, particularly in metropolitan Cochabamba. On the evening of November 11, the Armed Forces commander issued an order for troops to deploy nationwide to restore order (Romero 2019b; *Fuerzas Armadas Anuncian Ejecutar Operaciones Conjuntas Con La Policía* 2019). During the two-day period at least eight people were killed, including two police officers and one civilian who were fatally wounded but died later.

Jeanine Áñez, previously the second vice president of the Senate, claimed a place in the line of succession and was sworn in as president on November 12. Áñez designated hardliner Arturo Murillo to the Ministry of Government, overseeing domestic policing, and elevated military officers who embraced a domestic policing role as she replaced the leadership of the Armed Forces on November 13 (*Erbol* 2019a; *El Comercio Perú* 2019; Manetto 2019). Two days later, she signed Supreme Decree 4078, which exempted the military from criminal prosecution for actions carried out during the nationwide crackdown. This series of authorizations evidently overrode and countermanded President Mesa's January 2005 decree limiting military action against protesters.

Brief identifier	Year	Mor	Day	YearL	Mor	Day	DeceasedFirstN	DeceasedSurnames	Perpetrator Political Affliation	Victim Political Affiliation	Intentionality
La Paz pro-Evo election march	2019	10	29	2019	11	28	Julio	Llanos Ramos	Pro-MAS	Other protest	Direct
Montero election clashes	2019	10	30				Marcelo	Terrazas Seleme	Pro-MAS	Anti-MAS	Direct
Montero election clashes	2019	10	30				Mario	Salvatierra Herrera	Pro-MAS	Anti-MAS	Direct
Metro Cochabamba election clashes	2019	11	6				Limbert	Guzmán Vasquez	Pro-MAS	Anti-MAS	Direct
La Paz journalist beaten to death	2019	11	10	2019	11	16	Sebastián	Moro	Anti-MAS ?	Pro-MAS	Direct
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	10	2019	11	12	Heyber Yamil	Antelo Alarcon	Pro-MAS	Security Forces	Incidental
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	11	2019	11	18	Juan José	Alcón Parra	Pro-MAS	Security Forces	Direct
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	11				Silverio	Condori	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Incidental
Metro Cochabamba post-resignation violence	2019	11	11				Miguel Angel	Ledezma Gonzales	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	11				Percy Romer	Conde Noguera	Security Forces ?	Bystander ?	Direct
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	11				Beltrán Paulino	Condori Arumi	Security Forces ?	Bystander	Direct
Metro Cochabamba post-resignation violence	2019	11	11				Filemón	Soria Díaz	Pro-MAS	Bystander ?	Direct
La Paz post-resignation violence 2019	2019	11	11	2019	11	12	Juan Martín Felix	Prez Taco	Security Forces ?	Bystander	Direct
Betanzos post-resignation violence	2019	11	12				Marcelino	Jarata Estrada	Security Forces	Bystander	Direct
Montero post-resignation clash	2019	11	13				Roberth Ariel	Calisaya Soto	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Yapacaní post-resignation clash	2019	11	13				Filemón	Salinas Rivera	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Metro Cochabamba post-resignation violence	2019	11	13				Juan José	Mamani Larico	Pro-MAS ?	Anti-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15	2019	11	16	Armando	Caraballo Escobar	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15	2019	11	16	Plácido	Rojas Delgadillo	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Omar	Calle Siles	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Lucas	Sánchez Valencia	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Emilio	Colque Leon	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Juan	López Apaza	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				César	Sipe Mérida	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Marcos	Vargas Martínez	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Sacaba massacre 2019	2019	11	15				Roberto	Sejas Escobar	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Devi	Posto Cusi	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Edwin	Jamachi (Juchamani) Paniagua	Security Forces	Bystander ?	Direct / Bystander
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Joel (José)	Colque Paty	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Pedro	Quisbert (Quisberth) Mamani	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Juan Jose	Tenorio Mamani	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Antonio Ronald	Quispe Ticona	Security Forces	Bystander ?	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Clemente Eloy	Mamani Santander	Security Forces	Bystander ?	Direct / Bystander
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19				Rudy Cristian	Vásquez Condori	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19	2019	11	22	Milton David	Zenteno Gironda (Centeno Geronda)	Security Forces	Bystander ?	Direct / Bystander
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19	2019	11	27	Calixto	Huanaco (Huanacu) Aguilar	Security Forces	Bystander ?	Direct / Bystander
Senkata massacre 2019	2019	11	19	2020	3	4	Emilio	Fernández	Security Forces	Pro-MAS	Direct

Table 10: Deaths and responsibility during the 2019 political crisis.

The military engaged in deadly confrontations with pro-MAS protesters in Betanzos (Potosí), Montero, and Yapacaní (both in Santa Cruz) on November 12, in which two protesters and a bystander were killed (*El Potosí* 2019; Corz 2019b). During these days, the MAS protest was gradually transforming into the more conventional form of left grassroots mobilization: coordinated road blockades and mass marches as part of a general strike. The Chapare served as an epicenter and model for this, with blockades throughout the region (Kurmanaev and Rios 2019). Two of these protests: a march of cocaleros to the city of Cochabamba and a prolonged blockade at the Senkata oil and gas facility in El Alto became the targets for the military crackdown.

In Sacaba, police blocked the passage of the Cochabamba-bound march on November 15. Following negotiations between the two sides, the police deployed teargas upon the marchers, touching off a two-hour confrontation. The shooting came about when military troops armed with guns replaced police at the frontlines (*Opinión* 2019a; *Opinión* 2019b). At least 115 protesters were injured, "mostly" by gunfire, according to hospital reports (Melgarejo 2019). A road blockade outside the Senkata YPFB gas installation was part of a general strike across La Paz department mounted by El Alto neighborhood councils and the La Paz campesino federation. On the morning of November 19, convoy of dozens of tankers and trucks carrying LPG gas canisters departed peacefully under a military escort. Within the next half hour, however, protesters re-established their blockade. By 11:15am, military troops were firing live ammunition as well as tear gas at the protesting crowd. The repression continued all afternoon as protesters retreated and bodies of those killed were brought to the San Francisco de Asis church (Quispe 2019). In both cases, security forces opened fire on large numbers of civilians, wounding scores and killing at least nine in Sacaba and (ultimately) eleven in Senkata. There have also been persistent and credible, if unverified, eyewitness reports of security forces removing the bodies of additional dead protesters from the scene at Senkata. An

observation mission of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights concluded that both events constituted massacres (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 2019).

The Sacaba and Senkata massacres were the deadliest episodes of state violence since 2003. As mentioned above, there were just two deadlier events during the Morales presidency: the 2006 inter-miner conflict at Huanuni and the 2008 El Porvenir massacre. The Áñez government's reversal of post-Gas War decisions to restrict the use of the military and deadly force in policing mass protest evidently contributed to these deadly events.

Overall, state security forces were responsible for at least 25, and as many as 28 deaths in the aftermath of Evo Morales' ouster. In ten days, the police and military killed more protesters than they had in the previous ten years (21). Deadly violence by civilian protesters claimed the lives of at least nine people, including two police officers (one of whom died in a motorcycle crash attempting to dodge protesters), during the entire crisis. November 2019 alone proved to be the bloodiest month in sixteen years, and the third deadliest month of the democratic era.

VI. Acknowledgements and Contact Information

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Correspondence about the contents of this paper should be directed to:
Carwil Bjork-James, Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, c.bjork-james@vanderbilt.edu.

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