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Democratisation and the radical-Left in Latin America:
Toward a post-neoliberal citizenship regime? Lessons
from Bolivia and Venezuela

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Acronyms and Abbreviations:

AD: *Acción Democrática* (Democratic Action)

AND: *Alianza Democrática Nacional* (National Democratic Alliance)

ALBA: *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)

ANC: *Asemblea Nacional Constituyente* (National Constituent Assembly)

APG: *Asemblea del Pueblo Guaraní* (Assembly of Guaraní People)

CAINCO: *Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz* (Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Service, and Tourism of Santa Cruz)

COD: *Central Obrero Departmental-La Paz* (Departmental Workers' Union of La Paz)

COR-El Alto: *Central Obrero Regional-El Alto* (Regional Workers Union of El Alto)

CIDOB: *La Confederación de Pueblos indígenas de Bolivia* (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia)

CNE: *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (National Electoral Council)

CNMCIQB-BS: *Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia-Bartolina Sisas* (National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia- Bartolina Sisa)

COB: *Central Obrera Boliviana* (Bolivian Workers Central)

CODELPA: *Comité de Defensa de la Paz* (Defence Committee for La Paz)

CONALCAM: *Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio* (National Coordination for Change)

CONALJUVE: *Confederación Nacional de Juntas Vecinales* (National Confederation of Neighbourhood Councils)

CONAMAQ: *Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu* (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu)

CONDEPA: *Conciencia de Patria* (Conscience of the Fatherland)

COPEI: *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (Christian Democratic Party)

COPRE: *Comisión para la Reforma del Estado* (Presidential Commission for Reform of the State)

CRBZ: *Corriente Revolucionario Bolívar y Zamora* (Bolívar and Zamora Revolutionary Current)

CSCB: *La Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia* (Syndicalist Confederation of International Communities Bolivia)

CSUTCB: *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos* (Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia)

CTU: *Comité de Tierra Urbana* (Urban Land Committee)

CTV: *Confederación de Trabajadores Venezolanos* (Confederation of Venezuelan Workers)

ECB: European Central Bank

FANB: *Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (The National Bolivarian Armed Forces)

FDTEULP: *Federación Departmental de Trabajadores de Educación Urbana La Paz*
(Departmental Federation of Urban Teachers, La Paz)

FEDECAMARAS: *Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela*
(The Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Production)

FEJUVE: *Federaciones de Juntas de Vecinos* (Federation of Neighbourhood Associations)

FNCEZ: *Frente Nacional Campesino Ezequiel Zamora* (Ezequiel Zamora National Campesino Front)

FNCSB: *Frente Nacional Comunal Simón Bolívar* (Simón Bolívar National Communal Front)

IMF: International Monetary Fund

ISI: Import Substitution Industrialisation

IPSP: *Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos* (Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples)

MAS (Bolivia): *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement toward Socialism)

MAS (Venezuela): *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement toward Socialism)

MBR-200: *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200* (Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement-200)

MERCOSUR: *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Common Market)

MIR: *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Left Movement)

MNR: *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement)

MTA: *Mesas Técnicas de Agua* (Water Roundtables)

MUD: *Mesa de Unidad Democrática* (Democratic Unity Roundtable)

MVR: *Movimiento V República* (Fifth Republic Movement)

NED: National Endowment for Democracy

NNCC: *Red Nacional de Comuneros and Comunerías* (National Network of Comuneros and Comunerías)

OAS: Organisation of American States

PDVSA: *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.* (Venezuelan Oil, Ltd.)

PJ: *Primero Justicia* (Justice First)

PODEMOS: *Poder Democrático y Social* (Democratic and Social Power)

LPP: *Ley de Participación Popular* (Popular Participation Law)

PSUV: *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (United Socialist Party of Venezuela)

Sol.Bo: *Soberanía y Libertad Bolivia* (Sovereignty and Liberty Bolivia)

TIOC: *Territorios Indígena Originario Campesinos Titulados* (Indigenous-Campesino Territories)

UN: *Unidad Nacional* (National Unity)

UNASUR: *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (Union of South American Nations)

UNT: *Un Nuevo Tiempo* (A New Era)

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

VP: *Voluntad Popular* (Popular Will)

WB: World Bank

YPFB: *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos* (Oil Reserves of Bolivia)

Summary:

The contemporary market model of democracy has led to the political and economic exclusion of popular sectors. Its adoption by both Left- and Right-parties has fostered a widening legitimacy crisis for democracy as it exists today. As such, the central concerns of this project are to identify how and why an alternative model that simultaneously boosts the political and social citizenship of popular sectors may emerge, develop, and sustain itself. A theoretical framework is advanced, detailing how the changing relative power of a Left-led state, the organised popular base, economic elites, and international (f)actors facilitate, shape and limit opportunities for democratisation. The framework is applied to the cases of Bolivia and Venezuela where radical-substantive democratisation experiments were undertaken since the turn of the millennium. The lesson from the two cases is that substantive democratisation that extends social and economic citizenship, thereby challenging entrenched elite interests, will foster an economic-elite destabilisation backlash. Progressive governments in both cases faced tensions between adhering to the popular mandate to boost political and economic inclusion on the one hand, and working within the confines of a national, regional and global environment dominated by the forces of capital on the other. A second and related tension thus emerged between strict adherence to the liberal democratic separation of state powers, and centralisation of power in the office of the executive to overcome elite barriers to the democratisation processes. While the presidents argued that centralised power would be used in a progressive manner to block elite destabilisation efforts while simultaneously opening new avenues for direct participation from below, over time the power imbalance between the political leadership and the organised base led to a fractured relationship between these two groups. In some

scenarios, the base faced co-optation if they worked too closely with the state, while in others, retaining an autonomous critical stance toward the government fostered state-led divide-and-conquer tactics of formerly powerful popular organisations. The emergence of a “dual power” of two lefts whereby the Left-government entered into confrontation with the popular base greatly weakened the democratisation process, allowing elite and transnational forces to take advantage.

Chapter 1: Crises of democracy: How did we get here and where to next?

1. Introduction:

At one level democracy is always in crisis...there has never been a period in the evolution of representative democracy when someone somewhere has not declared democracy to be in crisis. What is unusual in the current conjuncture is the degree of consensus underpinning the analysis. In the past those shrieking "fire!" tended to be in a minority – oddball figures, radicals, zealots. Today, it would be easier to assemble those who didn't think something fundamental was amiss than those who did (Tormey 2014: 2).

There is growing recognition, both in academic literature and popular commentary, across the political spectrum from Liberals, Conservatives to Marxists, that the contemporary dominant model of democracy "is in the doldrums" (Tormey 2014: 2). Evidence of the malaise of democracy can be seen in the high levels of citizen disaffection with politics (Campus and Andre 2014), the lack of political literacy amongst the citizenry (Rapeli 2013), low levels of satisfaction and trust in governments and politicians (Hay and Stoker 2009; Warren 2009) and declining political party membership (Whitley 2009). Indeed, since the 1970s, there has been increasing disillusionment with politicians, political parties and political institutions across the developed world (Pharr, Dalton, and Putnam 2000). It appears that this disaffection does not lead to apathy, but rather to increasingly critical evaluations of government (Warren 2002: 681). Since the 2008 global economic crash, trust and confidence in politicians and politics has diminished further and the democratic deficit – the gap between public aspirations for democracy and satisfaction with democracy (Norris 2011) – has widened. As Pateman (2012: 15) summarises, "in Western countries popular

confidence in old-established institutions is fading, voters are disaffected, trust in government is declining and a very wide gap has opened up between citizens and governments and political elites more generally”.

This thesis aims to identify what underlies this malaise, as well as how to respond to it. I suggest that at the root of this malaise is weak citizenship in its civil, political and social forms (Marshall 1950). Indeed, I suggest that declining citizenship quality is both a cause and consequence of this democratic crisis, and that this faltering citizenship is directly related to the advancement of “market democracy” (Kohl 2006) – that is, an extremely thin model of liberal democracy guided by neoliberal principles.

In the “developed” world, neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatisation, austerity, and corporate trade have led to living standards declining precipitously as citizens “have lost their jobs. They have lost their pensions. They have lost much of the safety net that used to make their losses less frightening” (Klein 2016). At the same time, politics has become the “preserve of a professional office-seeking class” (Wright 2016), while the increasing power of non-elected actors such as transnational corporations, international financial institutions, central banks, or regulatory bodies (Crouch 2004; Vibert 2007) and the development of complex governance arrangements that evade accountability and transparency (Runciman 2013 as noted in Ecran and Gagnon 2014: 1) have left the average citizen in a weakened position to defend their well-being.

In an era of footloose capital and migration and where citizens are left defenceless against the ravages of the free market, the utter failure on the part of ostensibly Left parties to offer any sort of alternative to this neoliberal doctrine (Klein 2016) have raised concerns in the “advanced” West. The lack of free choice in the political market due to policy

convergence around the tenets of neoliberalism and the sense that politicians are “there only for the taking” allows the far-right to make gains by appealing to the sense of frustration of vulnerable citizens (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 598). If this moment of deep discontent is to be used constructively, then we must begin to engage seriously in efforts to move beyond market democracy.

Responding to the above concerns, this study seeks to address what such an alternative model of democracy might look like, how it might emerge, and what would shape its development and sustainability. Given that democracy is an essentially contested concept (Collier et al. 2006: 212), it is important to begin by identifying what the term implies in this project. The democratisation literature identifies hundreds of democracies “with adjectives” (Collier and Levitsky 1997: 2), for example minimal, electoral, maximal, delegative, participatory, and so forth. This project, following Beetham (1992: 40), posits that in reality there should only be one conception of democracy, that is, “a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which people exercise control”. Disputes and differing adjectives placed in front of democracy are really about *how much* democracy is desirable or practicable (Ibid). As such democracy may be understood as existing on a continuum of “how much democracy exists in reality”, with thin market-liberal understandings at one extreme, and thicker participatory, substantive understandings at the other. The key variable along the democracy continuum is the quality of citizenship in its civil, political, and social forms. Democratisation, then, entails moving toward the substantive, participative end of the spectrum, while de-democratisation signifies a move toward the market-liberal end of the continuum. While to date democratisation theory has tended to adopt a normative bias toward processes in the the West, given the crisis of

democracy facing the “developed” democracies today, this thesis seeks to engage in a discussion of what can be learned from the “developing” democracies of Latin America and their efforts to move toward the participative-substantive end of the democracy scale.

The chapter proceeds by firstly discussing the concept of citizenship. Next, to comprehend how the “developed” democracies have reached the current malaise and to take lessons from past mistakes and successes, I trace the development of democracy through its liberal and then social democratic stages, before describing the emergence of market democracy. By comprehending the issues in our current model we can then begin to evaluate alternatives that would boost citizenship quality. As such, “thick” conceptions of democracy – substantive, participative, and deliberative – are evaluated. The chapter then calls for a break from the Euro- and US-centric focus of democratisation theory, suggesting instead that the so-called developed democracies should look to the recent experiments in Left-led Latin America. Similar to the current moment in the “developed” democracies, the application of market democracy in Latin America fostered a citizenship crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. However, around the turn of the millennium, the region witnessed the emergence of experiments that have sought to challenge market democracy and develop a “post-neoliberal” model that boosts citizenship. As such, the chapter concludes with an evaluation of Latin American democratisation so as to draw lessons for democratic theory in general regarding how to move beyond the confines of market democracy, and thereby overcome the crisis of democracy. However, it is important to highlight that the processes have varied greatly across distinct cases in Latin America, ranging from moderate to more radical processes. Indeed, there is also variation within the cases found within the more radical spectrum of Latin American democratisation experiments, with some processes led

from above by vanguardist-type leaders, while others have emerged from, and been influenced by, popular forces from below. As such, the chapter finishes with a call for the development of a theoretical framework capable of accounting for such variations and explaining their impacts on democratisation processes.

2. Conceptions of Citizenship:

Grugel and Bishop (2014: 10) argue that “the institutions of governments and the state more broadly can only be fully democratic when they enjoy popular legitimacy and represent the political community, meaning that it is difficult to separate democratic government from the concept of citizenship”. Citizenship has different interpretations, but the most accepted, although not uncontested, conception is that of TH Marshall (1950). Marshall (Ibid.: 148) outlines three elements of citizenship; civil, political, and social. The civil element is composed of “the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice” (Ibid.). The institutions most closely associated with civil rights are the courts of justice. The political element of citizenship implies the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the member of such a body. The institutions associated with political citizenship are parliament and councils of local government. By the social element, Marshall means “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (Ibid.: 149). The educational system and social services are the institutions most closely associated with the social element. As Marshall highlights, there is no universal guiding principle that determines the

level of rights and duties “but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed” (Ibid.: 150). Marshall was a liberal thinker who did not argue for the elimination of inequalities, but rather for a reduction in the risks associated with capitalism for the poorest citizens via welfare provision (Jones and Gaventa 2002: 2). Marshall’s central analytical structure of civil, political and social citizenship remains a central reference for most discussions on the subject, and here I adopt it as a means to explore competing conceptions of what citizenship should entail.

The liberal emphasis on individual rights, equality, and due process of law, communitarian ideas of belonging, and the civic republican focus on processes of deliberation, collective action and responsibility have been the focus of much of contemporary discussions on citizenship (for example Mouffe 1992; Isin and Wood 1999; Heater 1999). Central to these discussions “is the need to conceptualise citizenship as both a status, which accords a range of rights and obligations *and* an active practice” (Jones and Gaventa 2002: 5). As Lister (1997:41) argues, “to be a citizen in the legal and sociological sense means to enjoy the rights of citizenship necessary for agency and social and political participation. To act as a citizen involves fulfilling the potential of that status”. Citizenship, if understood as requiring participation to be effective, can therefore be understood as “the direct intervention of citizens in public activities, and the accountability of the state and other responsible institutions to citizens” (Jones and Gaventa 2002: 7).

If participation is considered a key component of citizenship, the spaces of participation – that is the physical and social arenas where participation takes place – require analysis. Cornwall and Gaventa (2001:5) highlight that discussions must focus on

how to extend the traditional places and mechanisms for citizen participation, such as the ballot box, toward developing institutions and processes that allow for more active and inclusive participation. Cornwall and Gaventa (2001: 8) call for new spaces and strategies to construct citizen participation, “ones in which participation shifts from the ‘users and choosers’ approach to one concerned with how citizens ‘make and shape’ policies which affect their lives”.

This brief discussion suggests that citizenship is not an uncontested term, and that in fact the quality of actually existing citizenship is dependent on the underlying dominant model of democracy. Therefore, in order to contextualise the emergence and development of the contemporary crisis of democracy, as well as to identify what may be required to overcome it, it is necessary to evaluate the ideological groundings and the citizenship regimes of the various democratic models hegemonic during the lead up to the current conjuncture. As such, a brief review of liberal and social democracy followed by neoliberal-influenced models of democracy is offered.

3. “Thin” conceptions of Democracy:

3.1 *Liberal democracy:*

Writing in the 1940s, and fearing that “excessive” participation of the *demos* would result in another Bolshevik revolution or the mass rallies that heralded the rise of Nazi Germany (Held 2006: 142), Joseph Schumpeter advocated a minimalist conception of democracy. For Schumpeter (1942), democracy meant a *method*, that is, an institutional arrangement “for arriving at political – legislative and administrative – decisions by vesting in certain individuals the power to decide on all matters as a consequence of their successful pursuit of the people’s vote” (Held 2006: 142). Schumpeterian democracy, heavily influenced by

Weber, reduces politics to an elite process, “whereby democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people actually rule in any obvious sense of the term ‘people’ and ‘rule’.

Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them” (Schumpeter 1976: 270). This elitism sought to “narrow the scope of political participation” and advanced the idea that to “make democratic decision-making rational” required limiting it to elites, with the role of the masses limited to choosing between those elites (Avritzer 2002: 15).

Broadly following the minimalist, Schumpeterian tradition, pluralist theorists such as Robert Dahl (1973) accept that the distinguishing feature between democracies and non-democracies are the methods in which political leaders are selected (Nef and Reiter 2009: 34; Held 2006: 158). Dahl suggested using the term “polyarchy” to differentiate between actually existing democracies and democracy as a political ideal since he recognised that there were conditions for democracy which many “democracies” did not actually meet (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 29). Polyarchies are premised on a combination of elected government and civil liberties, with the aim being to ensure access to the political system for various groups in society (Ibid.), which Dahl (1989) acknowledges requires a minimum level of substantive equality. The core institutions are the election of government officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, the right of all citizens to run for public office, freedom of expression, access to information from sources other than official sources, and associational autonomy with the right to form independent organisations including political parties and interest groups (Dahl 1989: 221). The state’s role in polyarchy is thus to facilitate the trade-off and appeasement of demands of relatively small groups of elites (Held 2006: 161). While institutions matter in polyarchies, their functioning depends on an unspoken

“consensus on the rules of procedure; consensus on the range of policy options; and consensus on the legitimate scope of political activity” (Held 1996: 207). As Held (2006: 162) notes, pluralists believe that “‘democracy’ does not seem to require a high level of active involvement from all citizens” and “can work quite well without it”. Dahl’s concept of polyarchy “gradually became the basis for describing the empirical characteristics of liberal democracy since the 1970s” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 29).

3.2 *Social democracy:*

While liberal democracy centred on elected governments and civil liberties, a more substantive model, social democracy, emerged from discussion amongst the Left regarding the challenges facing the socialist movement in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Berman 2010: 24). Political theorist and historian Eduard Bernstein’s call for an evolutionary, democratic struggle to build socialism laid the groundwork for social democracy (Berman 2014: 8). Bernstein argued that the capitalist system had become far more flexible since Marx and Engel’s time (Berman 2010: 25). As such, “instead of waiting until capitalism collapsed for socialism to emerge...he favoured trying to actively reform the existing system” (Berman 2014: 9) so as to address concrete social needs (Berman 2010: 25).

Following World War 1, there was a shift amongst many on the Left who began to reject the “twin pillars of orthodox Marxism – class struggle and historical materialism” and instead “openly embrace their antithesis – cross-class cooperation and the primacy of politics” (Berman 2014: 10). The focus on class struggle “suffered a critical blow with the outbreak of the war. Socialist parties across the continent abandoned their suspicion of bourgeois parties and institutions and threw their support behind the states they had

hitherto pledged to destroy” (Ibid.). Furthermore, in the post-war era the democratic wave that spread across much of Europe “confronted socialists with unprecedented opportunities for participation in bourgeois governments. Given a chance to help form or even lead democratic administrations, many were forced to recognize the uncomfortable truth that workers alone could never deliver an electoral majority and that cooperation with non-proletarians was the price of political power” (Ibid.). In addition, the war highlighted the power of nationalism to mobilise immense numbers of people, and with populist right-wing movements tapping into such sentiments “many socialists worried that clinging to orthodox Marxism’s emphasis on class conflict and proletarian exclusivity would prevent them from responding to the needs of ordinary citizens and thus cause them to lose ground to competitors” (Ibid).

As Berman (2014: 11) delineates, historical materialism was “dealt a critical blow by the war and its aftermath. The pivotal position occupied by socialist parties in many newly democratized countries after the Great War made it increasingly difficult to avoid the question of how political power could contribute to socialist transformation, and the subsequent onset of the Great Depression made submission to economic forces tantamount to political suicide”. With millions of disaffected people ready to be “claimed by any political movement promising to tame markets” orthodox Marxism’s emphasis on letting “economic forces be the drivers of history meant that here too it ceded ground to activist groups on the right” (Ibid.).

In this scenario, budding social democrats proposed that the state could and should be used to tame the capitalist system, thereby championing a “real ‘third’ way between classic liberalism and Soviet communism, based on a belief that political forces could triumph over economic ones” (Berman 2010: 26). As such, attention centred on developing a “viable

policy agenda based on cross-class appeals and a ‘people’s party’ approach together with a commitment to using the state to control markets” (Berman 2014: 14). After 1945, the “state became generally understood to be the guardian of society rather than the economy” with social imperatives often trumping economic ones as Keynesianism and the welfare state come to dominate in Western Europe (Berman 2014: 16). Both of these were significant because they rejected the view that markets operated best when left unhindered, and instead called for state intervention in economic affairs (Berman 2014: 17).

Following World War II, Europeans understood that social divisions and laissez-faire capitalism had the potential to lead to political disaster if left unattended, and as a result, social democratic policies were adopted not only by main-stream Left parties, but centre-right ones too (Berman 2010: 27). On these foundations, democracy was consolidated and prosperity built (Ibid.). However, while social democratic policies were clearly effective, the very success of the post-war order led many leftists to forget that reforms, while important, were only stepping stones toward “taming and domesticating the capitalist beast” (Berman 2010: 27).

In the 1990s, a new wave of “Third Way”¹ thinkers and leaders emerged. Anthony Giddens, much like former British Labour Party leader Tony Blair, identified the 1990s Third Way as “modernised social democracy” (Giddens 1998, 1999). Such a view was based on the New Progressivism - adopted by Bill Clinton - which depicted the Third Way as an alternative to the “liberal impulse to defend the bureaucratic status quo and the conservative bid to simply dismantle government” (Progressive Foundation 1996). The core values of this Third Way are “equal opportunity, mutual responsibility, and self-governing citizens and communities” (Progressive Foundation 1996:27; see also Stuart White’s 1998 discussion of

¹ It is important to emphasise that the 1990s “Third Way” thinkers differed substantially in their understandings of social democracy from the third way thinking of the interwar years.

the Third Way). As Pierson notes (2001: 128-130), the Third Way of the 1990s “appears to owe little to what has passed” for earlier social democratic thought and has been attacked by many who see it as a mask to hide the fact that the new politics of the centre-left will mean a continuation of neoliberalism (which is discussed in the next section), and that the advocacy of “progressive competitiveness” offers little more than a “kinder road to hell”.

Berman (2010: 27) states that over the final decades of the twentieth century, the Left’s lack of deep thinking on long-term strategies to achieve substantial change allowed the Right to take the mantle of ideological dominance. In the period before the 1970s, a growing neoliberal movement “had been organizing and thinking carefully about what it viewed as the drawbacks of the post-war order. When a crisis emerged, therefore, this movement had at the ready a powerful explanation of the West’s problems and a ready-made set of solutions for them” (Ibid.). It is to this neoliberal movement that I now turn.

3.3 The origins of neoliberal thought:

Democracy was said to face a crisis in the 1970s, one that arose from “an internal change to the conventional practices of democracy occurring within the state itself” (Ecran and Gagnon 2014: 7). Habermas (1975) stated that a crisis of late-capitalism was at the root of the 1970s crisis of democracy; as the state’s administrative political apparatus struggled to deal with the economic crisis of capitalism, there was a withdrawal of people and their support (via popular exit or protest) for core democratic institutions such as parties, parliaments and governments (Merkel 2015). Habermas (1975) describes this situation where citizens do not feel represented by the core institutions of democracy as a legitimacy crisis.

From a more conservative position, Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki (1975) wrote a highly influential report, *The Crisis of Democracy*, for the Trilateral Commission - a “multinational organisation founded by bankers, entrepreneurs, and private citizens in 1973 to foster cooperation between international states” (Merkel 2015). The report begins with a question: “Is political democracy, as it exists today, a viable form of government?” (Crozier et al. 1975: 2). Unlike Habermas (1975) who spoke of an exogenously created crisis of democracy, Crozier et al. (1975) describe an endogenously created crisis (particularly in the US, Western Europe, and Japan). They state that democracy itself had created its own crisis by fostering an overload of demands for increased participation, higher social security payments and a wider social security net, and better economic welfare. Citizens were said to be demanding “too much democracy” than the state could deliver, while the erosion of authority and governability in contemporary societies was due to “over-participation”. As such the report states that the “crisis” of democracy was a result of “the over-permissiveness of democracy itself” (Merkel 2015).

As Nef and Reiter (2009: 80) discuss, the liberal-democratic model that had served the wealthy classes for over a century was no longer fit for purpose; a new model of “conflict management, legitimation and enforcement, and above all elite accumulation appeared necessary”. Crozier et al.’s (1975) report presented the challenge of how to reconcile democratic politics (built on the premise of equality), with market economics (which is centred on the opposite: unrestricted private accumulation, which leads to monopoly) (Nef and Reiter 2009: 138). In order to liberate the democratic state and respond to the financial crisis of the times, Crozier et al. (1975) ultimately called for a move away from Keynesianism, and a move toward van Hayek’s and Friedman’s neoliberal economics (Merkel 2015).

Emerging from a critique of the social democratic model that developed in the post-war period, and with ideological origins in the liberal Weber-Schumpeter-Dahl model of democracy (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 598), neoliberalism is a political doctrine that reinforces a minimalist vision of the public sphere and democracy (della Porta 2013). Neoliberals, also known as the New Right, believe that both political and economic life should be a matter of individual freedom and initiative, where free market society with a minimal state is the goal (see Hayek 1960, 1976; Nozick 1974). Nozick (1974: 325), building on the work of Locke and Mill, argues that the only justifiable political institutions are those that promote the maintenance of individual rights, whereby rights signify legitimate spheres of action for an individual that may not be crossed “without another’s consent”. Nozick (1974) argues for a minimal state, as a more extensive state would “violate the rights of individuals” by forcing them to do certain things (Held 2006: 202). The state’s role according to Nozick is to act as a “protective agency” against force, theft, fraud, and violation of contracts (Held 2006: 203).

Another prominent New Right theorist and thinker, Friedrich Hayek (1978: 152-62) saw fundamental issues with “mass democracies” regarding the propensity for arbitrary and oppressive majority rule, and the progressive replacement of the rule of the majority by the rule of its agents (Held 2006: 203). Hayek used these two concerns to appeal for the restoration of a liberal order, what Held calls “legal democracy” (Ibid.). Hayek believes that the *demos* must be constrained in its actions by general rules as there can be no guarantee that what it demands will be good and wise (Ibid.). For Hayek, “liberalism is a doctrine about what the law ought to be, democracy a doctrine about the manner of determining what the law ought to be” (1960: 103). The New Right seek to advance “liberalism” over “democracy”

by limiting the democratic use of state power (Held 2006: 201). As long as there are rules to constrain the actions of majorities and governments, the individual is said to be free from coercive power, but without such constraints, democracy could be in fundamental conflict with liberty (Ibid.: 204).

3.4 Neoliberalism and Liberal Democracy: Market Democracy:

The above description of the New Right's conceptions of democracy, the state, and the citizen in many ways resembles that of earlier liberal thinkers Schumpeter and Dahl. However, "behind these rhetorics there is another layer of discourse facilitating the dismantling of liberal democratic institutions and practices" (Brown 2003: 52); a neoliberal rationality, that, "while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; it involves extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action, even as the market itself remains a distinctive player" (Ibid.: 40). The subjugation of liberal democracy to the neoliberal rational has fostered a "market democracy" (Kohl 2006: 304) in which the state's role is to guarantee the protection of the interests of transnational capital, irrespective of whether such interests run contrary to those of domestic citizens. Market democracy ideology "eviscerates nonmarket morality and thus erodes the root of democracy in principle at the same time that it raises the status of profit and expediency as the criteria for policy making" (Brown 2003: 52). A corollary to this market rationality has been the weakening of the nation state. These two features of neoliberalism have a drastic effect on the quality of democracy by narrowing what is considered the concern of the political realm, eroding citizenship rights, and weakening popular participation in decision-making.

Democracy in the neoliberal era has become a technocratic affair (Rancière 2006). For example, Ayers and Saad Filho (2015: 598) have described the replacement of elected officials by non-party technocrats to respond to the financial global crisis as “coups d’état under a democratic veneer” (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 598), which raise concerns “about the meaning and vitality of political democracy under neoliberalism” (Ibid.). Meanwhile, political parties today comprise “a self-reproducing inner elite, remote from its mass movement, but nested squarely within a number of corporations, which will in turn fund the opinion polling, policy-advice and vote-gathering services” (Crouch 2004: 74) in exchange for political influence (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 604). As Ayers and Saad-Filho (2015: 604) highlight,

Individuals are regularly invited to make a token visit to the polling booths, where they consume the freedom to vote by registering their preferences in much the same way as they express their identities by choosing soft drinks, clothes, schools and hospitals. Meanwhile, the substantive choices about the nature of social provision, the structure of employment and the distribution of income are made elsewhere.

Market democracy “explicitly isolates the political from the socioeconomic sphere and restricts democracy to the political sphere. And even then, it limits democratic participation to voting in elections” (Robinson, 2006: 100).

At the heart of the neoliberal project is, firstly, the creation of a state stripped of the “excessive” involvement both in the economy and in the provision of opportunities (Held 2006: 201). Secondly, neoliberalism fosters the commodification of society, that is the buying and selling in the marketplace, of elements previously conceived of as rights such as education, health, housing, welfare, and water (Sader 2011: 132). The extension of

economic rationality to formerly non-economic spheres and institutions prescribes the citizen-subject of a neoliberal order (Brown 2003: 42). Neoliberalism equates moral responsibility with rational action, whereby the “the rationally calculating individual bears full responsibility for the consequences of his or her action no matter how severe the constraints on this action—for example, lack of skills, education, and child care in a period of high unemployment and limited welfare benefits” (Ibid.). As a consequence, “the neoliberal citizen is one who strategises for her- or himself among various social, political, and economic options, not one who strives with others to alter or organise these options” (Ibid.: 43). Rather than the state guaranteeing quality citizenship, “subjects” are treated as individual entrepreneurs in every aspect of life, responsible for their own well-being, and citizenship is reduced to success in this entrepreneurship (Lemke 2001: 201).

Neoliberalism produces “negative individualism” (Castel 2003) whereby “individuals are urged to act as independent contractors who maximise their efficiency while simultaneously deprived of the social conditions which make it possible for subjects to act in an autonomous manner or follow the rules of utilitarian rationality” (Balibar 2008: 531). When social rights or welfare are dismantled to the point of “social insecurity”, many vulnerable members of society “find themselves in a double bind situation where they are at the same time interpellated as political subjects and internally excluded from the possibility of active political participation” (Ibid.: 536). Political rights degenerate and the substance of citizenship, “particularly the reciprocal relationship between obligations for the governed and accountability of the governing, becomes virtual, if not simply denied” (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the ideology of self-responsibility “deprives the citizens of their collective capacities” to influence political decisions (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 608). This

focus on creating individual entrepreneurs limits the possibility of social unrest transforming the social order because any prospective social issue is interpreted as a private concern (Bauman 1991: 189). Neoliberalism should thus be understood as both a cause and consequence of “the fragmentation and weakening of popular collective actors who are integral to any radical democratic alternative” (Roberts 1998: 12). While fragmentation of collective actors such as unions weakens the possibility of participation, so too does the social exclusion that neoliberalism fosters. As Pearce (2004: 485) states, “social exclusions and discriminations impede the participation that is needed to generate the effective demand for change in the political arena that would then address those exclusions and discriminations”.

The weakening of the state and the marketisation of society is not simply the result of domestic decision-making by national governments or conservative elites. Globalisation based on market democracy has produced a shift in power from the nation state to international governmental organisations (IGOs) (della Porta 2013: 24) that has drastically weakened the ability of nation states to respond to their citizens’ demands. The international financial institutions (IFIs) have enforced structural adjustment on governments applying for financial aid. IMF loans have been linked to country promises to apply liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and fiscal reform (O’Brian, Goetz, Scholte, and Williams 2000: 162). Since the late 1970s, the WB has moved from financing development projects to supporting structural adjustment in an attempt to reorganise domestic economies. By the end of the 1990s, half of the world’s population, and over two-thirds of its countries were subject to the influence of these two Washington-based institutions (Pieper and Taylor 1998; della Porta 2013: 27). Meanwhile, monetarist economic policies have been taken out of public debate, and are enshrined in binding supranational

treaties, while the extent of policy is confined within “acceptable” limits set by transnational trading agreements, central banking mechanisms and bureaucratic expertise (Nef and Reiter 2009: 139). As Ayers and Saad-Filho (2015: 606) summarise, “neoliberalism has circumscribed political democracy through the incremental exclusion of key economic matters from legitimate debate and the concentration of worldwide policy-making capacity in Wall Street and Washington, DC, leaving only matters of relatively minor importance open for debate”.

3.5 *Market democracy and the “crisis of too little democracy”:*

The depoliticisation of politics resulting from the adoption of market democracy, and its embrace by political parties on both the Right and the Left, has meant that democracy has become “devalued” as a political currency (Munck 2005: 60). In fact, this thesis suggests that the neoliberal response to the 1970s “crisis of *too much* democracy” has in fact engendered a contemporary crisis of *too little* democracy. The neoliberal drive to allow the market subsume responsibilities previously held by the state has had a drastic impact on the quality of democracy by eroding what is today considered the concern of politics, by commodifying citizenship, and by blocking the likelihood of popular influence over decision-making. Issues of poverty and inequality are withdrawn from the public (political) arena, and are considered as issues of technical or philanthropic management, where the aim is simply to create conditions for survival (Dagnino 2005: 19). Citizenship has been stripped to its bare bones whereby the provision of social and economic inclusion are no longer considered to be duties of the state, while the utter lack of space for real political participation and the capitulation of contestatory Left-wing parties to neoliberal rationality has left the popular sectors unprotected against the rapacious “free” market. Ultimately the outcome of this

crisis of citizenship is a sense of futility and the belief amongst popular sectors that democracy and the political system is a game that is fixed from above to support the agendas of the economic and political elite.

The crisis of democracy and the very “triumph” of neoliberalism therefore demands the need for collective action against it (Ayers and Saad-Filho 2015: 608). The Left must challenge the market model of democracy with an alternative vision, “one that rejects *homo oeconomicus* as the norm of the human *and* rejects this norm’s correlative formations of economy, society, state, and (non)morality” (Brown 2003: 59). As such, a discussion of “thick” models of democracy is now offered.

4. “Thick” Conceptions of Democracy:

Responding to Brown’s (2003: 59) calls to challenge neoliberalism with an alternative vision, it is pertinent to evaluate alternative models of democracy that foster “thick” citizenship in its civil, political and social forms. While liberals see democracy as a set of rules, procedures and institutions, “thick theorists” on the other hand see democracy both as a process that must be continually reproduced, a “way of regulating power relations in such a way as to maximise the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions which affect society” (Kaldor and Vejvoda 1997: 67). Such conceptions focus on the redistribution of power, and, by implication, understands democratisation as power redistribution (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 9). As Balibar (2008: 526) notes, “democracy, understood in a radical manner, is *not the name of a political regime* but only the name of a process which we could call tautologically *the democratisation of democracy itself*”. As such, democracy should be understood as the

name of a struggle, or collection of struggles, for the democratisation of democracy, whereby the goal is the preservation of, or advancement of, rights (Ibid.).

4.1 Substantive, Participatory, and Deliberative Democracy:

Fung and Wright (2003: 5) state that democracy should facilitate the active involvement of the citizenry, reach political consensus through dialogue, devise and implement public policies that foster a productive economy and a healthy society, and ensure that all citizens benefit from the nation's wealth. Such ideals are held by scholars coming from the participatory school of democracy such as Carole Pateman (1970) and C. B. Macpherson (1977). These theorists "see the essence of democracy in a society that nurtures concern for collective problems and in a knowledgeable citizenry capable of self-development and carrying a sense of political efficacy" (Monaghan 2012: 286). Pateman (1985: 71) questions the assumptions of liberal theory that individuals are "free and equal". For Macpherson (1977) issues of unequal power relations between groups and individuals must be accounted for in any analysis of democracy. Pateman (1985: 173) also questions the liberal conception of a separation between civil society and the state. Like many neo-Marxists, she does not believe that the state is an impartial, independent power; rather it is seen to be inescapably locked into the maintenance and reproduction of inequalities². If the state is neither separate nor impartial with respect to society, then participatory theorists believe that citizens will not be treated as free and equal (Held 2006: 210). As such, elections are seen as insufficient mechanisms to ensure the accountability of political elites.

Participatory theorists thus call for the democratisation of the state "by making parliament, state bureaucracies, and political parties more open and accountable, while

² For more detailed discussion of the class bias of the state, see the works of Miliband (1969) and Poulantzas (1969).

new forms of struggle at the local level must ensure that society, as well as the state, is subject to procedures which ensure accountability” (Held 2006: 211). While the problems of coordination of large-scale communities are considerable, Macpherson (1977) argued for transformation based upon a combination of competitive parties and organisations of direct democracy. He acknowledges that there will always be varying interests around which parties will develop, and thus only inter-party competition guarantees a minimum responsiveness of government to people at all levels below (Held 2006: 211). However, the party system should be reorganised on less hierarchical principles where political elites become more responsible to the personnel of the organisation they represent.

A combination of the central institutions of liberal democracy – competitive parties, political representatives, and periodic elections – are unavoidable elements of participatory democracy. A central concern however, is how institutions of representative democracy and participatory democracy should be combined. Critical theory provides the “public sphere” as a response. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Habermas describes the public sphere as, first of all, “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox 1974: 49). Public opinion is understood to refer to “the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally -and, in periodic elections, formally as well- practices vis-d-vis the ruling structure organised in the form of a state” (Ibid.). In this space, “individuals interact with one another, debate the actions taken by the political authorities, argue about the moral acceptability of private relations of domination, and make claims against the state” (Avritzer 2002: 40). The Habermasian idea of the public sphere also seeks to broaden the public domain, and politicise new issues by allowing previously excluded discussions back onto the agenda (Avritzer 2002: 41). Thus, the public sphere should be egalitarian not only

because it allows for free participation, but also because it allows new issues to enter the political debate (Benhabib 1992; Avritzer 2002: 41).

Ideally, the public sphere would allow for all citizens who could be affected by a policy to have a right to deliberate on it (Benhabib, 1996; Chambers, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Freeman, 2000; Young, 1999). As Bonham (1996: 6) states, “a legitimate political system should foster deliberation and, thus, increase the chances of arriving at correct (or valid, fair or true) decisions”. Offe and Preus (1991: 167) concur, arguing that the central challenge for democracy today surrounds “the introduction of procedures that put a premium upon the formulation of carefully considered, consistent, situationally abstract, socially validated and justifiable preferences”. As Manin expounds, “it is ... necessary to alter radically the perspective common to liberal theories and democratic thought: the source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself” (1987: 351ff).

While deliberation in a public sphere represents a highly democratic method of reaching a decision, the public sphere, in the Habermasian sense, faces a serious critique. Habermas suggests that the public sphere will influence the political system via a transfer of influence, via public opinion (1995: 371). When public opinion is communicated to the political system, parliamentary debates, and thus law-making, are said to be influenced (Ibid.). Clearly then, Habermas does not believe that the role of the public sphere is to produce decisions, but rather to simply influence administrative decisions (Avritzer 2002: 49). As such, power holders in the political sphere may refuse to implement this public consensus and accept legitimacy problems; thus, “Habermasian theory falls short of providing an alternative way

of reconnecting reason and will because, regardless of the rationality of the results of public debate, it is left to power-holders to decide whether to incorporate them into policy” (Ibid.).

The sharp division between civil society and the state in the Habermasian conception of the public sphere eventuates in “public opinion” that is simply a “critical commentary on authorised decision-making that transpires elsewhere” (Fraser 1990: 75). Separating civil-society from the state in such a manner fosters “weak publics” whose “deliberative practice consists exclusively in opinion-formation and does not also encompass decision-making” (Ibid.). Deliberation in the public sphere should therefore be tied to a framework that “both facilitates public discussion among equal citizens by providing favourable conditions for expression, association and discussion, and ties the authorisation to exercise public power— and the exercise itself— to such a discussion by establishing a framework ensuring the responsiveness and the accountability of political power to it” (Cohen and Sabel 1997: 320).

Discussing the Brazilian efforts to foster participatory budgeting (which entails elements of direct, participatory and deliberative concepts of democratic engagement), de Sousa Santos (2010: 199) states that “our concrete experience tells us that participatory forms of democracy advance when the relationship between social movement and progressive party forms a virtuous circle”. De Sousa Santos continues, noting that while demands for increased voice in decision-making certainly originated from below in Brazil, without the support of the progressive Workers Party such demands would likely have gone unheard. An ideologically committed political leadership coupled with an active civil society committed to defending participatory democracy is thus crucial (Fung 2011). Both conditions must exist, for

If state imperatives and defining movement interests cannot be reconciled, then entry into the state means co-optation and being bought off cheaply, a poor exchange for the loss of democratic vitality of the public sphere. If the two can be reconciled, entry into the state is a much better bargain, from the point of view of democracy as a whole as well as the instrumental interests of the actors involved (Dryzek 2000: 5).

Participatory, deliberative democracy faces several challenges. Firstly, public deliberation faces an issue of how to “scale up”; given that decisions taken at the national level have a direct consequence on the well-being of citizens, public deliberation must address not only local issues, but also regional and national concerns (Hartz-Karp and Briand 2009: 134). There may be a trade-off here, however, as “deliberation depends on participants with sufficient knowledge and interest about the substantive issues under consideration” (Cohen and Fung 2004: 27). Relatedly, Sartori (1987) suggests that if participation means taking part in person in deliberating public policy, it must be limited to small groups with a maximum size of a few thousand. Przerwowski (2010) concurs as he believes that equality and effectiveness are incompatible, and as such participatory democracy is not feasible at the national scale.

Furthermore, deliberative-participative models must ensure that there is no manipulation in the democratic process. Power rooted in money, prestige, tradition or violence can distort democratic dialogue (Nef and Reiter 2009: 53). There is also an issue surrounding the ability of some interest groups to organise and dominate other groups due to holding better resources, leading to the advancement of one group’s interests over others (Ibid.). If people have no real power to influence decisions, they will desist from participating. Such issues of power must therefore be managed if participatory and

deliberative conceptions are to boost the quality of democracy. Citizens therefore require social resources as well as political resources and procedural and institutional opportunities to affect policy (Johnson 2009: 680).

Roberts (1998) suggests that robust democratisation involves two components; a deepening and an extending. The logic of deepening democracy refers to the participatory-deliberative theories outlined above and involves “intensifying popular sovereignty in the political sphere, that is, moving from hierarchical forms of elitist or bureaucratic control to forms of popular self-determination by means of more direct participation in the decision making process or more effective mechanisms for holding elected representatives and public officials accountable to their constituents” (Roberts 1998: 30). Extending democracy meanwhile “pertains to the scope or domain of the social units and collective issues to which democratic norms are applied; that is, it refers to efforts to extend the democratic norms and procedures of collective self-determination from the formal sphere of state institutions to new spheres of social and economic relationships” (Ibid.). Extending democracy is important because “social and economic inequality can easily be translated into concentrations of power in the political sphere that skew the articulation of popular interests and block the exercise of popular sovereignty” (Ibid.: 29). Such a perspective suggests that “social equity is not a substantive outcome that is external to the functioning of democratic procedures but a prerequisite for equal access and unbiased democratic contestation and thus a vital indicator of procedural fairness” (Ibid.: 30). This socialist understanding therefore envisions democracy as a transformative project that addresses the social and economic inequalities of society (Smilde n.d.). Figure 1 “represent the space in which democratic expansion or contraction occurs in both political and socioeconomic domains” (Roberts 1998: 30).

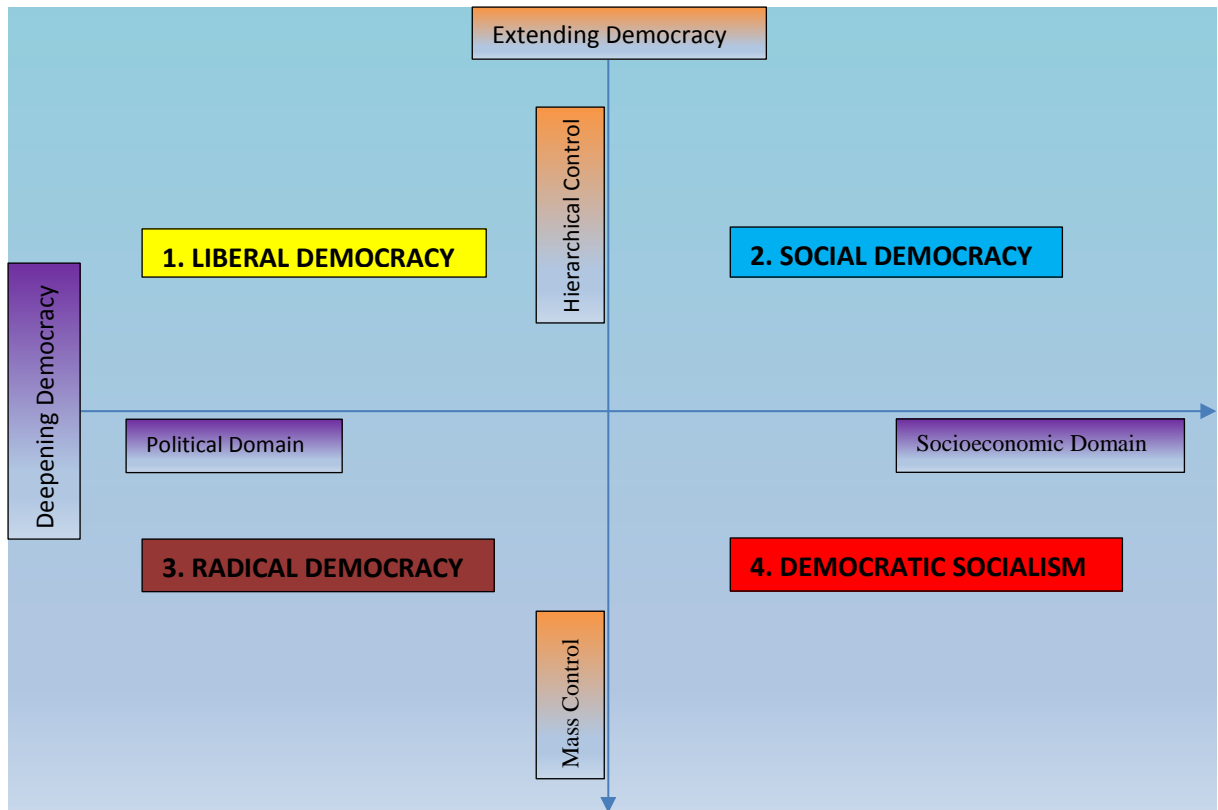


Figure 1: A model for deepening and extending democracy: Taken from Roberts (1998: 31)

5. Removing the Blinkers: Lessons from “developing” democracies:

To date, democratic models and theories on how to democratise have principally emanated from the West. However, given the contemporary crisis of, and the hegemonic status of, market democracy in the “developed” world, it is necessary to move beyond the Euro- and US-centric tendencies evident in much of the academic theorizing, and open a debate regarding what the “developed” can learn from the “developing” world.

Contemporary Latin America may offer some light on how to respond to the democratic crisis. Much like the so-called “developed” democracies today, Latin America experienced a crisis of market democracy in the 1980s and 1990s. In both cases, the application of neoliberal economic policies combined with an elite-led, thin, liberal model of democracy led to state retrenchment and a marketisation of society. Neoliberal doctrine became

hegemonic across the political spectrum – that is, both Right and erstwhile Left parties accepted the underlying superiority of the market vis-à-vis the state for making decisions. Just as in the “developed” democracies today, in Latin America there was a common perception that democracy had been hijacked by unelected actors such as the IMF, World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation (Cannon 2009: 157). The political agenda in both cases narrowed, and technocratic decision-making took precedence with small governments tasked with controlling inflation and protecting private property rights the norm. Political and social institutions in both cases were designed to protect and promote free-market capitalism, the benefits of which would supposedly trickle-down to benefit all of society. In such a scenario, the concerns of the most vulnerable citizens were neglected, and privatisation, low levels of public expenditure, regressive taxation, trade liberalisation and labour flexibilisation became entrenched. Much like in Europe and the US today, the imposition of market democracy in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s gutted political and social citizenship of its content. Unsurprisingly, the result in both regions was a crisis of democracy with extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with politics and low levels of trust in governments and politicians. Ultimately, the model of democracy itself was/is seen to be ineffective in responding to the citizen needs.

The crisis of democracy in the contemporary “developed” democracies, in the absence of an alternative democratic proposal by the Left³, has led to increased support for right-wing populists who play on the fears of popular sectors. However, unlike in the West where the Left has failed to respond to the needs of its ostensible core support base – the popular and working class sectors - in Latin America since the turn of the millennium there have been several experiments that have sought to build a post-neoliberal model of democracy

³ Spain and Greece are the exceptions here where Left-wing political parties did emerge at the national scale.

that boosts popular sector citizenship via a deepening and extending of democracy. Latin America appears to be “ahead of the curve” in terms of where to draw lessons for democratic theory as it is the only region in the world where there have been concerted efforts to respond to the crisis that market democracy fosters. By examining closely the development of these democratic experiments we can identify the pitfalls and opportunities that exist and ultimately advance democratic theory by re-imagining an alternative to the current hegemonic model which has clearly lost legitimacy across the developed world. Without such a boost to theorising, it appears that belief in the capacity of democracy, as well as ostensibly Left-wing parties, to deliver just and fair societies is destined to ossify in the long shadow of neoliberalism.

6. Democratisation in Latin America:

Following a crisis of democracy in the final decades of the twentieth century, a series of elections brought Left and Left-of-centre leaders to power across much of Latin America in a “pink-tide” that dramatically transformed the political landscape. To comprehend how and why this pink-tide emerged - and to highlight the similarities and differences in the origins and symptoms of, and responses to, the crisis of democracy faced in the “developed” democracies today - this sector begins with a brief review of Latin American democracy from the 1930s to the 1970s, followed by a discussion of the transition to liberal democracy and neoliberalism after authoritarian rule. The impact of this twin transition on the role of the state, and the subsequent outcomes on the quality of democracy and citizenship are then discussed, before outlining how popular protests brought new-Left leaders to state power. An analysis of Left governments’ attempts to deliver a *post*-neoliberal scenario is offered, highlighting the fundamental challenges that exist, not only to Latin American experiments, but to any effort to build an alternative to market democracy.

6.1 *Latin American democracy, authoritarianism, and re-democratisation: 1930-1980:*

Following the failure of laissez-faire capitalism during the great crisis of the 1930s, Latin America adopted Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI), a form of national populism that was the region's version of the Keynesian welfare state and social democracy of the developed world (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Silva 2009: 20). This national-populist model "applied a wide array of mechanisms to protect individuals and communities from the full force of the market" (Silva 2009: 21). ISI features in urban areas included increased formal sector employment, much of it in the public sector, with labour rights and benefits; and expanded public health, education, housing, and subsidies for basic consumption which protected the popular sector and middle classes from the excesses of the market (Ibid.). In rural areas, while ISI fell short of its promises to the peasant sector, it did create "legally protected organisational capacity, a legal framework to struggle for rural labour and land tenure rights, and subsidised credit to partially insulate that sector from markets" (Ibid.). State subsidies for transportation and energy costs benefitted both urban and rural populations (Ibid.). As Silva (Ibid.) notes, "all of these mechanisms were integral parts of the social compacts on which people depended to maintain their livelihood".

However, for all its efforts to "spearhead industrialisation with inclusion of the popular sectors, the national-populist development model suffered from serious problems" (Silva 2009: 22). Social inclusion reached an expanding middle-class and the labour aristocracy who were protected by unions in the formal sector and who were connected to labour parties (Ibid.). However, the heavy bias toward urban areas (Prebisch 1971) meant that a growing mass of city and rural marginalised poor "laboured under much more exploitative conditions" (Silva 2009: 22). Meanwhile, states lacked capacity to coordinate

and implement ambitious development plans (Ibid.). It is important to note however, that while ISI had many flaws, it had fostered a strengthening of the Left, who demanded greater social rights. Indeed, social conflict “intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, in protest at policies that effectively meant that import-substituting states invested in infrastructure and supported economic growth but failed to engage in an effective redistribution of income. The result was a series of bitter class struggles” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2009: 5).

Unlike Europe after the Second World War, where elites gradually came to be convinced of the importance above all of “preserving social peace and internalizing the principles of political equality, welfare, and social inclusion in order to maintain it, a similar break with traditions of elitism and extreme privilege could not be engineered in Latin America” (Grugel 2009: 29). As a result, in countries where a strengthening working class increased pressure for social reform, the “result was not inclusion but dictatorship” (Ibid.). However, these military regimes faced increasing pressure to democratise in the 1980s due to changing international attitudes toward authoritarianism, the fallout from the 1982 debt crisis which was blamed on incumbent military leadership, and increasing social and civic opposition from the Catholic church, human rights groups, neighbourhood associations, and unions (Grugel 2009: 30; Grugel and Bishop 2014: 231).

The challenge of building democracies “was complicated by the legacies of erratic economic programs implemented during the years of authoritarian rule and profound economic recession that swept across the region from the late 1970s” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2009: 5). ISI policies failed to control the effects of the debt crisis, and as hyperinflation spiralled, the economic crisis was translated into a crisis of the political order “understood as the failure of the state to regulate social relations, the loss of the political system’s

capacity to represent its citizens, and as a threat to political stability posed by mass street protests against economic crisis” (Panizza 2009: 23). The financial crisis was used as a justification to drive forward the liberalisation agenda (Grugel, Riggirozzi and Thirkell-White, 2008: 502) while the political crisis in the region added to the converging belief amongst business, international aid agencies, financial institutions, and governing elites that the institutions developed under ISI needed to be removed, thus eradicating the social and political roots of the crisis (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012; Taylor 2009).

6.2 Neoliberalism in Latin America:

The crisis of ISI and authoritarianism “unleashed the twin processes of free-market economic reforms and democratisation that were attempts to construct a contemporary version of market society” whereby economic relations are reorganised on “neoclassical principles” coupled with the restructuring of “political and social institutions to support free-market capitalism” (Silva 2009: 23). A regional model of “elite-led democracy which deliberately eschewed traditional social welfare models in favour of a liberal order that demanded conformity with the market” was introduced (Grugel 2009: 31). A conservative status quo emerged in the region, and the agenda of democratisation was limited to the “restoration, or in some cases the establishment, of electoral competition between elites, organised into political parties, alongside efforts to guarantee civil liberties, uphold the rule of law and – in some cases – a pledge to ‘do something’ for the very poor through the introduction of workfare schemes or social programs targeted at the very poor” (Ibid.: 31-2).

The principle goal of neoliberalism was to reform the relationship between the state and the market; as such the reforms associated with the Washington Consensus - the standard reform package advocated by the IMF, the World Bank and the US Treasury called for

privatisation; cuts to public expenditure, infrastructure and pro-poor public services; tight fiscal discipline; regressive taxation; market-driven competitive exchange and interest rates; trade liberalisation policies such as a uniform tariff; increased protection for private property; and reform of the labour market (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2009: 6).

Neoliberal reforms were generally adopted in two distinct phases; the first stage was intended to stabilise the economy and curb inflationary pressures, while the second phase was a longer, more complex reform process that in theory would “change the cultures and practices of states and lead to a more productive economy” (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2009.: 7). The state was “clouded in shame” while the market was promoted as modern and desirable (Grugel 2009: 33), the “sole route for the Latin American dream: the inclusion into the First World” (Dagnino 2005: 19). State cutbacks and switching to the market as the driver of the economy settled into the new orthodoxy in Latin America, with financial assistance and policy support from the IFIs conditional on the adoption of “good” policies (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2009: 6, 12).

The liberal democratic model in Latin America “entailed small government structured to support the neoliberal economic and social agenda, especially the protection of private property rights” (Silva 2009: 25). Consensus amongst political elites regarding the need for neoliberal reforms meant that “redistributive issues and a larger role for the state in economic and social development were simply off the table” (Ibid.). Security for private property rights however, especially against nationalisation, and monetary stability received first priority (Ibid.). Finance ministries and central banks were given greater institutional capacity, while other economic line ministers and agencies became subordinate to them

(Ibid.). Privatisation and deregulation gutted the public sector, while funding to state institutions other than finance and banking were slashed (Ibid.).

Elite convergence on “free market policies in the 1990s gave salience to a neoliberal ideology that posited that all decisions in a society, and not only economic ones, are best left to markets or made subservient to market forces” (Munck 2015: 369). The neoliberal marketisation of society linked “citizenship in the new democracies not to the state via redistribution, as in social democracies, but to the market” (Grugel 2009: 35). The state, weakened via decentralisation and privatisation, “progressively withdraws from its role as guarantor of rights” while “the market is offered as a surrogate site for citizenship” where to be a citizen signifies “individual integration into the market, as a consumer and as a producer” (Dagnino 2005: 19). Ideas of developing a Latin American version of full-employment and a welfare state were abandoned, while sharp reductions in government spending on health, education, and pension plans, along with eradication of subsidies that had supported incomes of middle and popular sectors (Silva 2009: 24) left citizens isolated and unable to protect themselves from the ravages of the market.

While citizenship for the poor was all but eradicated, second stage reforms concentrated economic, social, and political capital in the hands of a reduced number of business groups, local and transnational, who enjoyed privileged access to government in return for providing governments with finance, investment and legitimacy (Grugel 2009: 36). Meanwhile, reforms to labour laws that emphasised flexible-labour and privatisation of state companies weakened unions (Silva 2009: 24), making it difficult for organised labour to oppose the new political economy (Grugel 2009: 35).

Even as liberal democracies were being consolidated, subaltern social groups were increasingly suffering from political exclusion; liberal democracy “stripped them of

institutional channels to press their demands in both the executive and legislative branches of the state, thus effectively cutting them out of the policy-making process” (Silva 2009: 28). This pattern of isolating executive decisions from popular debate became the *modus operandi* of Latin American “democracies”. Regional governments became increasingly “delegative” (O’Donnell 1994) where “behind-the-scenes negotiations” between elites fostered a “highly centralised process of decision-making” (Grindle 2000: 6). Hence, while democratic institutions may have been stable, there was little capacity for vertical control over government by the electorate or civil society, while horizontal accountability via other democratic institutions was weak (Grugel 2009: 35). In sum, the introduction of Washington Consensus neoliberal reforms “and governments’ often pig-headed commitment to them—reduced significantly the access ordinary people enjoyed to a variety of social, economic and political resources, many of which are central to the exercising of democratic voice” (Ibid.).

The above description shows how a combination of liberal democracy under the guidance of a neoliberal mentality has eroded the quality of democracy in Latin America, which in many ways resembles the situation in the developed Western democracies. Neoliberalism and technocratic democracy dismantled the citizenship gains that had been won during the ISI period (1930-1970), foreshadowing the more gradual erosion of social democracy in Europe. State retrenchment and a move toward market-mentality narrowed the scope of politics, eroded citizenship, and reduced popular influence in the decision-making process in both the West and Latin America. Contemporary “developed” democracy resembles the shallow democracy of Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s where representative institutions are weak, technocratic decision making marginalises citizen input leading to unaccountable leaders who ignore electoral mandates, and growing social inequality mocks the formal political equality of democratic citizenship (Roberts 1998: 1).

The attempt to marketise citizenship has been actively resisted in Latin America with periodic eruptions of social protest. By the turn of the new millennium, “many regional governments were struggling to contain deep-seated social conflicts and political tensions which are the result of almost two decades of state retrenchment, pauperisation and lacklustre citizenship” (Grugel 2009: 26). The de-legitimation of traditional conservative parties who had advocated and overseen the adoption of neoliberal policies combined with the explosion of mass popular protests calling for greater political and economic inclusion paved the way for the election of progressive governments across much of the region on mandates to deepen and extend democracy.

6.3 Social upheaval and the election of the new-Left in Latin America:

Latin Americans rapidly realised that the “work of building democracy had not been completed through democratic transitions. Moreover, they gave bite to the rather generic statements about building democracy by asking the question: ‘Which democracy?’” (Munck 2015: 369). Social rejection of neoliberalism and the marketisation of democracy can be traced back to the 1989 protests and riots in Venezuela and Argentina (Grugel 2009: 37). A wave of protests swept the region over the following years. These popular uprisings represent a continuation in the “conflict between civil and political society over what constitutes representative government [that] can be traced back to the . . . transition to democracy” (Peruzzotti 2006: 229). The dispute around the meaning of democratic participatory citizenship, and the efforts to confront the reduction and displacement of its significance under neoliberalism, constitutes the essence of political debate in Latin America today (Dagnino 2005: 22).

Protests represented a struggle for re-incorporation whereby excluded segments of society sought to (re)connect with state institutions so as “to recover - or for the first time

gain – access to rights and benefits that the state has failed or ceased to secure or provide” (Rossi 2015: 3). Mobilisation originated from a wide-range of actors. Organisations rooted in cultural, identity, and class politics (such as indigenous peoples, unemployed, landless, pensioners, and neighbourhood associations amongst others) linked together, demanding greater political, social, cultural, and economic inclusion and equality which market democracy had failed to deliver (Silva 2009: 1). Protests acted as a tool for popular sectors to “form a bridge between the state as it actually is and the state as it should be” (Rossi 2015: 3), challenging market democracy and demanding a new social contract whereby states guarantee the rights of their citizens (Grugel 2009: 40).

Focusing on subsistence rights and the loss of social citizenship, popular organisations linked the social and economic crisis of the Washington Consensus with the model of democracy itself (Peruzzotti 2006; Grugel 2009: 40). In all of the protests, assemblies and neighbourhood councils across Latin America, there was a “desire to move beyond the liberal framework of participation” (Arditi 2008: 66). In the end “it was the association of neoliberalism with ruling class politics and the difficulty of reconciling neoliberal policies with popular expectations of a new era of democratic politics” (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2012:5) that led to popular uprisings.

From 1998 onwards, a wave of progressive governments promising “greater inclusion and policies to stimulate growth and promote human development” were elected across much of the region (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2012: 5) (see table 2). These governments were accompanied by “popular calls for a different kind of political leadership, demands that ordinary people have more access to the state and better welfare provision and mobilisation for policies of cultural recognition and a strengthening of communal and indigenous rights (in Bolivia and Ecuador especially)” (Ibid: 7). The arrival of the progressive

governments has (re-)opened a debate regarding the scale and purpose of state intervention in the market, democratic and governance reform, the coverage and content of welfare programs, equality - especially in terms of wealth and income-, as well as regional and international policy stances (Lievesley and Ludlum 2009:5 ; Wylde 2012: 15). These policy initiatives and changes have in their totality been described as *post-neoliberal*, meaning that elements of the previous export-led growth model are retained, whilst introducing new mechanisms for social inclusion and welfare (Heidrich and Tussie 2009; Wylde 2012; Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2012; Yates and Bakker 2014).

TABLE OF LEFT PRESIDENTIAL VICTORIES 1998-2015

Country	Party	President	Year Elected (re-elected)
Venezuela	Fifth Republic Movement/United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV)	Hugo Chávez	1998; re-elected in 2000, 2006, 2012
		Nicolás Maduro	
	Gran Polo Patriótico (GPP)		2013
Chile	Chilean Socialist Party (PSCh), Concertación	Ricardo Lagos	2000
		Michelle Bachelet	2006, 2013
Dominican Republic	Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	Hipólito Mejía	2000
Brazil	Worker's Party (PT)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	2002; re-elected in 2006
		Dilma Rousseff	2010; re-elected in 2014
Argentina	Justicialista Party (PJ)	Néstor Kirchner	2003
	Frente Para la Victoria	Cristina	2007; re-elected in 2011
		Fernández de Kirchner	
Uruguay	Broad Front (FA)	Tabaré Vázquez	2004; 2014
		José Mujica	2009
Panama	New Fatherland	Martín Torrijos	2004

Bolivia	Movement toward Socialism (MAS)	Evo Morales	2005; re-elected in 2009, 2014
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberal Front (FSLN)	Daniel Ortega	2006; re-elected in 2012
Ecuador	PAIS Alliance	Rafael Correa	2006; re-elected in 2009, 2013
Paraguay	Patriotic Alliance for Change	Fernando Lugo	2008
Guatemala	National Unity of Hope (UNE)	Álvaro Colom	2007
El Salvador	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)	Mauricio Funes Salvador Sánchez Cerén	2009 2014
Peru	Gana Perú	Ollanta Humala Tasso	2011
Costa Rica	Citizens' Action Party (PAC)	Luis Guillermo Solís	2014

Table 2: Source: Adapted from Levitsky and Roberts (2011: 2), Mc Nulty (2014: 4), and Munck (2015:367)

6.4 Post-neoliberalism in Latin America:

Post-neoliberalism embodies a “different conceptualisation of the state from that which reigned in the high period of neoliberalism, based on a view that states have a moral responsibility to respect and deliver the inalienable (that is, non-market dependent) rights of their citizens, alongside growth” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012: 3). Politically, “post-neoliberalism is a reaction against what came to be seen as excessive marketisation at the end of the twentieth century and the elitist and technocratic democracies that accompanied market reforms” (Ibid.). Post-neoliberalism should be understood as a call for a “new form of social contract between the state and people” (Wylde, 2011: 436) and “the construction of a social consensus that is respectful of the demands of growth and business interests *and* sensitive to the challenges of poverty and citizenship” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012: 4). While “the institutional forms and procedures of democracy increasingly may be in place” in Latin America, post-neoliberalism represents a response to the critical challenge of “how to

deepen their inclusiveness and substance, especially in terms of how citizens engage within democratic spaces to create more just and equitable states and societies” (Gaventa 2006: 8). As Peruzzotti (2006: 209) notes, post-neoliberalism is part of the unfinished debate over what constitutes a transition to democracy.

Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012: 2) outline what they see as two mutually re-enforcing pillars of post-neoliberalism: a) a set of political goals that seek to “reclaim” the authority of the state so as to generate a “new social consensus and approach to welfare” and b) economic policies that aim to “rebuild” state capacity to “manage the market and the export economy in ways that not only ensure growth but are also responsive to social needs and citizenship demands”. The post-neoliberal citizenship agenda and the growth strategy complement each other, whereby the rebuilding of the state represents a “profoundly political intention to ‘make the state public’ and ensure that it is better able to defend the public interest” (ibid.: 15). The post-neoliberal project also seeks to revive citizenship via a “new politics of participation and alliances across sociocultural sectors and groups” with a deepening of democracy by “establishing greater autonomy (autonomía) and self-governance (autogestión) through processes of cultural self-determination at a variety of scales” (Yates and Bakker 2014: 3, 9). Rather than seeing individuals as producers and consumers in the market, post-neoliberalism proposes to extend democracy by fostering collective rights and solidarities that “aspire to achieve universal social citizenship [representing a] fundamental rethinking of state-society relations, to a greater or lesser extent according to the case” (Beasley-Murray, Cameron, and Hershberg 2010: 4).

However, post-neoliberal governments have tended to be pragmatic where the economy is concerned, working within the liberalised global economic system. In this sense, while differences exist between neoliberal and post-neoliberal growth strategies, they

should not be understood as opposing strategies (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012: 6). The “post-” in post-neoliberalism principally represents differences in “government attitudes to the poor and discourses of citizenship rather than economic management as such” (Ibid.).

Post-neoliberal projects have varied in terms of how, and to what extent, they have challenged market democracy. While conservative scholars such as Jorge Castañeda (2006) have attempted to divide the post-neoliberal turn into a “good”, moderate Left (Brazil, Chile, Uruguay) and a “bad” populist Left (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Argentina to a lesser extent), such crude dichotomies fail to understand the nuanced differences amongst cases. Rather, I suggest that the post-neoliberal governments may be evaluated along a citizenship continuum, with each case varying in how they have sought to transform political and economic inclusion of erstwhile excluded sectors.

In the post-neoliberal cases of Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, while centre-Left governments succeeded in delivering some socio-economic benefits to their citizens, they tended not to challenge the model of liberal democracy (Munck 2015: 379). Indeed, in “making the model of liberal democracy its own, the centre-left severely limited its ability to deliver on the left’s traditional aspiration to address the economic conditions of participation and contain the transformation of economic power into political power” (Ibid.). As such, while liberal democracy may have been strengthened by Left governments in these cases, there has been a failure to transform the preferences of electoral majorities into public policy (Garretón 2012; Munck 2015: 379).

In the cases of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, there *have* been attempts to build an alternative to liberal democracy, thereby meriting greater investigation (Munck 2015: 379). There have been efforts to refashion state institutions accompanied by constituent assemblies to re-write constitutions and “a search for a closer, more direct relationship

between the executive and the ‘people’” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012: 5). Such processes have led to contrasting analyses as to whether or not these cases should be considered as examples of de-democratisation or democratisation.

For some analysts, the cases are simply populist experiments which damage democracy (Castañeda 2006) via the construction of “hyper-plebiscitary” presidencies (Conaghan 2008). Such analyses resonate with Juan Linz’ (1990) discussion of the “perils of presidentialism”. Linz highlights how, in presidential systems, both the executive and the legislative branch may claim democratic legitimacy as they derive their power from the votes of the public in elections. However, if a divergence of opinions emerges between the office of the president and the legislative, conflict may “erupt dramatically” (Linz 1990: 53). In a presidential system (as opposed to parliamentary) Linz (Ibid.: 56) states that presidents may believe that they possess independent authority and a popular mandate, and thus find legislative opposition to their policies irksome. Indeed, Linz (Ibid.: 61) flags that the “plebiscitarian component implicit in the president’s authority is likely to make the obstacles and opposition he encounters seem particularly annoying. In his frustration he may be tempted to define his policies as reflections of the popular will and those of his opponents as the selfish designs of narrow interests”. Linz continues, stating that the “doleful potential for displays of cold indifference, disrespect, or even downright hostility toward the opposition is not to be scanted”. Where these perils are not avoided, and a “hyper-presidential” system develops, the superiority of the executive is emphasised while there is excessive use of unilateral mechanisms to adopt decisions (Nino 1996; Llanos and Nolte 2016). As Rose-Ackerman et al. (2011: 247) state, in a hyper-presidential system, “presidents who are challenged use the rhetoric of separation of powers to defend their actions and argue against the imposition of checks and balances by the other branches and institutions”. The concerns of scholars such

as Castañeda (2006) and Conaghan (2008) is that the cases of Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela have become “hyper-presidential” systems that threaten the very stability of democracy.

While liberal scholars have decried the “hyper-presidential” nature of the “radical” Left cases, as Munck (2015: 373) notes, progressive governments in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela see “the various mechanisms proposed by advocates of liberal democracy to limit the power of elected authorities as limits on democracy itself” and they therefore struggle to re-found politics through “constitutional change with popular participation” (ibid.). While not rejecting some of representative democracy’s core principles, such as free and fair elections, transparency and accountability (Duffy 2015: 1744), the national governments have sought to profoundly transform pre-existing political regimes and liberal modes of democracy (Wolff 2013: 33). This more radical Left have emphasised how entrenched political elites and regional powers have blocked programs for change, and hence argued for a strong president, who relies on “plebiscitarian appeals for popular support” so as to “counter the bias toward the status quo” (Munck 2015: 374). In this regard, the “radical”-Left leaders and their support base ultimately challenge Linz’ (1990) notion of the “perils of presidentialism” and his concern regarding the *stability* of democracy by detailing how stable democracy does not automatically equate with a *quality* democracy. For popular sectors “stable” democracies had become an incubator for the maintenance of political and economic exclusion, and hence a new conception of democratic inclusion was required, even if this entailed challenging the boundaries of liberal democratic norms (Munck 2015).

The efforts to move away from market democracy in Latin America and build a model that boosts the quality of citizenship faced several challenges. These challenges are not country-specific – that is, they are challenges that any attempt to construct a post-

neoliberal democracy is likely to face. Latin American democratisation experiments witnessed extraordinary efforts by economic elites, supported by – and sometimes equating to the same thing – the far-right to destabilise processes which they believe harm their interests. In Argentina and Brazil pro-neoliberal presidents returned to power following virulent smear campaigns in the Right-controlled media against Leftists Cristina Kirchner and Dilma Rousseff, with the “questionable impeachment process” (Cannon and Brown 2017: 618) of the latter highlighting the lengths elites will go to prevent any challenge to the hegemony of neoliberalism. In Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela economic elites and the far-right also sought to destabilize Left-wing presidents via threats of cessation and autonomy, media campaigns, and “economic warfare”.

A further challenge to building a post-neoliberal model of democracy is the continued reliance on the international market for economic survival; given that the rules of the game are set by international financial institutions and powerful governments who seek to push market democracy as the panacea to all development concerns, introducing an alternative model of democracy that seeks to protect citizens from the free-market and that challenges the hegemony of liberal democracy faces powerful external barriers. In Latin American experiments, Left- governments have found themselves “squeezed between popular demands, articulated by key social movements for greater participation and improved living conditions, and global demands for pro-market orthodoxy and protection of the interests of capital” (Cannon and Kirby 2012: 202). In the context of a market liberal global order, and with powerful liberal regional actors, the “scope for real clashes of interest and values” is large (Heidrich and Tussie 2009: 52).

The above discussion of the challenges to efforts to construct a post-neoliberal democracy suggest that to understand how an alternative to market democracy may

emerge and sustain itself, and to explain variations in outcomes of such processes, a flexible and adaptable theoretical framework is required. As such, in the next chapter a theoretical framework is advanced that seeks to account for how the relative power of the Left-led state, the organised popular base, economic elites, and transnational (f)actors may influence the direction and outcomes of the process. Furthermore, given that different processes have different origins, the framework seeks to account for if and how such variance influences the pathways of democratisation process.

Looking forward, chapter 3 details the methodological issues of the project regarding case-selection, variables and indicators, data-collection methods and ethical requirements. In chapter 4, a rich historical account of the emergence and development of Bolivia's post-neoliberal process is offered, highlighting how the relative balance of power between the new-left government, popular-societal actors, economic elites, and international (f)actors influenced the process. To gain a more nuanced understanding of the successes and issues of Bolivia's process, as well as the outcomes to date and the challenges going forward, Chapter 5 offers an in-depth analysis of the experiences of urban popular groups in the city of El Alto. In chapter 6, the focus turns to the Venezuelan case. The power framework (which is developed in the following chapter) is used to guide a historical analysis of the emergence and development of the post-neoliberal process. Chapter 7 then offers an analysis of the issues and challenges of constructing a radical-substantive democracy based on the perspectives of urban residents in two of Caracas' most emblematic popular neighbourhoods, El 23 de Enero and Petare. In chapter 8, the outcomes and experiences of the Bolivian and Venezuelan experiments to move beyond the confines of market democracy are compared and contrasted. Briefly summarising, analyses suggests that where there is a long tradition of popular sector organising and mobilisation, co-ordinated protests

against exclusion are likely to emerge that bring a progressive leader to power who shares a tight link with, and is answerable to, social movements. Conversely, where there is a weak tradition of organising, ad hoc protests are more likely, and a more vanguard-type leader is likely to emerge and direct the process from above. The impact of these varied origins become more apparent over the course of the democratisation process as a power struggle between the government, popular sectors, elites, and transnational (f)actors emerges. In general, progressive leaders' efforts to redistribute economic resources fosters an elite backlash, and the more substantive the effort to engage in socio-economic redistribution, the greater the economic-elite backlash is likely to be. What is more, the greater the power of elites, the greater the pressure on progressive leaders to centralise power in the executive so as to bypass elite obstacles to reform and to overcome elite-led destabilisation efforts. Meanwhile, where popular sectors are powerful, they will push the government to radicalise the process. Furthermore, where transnational power over domestic government is high, democratisation processes are likely to follow a more moderate path. Ultimately, unless progressive governments can limit the power of economic elites and transnational forces, they are likely to find themselves at the centre of a tug-of-war between popular demands for change and elite demands for maintenance of the status quo, with confrontations between the popular base and the progressive government a likely outcome. Such confrontations may act as stepping stones toward a rejuvenation of the process, but conversely they may also open the door for Right-wing political actors to take advantage. I turn now to a discussion of existing democratisation frameworks before outlining the new theoretical framework for post-neoliberal processes that seek to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy.

Chapter 2: Toward a radical-substantive democratisation framework:

1. Traditional Democratisation Frameworks:

An analytic framework is required to comprehend how an alternative to market democracy that boosts the quality of citizenship may emerge, develop, and sustain itself. Grugel and Bishop (2014: 74) highlight three distinct traditional frameworks that can be found in the literature. Firstly, there is modernisation theory “which has tended to focus on how economic development both produces democratisation and helps to sustain it (Ibid.). Secondly, historical sociology, also known as structuralism, “seeks to explain how democratisation emerges out of class conflict and the changing relations between different classes and the state” (Ibid.). Thirdly, transition theory, also known as agency theory, which emerged later than modernisation or historical sociological theories, focuses on “elite interactions in negotiating democratic transitions” (Ibid.). While each of these theories offer some useful guidelines on how to assess democratisation, each in isolation fails to offer a coherent framework capable of explaining *how* and *why* a simultaneous deepening and extending of democracy that boosts citizenship quality may emerge and develop in today’s globalised world. As such, I now offer a review of the traditional frameworks to identify their strengths and weaknesses, before developing a framework capable of examining democratisation processes that seek to move beyond the confines of market democracy.

1.1 *Modernisation theory:*

Modernisation theory, developed primarily in the works of Lipset (1959) and Parsons (1951), suggests that modernity and capitalism are required for democracy to emerge, whereby economic growth is causally related with progress (Grugel 2002: 47). Lipset argued that

democracy is not a choice, but rather a natural consequence of economic modernisation; capitalism, it was argued, would create conditions for democracy through trickle down wealth, education, urbanisation and the emergence of an educated middle class that would reward moderate, democratic parties and penalise extremist groups (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 76; Lipset 1959: 78).

Modernisation theory predicts that developing regions can achieve democracy if they can “replicate European original transitions to capitalism and enter the global system” (Grugel 2002: 47). There is an inherent assumption that interaction between European and non-European societies “leads the latter to assume the characteristics of the former” (Avritzer 2002: 59). Rostow (1952) argued that tradition and modernity are mutually exclusive concepts. Material progress and democracy were linked to modernity, where modernity was said to “broadly consist of urbanisation, industrialisation, secularisation, and eventually, democratisation” (Mahdavi 2011: 25). The framework of modernisation assumes a lineal, temporal process “whose point of departure (t1) is a non-modern institutional structure and whose arrival point (t2) is the consolidation of modern institutions. Modernisation takes place between (t1) and (t2). Industrialisation is the process connecting the two temporalities and cultural change is the product of industrialisation” (Avritzer 2002: 59).

Modernisation theory is however premised upon an inordinately simplistic lineal relationship between capitalism and democracy in Europe, leading to an ahistorical, ethnocentric, overly structural understanding of democratisation (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 77). While it is certainly true that democracy is more likely to remain stable under a developed economy, the causal correlation between capitalism and democratic

advancement is overstated. Moreover, modernisation theory follows the elitist tradition in viewing the masses as subordinate elements in the process of modernisation (Avritzer 2002: 59). Local culture and traditions are ignored as a simple imitation of European institutions is assumed.

Modernisation theory is unsuitable to appraise popularly driven processes of democratisation, in which democracy is understood, by progressive forces, in a far more substantial manner. Crucially, modernisation theory suggests that developing democracies follow the European model. But this is exactly how democracy has become delegitimised today; by following a model for democratisation that prioritises capitalism (in today's world financialised capital), democracy under neoliberal guidance has eroded state protection of citizens, while forcing citizens to act as mere bystanders in decision-making processes.

1.2 *Structural Theories:*

Historical sociologists, also known as structuralists, identify power as a crucial factor influencing democratisation. Historical sociologists “trace the transformation of the state through class conflict over time, in order to explain how democracy – which they see as state transformation – has sometimes emerged” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 82). Building on the work of Barrington Moore (1966), Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992) “view the political system of a particular country in relation to broader questions of social power” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 82). Drawing on classical sociology and Marxism, Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) stress the impact of “three power structures”: relative class power, the state, and the impact of transnational structures. They posit that social class and class conflict are the starting point for an analysis of power and the state (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 84).

Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) see democratisation as the imposition of reforms on a capitalist

state, not as an automatic outcome from the development of capitalist relations of production (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 84). Transnational structures of power that are “grounded in the international economy and the system of states” are said to impact the “balance of power within society, affect state-society relations, and constrain political decision-making” (Grugel 2002: 52.).

Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) argue that capitalism encourages democracy because it “transforms the class structure, strengthening the working and middle classes (pro-democratic forces) and weakening the landed upper class (anti-democratic force)” (1992: 270). Urbanisation, factory production and new forms of communication and transportation created an unprecedented opportunity for working- and middle-class sectors to organise. Collective action via associations, unions, and parties is said to give subordinate classes power vis-à-vis other groups in society (Huber et al. 1997: 325). It is this in-built contradiction of capitalism that creates a more organised and dense urban working class allowing for a challenge to the capitalist state (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992: 5). Unlike classic Marxism, which sees the state as essentially anti-working class, Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) see the state as a crucial institution which can be transformed by subordinate pressure into promoting the elements of democracy that working class sectors desire.

Historical sociology has faced several critiques. Firstly, structuralists’ focus on the working class as the principle driver of social change has been challenged. As Collier (1999) argues, class action is not determined by a historical mission; rather, different classes may play different roles depending on the context. Furthermore, the focus on class does not account for territorially based movements formed around identity (for example landless peasant and indigenous movements). What is more, given that working class power has

been decimated by neoliberal policies, a framework focusing primarily on organised labour as the driver of a post-neoliberal democracy would be too narrow to capture possibilities and realities. Secondly, agential theorists critique the narrow role afforded the individual in historical sociological accounts of democratisation. For example, Przeworski (1991: 96) states that in structuralist frameworks, outcomes were “uniquely determined by [macrosocietal] conditions, and history . . . [went] on without anyone ever doing anything”.

Notwithstanding these critiques, insights from historical sociological analysis are particularly useful for understanding post-transition outcomes. Context-specific factors impacting democratisation processes are teased out and examined with the goal of *explaining outcomes*. By accentuating the in-built class antagonism in capitalist societies, historical sociology highlights that conflict is a normal part of democracy, and not, as theories built on elitist ideals suggest, a weakness (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 85). Such a view resonates with Chantal Mouffe’s (2000, 2005, 2013) notion of “agonistic pluralism” in which “confrontation, far from representing a danger for democracy, is in reality the very condition of its existence” (Mouffe 2014).

1.3 Transition Theory:

The 1980s Latin American transitions from authoritarianism had a drastic and profound effect on the theorisation of democratisation, “challenging all...presumptions about preconditions” (Karl 1990: 4). This theoretical turn “was due to the new practice of contemporary democratisation in which democracy evolved in countries without the presence of all the structural conditions required for democratic transition” (Mahdavi 2011: 33). Theorists analysing the transitions from authoritarianism, also known as transitologists, had two principle concerns. They focused on the required conditions for transition from

authoritarianism to some form of democracy, as well as the conditions that could account for the durability of democracy (Munck, G. 2011: 334).

Political liberalisation and the move toward democracy were understood as an elite driven process (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1986; Stepan 1988). Political change was to be achieved through pacts between military and political elites outlining the rules of the game (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986). Democratisation was understood as a "process, led by cost-benefit calculations on the part of key actors" (Cannon and Hume 2012: 4). As Doh Sin summarises, democracy, for transitologists, "is no longer treated as a particularly rare and delicate plant that cannot be transplanted in alien soil; it is treated as a product that can be manufactured wherever there is democratic craftsmanship and the proper zeitgeist" (1994: 141). The goal of these agential approaches is to adapt "political institutions to their social environment in such a way that it becomes easier for competing groups to share power and institutionalise the sharing of power" (Vanhanen 1990: 165). Transitologists believe elections will broaden the democratic accountability of the state to its citizens and increase participation, thereby acting not just as a "foundation stone, but a key generator over time of further democratic reforms" (Carothers 2002: 8).

The third wave of democratisation⁴ reached Latin America in the 1980s with the resumption of political competitions and elections in most countries (Huntington 1991). However, several destabilizing issues emerged. Non-democratic actors did not leave the political scene (O'Donnell 1992; Hagopian 1992); economic inequality increased (Przeworski

⁴ The first wave originates with the American and French Revolutions and runs to the 1920s or 1930s, while the second wave refers to the post-World War II period until the mid 1960s or 1970s. For a full discussion, see Huntington (1991).

1995); there was deep political instability (Mainwaring and Scully 1995); and the political culture of the past persisted (Moisés 1995; Peruzzotti 1997). This led transitologists “to assume two different positions regarding the type of ‘post-transition’ political regime emerging in Latin American societies” (Avritzer 2002: 32) – a consolidation position and “delegative democracy”.

The consolidation argument retained much of the transitology approach (Gunther et al. 1996). Linz and Stepan (1996: 15) famously defined a consolidated democracy as “a political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, ‘the only game in town’”. However, as Avritzer (2002: 32) highlights, the most important element of this game is that “it is played exclusively by political actors and involves only one activity; power disputes between different political groups”. Secondly, Guillermo O’Donnell (1994, 1996) highlighted that particularism (patronage, nepotism, corruption) was widespread in the new Latin American democracies. He argued that these cases could not be considered as complete transitions to democracy, and rather should be seen as “delegative” democracies. In such a scenario, long-term habits “such as low levels of accountability, privatisation of the state, and ineffective enforcement of citizenship persist as important trends shaping the political system” (Ibid.: 33). In sum, “delegative democracy changes transition’s point of arrival” from that of a full democracy to “a durable semi-democratic relation between state and society” (Ibid.).

Transition frameworks have shown how the micro-levels of democratisation are important. They highlight how “agency, negotiations, compromise and the *politics* of change” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 91) are decisive in initial stages of democratisation, emphasizing the importance of “institutionalizing uncertainty without threatening the

interests of those who can still reverse the process” (Przeworski 1986: 60). However, transition theory has faced several critiques. To begin, the very concept of “transition” has been held to be inherently teleological in its assumptions, with “a pronounced institutionalist and electoralist bias in what was deemed to be the ultimate democratic endpoint” (Cannon and Hume 2012: 3). While elite-led transitions may lead to stable democracy, the *quality* of democracy may be severely restricted (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 236) as there can be no guarantee that elections will transform the underlying political and economic inequalities in society (Przeworski 1995: 54). The focus on institutions and pluralism where elites are completely cut-off from the citizenry, and the lack of focus on quality-based outcomes of democracy, has been described as “feckless pluralism”, where political life is a “hollow, unproductive exercise” (Carothers 2002: 11). Furthermore, pact-making allows economic elites to ensure they continue to have a “right” to exploit the majority of citizens (Karl 1990). Meanwhile, the role of popular organisations in democratisation processes is unaccounted for in transition theory despite the fact that throughout the history of democratisation, both in Latin America and beyond, mass mobilisation has played, and continues to play, a fundamental role (Arditi 2008; Baker 1999).

2. An Alternative framework for Radical-Substantive Democratisation:

The classic frameworks for understanding democratisation were principally concerned with *causation*. However, given the contemporary woes of democracy, the challenge for democratisation studies today is to identify how an alternative to market democracy may emerge, develop, and leave a lasting legacy that boosts the *quality* of existing democracy and leads to a thick citizenship. As such, the framework must assess how to “maximise

popular control by expanding opportunities for direct citizen input, oversight, and participation in the policy making process and by enhancing the accountability of elected representatives to their constituents” (Roberts 1998: 26). Secondly, the framework must account for how to extend “democratic values, norms and forms of participation into the social and economic realm” thereby fomenting a “transformative project of addressing social and economic inequalities” (Smilde n.d.). A framework capable of understanding and explaining how, and why such complex processes may emerge, develop, and leave a long-term democratic legacy is thus required. As such, I propose a framework that accounts for both structural and agential factors influencing democratisation, highlighting how both path-dependent and emergent variables impact on the development and outcomes of attempts to simultaneously deepen and expand democracy. Hence, I seek to offer a framework that is universal in terms of highlighting key variables that impact on all democratisation process that seek to move beyond the confines of market democracy, which at the same time retains the flexibility required to adapt to case-specific factors and histories.

2.1 Combined structural and agential frameworks:

Grugel and Bishop (2014) respond to Roberts (1998) calls to extend and deepen democracy, and follow a broad approach that combines elements of the structural and agential frameworks. Grugel and Bishop (2014: 96) understand democracies as “political systems comprising institutions that (should) translate citizens’ preferences into policy, have effective states that act to protect and deepen democratic rights, and count on a strong, participatory and critical civil society”. Ultimately, Grugel and Bishop (2014) call for a transformation of the state and society so as to deliver a better quality of democracy.

The state is central to democratisation in a number of ways. First, and above all, democratisation means building a democratic state, requiring *institutional change* (the form of the state), *representative change* (who has influence or control over state policies) and *functional change* (what the state does or the range of state responsibilities) (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 97). Building on the work of Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), Grugel and Bishop (2014: 135) outline that “democratisation occurs when subordinated social groups achieve sufficient access to the state so as to change the patterns of representation within it”. In such a view, democratisation essentially entails a struggle to extend rights and deepen citizenship, whereby the state no longer serves as an instrument to protect dominant elites (ibid.). Any explanation of democratisation therefore must explore “the extent to which the public sphere is open to all and, second, the ways in which civil society, as a space for political action, challenges or reproduces authoritarian practices” (ibid.: 136).

State capacity plays a key role in democratisation; the ability of the state to implement goals, particularly in the face of opposition from powerful social groups, or in “the face of recalcitrant socio-economic circumstances” has a great influence on democratisation (Wylde 2016: 327; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, 1985: 9). As Huber (1995: 167) outlines, there are several essential tasks that all states must carry out if they are to be considered functioning states. Firstly, the state must have the capacity to enforce the rule of law throughout the state’s entire territory and population. Secondly, the state must promote economic growth and development. Thirdly, the state must elicit voluntary compliance from the population over which the state claims control. Fourthly, the state must shape the allocation of societal resources.

Huber (1995: 166) notes that state strength is related to “extractive capacity” and means that “incumbents can set and achieve goals” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 129). States require

effective infrastructural powers that penetrate “universally throughout civil-society, through which political elites can extract resources from, and provide services to, all subjects” (Mann 2002: 2). (Fiscal) state capacity to raise revenue is essential for the delivery of public goods and redistribution (Cárdenas 2010: 2). Without efficient state infrastructure to tax and redistribute and intervene in society without coercion, full democratisation is unattainable (Mann 2002: 3.). States with minimal levels of technical capabilities will therefore crumble under popular pressure for economic and political inclusion (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 128). As Beasley-Murray et al. (2010: 6) highlight, “any progressive alternative in the task of state management must enhance its capacity to distribute resources, to oversee effective institutions, and to represent the citizenry democratically”.

The exact nature of the state and societal transformation Grugel and Bishop (2014) advocate requires further analysis if we are to comprehend how it may emerge, how it may respond to the contemporary crisis of democracy, and how it may leave behind a lasting legacy on the quality of citizenship. Democratisation today must challenge market democracy by confronting the existing boundaries of what is defined as the political arena: “its participants, its institutions, its processes, its agenda and its scope” (Dagnino 2005: 1). As discussed in chapter 1, radical democratic theorists call for the development of a participatory, deliberative public sphere that allows for new issues and debates to emerge, while also calling for institutional links between society and the state so as to make participation and deliberation effective in terms of having actual impact on policy decision-making processes (see for example Fraser 1990; Cohen and Sabel 1997; Avritzer 2002; Fung 2011). Substantive theorists meanwhile outline that extending democracy is important because social and economic inequality can easily be translated into concentrations of power in the political sphere, thereby inhibiting the formation and realisation of popular

demands (Roberts 1998: 29). Indeed, such theorists believe that democracy cannot be deepened in the midst of radical social and economic inequality, and suggest that “improving the lot of the poor will increase their human and social capital and eventually lead them to have more political voice” (Smilde n.d).

While deepening and extending democracy would certainly offer a response to Dagnino's (2005:1) call (see previous paragraph) to challenge the neoliberal conception of democracy in terms of *who participates*, what the *institutional features* of democracy are, *how decisions are made*, and what the *range of decisions open to public consultation* is, we are still none the wiser as to what actually influences whether such democratisation occurs. I suggest that we must examine *power* in society if we wish to comprehend how and why democratic deepening and extending processes emerge, how they develop, and what their lasting legacy is likely to be.

2.2 Power and Democratisation: A Theoretical Process Tracing Framework:

The central concerns of this project are to identify how and why an alternative to market democracy that simultaneously seeks to deepen and extend democracy may emerge, and to identify the factors that influence the development and legacy of such a democratisation process. Ultimately, the aim is to examine democratisation processes that deliver an institutionalised deepening and extending of democracy, whereby deepening refers to increasing the capacity of formerly excluded popular sectors of society to influence state decision-making processes, while extending refers to the embedding of social rights. To this end, it is necessary to identify cases that have experimented in simultaneous deepening and extending of democracy. While one could attempt to evaluate the success to deepen or extend by simply looking at outcomes of democratisation processes, such an evaluation would fail to explain *why* outcomes occur. Rather, one must understand that

democratisation is a complex process that varies from case to case due to multiple factors. Analysis must be cognisant that differing origins of processes are likely to be key factors in explaining outcomes. However, we must not fall into a similar trap as the modernisation theorists who assume a linear path to some pre-determined democratic outcome given a set of pre-existing conditions. Rather, we must identify if and how factors present at the origin of the democratisation process feedback onto the process, influencing its pathways, while simultaneously accounting for multiple factors that emerge along the way and cause the process to spring forward, reverse, or change course altogether. To respond to such needs, this study suggests employing a theory-guided process tracing method (TGPT).

Aminzade (1993: 108) states that to understand a complex process, researchers must provide “theoretically explicit narratives that carefully trace and compare the sequences of events constituting the process” of interest. If narratives are built on theory, they “allow us to capture the unfolding of social action over time in a manner sensitive to the order in which events occur” (ibid.). Aminzade continues, stating that “by making the theories that underpin our narratives more explicit, we avoid the danger of burying our explanatory principles in engaging stories. By comparing sequences, we can determine whether there are typical sequences across [cases] . . . and can explore the causes and consequences of different sequence patterns” (ibid.). Falletti (2006: 5) states that such theory-guided process-tracing (TGPT) methods explain “the outcomes of interest by going back in time and identifying the key events, processes, or decisions that link the hypothesised cause or causes with the outcomes”. Researchers should therefore start with a set of hypotheses, and apply TGPT methods to specify the mechanisms that link causes and effects (ibid.). As

George and Bennet (2005) and Hall (2003) (both cited in Falleti 2006) highlight, the TGPT method firstly permits

The study of complex causal relationships such as those characterised by multiple causality, feedback loops, path dependencies, tipping points, and complex interaction effects. Second, it can lead to the formulation of new theories or hypotheses on the causal mechanisms that connect correlated phenomena. Third, TGPT in structured, focused comparisons (i.e., measuring the same causal mechanisms and outcomes in the same way across each case) permits the testing of hypotheses and theories. Finally, the TGPT method can reveal how endogenous changes affect the evolution of our variables of interests. For all these reasons, the careful application of TGPT to generate and test hypotheses will continue to advance our knowledge about complex causality phenomena in comparative politics (Falleti 2006: 7).

Falleti (2006) emphasises that the TGPT method should be differentiated from methods used in many comparative historical studies (see for example Rueschemeyer et al.'s 1992 macrosociological study on the origins of democracy); such studies require the evaluation of fairly long periods of time, and Falleti (2006: 21) notes that nonstructural causal mechanisms become hard to uncover, whereby agential action may even be excluded from analysis. Furthermore, in comparative historical methods "sequential analysis becomes quasi-synonymous with the timing of different processes or variables in relation to each other...rather than with the ordering of events within a process" (Falleti 2010: 21). Thus, "arguments that claim to be sequential are often narratives that connect independent, intervening, and dependent variables or processes (just as static methodologies would do),

except that the independent and intervening phenomena are temporally antecedent to the outcome of interest. As such, these explanations do not analyse the interactions or feedback effects among the component events of a process” (Ibid.). As Mahoney (2000: 537) expounds, “the tension between path-dependent arguments and more commonplace causal arguments in historical sociology hinges significantly on the temporal location of initial conditions in a sequence”. Hence, it is crucial that analysts “develop objective criteria for determining what temporal point should represent the ‘initial’ or ‘starting’ conditions of a sequence” (Ibid.).

Analysts must identify hypothetical causal mechanisms that describe the relationships or actions among the units of analysis. As Falleti and Lynch (2009: 5) note, “mechanisms tell us how things happen”. I follow Falleti and Lynch (2006) who diverge from Mahoney (2001: 580) when he states that a causal mechanism is “an entity that – when activated – generates an outcome of interest”. Such a definition implies a deterministic understanding of mechanisms, such that once the mechanism operates, it “will always produce the outcome of interest” (Ibid.). Conversely, Falleti and Lynch (2006: 5) see mechanisms as “portable concepts distinct from the variables attached to particular cases” that can “operate in different contexts”. Given that mechanisms interact with the contexts in which they operate, outcomes of processes cannot be pre-determined simply by knowing the type of mechanism that is at work (Ibid.). As Goertz (1994: 28) states, “context plays a radically different role than that played by cause and effect; context does not cause X or Y but affects how they interact”.

While a TGPT framework must detail the point at which a process begins, Collier and Collier (1991) describe how a theoretical model should examine the “antecedent

conditions” which may “be part of the causal chain in a theoretical explanation... when they differentiate units undergoing” processes of change (Roberts 2015: 48). That is, a framework must account for conditioning causes that, while not generating the actual processes under investigation, may weigh directly on their dynamics and thus influence their trajectory and lead to divergent outcomes amongst cases under comparison (Ibid.). Furthermore, once a process has begun, sequences may take several forms. Pierson (1992, 1993, 1996) has shown that “once adopted, policies have effects on future politics that, as time goes by, make it increasingly difficult to stray from the policy trajectory originally taken. One main reason for this is that policies create their own constituencies who defend the gained policy terrain and continue building on those reforms to maintain and advance benefits derived from them” (Falleti 2010: 16). Such analysis resonates with Mahoney’s (2000: 508) description of *self-reinforcing sequences* characterised by the formation and long-term reproduction of a given institutional pattern. However, Mahoney (Ibid.: 526-7) suggests that a *reactive sequence* may also develop. Reactive sequences “may reinforce some outcomes, producing linear legacies of institutional continuity, but they may corrode or destabilise others and generate a legacy of ongoing institutional change or fluidity” (Roberts 2015: 45).

So, how might such a TGPT model look like for democratisation processes that seek to boost citizenship in its civil, political, and social spheres and overcome the political and economic exclusion fostered by market democracy by simultaneously deepening and expanding democracy? We must identify what is the key starting point of the process, as well as outlining the antecedent conditions that may feedback onto the process and influence the trajectory of the sequences. Given that this study seeks to examine

democratisation processes that aim to build a post-neoliberal alternative to market democracy, the election to state power of a Left party that promises to deepen and extend democracy is considered to be the “point of inflection”. This term in many way resembles the notion of a “critical juncture” advanced by Collier and Collier (1991), and expanded on by Mahoney (2000, 2001, 2001a) and Capoccia and Keleman (2007). A critical juncture “may be defined as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different...units of analysis and which is hypothesised to produce distinct legacies” (Collier and Collier 1991: 29). Critical junctures are “characterised by high levels of uncertainty and political contingency” (Roberts 2015: 43). A critical juncture contains three components; “the claim that a significant change occurred within each case, the claim that this change took place in distinct ways in different cases, and the explanatory hypothesis about its consequences” (Collier and Collier 1991: 30).

However, it is necessary to distinguish my term, a “point of inflection”, from a “critical juncture” due to the central role of “key actor choice points” (Mahoney 2001: 6) in critical juncture frameworks. Critical junctures require that agential forces face a clear fork in the road, whereby the “range of plausible choices available to powerful political actors expands substantially and the consequences of their decisions for the outcome of interest are potentially much more momentous” (Capoccia and Keleman 2007: 343). While the process I describe here resembles many of the critical juncture criteria, it does not contain a “fork in the road” moment where agents face a choice between divergent paths. As such I use the term “point of inflection” to differentiate from “critical junctures”.

The election of a Left party is considered to be a point of inflection in a post-neoliberal democratisation process for two reasons. Firstly, it offers the possibility of opening a period of substantive and radical democratisation that would be highly unlikely to occur under a

Right-wing party. Secondly, without access to state resources for a Left-wing party, a radical transformation of society would not be feasible. While identifying a point of inflection appears straight forward, it is necessary to outline a theoretical process capable of explaining how the point of inflection emerged and how the aftermath sequencing developed.

Roberts (1998) identified that if attempts to deepen democracy are accompanied by efforts to extend democracy, a strong reaction from economic elites⁵ who seek to defend their privileges is likely. As such, a core component of the TGPT must account for how these elite reactions influence and feedback onto the democratisation process. If elite opposition and destabilisation efforts to extending democracy to the socio-economic sphere are inevitable, then the issue emerges as to whether or not a strict adherence to liberal democratic separation of state powers is compatible with a simultaneous effort to overhaul the existing distribution of wealth in society. Indeed, progressive leaders may feel that to adhere to their mandate to engage in socio-economic redistribution, a centralisation of power in the office of the executive is required. It is essential to highlight here that the extent to which such centralisation of power is possible, and how exactly it may occur, would be greatly influenced by the institutional context in which the process occurs. A centralisation of power would be far more likely in a presidential system compared to a parliamentary system (Linz 1990). Should a centralisation of power in the executive occur, fundamental issues regarding attempts to move beyond market democracy and build a post-neoliberal model emerge.

⁵ For the remainder of this section, the term “elites” refers to domestic business and economic agents who control such vast resources that they have structural power to influence government policy agenda setting. This is to differentiate the term “elites” from political elites who may in fact be part of the sitting Left governments.

While each individual case will be different, I outline a general theoretical framework of how a post-neoliberal democracy may emerge and develop. Following an extended period of economic and political exclusion resulting from the application of market democracy, mass protests demanding change will emerge (without such protest it is inconceivable that a post-neoliberal democratisation process that seeks to change the status quo could emerge); following protests, a new-Left party or leader with a clear mandate to boost citizenship is elected; once the new government seeks to boost social citizenship by extending democracy, thereby threatening elite interests, there will be a backlash by elites⁶; in response to this backlash, the progressive government will face a dilemma - moderate their efforts to overhaul wealth distribution in society, or bend the liberal separation of powers and use centralised executive power to resist destabilisation and push forward with socio-economic reform. If this second path is chosen whereby executive power is boosted, a balancing act between centralisation so as to counteract elite opposition, while simultaneously fostering popular grassroots involvement in decision-making processes emerges. Within the centralisation path, a range of scenarios may emerge; at one end centralisation could be “progressive”, that is, the executive makes use of its power to override elite opposition – though perhaps inhibiting the civil and political rights of elites and the parties that represent them – in order to ensure that democratic extending occurs, while at the same time, crucially, popular sectors are guaranteed access to policy-making channels so as to ensure bottom-up control of the process. In such a scenario, the risks of centralising power are somewhat counterbalanced by a simultaneous deepening of

⁶ The ideological hue of the progressive government will likely influence the extent of efforts to extend democracy. More “radical” political leaders will push for a more fundamental overhaul of the distribution of resources, which in turn will likely foster a more aggressive response from economic elites. As such, the context-specific ideology of the progressive leaders and the extent of the challenge to the status quo they pose will influence elite resistance and the subsequent democratization process.

democracy for popular sectors. Conversely, centralisation to overcome elite opposition to extending democracy may set in motion a reactive sequence whereby centralisation becomes “despotic”. In such a scenario, popular sectors would be excluded from decision-making channels, while the executive would use extensive powers to entrench itself in power irrespective of electoral results or popular demands for change. In such a scenario, and without the counterbalance of popular control, “despotic” centralisation may tend toward full-blown authoritarianism.

Focusing on those cases where boosting executive power is a possibility, I suggest that the theoretical framework must account for how the power of the Left-government, popular society, economic elites, and the international sphere influence the democratisation process and subsequent outcomes. As discussed shortly, to comprehend how each of these four sectors influences outcomes, we must evaluate the *relational* power between them, that is, how they interact with and influence each other. However, in general, increased popular societal power should boost the quality of democratic deepening and extending, control centralisation, and increase the long-term legacy of the process. Powerful economic elites will foster a weakened democratic deepening and extending, a strong government desire to centralise, and a limited democratic legacy. Strong Left-government power meanwhile can have both a positive and negative impact on democratic outcomes. If the government is strong, democratic extending is likely. Deepening and centralisation may be increased or decreased depending on how popular societal power and elite power influences the government. Strong government in conjunction with a strong popular society tends toward democratic deepening, restricted centralisation, and a lasting legacy. However, powerful economic elites in the absence of a powerful popular society is likely to foster despotic centralisation and a weak legacy. Government-international

relations must be included in analysis because, as historical sociologists Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) outline, transnational structures of power based in the international economy influence the domestic balance of power between state and society and impact upon the range of policy choices available to government. How international (f)actors impact on democratic outcomes depends not only on their power vis-à-vis the Left government, but also on their underlying ideological tendencies. In sum, the actual impact on democratic outcomes will depend on the relational balance of power between key actors and institutions in each specific case.

In addition to the relational analysis of power, the framework must also account for the antecedent conditions that may influence the democratisation process, both in its early and more advanced stages of development. For the proposed framework to be more universally applicable, it would need to account for path-dependency issues of presidential versus parliamentary political systems. However, the focus here and for the remainder of the thesis is on those cases where centralization of power in the executive *is* possible, as these cases may shed the greatest light on the complexities and difficulties of engaging in radical-substantive democratization today. As such, the framework and following analysis is most applicable to presidential systems⁷. Before discussing the variable antecedent conditions, it is important to note how one feature of neoliberal reform – decentralisation policies – has influenced the possibility of a challenge to market democracy emerging. As Falletti (2010) outlines, following the demise of import substitution industrialisation (ISI), Latin America systematically engaged in decentralisation policies, that is, “a set of policies, electoral reforms, or constitutional reforms that transferred responsibilities, resources, or

⁷ However, as Malamud (2001) highlights, centralisation of power versus diffusion of power should not simply be read as a mirror of presidential versus parliamentary systems. While institutions matter, the degree of centralisation of power is also determined by political practices and informal institutionalisation (O’Donnell 1996).

authority from higher to lower levels of government” (Ibid.: 6). As Roberts (2015) demonstrates, without decentralisation from central government to regional and municipal state spheres, spaces for new parties, many of them Left-parties, would not have existed. Without such spaces, it is questionable as to how the challenges to market-democracy could have emerged.

Returning to the nature of varied antecedent conditions, the form of protest against political and economic exclusion, that is, whether it is well co-ordinated by powerful grassroots movements or whether it is a spontaneous ad-hoc eruption, will influence the type of leader that is elected at the moment of inflection, as well as their post-neoliberal mandate. Co-ordinated protests are more likely to foster an organic relationship whereby a new leader and party emerge as the political expression of organised groups in civil society (Roberts 1998: 75). In organic relationships there is, intentionally, a fuzzy line between the party and its constituent social organisations, and party leaders and members may come directly from the social movement. Given their origins in diverse forms of popular organisation, relationships between organic parties and society “tend to be more open, inclusive, and pluralistic in their organisational structure, with less hierarchical control and more political space for democratic participation at the grassroots” (Ibid.). As such, in organic relationships we would expect to see greater levels of democratic deepening and progressive centralisation.

Conversely, in cases where protests are uncoordinated, but still on a mass scale, relations between popular protesters and the new leader and party will tend toward a vanguard relationship (Roberts 1998: 75). In such a scenario, a leader emerges independently of the unconnected protest movements but claims to represent their demands and concerns. Over time, in the vanguard relationship there is a tendency “for the

party to try to establish political control over diverse forms of social organisation and to shape collective action in conformance with the party's political objectives" (Ibid.). As such, in vanguard relationships one would expect lower levels of democratic deepening and a greater tendency toward despotic centralisation compared to organic relationships.

I also hypothesise that the history and scope of popular sector organising in the antecedent era may have a conditioning influence on the sequencing and legacy of the democratisation process. The legacy of the process will depend on ensuring that deepening and extending becomes institutionalised. Institutionalisation allows citizens to see progressive changes as rights, who will then mobilise to vote in support of their retention (Huber and Stephens 2012: 266). Following elite opposition to efforts at extending, and the subsequent centralisation of power in the executive, I propose that cases with histories of co-ordinated mobilisation will be better positioned to ensure that centralisation remains "progressive". In addition, in such cases popular sectors will be better prepared to hold the government to account and prevent any backsliding on social citizenship gains in response to elite demands. Conversely, in cases where popular society does not have a long history of organisation and mobilisation from which to draw lessons and inspiration from, I hypothesise that popular actors will be less capable of defending their hard-won citizenship gains from demands placed on the government by elite opposition.

2.3 Understanding Power:

In order to comprehend the TGPT framework we must analyse the capacity of the Left-government, popular society, economic elites, and international (f)actors to achieve their goals, as well as the autonomy they have to pursue their objectives. Power is most commonly understood as the capacity to make others do what they otherwise would not, where one actor in a social relationship can carry out their will despite resistance (Weber

1968; Mann 2012; Silva 2009). This is known as “distributive” power, entailing a zero-sum game with a fixed amount of power distributed amongst opponents, whereby an increase in power for one side necessitates a decrease in power for the other (Mann 2012: 6; Silva 2009: 33). However, Parsons (1960: 199-225) highlights that there is a second *collective* or *relational* dimension to power whereby a “social actor may transcend his or her limitations in a head-to-head conflict with a more powerful opponent by collaborating with others who have similar grievances and goals” (Silva 2009: 33). This forging of horizontal linkages allows actors to coordinate action, and establish coalitions and alliances (Ibid.). As such, the framework developed in this study adopts a relational approach to power “drawing attention to the fact that actors’ capabilities depend, in part, on those of others and that actors are enmeshed in distinctive and overlapping-power networks” (Silva 2009: 30). As such, analysis must examine how power relations between the government-elites, the government-popular society, and the government-international sphere interact and impact the democratisation process.

a. Government-elite opposition relations:

Post-neoliberal democratisation processes are likely to be heavily influenced by government-elite power relations; the capacity of a government to redistribute, how governments engage in redistribution, and how elites respond to such redistribution must be accounted for in explaining how, and to what extent, power becomes centralised in the executive. As such, it is necessary to evaluate what gives elite oppositional forces power over the radical governments, and, vice versa, what gives governments power to resist elite opposition demands to desist in democratic expansion.

Mann (2012: 2) outlines a theory for understanding societies and their structures whereby the interrelations between four fundamental sources of social power - ideological,

economic, military, and political (IEMP) – determine the relative power of actors. Left governments and elite oppositional forces seek to control these four sources of power which “engender the structural bases and resource capabilities upon which social order and domination rest” (Silva 2009: 33).

Political power refers to “the usefulness of centralised, institutionalised, and territorialised regulation of many aspects of social relations” (Mann 2012: 26). Political power refers primarily to the power of the state. State power has two elements. Firstly, there is despotic power of the state elite, which allows elites to take decisions without routine negotiation with civil society groups (Mann 1984; 2012). Secondly, states may have infrastructural power which allows them to penetrate society and implement decisions throughout its territories, whereby “political elites can extract resources from, and provide services to, all subjects” (Ibid.: 2). Examples of sources of political power that left governments and elite opposition vie for include control of the judiciary, executive and legislature, political parties and coalitions of parties, and municipal and local governments.

Economic power depends on the “effective possession of economic resources” (Silva 2009: 36). Sources of economic power include control of the banking and commerce sectors, taxation, business and investment ownership, and natural resource control. Groups who can monopolise control over production, distribution, exchange, and consumption strengthen their collective and distributive power in societies. For example, as Silva notes, “dominant class-based social groups use their economic power to defend their interests in profits and favorable investment conditions against both labor and the state” (2009: 37). Capital exploits the state’s reliance on it for critical investment and employment generation, thereby coercing the state to limit its intervention in the markets (Ibid.). Economic elites seek to use their sources of economic power to constrain progressive policies that would

transfer wealth to the poor, thereby limiting the possibility of extending democracy (Huber and Stephens 2012).

Military power is a coercive power that relies on the use of force and arms, and the military and police elites who monopolise it can obtain collective and distributive power (Mann 2012: 26). While it could be argued that the military is controlled by the state, and should therefore fall under the heading of political power (Weber 1978), given the history of the military to act independently in some regions, for example in Latin America it is necessary to separate military from political power (Silva 2009: 38). Military power is not confined to armies; both Left governments and elite oppositional forces may use connections with gangs, paramilitaries and criminals to achieve their desired goals (Mann 2006: 351).

The final source of social power, ideological power, derives from “the capacity of ideas to shape policy options and principles of social organisation” (Silva 2009: 40). Those who can monopolise a claim to meaning and knowledge wield great collective and distributive power. As Mann (2011: 173) argues, for an ideology to change social processes it “needs the existing ideologies to appear to be defeated and it has to offer an alternative and plausible interpretation, so it has to make sense to people...It’s a combination of the failure of the existing ideologies and an alternative which seems appropriate to the times and which uses elements of the present social structure yet emphasises them in a new way, which makes converts” (Ibid.: 173). Ideological power is increased where “innovative issue framing resonates with broader audiences and draws them in” (Silva 2009: 40). Sources of ideological power for the Left governments and elite opposition include - to varying degrees depending on the actual case - the domestic and foreign media, universities, and religious

institutions. Case study chapters will examine the wide asymmetries of influence in these sources of ideological power wielded by the Left governments and the economic elites.

b. State-popular society relations:

Unequal power relations between society and state (where the state is dominant) will limit the agenda of politics, ruling out the possibility of direct citizen input to decision-making, or policies that address embedded inequality (Caputo 2011: 448). Hence, society must find a way to alter this balance of power. As noted above, weak social actors can forge collective power by collaborating with others who have similar goals, thereby helping them to overcome their limitations in one-on-one conflicts with more powerful actors (Parsons 1960; Silva 2009; Mann 2012). By forging horizontal linkages, societal actors can coordinate action, and establish coalitions and alliances (Silva 2009: 33). The presence of a strongly organised and united civil society is more likely to generate pressure from below, and thus give power to society over state actors (Anria 2016: 463). Strongly organised civil societies are those with high organisational density (percentage of a geographical region's population that are members of grassroots organisations), while united civil societies are those with an affinity of purpose, that is, "the ability to privilege common purpose over narrow organisational interests in order to agree on decisions affecting common interests" (Ibid.: 464).

If society (in the form of social or protest movements) wishes to increase its influence in decision-making processes and affect change in the policy-range offered by the state, then collective action must be one end of the spectrum of participatory engagement, where the other end is more formal and institutionalised (Pearce 2004: 503). As such, society must engage with the state-apparatus, and not just fight against it. The form that societal-party

relations take during attempts to deepen and extend democracy is thus a crucial variable influencing democratisation outcomes (Roberts 1998).

c. State-international relations:

The “prevailing international, regional, and global context, the geostrategic location of the state and society in question, their relationship with global forces, and, also, the nature of democratisation of the very institutions of global governance and other private entities which wield power” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 103) may influence the democratisation processes. Given their conservative nature and support for market democracy, the capacity of the IFIs such as the IMF and World Bank to hold national governments to account may influence the freedom that Left-led states have to experiment with democratic deepening and extending. Walker and Williams (2010) note that increased political participation may lead to a radicalisation of demands from below on political leaders from the rank-and-file, thereby complicating governing elites’ attempts to compromise with international (f)actors. How the government manages this scenario where it is trapped between demands from below and above will significantly influence democratisation processes.

2.4 Advancing democratisation theory:

In summary, rather than privileging structures or agents, as many democracy frameworks do, the approach taken here is to marry the two “to achieve a more sophisticated synthesis, and a more nuanced understanding of how democratisation is produced by the interplay between them” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 101). As Mahoney (2001a: 11) states, “such a mutually constitutive approach to actors and institutions resonates well with many recent calls in the study of national political regime change for frameworks that go beyond voluntaristic and structural approaches”. Unlike overly agential approaches, the approach

adopted here avoids excessive emphasis on “contingency, crafting, and choice by highlighting the crucial role of structures and institutions in channelling long-term development” (Ibid.). However, “by emphasizing the role of actor choice in creating institutions and structures”, the approach followed here “avoids the tendency of some structuralist accounts to read human agency out of the analysis” (Ibid.).

The framework advanced here not only identifies outcomes, but also *explains variance* in outcomes. Such a framework fills a gap in the literature regarding how a radical, substantive alternative to market democracy may emerge, develop, and sustain itself. However, though it may be appealing for social sciences to develop a single theory that can explain democratisation processes in all cases and all times, democratisation is too complicated a process to do so. As Tilly argues, it is difficult to forge one approach that alone can explain such a multi-faceted process, and questions of “how” and “why” democratisation does or does not occur “spring up at every step of our historical way” (2007: 49 as cited in Grugel and Bishop 2014: 101). However, the framework advanced here is adaptable and flexible, and the theoretical process detailed above may be transported from one site of analysis to another, which is crucial given that each case of democratisation will be different from others.

3. Applying the Framework To Left-led Latin American Experiments:

Turning to Latin America, in the more radical pink-tide cases such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela there have been attempts to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy. One of the principle critiques of the radical Left governments from liberal-democratic theorists has focused on the centralisation of power in the executive. As Hunt (2016: 443) notes, some authors contend that democracy is being weakened due to a focus on “power enhancement” in the presidency, thereby eroding horizontal accountability and fomenting

social and political polarisation (Madrid, Hunter, and Weyland 2010: 141-2). Indeed, Eaton (2013) states that the reversal of neoliberal decentralisation in the radical Left cases highlights how power has been centralised in the executive so as to diminish opposition power and increase presidential control of resources. However, as outlined earlier in section 6.4 of chapter 1, Munck (2015: 373) notes that the radical Left challenged the liberal idea of the separation of powers because they felt that without a strong president it would be impossible to overcome elite opposition and implement ambitious attempts to re-found the political, economic, and social spheres (Escobar 2010). Furthermore, as Wolff (2013) discusses, these centralizing trends have been accompanied by “new relations with society through popular participation and the need to negotiate support from marginal social actors that had been excluded and underrepresented by previous governments” (Hunt 2016: 443; Wolff 2013).

To comprehend the emergence, development, outcomes, and legacies of the democratic experiments in the “radical” pink tide cases, I now apply the TGPT framework detailed above. The point of inflection is the election of radical Left governments to state power, as it was with the election of these leaders that attempts at constructing an alternative model of democracy began in earnest. The antecedent conditions include the shift to neoliberalism and liberal democracy in the region and the subsequent weakening of citizenship followed by the eruption of mass popular protest. Roberts’ (2015) model expertly describes how in some pink tide cases the neoliberal “critical juncture” created the space for radical parties to emerge. He notes that where neoliberal “reforms that were imposed by labour-based populist or centre-left parties”, party systems were “de-aligned”, thereby “leaving opponents of the reform process without effective representation in established institutions”. In these cases, “societal claims were mobilised outside and against established

party systems, forcing traditional parties to share the political stage with new popular contenders – or to be eclipsed by them altogether....This pattern broke down and transformed national party systems, and it created opportunities for a more radical, extra-systemic turn to the left that included sharper breaks with the market orthodoxy of previous rulers” (Roberts 2015: 5)⁸.

It is crucial to highlight, however, that the radical outsider parties that emerged in Latin America are not identical. Silva (2009) examines in detail the waves of protest that emerged across the continent in response to the political and economic exclusion that resulted from the adoption of neoliberal policies. Some protest waves were led by organised labour movements and civil society groups, while others were disconnected, ad-hoc eruptions of anger that did not have a centralised guiding force. Where protests were coordinated by groups with long histories of mobilisation and horizontal linkages across society, a movement-Left party was elected to power, while in cases where popular society had a more limited history of organisation and where protests against the neoliberal marketisation of society were un-coordinated, a more top-down, vanguardist radical-Left party emerged (Levitsky and Roberts 2011: 13). These two hypothetical processes are outlined in figures 2 and 3 overleaf.

⁸ It is pertinent here to remind the reader that the cases under discussion are presidential political systems.

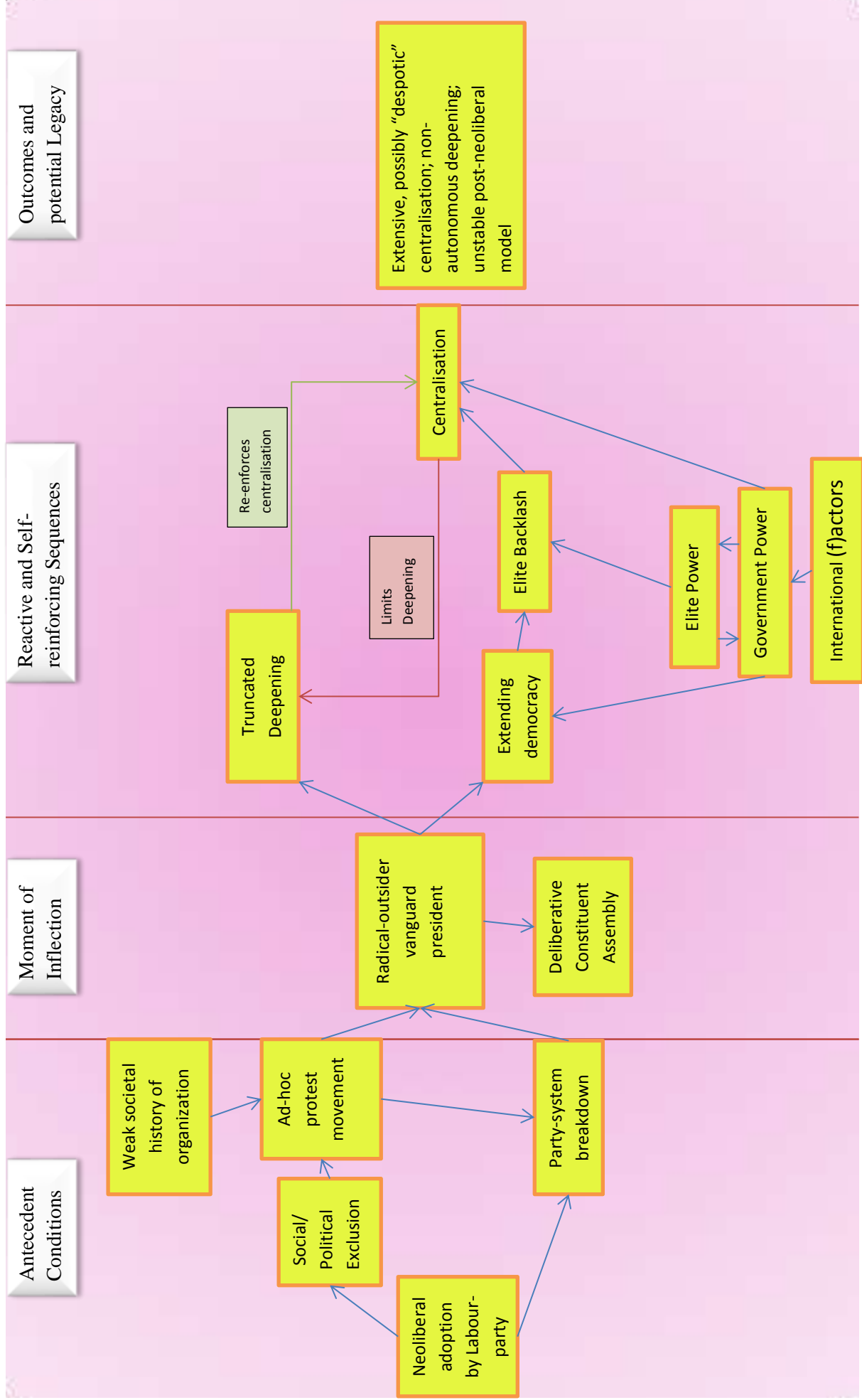


Figure 2: Simultaneous deepening and extending of democracy in vanguard-type cases. (Author's own elaboration)

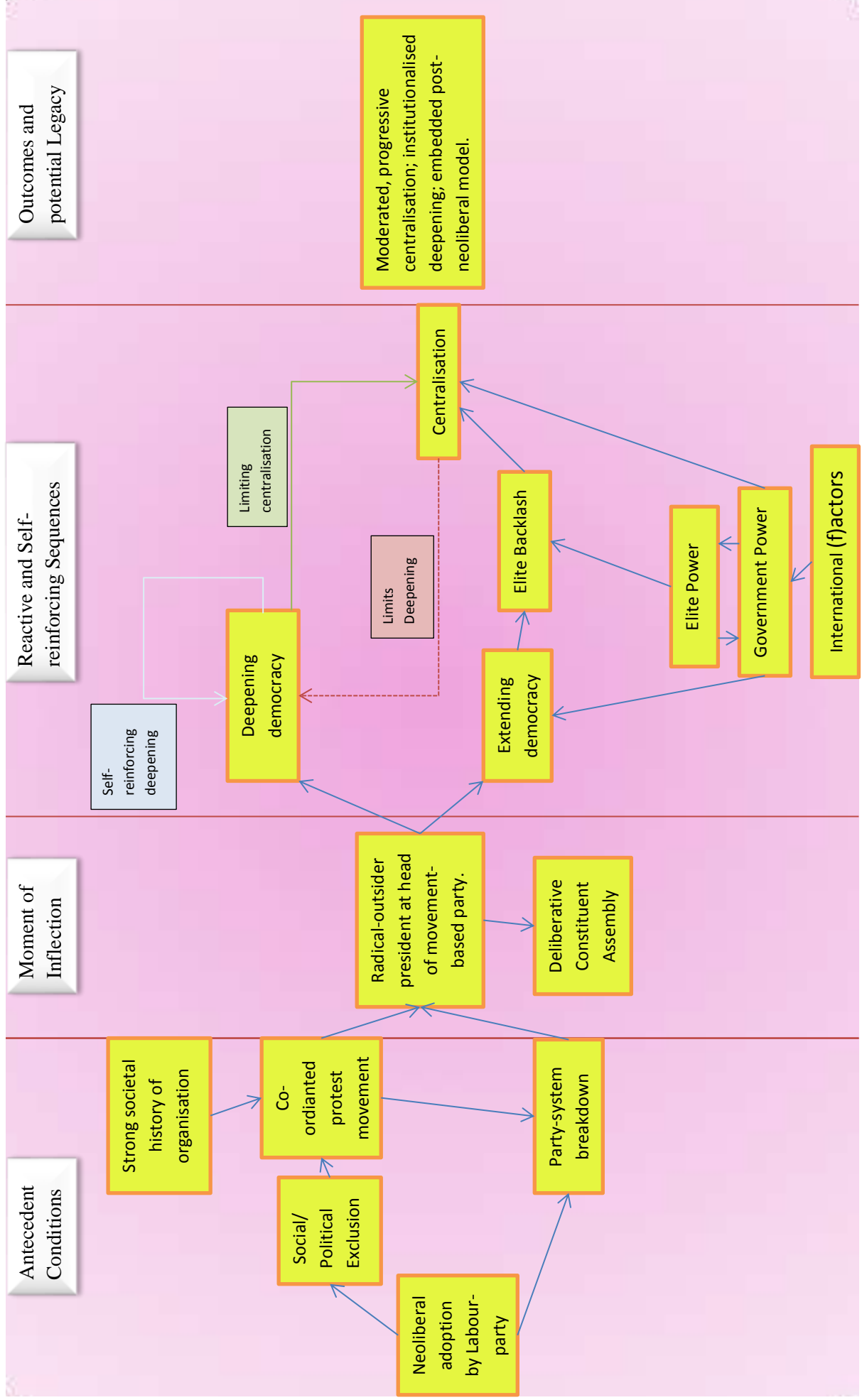


Figure 3: Simultaneous deepening and extending of democracy in movement-based cases. (Author's own elaboration)

The two processes outlined in figures 2 and 3 are hypothetical models that require concrete empirical testing. Bolivia and Venezuela are chosen as sites to test the models and examine the democratisation sequences that have emerged. Both Bolivia and Venezuela adopted neoliberal policies under the guidance of supposed labour-based parties; both experienced recurring cycles of anti-neoliberal protest (Silva 2009); both experienced party-system collapse following such protest; following the election of a radical-outsider Left government, both established constituent assemblies; and in both cases they departed from liberal democratic principles and adopted heterodox economic policies (Silva 2017: 93). Despite these similarities, the two cases varied in terms of the origins of the Left turn; the election of Evo Morales in Bolivia at the head of the MAS party was the result of a bottom-up party-movement process following well organised protests under a unifying anti-neoliberal banner. In Venezuela, uncoordinated, ad hoc eruptions of anti-neoliberal sentiment created the space for Hugo Chávez's election in Venezuela along a more vanguard party-society relationship. Furthermore, in Bolivia there is a long history of Marxist- and indigenous-inspired collective organisation and mobilisation vis-à-vis the state, while in Venezuela there is a more limited history of popular-sector organisation.

Given that both cases have engaged in experiments that seek to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy, they offer ideal sites from which to draw lessons for democratic theory in general regarding how to move beyond the confines of market democracy. Considering the varied experiences of popular organising before the points of inflection, the cases also offer scope for comparison regarding if and how antecedent experiences of organising feedback onto the process at a later stage, influencing democratic outcomes (quality of deepening and extending, centralisation, and legacy). Furthermore, the varied nature of party-societal relations – organic in Bolivia and more vanguardist in Venezuela –

allow for examination of how bottom-up experiences compare to more top-down experiments in building a post-neoliberal democracy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

1. Introduction:

Given the crisis of market democracy and the political and economic exclusion experienced by the popular sectors of society, it is pertinent to ask how an alternative model that simultaneously deepens and extends democracy may emerge and develop. As such, I seek to examine democratisation attempts that seek to move toward a post-neoliberal model. Rather than simply assessing the final outcomes of such processes, I wish to explain these outcomes so as to identify lessons for how to thicken the quality of democracy. Given the complex nature of such a democratisation process one must identify its origins before tracing its development over time, highlighting the multiple variables that influence the path taken and the ultimate outcomes in terms of a deepened, extended, and embedded post-neoliberal model of democracy that thickens the quality of civil, political, and social rights, while also accounting for the issue of centralisation of power in the executive. To respond to these concerns, I examine democratisation processes in Latin America under the leadership of radical-Left governments via a theory-guided process tracing framework.

This chapter begins by detailing the process of case selection and the adoption of a paired comparison research design to examine the cases of Bolivia and Venezuela. Next, indicators for democratic deepening and extending, elite destabilisation, centralisation, and democratic legacy are delineated before identifying how to assess the relative power of the left-led state, organised popular society, economic elites, and transnational (f)actors. A discussion of data collection methods is then offered highlighting that secondary sources of data are triangulated with primary data gathered via interviews with key actors as well as participant observation and ethnographic analysis. Interviews were completed during two

field research trips to each case country in 2016 and 2017, and were bolstered by long-distance and electronic interviews in 2017 and 2018.

2. Theoretical Context:

Democratisation, in this project, is considered to be a multi-faceted and open-ended process. That is, a variety of factors may emerge and impact the process, causing it to advance (democratise) or retreat (de-democratise) wherein the quality of actually existing citizenship is the variable in question. Given that this project seeks to comprehend how an alternative to market democracy that simultaneously deepens and expands democracy may emerge, develop and sustain itself, an interpretivist approach underpinned by a subjectivist ontology is adopted. As such, rather than seeking general “rules”, the more critical approach of this project “seeks to question overly simple assumptions and to challenge deeply embedded but often unreflexive ideas about democracy” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 102). A critical approach to existing “developed” democracies is adopted. Such a view does not resonate with more positivist and economic approaches to understanding democratisation, which ask narrow questions and use quantitative analysis of large datasets to hypothesise “the ways in which different causal factors produce particular kinds of democratic outcomes” (Grugel and Bishop 2014: 102). This type of empirical analysis tends to take questions surrounding the meaning of democracy as settled. Given that multiple factors emerge throughout the ongoing process of democratisation, quantitative analysis of cases exhibiting a given set of initial variables cannot offer a robust examination of varying democratic outcomes.

Furthermore, neither structures nor agents should be privileged in research design. As Grugel and Bishop (2014: 100) outline, “structures are important, and likewise our

perceptions of structures are too; but it is people, both within wider civil society and those driving the institutions of the state apparatus that make democracy". Hence, structures *and* agents are influential in democratisation. Such an ontological position allows analysis to offer a nuanced understanding of how the interplay between structures and agents influences if and how substantive-participative democracies and social change may emerge.

3. Research Design: Paired Comparison and Case Selection:

Given the complex nature of processes to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy, a large-N type study is eschewed. Such a method is not apt for comprehending the case-specific factors that must be accounted for in any examination that seeks to *explain* outcomes. Rather, a small-N method is employed. There are two options here, a single-case study and a paired-comparison. Tarrow (2010: 243) outlines the similarities of the two. First, both provide an "intimacy of analysis" that is rarely available to large-N studies; second, both methods insist on deep background knowledge of the countries being examined; and third, both facilitate "causal-process analysis" in contrast to "data-set observations" (Brady and Collier 2004: 277).

While there are similarities, paired-comparison does differ from single-case studies in several ways. Tarrow (2010: 244) notes that its distinctiveness can be understood via an analogy with experimental design strategies. He states that paired-comparison is similar to experimentation in its ability to compare the impact of a single variable on outcomes of interest, though not to the same extent given that an experimenter has the ability to randomly assign subjects to treatment and control groups. In this regard, all the pairing comparativist can do is "attempt to carefully match the confounding variables that they know about (but not the ones that do not come to mind)" (Ibid.). Also, given the small

number of cases used, it is not possible to control for more than a few factors. However, he (2010: 244) affirms that paired comparison “does have an analytical baseline, eliminating the possibility that the dependent variable can have occurred even in the absence of the independent variable, thus significantly increasing the inferential power of the design over the single-case study”. Secondly, paired comparison allows for dual-process tracing, thereby reducing the possibility that a “supposed determining variable is as critical as it might seem from a single-case study alone” (Ibid.).

Given the advantages of paired comparison, one may ask why researchers should stop at comparing just two cases. Tarrow (2010: 246) believes that the move from single-case to paired comparison “offers a balanced combination of descriptive depth and analytical challenge that progressively declines as more cases are added”. When moving from one to two cases, we enter the “realm of hypothesis-generating comparative study” while also examining how common mechanisms are influenced by case-specific features; but as the number of cases is increased, “the leverage afforded by paired comparison becomes weaker, because the number of unmeasured variables increases” (Ibid.). As such, by keeping comparisons to a small-N, we avoid issues of “concept stretching” (Sartori 1970). Given the nature of the aims and questions of this study, a paired-comparison methodology is employed, thereby allowing for a “thick description” (Geertz 1973) that helps decipher the “meaning of behaviour and institutions to the actors involved” (Collier 1993: 110).

The issue then arises as to how we should select cases for comparison. Mills’ (1843) method of similarity or difference offers guidance. These methods are termed most similar systems design (MSSD) or most different systems design (MDSD) (Pierce 2008: 58). In MSSD, common systemic characteristics are controlled for, whereas intersystemic differences are

viewed as explanatory variables (Przeworski and Teune 1970: 33; Tarrow 2010:234). MDSD use the logic of comparison in a reverse manner; cases are selected on the basis that they share a key independent variable, but differ greatly in terms of spurious and intervening variables (Burnham et al. 2008: 77). In both MSSD and MDSD, it is crucial to highlight that the dependent variable is irrelevant at the research design stage; cases should not be included or excluded on the basis of their values on the dependent variable (Geddes 1990).

MSSD has been criticised because “the experimental variables cannot be singled out” (Przeworski and Teune 1970: 34). However, Gerring (2006: 133-135) and others have pointed out that while it may be difficult to sort the specific variables that unite systems, MSSD can direct attention to the ways in which they differ. Meanwhile, in the exploratory phase of research, a second case can confirm a tentative finding from a single case (Ibid.: 131). Besides, as Tarrow (2010: 235) notes, “some cases are inherently interesting because they take contrasting routes to similar outcomes”.

MDSD is particularly prone to the “many variables, too few cases” criticism that small-N studies in general receive (Tarrow 2010: 235). This critique of comparative methods suggests that MDSD have a weak capacity to sort out rival explanations (Lijphart 1971). Lijphart (1971) suggests that to overcome this issue, we should use MSSD to identify comparable cases, that is, cases that are matched on many variables not crucial to the study, but that vary in terms of key independent variables, thereby assessing their influence more adequately. However, MDSD does have some advantages over MSSD. As McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001: chapter 10) discuss, highlighting similar or identical processes in a variety of cases can “expand or limit the scope conditions of established research findings”

(Tarrow 2010: 235). Neither MSSD nor MDSD is inherently superior, and which method we chose depends on the issue under investigation (Ibid.).

Considering the contemporary crisis of market democracy in the “developed” world, it is fundamental that democratic theorising begin to engage in discussion of how an alternative model that boosts the quality of citizenship may emerge, thereby re-invigorating both citizen conceptions of the political system in which they live, and democratic theory itself. As such, this study identifies cases in Latin America which experienced a similar democratic crisis in the past, but which, with the arrival of the pink tide of Left governments, began experimenting in delivering a “post-neoliberal” model that responds to citizen concerns regarding political and economic exclusion. By critically engaging with these experiments, crucial lessons for democratic theory can be uncovered.

The post-neoliberal turn in Latin America was not homogenous. As Yates and Bakker (2014: 10) identify, “policy changes and institutional reforms have taken shape under different national regimes and according to different political ideologies in Latin America, all of which embody the tensions involved in attempting to overcome distinct neoliberal institutional heritages.” As such, it is necessary to identify which post-neoliberal cases offer the best site for analysis. Munck (2015: 384) suggests that analysis examining democratisation processes in the region should pay particular attention to the cases where progressive governments’ efforts have gone furthest to build an alternative to liberal democracy as these “are the cases where conflicts between government and opposition are most bitter” (Munck 2015: 384), hence offering the best cases from which to draw lessons.

Following a MSSD, Bolivia and Venezuela were selected as the cases for comparison in this study as, firstly, they are representative of the radical end of the post-neoliberal

spectrum. Furthermore, the cases share many characteristics, making them viable sites in which to compare democratisation processes. Both cases are examples of presidential systems. In both cases, there have been attempts to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy, albeit to varying extents, following the election of outsider candidates to presidential office on the back of mass protests against the economic and political exclusion experienced by the popular sectors under market democracy. New constitutions were drafted in each country with the goal of boosting political and social citizenship. Liberal democracy is not eschewed in either case, but is challenged. Nationalisations and reliance on natural resource rents has been vital in both cases' attempts to extend democracy. Both are active members in new regional alliances (such as the *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - ALBA] and the *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* [Union of South American Nations – UNASUR]) that seek to offer alternatives to US dominated organisations (such as the Organisation of American States - OAS); both are overtly critical of US policy, in Latin America and beyond. In both cases, there has been opposition from entrenched economic elites who have seen their historical positions of power challenged. As a result of such opposition, both presidents have been accused of centralising power in the executive as they have sought to adhere to promises to raise the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society.

There are however crucial differences between the two cases. Bolivia, unlike any other South American new-Left country, experienced a major social revolution in 1952, and as a result had a veteran, highly militant independent labour confederation (Silva 2009: 103). The majority-indigenous population is also important in comprehending the societal power in Bolivia. Issue framing “on ethnic identity was crucial in organising resistance” whereby

anti-neoliberal protests were “intertwined with claims for indigenous rights” (Ibid. 104-5). The mass protests against neoliberalism and market democracy in Bolivia were organised by powerful social and indigenous movements who had a long history of organisation (Balderacchi 2015: 5). While popular protests did erupt in Venezuela in response to the ills of neoliberalism, unlike in Bolivia, the protests were not directed by an organised, coherent social movement. Consequently, societal movements did not build associational and collective power by connecting disparate movements together under one umbrella (Silva 2009: 195). As such, while Bolivia and Venezuela “show the interaction of mobilised social movements and a state committed to developing a participatory democracy” (Kirby 2013: 105), the initial state-society relations differed. In the opening stages, Bolivia’s Left-turn followed “a classic mode of incorporation from below via a mass mobilisation party”, while Venezuela’s followed a “state-led incorporation on socialist concepts of popular power” (Silva 2017: 93). In order to more fully comprehend outcomes in both cases, it is important to evaluate whether such variance in the antecedent conditions and early phases of the democratisation process influenced the subsequent democratisation sequences. Furthermore, analysis seeks to evaluate whether cases that exhibit long histories of popular organisation have a greater capacity to inhibit centralisation of power in the executive as well as to defend democratic gains, thereby signifying a greater post-neoliberal legacy.

While Bolivia and Venezuela are examined in this study, Munck (2015: 384) identifies that Ecuador and Nicaragua are also important cases in which to study the development of alternatives to liberal democracy. However, while Nicaragua has experimented with alternatives to liberal democracy, the process is less advanced than in Bolivia and Venezuela. Ecuador does offer an interesting case as there have been robust experiments in

deepening and extending democracy. However, it would be beyond the scope of this project to include a third in depth case study. Venezuela's status as the longest standing, and in some regards most radical, of the new-Left countries gives it an important status in examining Latin American democratisation. Bolivia meanwhile exhibits crucial characteristics of a democratisation process that is driven from the bottom-up by a society that controls the government. While in Ecuador there were organised demands from the grassroots for a deepening and extending of democracy, President Rafael Correa retained power over the base, and as such could limit the extent of democratisation (Balderacchi 2016). Ecuador straddles the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases in some regards; it had, like Bolivia, bottom-up protests demanding more democracy, while at the same time it had a state that dominated processes, like in Venezuela. As such, while it would be instructive to include Ecuador as a case study, the variance between the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases offers the most interesting comparison for generating lessons for democratisation.

4. Research Methods:

Bolivia and Venezuela offer instructive lessons for progressive forces, at both the state and societal level, who seek to develop an alternative to an elite controlled liberal, representative democracy underpinned by a neoliberal rationality. To date however, the majority of scholarly analysis on contemporary Bolivia and Venezuela, and the Latin American region more generally, has evaluated the post-neoliberal era via a liberal lens (see for example Vargas Llosa 2009; Walker 2013: ch. 8; Weyland 2013). Other conservative thinkers such as Álvaro Vargas Llosa suggest the Left governments have weakened democracy by using "populist" tactics that sacrifice liberal ideals of political democracy, the market-economy and individual rights (Vargas-Llosa, A. 2015). Part of this narrative suggests

that some states – most notably - Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador - may have become authoritarian regimes, which while holding elections, retain too much power in the state to allow for these to be sufficiently free and fair (Mazucca 2013: 109; Vargas Llosa 2009; Castañeda 2006). Their tendency to shore-up electoral support from informal sectors through redistribution of commodity incomes leads Mazucca to term these ‘radical’ Left leaders “rentier populists” (2013: 110). Such analysis is important, as the risks of deep-centralisation of power in the executive are certainly real, and the consequences to democratic processes could be extremely harmful. However, this branch of analysis has failed to fully comprehend the radical experiments in deepening and extending democracy.

The “overwhelming focus on populist tendencies of leaders in power tends to obscure the underlying political crises that existed before the new Left governments came to power, including the decline of traditional parties and the crisis of representation and legitimacy” (Hunt 2016: 444). By solely focusing on concentration of power in the executive, which is most certainly a crucial variable in any democratisation process, liberal critiques of post-neoliberal democratisation have tended to obscure the “dynamics of change at the grassroots level” (Buxton 2011: xi), “thereby restricting the development of theory on the potential and limitations of alternative forms of democracy” (Duffy 2015: 1489). Such analyses miss the “contested nature of democracy” clearly evidenced in Latin America (Wolff 2013: 55). Analyses therefore should challenge “the universalist, modernising assumptions and democratic classifications of liberals...on the basis that they do not engage with or measure popular understandings of real existing democracy and its practice” (Buxton 2011: xvi). Embracing a broader understanding of democratisation and its outcomes

enables “academic theorising and evaluation to move beyond a simple dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ democracy” (Duffy 2015: 1489).

As both Jessop (2001) and Hunt (2016) note, the capacity of the state to deliver a deepened and extended democracy can “only be analysed in relation to the society to which it belongs. From this, a complete relational analysis must effectively incorporate the impact of civil society and social movements on the role and capacity of the state” (Hunt 2016: 438-9). Both Hellinger (2011: 340) and Buxton (2011: xii) agree, stating that qualitative analysis focused on popular experiences of democratisation is required so as to take a “welcome break from the purportedly logical assumptions of economists and from the crude, elite-focused mouldings of the populist school” (Buxton 2011: xiii). The framework adopted in this study allows for analysis that addresses such concerns and gaps in the literature by placing democratisation processes within wider structural frameworks, while retaining a focus on the experience of “ordinary” agents (Hellinger 2011: 340).

While it is key to analyse state-society power relations and how they influence democratisation processes, the structural-agential approach requires a more nuanced relational analysis of power between actors if we are to comprehend how and why the cases have delivered varied results on the outcomes of interest, namely levels of democratic deepening, extending, centralisation, and embeddedness of change. Given the likely rejection by elites to government attempts to redistribute, as well as the likely efforts from international (f)actors such as hegemonic regional powers and regional blocs to influence democratic outcomes, the relative power between Left government, economic elites, and international (f)actors must be evaluated, in conjunction with state-popular society power relations.

5. Identifying democratisation outcomes: Deepening, extending, centralisation, and legacy:

To assess whether Bolivian and Venezuelan processes have in fact deepened and extended democracy, it is necessary to ask if they have confronted neoliberal boundaries of what is defined as the political arena: “its *participants*, its *institutions*, its *processes*, its *agenda* and its *scope* (emphasis added)” (Dagnino 2005: 1). Firstly, the state must be transformed in an institutional (form of the state), representative (who influences state policies), and functional (range of state responsibilities) sense so that spaces for deliberative participation are opened to citizens, while socio-economic inclusion of popular sectors is boosted via increased state protection from the market.

5.1 *Deepening Democracy:*

To identify if democratic deepening has occurred, it is necessary to evaluate opportunity and agency; opportunity signifies formal and informal institutions such as laws, norms, and regulatory frameworks that foster or impede agency, and agency indicates the capacity of actors to make effective choices, that is, the capacity to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005: 4). As such, we need to evaluate whether opportunities for direct citizen input, oversight, and participation in the policy making process have been boosted, and whether the accountability of elected officials to their constituents has increased (Roberts 1998: 26). In this study, I focus on the capacity of popular sectors to influence and oversee policy making that centres on issues of social citizenship such as housing, education, health, pensions, and land reform as it was in these areas where popular calls for change were most robust under market democracy (Silva 2009).

Criteria that would suggest that such deepening has occurred include fora for public discussion on social policy that while autonomous – that is independent of state interference – also have an institutional link to state administrative agencies charged with developing and applying policy. These links are necessary for ideas and demands forged at the local societal level to be heard by the state, and for society to monitor and give feedback to state agents regarding the success or otherwise of a given policy. Re-call referendums whereby citizens can hold politicians to account if their performance does not match public expectations would indicate a more direct influence by society over the state. Furthermore, as Silva (2013: 55) notes, “appointments to government positions of leaders and intellectuals who are from or closely identified with the popular sectors in the government’s social coalition are also significant”.

To measure the extent to which such indicators of democratic deepening exist, I begin with an analysis of the new Constitutions and the laws surrounding participation and citizenship. I also assess secondary statistics, produced by both governmental and non-governmental agencies, regarding participation. Secondary data alone however cannot prove that new laws or government promises are actually put into practice. While quantitative data may suggest that there are greater numbers participating in state-sponsored participatory organisations, for example, it cannot identify the quality of such participation, or the expectations and disappointments of engaging in participation. As such, it is necessary to triangulate secondary data with primary data from interviews and focus groups so as to gain a more nuanced understanding of the successes and failures of the experiments.

An affirmative response to the following questions during primary research may suggest that democratic deepening has occurred⁹; firstly, have participatory spaces emerged that allow for popular control over a *range* of issues, and do these issues resonate with popular concerns, as measured by the actual policy areas discussed by the public; secondly, do societal-bodies have *control* over decision-making processes, as measured by whether participants or state officials have final say on project approval or policy approval; thirdly, are the actual decision-making processes genuinely *deliberative* whereby decisions are based on open discussion rather than via non-deliberative forms such as strategic bargaining, hierarchical command, markets, or aggregate voting; fourthly, are citizens able to effectively *monitor* the implementation of their decisions and hold politicians to account, as measured by active citizen oversight of policy application and whether officials are open to recall elections; fifth, are participatory-deliberative spaces *inclusive* whereby political pluralism exists amongst participants in decision-making. It is thus important to identify who is invited to participate as well as who is involved in the formulation of propositions that institutions are then supposed to implement; and sixth, are decisions made through this process effectively translated into real action, as measured by actual state delivery of proposals advocated by the public.

5.2 *Extending Democracy:*

Extending democracy entails attempting to redress social and economic inequalities so as to prevent economic power from skewing the articulation of popular interests and blocking the exercise of popular sovereignty. Social equity is not simply a substantive outcome that is external to the functioning of democracy, but is also a prerequisite for equal access and

⁹ Questions are adapted from Hetland (2014) and Fung and Wright (2003).

unbiased democratic contestation, and is thus a vital indicator of procedural fairness (Roberts 1998: 29-30). In particular, the “factual existence of social rights such as access to information, education, food, and health care is of primordial importance to one’s ability to exercise civil and political rights” (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 5). Indeed, as “poverty and political underrepresentation are generally connected in multiple ways (see Fraser 1990, Bourdieu 2001), marginalised groups face the difficult task of introducing their visions and demands into state politics” (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 5). In this project, indicators of extending democracy include attempts by the state to decrease inequality and to boost the social and economic citizenship of popular sectors via state protection from the market in areas such as housing, health, education, pensions, and land reform.

To measure whether such attempts to extend democracy have taken place, I assess the new constitutions and laws for providing social citizenship to citizens, as well as examining statistics regarding social spending as a proportion of GDP on specific areas targeted by government social policy. Statistical analyses of the effectiveness of such policies seek to examine changes in inequality and the quality of life of popular sectors. Furthermore, in order to assess the actual quality of the service delivered, and to identify if such services match popular needs and demands, and to assess how the delivery of such services has changed over time, requires triangulating secondary analysis with primary research of beneficiaries of such policies. As such interviews are carried out to measure whether democratic extending has in fact occurred, and to what extent it has achieved its goals.

5.3 Elite destabilisation and Centralisation of power in the executive:

One of the core concerns with processes that seek to simultaneously deepen and extend democracy is that economic elites will attempt to stifle redistribution, leading to

centralisation in the executive so as to overcome these obstacles. To identify if such elite destabilisation tactics did in fact occur, I combine secondary analysis of academic resources with primary data collection from key stakeholders such as local politicians, academics, and journalists. Adapting the framework of Janda (1980) who examines the centralisation of power within a political party, evidence of the following variables would suggest centralisation in the executive has occurred; reductions or eliminations of separations of power between the branches of the state; rule by executive decree for extended periods of time outside of emergencies; selecting candidates for local political positions in a top-down process rather than via local processes that engage with popular civil-society groups; policy formulation decisions being taken by the executive rather than the agenda being set by local societal groups with the participation of local branches of the political party; the executive administers disciplinary procedures against members of its own party, parties included in coalitions, opposition parties, and civil society groups who critique government actions; and leadership being exercised by one individual who can personally commit the party/country to binding courses of action rather than being controlled by societal actors, members of party coalitions, or opposition parties (Janda 1980: 108). This centralisation of power may become problematic if it becomes *despotic*; despotic power “refers to the range of actions that the ruler and his staff are empowered to attempt to implement without routine, institutionalised negotiation with civil society groups” (Mann 2012: 169) or political opposition. If centralisation becomes despotic, the scope for popular social organisations to maintain their autonomy from the government and direct policy-making decisions will be reduced via co-optive practices.

To measure the extent of centralisation I examine secondary sources, both academic and media reports, that examine the above mentioned criteria. Secondary analysis is also triangulated with primary research. Interviews with popular sector civil society groups, local academics, opposition politicians, and politicians of the ruling party are completed so as to help gauge the level of centralisation of power in the executive.

5.4 Legacy of processes:

To comprehend the embedded nature and the legacy of post-neoliberal democratisation processes requires analysing the extent that democratic deepening and extending measures that boost the quality of citizenship have become institutionalised. Institutionalisation occurs where popular sectors have the capacity to hold a government to account, prevent centralisation becoming despotic, and ensure that spaces for bottom-up participation are established, while also ensuring that any advances to social citizenship are protected in the face of elite opposition to such changes. To identify whether such a scenario has in fact emerged requires triangulating secondary research which charts popular sector mobilisations – in terms of numbers competing, protest demands, and linkages between popular organisations – with primary analysis focused on identifying how popular sectors view the process of change in terms of successes, failures and “red-line” issues that will likely spark a new wave of mobilisation. Furthermore, the development of a progressive political party that creates spaces for grassroots participation in and control over internal decision-making processes, and that is capable of competing electorally at a national level, would represent an institutionalised legacy. To identify if such a party exists, primary research with popular members of progressive parties is triangulated with secondary

research examining levels of electoral success for the party at local, regional and national levels.

6. Historical process tracing and power:

The TGPT framework outlined in chapter 2 calls for a historical analysis of the key events and moments where we saw changes and attempted changes in terms of deepening, extending or centralisation, as well as examination of elite backlashes to (attempted) redistribution, government responses to elite obstacles, and international interventions and changes in the international sphere. Furthermore, following the “point of inflection” where outsider-Left candidates are elected to presidential office, the TGPT framework calls for an analysis of the relative power relations between government, elites, organised popular society, and international (f)actors in order to understand how and why certain events and actions occurred, how they fed back on to the democratisation process, and how they impacted on democratic outcomes.

6.1 *Government-elite relations:*

In terms of government-elite power relations, I adapt Mann’s (2012) framework that examines how the interrelations between four fundamental sources of social power - ideological, economic, military, and political (IEMP) – determine the relative power of actors (1986: 2). As such, it is necessary to identify indicators for each source of power, and to detail how to identify which of these indicators were present, and how they influenced outcomes, at the key moments in the TGPT framework explaining the development of the post-neoliberal democratisation process.

Indicators for political power include control/influence over the branches of central government, links to dominant political parties and coalitions, control of municipal and local governments, and influence over civil-society groups who actively support your

agenda/oppose your opposition's agenda – such as trade unions, NGOs, student groups, and organisations that can mobilise public support for your agenda. Sources of economic power include control of the banking and commerce sectors, taxation, business and investment ownership, and natural resource control. Control over production, distribution, exchange, and consumption chains indicates that a group has economic power over rivals to influence outcomes. Indicators of military power include control over the armed forces, the police, and connections to gangs, paramilitary groups and criminals. Indicators of ideological sources of power include control over the media, the education system – in particular universities – and religious institutions. Other sources of ideological power include influence over NGOs final reports regarding issues of human rights, economic performance etcetera.

The principle method used to identify whether government or economic elites have control over these sources of power at a given moment is analysis of secondary sources. In particular, I evaluate academic analysis and media reports of the key moments in the TGPT framework, identifying the power-balance between government and economic elites and then offer analysis as to how the relative power balance influenced the democratisation process.

6.2 Government-society relations:

The second relationship that the TGPT framework suggests influences democratisation processes is between government and popular societal groups. Popular groups can boost their power vis-à-vis the government by increasing associational and collective power (Parsons 1960; Silva 2009). Associational power refers to “organising along the lines of class, identity, or other specific interest” (Silva 2009: 38). Collective power “involves coordination among two or more organised social sectors, such as urban formal sector labour, peasants,

indigenous, the informal sector of labour, neighbourhood associations, and so on” (Ibid.). Furthermore, Anria (2016: 463) suggests that societal power is boosted when popular civil society has a strong organisational density – that is, a high percentage of a locality’s population are members of popular grassroots organisations – and where disparate groups are united in their goals and objectives. In such scenarios, popular sectors capacity to mobilise and protest is boosted, thereby increasing their ability to hold the government to account.

6.3 Government-international (f)actors relations:

The final power relationship to examine is that between the government and international (f)actors. As Grugel and Bishop (2014: 98) highlight, globalisation fundamentally challenges the notion that democratisation is something which simply occurs in territorially bounded states. Pressures for a certain type of democratisation may be understood as “leverages” by the West and “linkages” to the West (Levitsky and Way 2005, 2007). While Levitsky and Way’s framework was designed to examine democratisation in the post-Cold War period, the conceptions of leverage and linkage by and to the West remain pertinent in Latin America’s experiments in building a post-neoliberal model of democracy.

Western leverage describes a governments’ vulnerability to external pressure which may be exerted in “a variety of ways, including political conditionality and punitive sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and military intervention” (Levitsky and Way 2005: 21).

Levitsky and Way outline several factors that influence the extent of Western leverage. Firstly, and most importantly, is the size and economic strength of a state; weak states with underdeveloped economies are more vulnerable to external pressure than those with substantial economic power. Secondly, Western leverage is reduced where a country has

economic, political or military support from an alternative power, be that at the regional level or beyond.

Linkages meanwhile are defined as “the density of its ties to the United States, the EU, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions” (Levitsky and Way 2005: 22). Levitsky and Way identify several dimensions of linkages; “1) economic linkage, which includes credit, investment, and assistance, 2) geopolitical linkage, which includes ties to Western governments and Western-led alliances and organisations; 3) social linkage, which includes...migration and diaspora communities” (Ibid. 22-23). Greater linkages mean greater awareness in the West of challenges to the market model of democracy. Furthermore, greater media coverage and lobbying by NGOs ideologically aligned to market democracy increases the pressure on Western governments to interfere with domestic democratisation.

To measure the extent of Western leverage and linkage, I begin by examining the extent of Bolivia and Venezuela’s reliance on the international financial institutions for economic aid. Given the pro-neoliberal stance and US domination of these institutions, heavy reliance is likely to increase pressure to curb attempts to build a post-neoliberal democracy. Secondly, economic strength and reliance on trade with the US is assessed. Again, given the neoliberal ideological stance of the US and their historical aggression towards Leftist movements in the Latin American region, it is likely that US leverage over Bolivia or Venezuela would prevent post-neoliberal democratisation from advancing. Finally, links between the two case countries and other global powers such as Russia and China are evaluated. Strong links would suggest a declining Western influence, thereby increasing the policy space to engage in democratisation that challenges market democracy. To identify

the extent of leverage and linkage and their impact on democratisation processes I examine existing academic literature and review newspaper reports from both pro-government and opposition sources.

A further component to analyse when determining government-international relations is the membership of individual countries to regional organisations. Membership of such bodies requires signing up to a democratic charter. If countries are signees to organisations that call for market models of democracy, they are likely to face pressure from other members to desist from attempts to build a post-neoliberal model of democracy. On the other hand, membership in regional bodies that promote challenges to the market model of democracy acts as a counterweight to pressure from international (f)actors who decry challenges to market democracy as challenges to democracy itself.

To examine how regional memberships influence democratisation processes, I firstly detail the membership status of Bolivia and Venezuela to various regional organisations that exist in Latin America, before examining the ideological stance of such organisations. To evaluate how regional bodies impact post-neoliberal democratisation processes I examine press releases from the organisations, as well as academic analysis and media reports.

7. Primary Data collection:

Primary data collection sought to offer a more detailed and nuanced examination of the key events identified in the TGPT post-neoliberal democratisation framework, helping to address some of the central concerns of this project. In terms of how the early relationship between Left governments and popular society influences democratisation, primary analysis allowed me to evaluate whether self-reinforcing or reactive sequences have developed such

that popular sectors' influence over social policy formation and implementation has increased or decreased over time, as well as allowing for examination of the capacity of organised popular sectors to curb the centralisation of power in the executive. Indeed, primary research focused on the experience of popular actors allowed for a rich examination of the contemporary state of democracy.

7.1 Fieldwork and identifying interviewees:

To respond to the central concerns of this project, the empirical basis of my primary research was qualitative data gathered through direct interaction with organised popular society. The reason for this is simple; popular sectors have been the most consistently excluded group – both politically and economically – under market democracy and as such it has been these groups who have most actively called for democratic deepening and extending. Also, given the fact that radical Left governments have most actively engaged in fostering inclusion of the popular sectors, I based my study on these groups. Such popular actors are the key actors capable of stating whether or not extending and deepening have been achieved and to what extent changes have become embedded. As such, it was necessary to select research methods that allowed for the collection of emic rather than etic data, that is, data that arose in a natural, indigenous form rather than data that represented the researcher's imposed view of the situation (Krippendorf 2004).

As such, fieldwork was an essential component of data collection for this project. While the historical chapters may be developed by using secondary resources, it would not have been possible to gain nuanced answers to questions regarding the democratisation processes without face to face interactions with popular actors. As many interview respondents highlighted to me, they appreciated the fact that I had gone to their country, city, neighbourhood, organisation and home. Respondents emphasised that they had very

rarely been offered the opportunity to voice their opinions on the processes, and resented the fact that their experiences were often written about by media sources who had not actually sought the viewpoints of local popular actors. Indeed, interviewees were keen to engage in discussions with me about their experiences, but stated that under no circumstances would they have been willing to do so with journalists or researchers via long-distance electronic means as there was a strong belief that their views and experiences have been misrepresented by many sources. As such, one of the key strengths of this thesis is that it offers a space for popular voices who are often talked about, but rarely spoken with. As discussed below, by earning the trust of respondees that their views would not be misrepresented, the data gathered was representative of local actors' actual lived experiences of the democratisation processes. By triangulating the written accounts of other researchers – which are shaped by those who wrote them and whose voices they included – with first-hand data collection, the validity of this research is thus significantly boosted.

7.2 Self-reflexivity as a researcher:

It is crucial that I as the researcher engaged in self-reflexive analysis of my position as an “outsider” and how this impacted on the type of data garnered from fieldwork. The principle source of primary data stemmed from recorded, semi-structured interviews accompanied by more informal conversations and ethnographic observations. The methodological aim was to use “interview-data-as-a resource” (Seale 1998; Rapley 2004) whereby interview data reflects the interviewees' reality outside the interview. Such an approach responds to both Hellinger (2011) and Buxton (2011) who critique the lack of analysis of Latin American democratisation from the perspective of everyday citizens. However, the data-as-resource approach to interviewing has been critiqued from some in

the constructionist traditions (for example Baruch 1981; Cuff 1993; Mishler 1991). As Rapley (2004: 16) states, this critique stems from highlighting that interviews are *inherently interactional events* where both parties equally monitor each other's talk and gestures, and that the talk is *locally and collaboratively produced*. As such, it was crucial that I as the interviewer did not assume that interview-talk was *only* about the official topic of the interview; it may have been about the person producing themselves as an "*adequate interviewee*", as a "*specific type of person in relation to this specific topic*" (Ibid.). Cognisance of such issues was required during all interviews to ensure that the interview does not reflect simply a social encounter between the interviewer and interviewee. Focusing on "interview-talk as locally and collaboratively produced does not deny that the talk is reflexively situated in the wider cultural arena" (Rapley 2004: 16). As Rapley (Ibid.) continues, "in this sense, interview-talk *speaks to and emerges from* the contemporary ways of understanding, experiencing, and talking about that specific interview topic. However, these ways of understanding, experiencing, and talking about the specific interview topic are contingent on the specific local interaction context and should be analysed, at least initially, from the circumstances of their production".

It was necessary therefore that I be cognisant of my positionality as a white European researcher who is examining polarising democratisation processes in Latin America. Given that I was an outsider who was seeking new knowledge, respondents may have sought to portray the democratisation processes in an overly-critical or supportive light, depending on their political ideology, direct links to or positions within a political party, or their lack of trust in me as a researcher. While bias relating to a respondent's personal ideology is normal, and indeed can be beneficial to research once their own positionality is accounted for, reluctance to speak to an unknown outsider provides a significant challenge. While

opponents and proponents of the democratisation processes spoke freely with me when I asked questions that allowed them to offer responses that supported their political viewpoint, getting respondents to offer a more nuanced appraisal of both the successes and issues of processes required gaining the trust of the interviewee that I would not manipulate or misrepresent their critiques. To do so, I made multiple visits to sites of analyses, went to people's homes for dinner, played football with respondents, walked around the *barrios* with locals, and participated in events with local actors. Furthermore, once I had been introduced by local actors who vouched for my integrity, new interviewees were increasingly willing to engage in discussions about the pros and cons of processes, thereby allowing for a more nuanced analysis of realities than would have been attainable had I not spent time in the field. Also, given that my wife is Venezuelan and is related to Alí Primera – a much-loved Venezuelan folk singer whose protest songs are adored by many of the people with whom I spoke, my status as an outsider was lessened. Indeed, my Venezuelan family are divided regarding their views on the process and informal conversations over the course of several years with them allowed me to gain a more nuanced understanding of the underlying sentiment in the country. Moreover, having lived in Venezuela in 2012-13 and travelled extensively in both case countries, my personal knowledge of the culture and customs helped to break down barriers with interviewees. Furthermore, being an outsider was, in some cases advantageous. For some interviewees who wished to critique the process, speaking anonymously to an outsider who was not directly related to a local organisation or party offered a space for discussion which was not normally available to them. There was no fear of reprisals for complaining about "their" government, organisation, party, or process and as such, they were more prepared to

engage in frank discussions than they would have done with fellow participants in the process.

7.3 Sites of Analysis:

In Venezuela, primary research focused on two core groups; popular urban organisations that came into existence after the election of Hugo Chávez, and organisations that had a history of organising around ideas of democratic deepening and extending that pre-date Chavez's election. Analysis seeks to identify how both groups have viewed the successes and failures of the democratisation process, whether expectations have been met and what lessons they have garnered for how to drive the process forward. I spent three months living in Caracas in 2016. In Bolivia, primary research focused on urban popular groups with long histories of mobilisation calling for radical substantive democratisation. Analysis centred on groups who retain support for president Evo Morales, and on groups who initially supported the president but who no longer do so. I spent four months living in Bolivia in 2017. All four groups, two in Venezuela and two in Bolivia, are comprised of popular actors who support the building of a post-neoliberal democracy. However, variances in organisational history, as well as varying state-society relationships allow for both cross-case and internal comparisons. Analysis and comparison of data from these four distinct groups helps identify if the origins of the post-neoliberal process and the history of organisation are important in influencing the extent of deepening, expanding, centralisation and legacy.

7.4 Generalisability and validity:

It must be noted that carrying out such analysis cannot garner a complete understanding of the successes or failures to imbed a deepened and extended democracy. Each local experience is different, with different histories and differing power balances leading to differing outcomes. As such, a complete generalizable systematisation of experiences is not

viable. This is the trade-off when selecting in depth small-N analysis over large N. However, a large-N study would be far less efficient, and indeed unsuccessful, in responding to the how and why questions regarding the emergence, development and legacy of a radical-substantive democratisation process. In fact, given the nature of democratisation and the multiple factors that influence its development, seeking to offer simple generalizable “rules” for democratisation would run the risk of being overly teleological. Rather, this thesis seeks to offer a rich analysis drawn from actual experiences. This interpretivist approach eschews the normative, Euro-centric approach of earlier democratisation theorists and instead helps us to comprehend the process from the perspective of local popular citizens. Such an approach helps us to identify how multiple factors influence processes, and crucially, how a given context must be accounted for when seeking to comprehend complex democratisation processes. However, this does not block the possibility of drawing lessons from the two cases; careful in-depth analysis of each case and of lived experiences does allow for comparison, helping us to tease out and develop a theoretical framework “that not only makes sense of the particular persons or situations studied, but also shows how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results” (Becker 1990: 240). This does not suggest that “issues of sampling, representativeness and generalizability are unimportant...They are crucial whenever one wants to draw inferences from the actual persons, events, or activities observed to other persons, events, or situations, or to these at other times than when the observation was done” (Maxwell 1992: 293). As such, carefully selecting sites for field research and identifying interviewees that allow for generalizability to unobserved sites within each case country is key to boosting the validity of the study.

In Venezuela, data collection focused on two sites in the capital city of Caracas. Research focused on Caracas for several reasons. Firstly, 89 per cent of Venezuelans live in urban environments (World Bank Urban Population 2015), so focusing on the city of Caracas is not unrepresentative of the country in general. Secondly, there are emblematic neighbourhoods in Caracas that meet the criteria of having either recent, or historical experience in organising and interacting with the state to demand a deepened and extended democracy. Thirdly, Caracas was selected due to time and financial restrictions.

The popular *parroquia* of Petare is located in the densely populated municipality of Sucre, eastern Caracas. It is comprised of several massive *barrios* with a population of 372,616 (INE 2014). Petare is a sprawling zone that does not have a strong history of well organised, collective mobilisation. The site is representative of popular urban areas across the country due to its similar indicators for income, employment, education, and housing levels (INE 2014a). Petare also has many new popular movements and organisations that have emerged following the election of the outsider Left candidate to president, making it a good site to investigate so as to respond to the central concerns of this project outlined above.

The second site of analysis in Venezuela, the popular zone of 23 de Enero, is located in the Libertador municipality in the Capital District of western Caracas. 23 de Enero has a population of 77,344 (INE 2014). The name 23 de Enero (23rd of January) references the date in 1958 when the Venezuelan dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez was overthrown. The barrio is seen by residents as the heart of Chavismo. The Hugo Chávez-led coup attempt of 1992 was headquartered in the Cuartel de la Montaña building in 23 de Enero, while this same building now houses the mausoleum to Chávez. 23 de Enero has a long history of

popular protest and left-wing guerrilla urban warfare demanding that the state deliver services to the urban poor.

A note of caution on the two principal sites of investigation must be sounded. Petare is located in an opposition-led municipality/state¹⁰ while 23 de Enero (Libertador) is government-led. While the principal comparison is between Venezuelan and Bolivian cases, I do offer some internal case-comparison too. As such, a critique of the research design may be levelled that differing results of the internal comparison will be due to the fact that one area was government-led, and the other opposition-led. While this must be taken into consideration, Venezuelan state-sponsored spaces for participation and the delivery of social citizenship are designed to bypass oppositional controlled sub-national levels of government. Indeed, the variance in political control in the two municipalities may add to the richness of the study, offering an extra layer to analysis, especially when one considers that the Sucre municipality was controlled by politicians of the ruling national Left-party in the early stages of the post-neoliberal democratisation process before opposition candidates won local elections.

In Bolivia, analysis centred on the popular indigenous city of El Alto. While Evo Morales and his *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) party emerged from a resistance movement of coca producers- the *cocaleros* - and relocated miners in the Chapare province (Anria 2013: 28), and actors and organisations based in this province make up the original core constituency of the MAS, this study does not focus on such actors. Analysis instead focused on the experience of urban El Alto for several reasons. The approach taken in this project seeks to follow a critical-progressive trajectory. That is, rather than simply offering a fawning support

¹⁰ However, the opposition lost control of the state in October 2017 elections.

of the processes that is blinkered to any shortcomings, while avoiding the narrow-minded ideologically guided attacks on the processes that seek to delegitimise any attempt at building an alternative to market democracy, I seek to follow a path that supports and highlights efforts to build a truly post-neoliberal democracy, while critically evaluating the shortcomings of these processes. Given the nature of the relationship between the MAS, Morales, and the organic base, it was unlikely that primary analysis would have identified such honest critical evaluations of the post-neoliberal process, or that such actors would mobilise against the president if centralisation occurred. As such, analysis instead focused on the experiences of non-organic popular sectors in El Alto, the *Ciudad Rebelde* (Rebellious City) (Lazar 2006).

El Alto is an extremely poor urban area that is a highly mobilised, self-organised, and politicised social space with a strong Aymara identity (Albó 2006; Lazar 2008 52-55; Anria 2013: 29). It is Bolivia's fastest growing city with a population of 848, 452 (INE Bolivia 2012). Movements in El Alto have been at the heart of anti-neoliberal protests and have a history of calling for democratic deepening and extending. Indeed attitudes in El Alto are perceived to be a barometer of the sentiment in the country as a whole, with the city setting the agenda for political demands of popular and indigenous sectors. Given the *Alteños'* (people from El Alto) lack of organic ties to the MAS party, I sought to assess their experiences of post-neoliberal democratisation in terms of deepening and extending, as well as their capacity to prohibit centralisation in the executive. By comparing and contrasting the experiences and opinions of *Alteños* who continue to support the MAS and Morales with those who have desisted in doing so, a nuanced understanding of the strategies, successes,

failures, feedback loops, and legacies of Bolivia's democratisation process under Left government can be garnered.

7.5 Interviewing:

Given the fact that democracy is an essentially contested concept, and that I sought to identify local perceptions of the development, or not, of an inclusive substantive democracy, interviews with open-ended questions that allow respondents freedom to detail their experiences were required. Each interview had guiding questions surrounding the issues of deepening, extending, centralisation, legacy and lessons learned, as well as issues relating to state-society power relations¹¹. Respondents were prompted to give a personal review of the entire democratisation process as detailed in the TGPT framework. If respondents failed to touch upon the key subjects themselves, I asked more direct questions. In this way, I managed to allow freedom for respondents to express their true opinions, while at the same time guiding responses towards the central themes of investigation in my project. While the majority of primary research was focused on popular experiences in both case countries, I also completed interviews with opposition politicians, local academics, journalists, and government officials tasked with boosting political and economic inclusion. These interviews deliver a more rounded analysis and help to comprehend and explore issues that popular sector actors may not be able to respond to such as the state of government-elite relations and government-international relations, and how these influence democratisation processes and outcomes.

¹¹ See appendix 1 for sample questions, though the exact questions posed were adapted for each individual interviewee depending on their history of engagement with political processes, organisational affinities etcetera.

Thirty to thirty-five interviews were completed in each case country. Interviews were carried out in Spanish which is essential as the vast majority of respondents did not speak English. Having lived in and travelled extensively in Latin America, and given that my wife is Venezuelan, my language skills were of sufficient quality to engage in such interviews. Respondents' real names are used throughout, except in cases where interviewees sought to remain anonymous. A list of interviewees and their affiliations can be found in Appendix 1. In order to identify potential interviewees in Venezuela, an academic who carried out research with popular sectors put me in touch with two contacts in Caracas. I began by meeting these two contacts for lunch. From discussions regarding my planned research, these contacts then put me in touch with a range of communal council and commune spokespeople. It was important to be introduced to such leaders, as they brought me to the actual sites of their councils/communes in *barrios* with extremely high levels of violence. Without such contacts, it would not have been feasible to gain access, both to the physical sites and to the local actors. Once I was introduced however, I was quickly welcomed by local actors and from there my contact list snowballed. In terms of sampling for interviewees in Venezuela, I sought to interact with long-term political activists as well as those whose engagement with politics was more recent. I met with both the elected spokespeople of communal councils and communes as well as regular members of the base. I interviewed a mixture of men and women. While interviews were predominantly carried out with popular actors in Petare and El 23 de Enero – some of whom have long histories of collective organisation and mobilisation and others whose involvement only began in recent times, to further boost both the generalisability and the richness of the study, interviews with popular actors in the *barrios* of Antímano and Minas de Baruta were completed. Furthermore, to gain a more nuanced comprehension of realities in the country I

interviewed several opposition politicians, middle-class residents of Caracas, and academics who are critical of the process.

In Bolivia, to identify interviewees I contacted the UNITAS research institute in La Paz whose research focuses on urban development in Bolivia. Via UNITAS, I was provided a contact list with actors on opposing sides regarding their support for the government. Following meetings with these contacts, I was introduced personally to leading figures in local popular organisations in El Alto. Once I had been introduced, finding new contacts proved relatively easy as sources were keen to share their experiences with me. I was invited to meetings and protests where my contact list grew. In terms of internal validity, I gained access to key organisations that both support and critique the government and the process, thereby allowing for a rich analysis. I also interviewed politicians from the governing party and the principle opposition party, as well as a relatively new political party which ideologically straddles the line between the dominant parties. Furthermore, I interviewed numerous “regular” citizens as well as base members from four different popular organisations, thereby boosting the generalisability and validity of the research.

7.6 Participant observation:

While in both case countries efforts were made to capture a range of views via interviews with key actors, to boost the validity and generalisability, interview data was accompanied by participant observation so as to gain a better understanding of the context in which interviewees live. The processes in Bolivia and Venezuela are contentious, with polarisation between supporters and opponents of the governments prevalent. It is important therefore to analyse not just what people say, but also the underlying context in which they say it. For example, government supporters may be reticent to critique state

policies for fear that a foreign academic would misrepresent the reality on the ground. It is necessary therefore to evaluate what is *not* said, or how things are said. While this is a difficult task, ethnography does help us to understand such complex social processes (Baiocchi 2005) and overcome issues of reporting bias in interview.

By spending extended periods of time with interviewees outside of the formal interview setting, I have sought to gain a deeper insight to their true opinions, thereby offering a more honest and robust analysis. Attending protests and organisation meetings, and being seen on a regular basis by local actors helped to establish my trustworthiness, as well as giving me an opportunity to observe how actors speak to each other in a natural setting. For example, I was asked to return multiple times to communes in Venezuela to witness how participatory democracy functioned in practice, as well as to take part in markets where locally grown food was distributed to local residents. In Bolivia, I was asked to join a six hour protest from El Alto to La Paz where I could engage in countless informal conversations with protesters helping me to gain a deeper comprehension of realities than would have been possible via formal interviews alone. By being “part” of the protest and taking photographs for the local organisations I was able to take note of the slogans and chants of protesters and to gain a better sense of the frustrations of some actors (as well as identify new interviewees). In both countries I was taken on tours of the locality, presenting me the opportunity to engage in informal discussions regarding the historical development of the sites. For example, in El Alto I was brought to the outskirts of the city for lunch with one interviewee’s family before we walked around the neighbourhood. This allowed me to witness first-hand the poverty levels in the city and the lack of development in terms of roadways and gas and water connections. While in El 23 de Enero in Venezuela I met a

woman selling cigarettes and newspapers from a kiosk. She brought me to a shrine she had set up for the deceased former president Hugo Chávez, stating that she goes there to thank Chávez every day for the gift of freedom he gave her. Such interactions help to comprehend just how Chávez was and is perceived as a saviour and saint by some sectors, which then helps to contextualise responses by popular actors during interviews. I was also invited to breakfasts, lunches and dinners with families in both case countries. Such interactions, including with the parents of interviewees, allowed me to gain a deeper insight into the historical grievances of the popular actors, thereby helping me to frame and contextualise the current moment. Taking public transport every day across the cities also allowed me to grasp the astonishing scale of inequality between the rich and poor in both countries. Engaging in informal conversations with bus drivers or metro passengers offered me further scope to grasp the general sentiment in both countries. By taking fieldnotes during all of the events mentioned above, I was able to hone my interview questions so as to try and capture more accurately the realities of the successes and issues with the democratisation processes. Finally, by maintaining contact with many people I met in the field, I have been able to keep up to date with daily realities, as well as ask for their opinions on my interpretation and presentation of the processes in each case, thereby boosting the validity of the research.

8. Ethical issues:

Before engaging in fieldwork and primary data collection, the project went through a rigorous ethical review procedure¹². The principle concern centres on protecting the anonymity of interview respondents. Before each interview, I discussed the nature of the

¹² See appendix 2 for the completed ethical application form which highlights the rigorous evaluation of potential ethical issues in the study. Information on data collection and storage is also provided.

project, provided a project overview as well as an informed consent form¹³. Furthermore, in several instances I have chosen to anonymise quotes, even where respondents did not ask for anonymity. The reason for doing so was to protect the identity of interviewees who provided sensitive data, particularly regarding accusations of corruption. While cases of corruption are widely reported in newspapers in both case countries, I felt that it would be prudent not to reveal the names of those who discussed such issues. When meeting members of a communal council or any other organisation where there are group activities, I asked for the group leader to introduce me and to highlight that I was there to carry out research. I took field notes openly to reinforce that I was collecting data for research purposes.

In the following chapters the above described framework and methodologies are applied to examine the post-neoliberal democratisation processes in Bolivia and Venezuela. Firstly, a historical chapter tracing the processes of each case is offered. Following the historical chapters, primary research-based chapters examine the national process from a local level, highlighting the nuances of the processes and their outcomes, as well as the likely legacies and future challenges for the post-neoliberal experiments. I turn now to the case of Bolivia.

¹³ See appendix 2 for a copy of the informed consent form and the project overview form.

Chapter 4: Bolivian democratisation in historical context

1. Overview

Following the TGPT framework outlined in chapters 2 and 3, this chapter offers an historical overview that traces the emergence and development of Bolivia's post-neoliberal process, weaving in an account of the relative power between the new-left government, popular-societal actors, economic elites, and international (f)actors, and detailing how the interplay of these variables has profoundly influenced outcomes in terms of deepening and extending democracy, centralisation of power in the executive, and the legacy of the project. As such, the chapter examines the antecedent conditions, evaluating how the power of popular society influenced the point of inflection – that is, the election of Evo Morales as president – as well as identifying how such antecedent conditions have fed-back onto the process and influenced the sequencing in the aftermath periods. The chapter begins with an overview of the three waves of anti-neoliberal contention, culminating in the Gas Wars of 2003-2005, before examining the state of affairs at the 2005 election of Morales. Phase 1 of the post-inflection sequence examines the 2006-09 period and the Constituent Assembly battle between the government, popular sectors, and conservative political and economic elites. Phase 2 of the post-inflection sequence accounts for the 2009-14 period during which government-elite relations softened while government-society relations became more fractious as some popular groups were included while others were side-lined. The chapter finishes by introducing Phase 3 of the post-inflection sequence, examining the period from 2015 to the present, highlighting and explaining the successes of the process to date, while outlining the issues and challenges that exist looking forward.

2. Introduction:

Evo Morales' 2005 election as president of Bolivia - the first indigenous president in the country's history - marked the beginning of a process that has witnessed attempts to deepen and extend democracy and move beyond strict market democracy. Following election, Morales initiated a "process of profound political change" (Wolff 2013: 40) that has sought to overturn the political and economic exclusion experienced by the indigenous and popular sectors under the technocratic democracy of the neoliberal era (Riggirozzi 2010; Silva 2009). Changes include a restructuring of the political system via a constituent assembly, economic and social reforms, and new alliances in the international sphere.

Opportunity and agency for popular sectors to influence decision-making have increased as liberal institutions of democracy have been boosted by the addition of experiments in direct and participatory democracy. The direct inclusion of citizens in the rewriting of the constitution, and its approval by national referendum in 2009, has witnessed the development of "fundamental changes in the form of the state" (Postero 2010: 62) such as increased autonomy for indigenous nations and recognition of their cultures, languages, and customs (Ibid.). Furthermore, social-movement actors have been offered access to the state via appointments to ministry positions, while new spaces of participation have emerged that directly link the state to society and allow for societal overview of the policy-making process. However, while the Morales government presents itself as the "government of the social movements" (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 11), it is clear that some movements are included more than others, and that there has in fact been a centralisation of power in the executive combined with attempts to co-opt or side-line some societal actors that challenge Morales' decisions.

In the economic sphere, Morales promised to break with neoliberalism and to boost the role of the state in the economy (Wolff 2013: 40). The partial nationalisation of the country's gas resources and increased taxes on extracting firms has drastically increased state capacity to invest in schools, hospitals, roads, domestic gas connections and other infrastructure projects (Achtenberg 2016: 373). What is more, increased revenue from taxes and royalties on hydrocarbon extraction and exportation has fostered a rise in state spending on welfare programs for the country's poor and indigenous populations in the fields of education and literacy, nutrition, and pensions (Postero 2010: 62). At the same time however, Morales' attempts at extending democracy have been criticised for being too moderate and his failure to break with an economic model dominated by primary-commodity extraction and exporting has left extensive power in the hands of domestic and transnational elites (Farthing 2017).

In the international sphere, Bolivia has aligned itself with the Bolivarian movement in Venezuela and with the radical-Left governments more generally in Ecuador and Nicaragua, joining several regional organisations that seek to engender space for an alternative to US-led calls for more market democracy, while Morales has vehemently opposed US imperialism in Bolivia and the region (Wolff 2013). At the same time however, Bolivia has remained an active member of the global capitalist economy, with natural gas and primary commodities remaining as the backbone of the economy. To comprehend the somewhat paradoxical process and outcomes, I now apply the TGPT framework examining power and the antecedent conditions, point of inflection, and aftermath sequences.

3. Antecedent Conditions:

3.1 *The emergence of market democracy:*

As Silva (2009: 104) states, the protest waves that erupted in response to market democracy and the subsequent election of Evo Morales must be understood against the backdrop of Bolivia's 1952 revolution and the national-populist era that followed. Many of the key actors and institutions that would influence later democratisation moments emerged out of, and in response to this period such as the labour union - the militant, miner-led Central Obrera Boliviana (COB; Bolivian Workers Central) (Silva 2009: 104). The Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR; National Revolutionary Movement) party also emerged from the 1952 revolution, and in the 1950s and 1960s they built a nationalist populist state and fostered state-led development. The corporatist system that maintained the ISI period collapsed however and the MNR government headed by Víctor Paz Estenssoro was ousted in a coup and replaced with a populist military regime led by former vice-president René Barrientos and army-chief Alfredo Ovando Candía (Silva 2015: 132). This scenario "ironically, gave birth to the second and third major political parties of the 1980s and 1990s" (Silva 2009: 105), the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario (MIR; Leftists Revolutionary Movement) formed in the early 1970s, and the Alianza Democrática Nacional (ADN; National Democratic Alliance) created by former dictator Hugo Banzer. During the 1978 transition to democracy, the COB played a crucial role in helping the peasant movement to form a politically independent, unified campesino organisation, the Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos (CSUTCB; Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia) (Silva 2009: 106) who represented highland peasants.

A fragmented multiparty system emerged following the long period of military-dominated rule (Silva 2009: 108) where the MNR, ADN and the MIR "shared power in various combinations for nearly twenty years" (Crabtree 2013: 277) in what was known as

the “democracia pactada” (“pacted-democracy”) (de la Torre: 2013 33). As Anria (2016a: 101) summarises, “large segments of the populace were underrepresented. In particular, the overlapping classes of peasants and indigenous Bolivians (perhaps three-fifths of the country) had little weight in political and economic decision making”.

Beginning in the 1980s, market-oriented reform was imposed by historically populist (MNR), conservative (AND), and crucially, even leftist parties (MIR) that had campaigned *against* neoliberal orthodoxy (Anria 2016a). This fostered a sense of “bait-and switch” politics (Anria 2016a: 101), “providing an example of neoliberal convergence *par excellence*” (Roberts 2014: 274). The “imposition of the New Economic Policy by ‘shock treatment’ caused profound economic and political exclusion of the popular sectors, deeply threatening their livelihood and leaving them without defences within established political institutions”¹⁴ (Silva 2009: 109). Excessive use of presidential decrees, scant legislative debate, and a lack of consideration for the “interests, demands and priorities of subordinate social groups” (Anria 2016a: 101) and the “promiscuous powersharing” (Slater and Simmons 2013) delegitimised the democratic model. Indeed, as de la Torre (2013: 33) states, “by the beginning of the twenty-first century, the political system was widely regarded as clientelist, corrupt, and in need of renewal”.

3.2 Anti-neoliberal mobilisation and the building of collective and associational power:

Protests against neoliberalism and pacted-democracy proceeded in three waves. First, from 1985-93, urban labour in cooperation with largely indigenous peasantry “mobilised significant associational and collective power” (Silva 2009: 112) against the New Economic

¹⁴ See Silva 2009 chapter 5 for an excellent discussion on the adoption of neoliberalism by multiple presidents, as well as the economic consequences on Bolivia’s popular sectors.

Policy, with the COB and other unions organizing massive strikes, while the CSUTCB announced peasant roadblocks to support urban strikers (Ibid.). However, the capacity of organised labour to challenge market democracy was debilitated by the neoliberal reforms as informalisation and public sector downsizing atomised the labour movement, including the COB “whose militancy and political strength had challenged many a government since its foundation” (Silva 2009: 109; Webber 2011: 24). In this scenario the CSUTCB, led by militant coca-growers came to play a leadership role in organizing anti-neoliberal protest (Silva 2015: 137). Framing protest against the Bolivian state and US imperialism around coca policies allowed for an intertwining of cultural, identity and economic motivations which became a key feature of future anti-neoliberal organizing (Silva 2009: 115). Furthermore, the coca growers’ successes highlighted how “successful organisation (as measured by capacity to mobilise and to force negotiation) had shifted from the factory and the mine...to territorially based forms” (Ibid.). As Silva (Ibid.) continues, while in the 1980s and 1990s “coca-grower mobilisation was mainly a regional phenomenon...it was an incubator for transformations in popular sector associational and collective power that blossomed in the second and third waves of anti-neoliberal contention”.

A second wave of contention erupted during de Lozada’s first presidency (1993-97), with the CSUTCB organizing protests such as the March for Life, Coca, and National Sovereignty in 1995 (Silva 2015: 138). The framing of the protests highlighted how neoliberal “commodification destroyed the economic, social and cultural conditions that supported life” (Silva 2009: 122). This represented a shift from the language of class struggle and attracted various social groups and identities (Ibid.). Authorities faced protests from

multiple sectors in both rural and urban settings with teachers, the COB, and Chapare coca growers resisting neoliberal reforms.

It is important to note that neoliberal decentralisation policies opened new spaces of participation at the local level (Hunt 2016: 442; Gray Molina 2003). The Popular Participation Law of 1994 (LPP) fostered decentralisation via the establishment of municipalities “along with direct elections for mayors and municipal councils empowered to make authoritative decisions and to administer revenue” (Silva 2009: 116). The LPP helped to foster the gradual inclusion of popular groups in organised politics, and popular movement candidates began to fill municipal councils (Anria 2016a: 101). The LPP also encouraged some poor and indigenous groups to take on the idea that liberal institutions could be transformed to meet their needs, and one response was the formation of the Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Toward Socialism; MAS) (Postero 2010: 62; Madrid 2011) which would go on to play a key role in Bolivia’s post-neoliberal democratisation process.

A third wave of protest erupted during the presidencies of Banzer (1997-02) and de Lozada (2002-3) with heightened levels of collective and associational power (Silva 2009: 123-4). Following a water privatisation scheme in 2000 in Cochabamba brokered by the government and the Bechtel corporation which “caused a 400 percent increase in the cost of water in local communities, a series of ‘wars’ broke out” (Kennemore and Weeks 2011: 269) between the government and organised popular forces. Law 2029 which allowed for privatisation of water distribution was rushed through Congress without discussion, publicity, or consultation with affected groups (Silva 2009: 125; Crabtree 2005: 20-21). The

political and economic exclusion “of social groups adversely affected by privatisation drove mobilisation” (Silva 2009: 125).

Citizens of Cochabamba “launched a mass protest against Aguas del Tunari, a...subsidiary of the US Bechtel corporation” by “organizing themselves into a powerful social movement, the Coordinating Committee in Defence of Water and Life” (Morales 2012: 56). Beginning with protests in December 1999, “15,000 irate citizens kicked off the Cochabamba Water War”; the following February, a two-day street war left 175 injured; in April, “over 30,000 protesters shut down the city and forced the government to declare martial law as demonstrations spread to...La Paz and El Alto” (Ibid.).

It is important to note that popular protest movements began to forge links with political parties during the Cochabamba Water War, particularly the MAS, as the “historic roots of the MAS are in the coca-growing zone of Chapare”, Cochabamba (Webber 2011: 58). Following the crash in tin prices and privatisation of the mining industry, tens of thousands of jobless miners migrated, with many moving to Chapare to begin a new life as small-holding cocalero peasants (Ibid.). Given the militant Marxist history of the miners, when the government, at the behest of the US, launched the “War on Drugs”, the cocaleros quickly began organizing resistance (Ibid.) eventually forging a social movement party called Assembly for the Sovereignty of the People (ASP) (Madrid 2011; Anria 2013). By 1998 however, “disputes between the three main indigenous leaders in the country – Felipe Quispe, Alejo Véliz, and Evo Morales - ...led to the eventual disintegration of the ASP” (Webber 2011: 60). Two new parties emerged, one led by Quispe, and, most importantly for Bolivia’s post-neoliberal democratisation process, the Instrumento Político por la Soberanía

de los Pueblos (Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples, IPSP) led by Evo Morales (Ibid.).

Morales, had – and today maintains - tight links with the cocaleros having risen through the ranks of the cocalero peasant unions in the El Chapare region, becoming secretary general of the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba – a coordinated council of coca growers unions – in 1988 (Webber 2011: 62). The IPSP appealed to a broad, inter-ethnic, and cross-regional social base (Ibid.) based around ideas of self-representation (Anria 2013: 27; García Linera et al. 2004). Due to legal technicalities, the IPSP was required to change its name, assuming the moniker of the defunct Movimiento al Socialismo (Webber 2011: 60).

The Water War established a platform on which the MAS launched itself from a regional to a national party. The decentralisation laws of the mid-1990s created the space at municipal levels for the MAS to compete electorally (Anria 2013: 26), and in the 1999 municipal elections the MAS won 3.27 percent of the national vote, ten mayoralties, and seventy-nine municipal council seats (Webber 2011: 60). The MAS used the context of the Water War to adopt a “plural popular” (Albro 2005) “strategy of coalition building, in which indigenous issues became the framing plank for successful political articulation” (Anria 2013: 27). This strategy became apparent in the 2002 presidential elections.

3.3 2002 Elections:

In the 2002 election campaign, the MAS “framed its politics in indigenist terms that made it popular with ethnic Quechua and Aymara” groups (Silva 2009: 133). The MAS “eschewed exclusionary language and repeatedly emphasised that the party was open to all people” (Madrid 2011: 245). As a result it brought together labour, peasant, and lowland indigenous

movements which helped generate moderate success at the municipal level (Goodale 2013: 32). Furthermore, the MAS sought to include left-leaning and nationalist intellectuals as well as urban indigenous and nonindigenous classes (Anria 2013: 27). Crucially however, expansion of their support base via electoral mobilisation was accompanied by support of social protests, allowing the MAS “to forge a strikingly heterogeneous coalition that would challenge the established political class, the status quo, and neoliberalism” (Ibid.). In this scenario, Evo Morales and the MAS placed second with 20.9 percent of the vote to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and the MNR’S 22.5 (Webber 2011: 63). As Anria (2013: 27) notes, “although the MAS did not win the presidency in the 2002 elections, it placed 27 deputies in the lower chamber and thus became a powerful political agent”.

3.4 Anti-neoliberal protest: 2003-05:

In October 2003, indigenous residents of El Alto, the satellite city above La Paz, “mounted massive demonstrations after the neoliberal president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada unveiled plans to give concessions to transnational corporations to pipe natural gas from the eastern lowlands to Chilean ports for export to the United States” (Postero 2010: 61). The “terms of the concession to foreign capital, framed as a giveaway, turned the issue into a symbol of the popular sector’s exclusion from market society” (Silva 2009: 134-5), and the wave of protests that engulfed the country became known as the 2003 Gas War. As Silva (2009: 135) highlights, during the Gas War “transformations in the associational and collective power of the social groups challenging neoliberalism that had been taking place in recent years came to a head, endowing them with unprecedented force”.

In conjunction with events in El Alto, a series of peasant roadblocks in the town of Warisata organised by Felipe Quispe and the CSUTCB held a tourist bus convoy hostage,

with Quispe calling for the liberation of imprisoned comrades, redress for peasant-related issues, as well as changes to natural gas policy (Silva 2009: 139). The government sent the army in on a “rescue” mission to free the tourists on September 20th, culminating in the deaths of six peasants and one soldier (Lazar 2006: 184). The “news that the military had killed civilians while assisting foreign tourists reinforced a view that the Sánchez de Lozada administration did not put the interests of the Bolivian people first” (Arbona 2008: 37), and further marches and protests erupted.

The government ordered the military to break up protests and marches, with troops killing scores of civilians (Postero 2010: 61) in what came to be known as Black October. The repression backfired, with mass protests erupting across the country calling for the president’s resignation, with “columns of miners and protesters from Oruro and Potosí, coca growers from Chapare, and peasants from the highlands” converging in La Paz (Silva 2009: 142). Demonstrators from El Alto and working class neighbourhoods of La Paz were accompanied by intellectuals, middle-class personalities, NGO leaders, human rights advocates, and politicians, while waves of protests of tens and hundreds of thousands rocked the country (Ibid.). A set of demands emerged, calling for the ouster of the president and his neoliberal model, as well as the nationalisation of gas (Spronk and Webber 2007: 36). With an estimated 500,000 people in the streets (Hylton 2003), “Sánchez de Lozada and his closest supporters fled the country for exile in the United States on October 17”, with vice-president Carlos Mesa taking over (Spronk and Webber 2007: 36).

During Mesa’s presidency, “Bolivia was characterised by a deepening political polarisation along the axes of class, race, and region” (Webber 2010: 52). As Webber (2010: 52) describes, two social blocs emerged. Firstly, a left-indigenous bloc comprised

predominantly of “indigenous urban proletarian and peasant forces” rooted “primarily in the most heavily indigenous departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosí, and Chuquisaca, was solidified on the basis of a similar alliance as in the...gas war in 2003 that led to the overthrow of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada” (Ibid.). The demands of the bloc were known as the October Agenda,

because they were essentially carried over from the unfulfilled promise of the October 2003 gas war. They included the nationalisation of natural gas, the convocation of a revolutionary constituent assembly, the resignation of Carlos Mesa, liberation from internally colonial race relations, nationalisation of and worker control of natural resources and strategic industries, and a radical redistribution of land and wealth (Webber 2010: 52).

The second bloc that consolidated between October 2003 and June 2005 “was an eastern-bourgeois bloc led by the regional bourgeoisies of the hydrocarbons-rich departments of Tarija and Santa Cruz and their allies in Beni and Pando” (Webber 2010: 52) known as the *media luna*¹⁵. The bloc was represented by the Pro Santa Cruz Committee which was comprised of the Agricultural Chamber of Eastern Bolivia, the Federation of Ranchers of Santa Cruz, and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Service, and Tourism of Santa Cruz (CAINCO) (Spronk and Webber 2007: 37). As Spronk and Webber (2007: 37) highlight, “the Spanish oil giant Repsol-YPF, Brazilian state-owned Petrobras, and Enron are members of CAINCO’s board of directors”. The Santa Cruz agro-industrial, petroleum, and financial elites, who were the most influential proponents of the neoliberal model, had

¹⁵ The term “*media luna*”, or “Half Moon”, refers to the crescent shape formed by the boundaries of the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and Tarija, where the most conservative sectors of the political and economic elite opposition are located.

enjoyed direct access to the central state via the MNR, AND, and MIR parties (Webber 2010: 59). In response to the October Agenda of 2003, this bloc advanced the January Agenda of 2005 calling for greater “departmental autonomy, regional control over natural resources, department control over most tax revenue, departmental authority over all policies except defence, currency, tariffs, and foreign relations, ‘free-market’ capitalism, openness to foreign direct investment, racism, and state repression of left-indigenous protesters” (ibid.).

Until March 2005, Mesa managed to appease both the radical conservative elites of the *media luna* as well as radical popular actors; he “promoted the reform of hydrocarbons and the convocation of a constituent assembly while simultaneously emptying the reform of its meaningful popular content and delaying the convocation indefinitely” (Webber 2010: 55).

In July 2004, the referendum on the future of hydrocarbon management did not adhere to the October Agenda demands which advocated a full nationalisation, but rather acted as a way of legitimating Mesa’s limited project of reform focused on increasing taxes and royalties to 50 percent of transnational petroleum company’s profits (Webber 2010: 55; Orgaz García 2005; Tapia 2005: 96). While the referendum passed the popular vote, Mesa’s “neoliberal reformism was insufficiently generous in its concessions to the October Agenda to secure the support of the left-indigenous bloc, which began to assert once again the necessity of fundamental structural solutions to the problems of racism, poverty, inequality, class exploitation, and imperialism” (Webber 2010: 57). Mesa faced “ongoing mobilisations and road blockades in January, February, March, May, and June of 2005, many focused on formulating a new hydrocarbons law that would wrest more control and profit away from

the transnational petroleum companies and confer them on the Bolivian state” (Spronk and Webber 2007: 37).

However, as the traditional economic elites increased their pressure on Mesa to avoid capitulating to the October Agenda demands, and with the TNCs, IMF, and US embassy allying behind the domestic elites, Mesa dropped any pretence of supporting popular demands and realigned with the elites of the *media luna* (Webber 2010: 54). In response however, hundreds of thousands of protesters took over the streets of La Paz and El Alto, forcing Mesa to resign (Webber and Spronk 2007: 38; Webber 2010: 67) paving the way for new elections in 2005. Indeed, the Gas Wars ultimately completed what the Cochabamba Water War had started, transforming “demands from local, regional, or union-specific grievances...to national-level demands centred on sovereignty, state control of natural resources, pro-formal sector employment and worker’s rights policies, agrarian reform, demilitarisation of the drug war, and calls for a constituent assembly” (Silva 2009: 138). However, while popular power from below had succeeded in removing two sitting neoliberal presidents, the Mesa presidency foreshadowed future power struggles between the state, radical popular social organisations, the traditional elite, and transnational actors which would impact the path and outcomes of Bolivia’s post-neoliberal democratisation process.

4. The Point of Inflection: 2005 Presidential Elections:

The December 2005 presidential elections “were defined by the utter exhaustion of the traditional neoliberal parties...that had ruled the country through various coalitional governments since 1985” (Webber 2011: 44). Disenchantment with the performance of liberal democracy coupled with market-oriented policies was growing (Madrid 2011: 239).

The convergence around structural adjustment policies by populist (MNR) and centre-left (MIR) parties “encouraged dissent to be channelled into extra-systemic forms of social and electoral protest”, convulsing the national party system (Roberts 2014: 126). By 2004, only 23.4 percent of the population reported confidence in the traditional parties (Seligson, Moreno, Morales, and Blum 2004: 102). The prolonged tension created the space for political outsiders to compete (Kennemore and Weeks 2011: 3). The MAS filled the void created by the decline of the traditional parties, wooing “the support of disaffected voters with steadfast opposition to the government’s policies and its strong nationalist and anti-establishment rhetoric” (Madrid 2011: 244). In this setting, Morales and the MAS easily won the 2005 elections in the first round with 53.7 percent of the vote to 28.6 percent for former president Quiroga and PODEMOS (Poder Democrático y Social; Democratic and Social Power), “a coalition of conservative parties and wealthy notables mainly from the eastern lowlands” (Silva 2009: 143). The MAS won a 72-seat majority in the 130-seat lower house (Anria 2016a: 102), with PODEMOS a close second, while the senate was almost evenly split between the two (Silva 2009: 143).

Fundamentally, Evo Morales was elected on a mandate of deepening and extending democracy by overcoming the political and economic exclusion experienced under market democracy. As Silva (2009: 143) summarises, the election “was a mandate to restore a measure of national economic and political autonomy, to open political participation and power to heretofore marginalised leftist and other popular sector leaders, and to protect the overwhelmingly poor and indigent mestizo and indigenous popular sectors from the ravages of the market”.

4.1 State-society power relations at the point of inflection:

The MAS “was born as a party of the social movements with a strong rural base” (Silva 2013: 59). It represents a hybrid organisation that straddles the line between party and movement; movements tend to challenge the state, whereas parties are participants in state institutions (Anria 2013: 22). The genesis of the party was from the bottom-up; it was a movement party in that it was sponsored by social movements as their electoral vehicle (ibid.: 23). Indeed, the MAS, at least up until the election of Morales as president, adhered to Roberts’ (1998: 75) “organic model” of party development in the sense that it engaged in electoral politics and competed for office, while at the same time it engaged in “noninstitutional, contentious bargaining in the pursuit of programmatic goals” (Anria 2013: 23).

It is crucial to highlight however, that the MAS had both a core social coalition and a more autonomous bloc of movement organisations that engaged with it in a strategic alliance (Do Alto 2011; Salman 2011; Anria 2013). As Silva (2013: 59) points out, the core was composed of an “inner circle” that included the cocaleros and the Six Federations of the Tropics unions, the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia (CNMCIQB-BS, Bartolina Sisas), and the CSUTCB. Evo Morales had tight, organic links with these organisations. The second autonomous-strategic bloc included the COB (especially the traditional, salaried miners); public sector unions; urban informal sector workers organised in neighbourhood associations - the Federaciones de Juntas de Vecinos (FEJUVE) - especially in El Alto; “non-salaried informal sector miners’ unions, the so-called ‘cooperativistas’; the CONAMAQ¹⁶, which represents highland Aymara and Quechua who inhabit marginal largely pastoral lands and who are weakly integrated into markets, hence still attached to communal ways of production” (Silva 2013: 59).

¹⁶ Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu).

The nature of how the MAS engaged with these strategic supporters, and in particular how it entered urban zones requires more explanation, as the evolution of urban-MAS relations would feedback on the democratisation process at a later stage. While from 1995-2002 the MAS was a campesino party, from 2002 on, and particularly in the 2005 elections, the MAS underwent a series of changes (Zuaso 2010: 120). As Anria (2013: 26) discusses, the “electoral imperative” involved four shifts for the MAS:

- 1) A territorial shift, from being a movement anchored in the coca-growing Chapare to a national movement with rural and urban social bases, as well as a growing presence in Bolivia’s largest cities, like La Paz and El Alto; 2) a shift in its class makeup from a resistance movement of coca producers and relocated miners to a catchall, multiclass movement that included urban and informal workers as well as middle classes, all of whom converged in their rejection of the political status quo; 3) an ethnic shift from being a largely indigenous movement to one that incorporated both indigenous and mestizo groups; and 4) a shift in terms of the organisations it comprised from a small group to an increasingly larger and heterogeneous group of base organisations.

While the party-system breakdown and the deligitimation of the existing traditional parties described above left a vacuum for the MAS to fill in urban areas, the MAS came as an outsider party (Anria 2013: 33). As such, to gain a foothold in the cities it often had to insert itself on top of pre-existing political parties and organisations which led to top-down co-optation of urban movement leaders and politicians who were gatekeepers to grassroots electoral support (Ibid).

In the political vacuum that existed in terms of leaders with popular legitimacy, demands in both urban and rural settings were channelled through the figure of Evo

Morales who became the expression of popular demands and interests (Revilla 2014: 46). Furthermore, as Balderacchi (2015: 21) notes, Morales' charisma played an important role in the efforts to attract non-indigenous voters, particularly in La Paz (Anria 2013). However, while Morales was crucial to the electoral outcomes of 2005, unlike the Ecuadorian or Venezuelan cases where the elections of Correa and Chávez can be ascribed in large part to their personal abilities to convince the electorate, Morales' election in 2005 was "unequivocally linked to the constant rapid strengthening of the indigenous-peasant social movement" (Balderachi 2015: 21). Indeed, it was the associational power of core movements in conjunction with the collective and mobilisational power forged by the linking of multiple rural and urban movements in strategic alliance with the MAS that gave societal actors the power to remove sitting presidents and bring Morales to power. The election of Morales after 20 years of neo-liberal regimes thus represents "a critical break with the past" (Riggirozzi 2010: 74), and it is to the first phase of this post-inflection era encompassing the attempts to re-calibrate the constitution that I now turn.

5. Post-Inflection Sequencing Phase 1: 2006-2009:

The first administration of Morales from 2006-09 was marked by the Constituent Assembly process and the racialised class struggle between popular sectors and opposition from the *media luna* region (Errejón and Guijarro 2016: 46; Webber 2016). The protests leading up to the 2005 election had de facto outlined Morales' mandate (Anria 2013: 36) in the October Agenda which called for reform of the state via nationalisations, agrarian reform, and a constituent assembly to decolonise the country (Errejón and Guijarro 2016: 46).

5.1 *The Constituent Assembly and Elite-backlash:*

Morales sought to adhere closely to these demands to deepen and extend democracy, highlighting his “positive accountability to the MAS’s social base” (Anria 2013: 36). In June 2006 the government outlined a roadmap in the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (National Development Plan; PND 2007). The plan offered an alternative vision to that of market democracy, and called for *buen vivir*, an indigenous vision based on communitarian forms of *coviviencia*, or living together (Goodale 2013: 34). The plan outlined that to achieve this target required the state to intervene as “promoter and protagonist of national development” (PND 2007: 4), whereby the state would act to transform society and the economy, but only if “all peoples and cultures are present in the economic and political decisions of the State” (Ibid.: 15). As Goodale (2013: 36) notes, “this meant that the people’s ‘capacity to decide’ would have to be recuperated within a new notion of the nation that recognised the pluriethnicity and multiculturalism of the country, as well as the vitality of the social movements”. Finally, the PND “suggested that these newly empowered social actors would create a new state during democratic debate in the Constituent Assembly” (Ibid.).

Early in Morales’ first term, the Unity Pact, a coalition of popular movements, some of whom had organic links to the MAS, while others were more independent, was formed (Webber 2016). The Pact was formed by indigenous groups from both the east and west in order to fight firstly for the realisation of the Constituent Assembly, and after that process had begun, to articulate and promote campesino and indigenous interests in the assembly (Zuazo 2010: 129)¹⁷. The Unity Pact worked closely with MAS representatives in the

¹⁷ Initial members of the Unity Pact included, amongst others, the CSUTCB; La Confederación de Pueblos indígenas de Bolivia (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia - CIDOB; CONAMAQ; La Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia (CSCB); La Federación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas, Originarias y Campesinas de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa (FNMCB-BS) (Zuazo 2010: 129).

Constituent Assembly (Silva 2015: 139), leading the drive for the radical plurinational reconstitution of the state (Webber 2016). Indeed, the Unity Pact represented a significant deepening of democracy as it acted as a space of corporative-collective deliberation and mobilisation for the campesino and indigenous sectors outside of the MAS (Zuazo 2010: 129).

However, the MAS was forced to engage with opponents of constitutional change, and the opening of the constituent process took place “through a pact with the regionalist right in the eastern part of the country, where the powerful business leaders of Santa Cruz had created grassroots political allegiances through the hegemonisation of a popular regional or *camba* identity associated with beauty, modernity, and prosperity in contrast to things Indian, backward, poor, and antidemocratic” (Errejón and Guijarro 2016: 46). This conservative regional opposition, comprised of both economic and political elites, was to play a key role, both in the direct outcomes of the constituent process, as well as feeding back onto the democratisation process at a later stage.

In response to Morales’ planned reforms, and making use of their political, economic, ideological, and military power, eastern lowland elites and the PODMEOS party began to struggle for regional autonomy in a bid to avoid the proposed changes to the status of private property rights, land reform and redistribution of state revenue (Silva 2009: 144). For the elite, autonomy is understood as “regional control over natural resources (e.g. land, timber, gas, and oil); the right to retain control over two-thirds of all tax revenues generated in the department; and authority to set all policies other than defence, currency, tariffs and foreign relations” (Eaton 2007: 74). Elites in the *media luna* have a long history of “upholding regional oligarchy, such as evading the agrarian reform of 1953, obtaining land

grants and loans from military dictators between 1964 and 1982 in exchange for support, and maintaining semi-feudal structures in most rural areas” (Kennemore and Weeks 2011: 7; Kohl 2010: 109). The autonomist drive was a “program of the rich” (Felix Patzi quoted in Webber 2011: 94), in which the autonomists “effectively wielded popular social forces behind a bourgeois agenda during the first year of the Morales administration, primarily focusing on the process of the Constituent Assembly” (Webber 2011: 94). In response to the MAS declaring that rules governing the Constituent Assembly would be determined by a simple majority rather than by a two-thirds vote (the MAS enjoyed a majority, but not a super-majority of two-thirds), PODEMOS and the autonomist forces accused the MAS of attempting an *autogolpe* (self-coup) and subsequently boycotted the Constituent Assembly, sending it into indefinite recess (Webber 2011: 95). Furthermore, autonomist forces across the *media luna* engaged in massive demonstrations and a civic strike (Ibid.).

In response to elite and conservative destabilising tactics, in 2007, and stemming from the Unity Pact, Morales organised supporters from the top down into the Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio (CONALCAM) (de la Torre 2013: 35). Zuazo (2010: 130) states that Morales’ creation of CONALCAM was part of a double strategy; on one side, to confront the opposition and to re-establish the power of the key movements from the anti-neoliberal protest era, “but this time under government direction”; and secondly, it was an attempt to give content to the idea of a “government of the social movements” by establishing social movement forms of action as a part of the government repertoire.

Under the Unity Pact, the MAS was coordinated by the social movements. With the emergence of CONALCAM however, this relationship changed, as government leadership over rural and urban organisations emerged in order to confront the challenge of building a

process of change from the street (Zuazo: 130), indicating emerging centralisation and top-down influencing of the base as a response to elite destabilisation tactics. However, as Zuazo (2010: 130) continues, government control over the direction of CONALCAM was only one side of the process; the other side was “the increase in its convocation in the most serious moments of conflict” thereby fostering the belief in the social movements that they were part of the government and that the government of the MAS was in fact “their” government.

Despite the mass popular mobilisations in defence of the government, in response to powerful elite opposition, the MAS offered to accept a mixed voting system in the Constituent Assembly whereby particularly contentious issues would require two-thirds support to pass; PODEMOS and the autonomist movements however rejected the offer and continued to mobilise. In the face of elite political power and their protests and threats to veto the entire process, Morales accepted that each article of the Constituent Assembly would require a two-third support, and with this compromise, the assembly ended its seven-month impasse (Postero 2010: 66). In December 2007 the Constituent Assembly approved a draft constitutional charter which, while favourable to government aspirations, was also more moderate (Silva 2009: 144) than the October Agenda called for (Webber 2011: 98). Substantial concessions were made on land reform “grandfathering in existing large landholdings and limiting Morales’ ability to hold office indefinitely” (Postero 2010: 60).

It is necessary to outline the power of the elite in order to explain why such compromise was accepted by the MAS. The extra-parliamentary activism of the autonomists influenced public perception of Morales, whose support fell from a high of 80 percent to 52

by the end of September 2006, while support for the Constituent Assembly declined from 69 percent in August to 45 percent in September 2006 (Webber 2011: 96). The country's wealthiest families with links to the traditional neoliberal parties own the major television networks and newspapers, capturing 70 percent of the TV audience, and 64 percent of print media circulation (Lupien 2013: 228). The families who dominate the private media are also major landholders in the eastern departments (Ibid.). Not surprisingly, the traditional media's response to the MAS agenda was characterised by "disdain and fear", painting ideological enemies as extremists, and focusing attention on disruptive actions by certain sectors of government supporters while downplaying similar actions by opposition groups (Ibid.: 236-7).

In conjunction with the ideological power of the elites, their political power was also boosted¹⁸. The political right was boosted by winning 6 out of 9 departmental prefectures in elections that occurred at the same time as the 2005 presidential elections (Webber 2011: 54). The geographical concentration of elite opposition in the eastern lowlands allowed the formation of dense organisational networks, enabling governors to enlist societal support, including that of popular sectors, which paralysed the assembly for months (Eaton 2014). Furthermore, the elite opposition used their political control over the departmental governments, the judiciary, and the state bureaucracy to impede the government where possible (Madrid 2011: 257; Kohl and Farthing 2008).

When the economic power of the Santa Cruz elites who maintained control over finance, and who had intimate ties with foreign capital (the department attracts more FDI than any other department) is considered in conjunction with the ideological and political

¹⁸ While it is important not to conflate conservative politicians and right-wing parties such as PODEMOS with economic elites per se, there were tight relationships between the two in this period (Silva 2009).

power of the Bolivian elite, we can see that the MAS faced resistance from a powerful adversary (Morales and Conroy 2017: 32).

5.2 *The 2008 re-call referendum:*

In 2008, with the constitutional draft still being contested, and with the autonomist movement pushing further by carrying out an illegal referendum on autonomy, Morales “sought to break... the impasse that threatened his government, calling on all the prefects to run in recall referenda, including himself and his vice-president” (Errejón and Guijarro 2016: 46). Morales easily won with 67 percent, up from the 54 percent of the 2005 elections (Silva 2009: 145), while the MAS recovered two of the regions from the opposition (Errejón and Guijarro 2016: 46). The autonomist movement’s response was to speed up its attempts to economically and politically disconnect from the Bolivian state, and “by August 2008 there was an almost undeclared civil war in the east, especially in Santa Cruz” (Ibid.). However, the last resistance to the draft constitution rescinded in the face of the continued support of the armed forces for the government, the mobilisation of member organisations of CONALCAM¹⁹, and the Brazilian-led UNASUR intervention which stated that only electorally validated decisions would be recognised (Ibid.).

5.3 *Democratic Deepening and Extending in the constitution of 2009:*

In January 2009, “voters overwhelmingly approved the new Constitution by 61.4 percent to 38.6 percent, although the opposition won” in the *media luna* (Silva 2009: 145). The Constitution outlines various mechanisms that seek to both deepen and extend democracy. Adhering to the Unity Pact demands, the Constitution redefined the nation as “plurinational

¹⁹ The CONALCAM was expanded in 2008 with the addition of various urban social organisations such as the COB, neighbourhood associations, unions, students, and miners’ cooperatives (Zuaso 2010: 130).

and communitarian” (Mayorga 2011; de la Torre 2013: 34). Bolivia’s democracy is described in article 1.1 as “participatory, representative and communitarian” (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 4). The “participatory form is associated with direct citizen participation in politics by means of mechanisms to include citizens’ decisions in legislation and/or public policy” (Arteaga 2015: 579). In addition to standard liberal representative democracy, mechanisms of direct and participatory democracy include referendum, recall of public servants, prior consultation, and legislative initiatives of citizens. Furthermore, members of the judiciary, after pre-selection by the legislative, are to be elected by the populace (Art. 182, 188, 194, 198 cited in Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 9). Organised civil society is to participate in the design of public politics, and to execute social control at all levels of the state (Art 240, 241 cited in Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 9). New spaces for participation are to be opened whereby organised civil society may impact on the policy-making regarding health, education, economic, and environmental issues (Art. 40, 78-93, 309, 343 cited in Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 9).

Community democracy “grants legitimacy to the practices used by social collectives – especially indigenous groups – to elect, appoint or nominate their authorities and representatives by means of their own traditional procedures” (Arteaga 2015: 579). As Schilling-Vacaflor (2011: 9) explains, communitarian democracy “is supposed to be exercised in self-governed indigenous-campesino entities such as municipalities and indigenous-campesino territories (TIOC)”. Elections of indigenous-campesino representatives “should take place according to the communities’ own norms and procedures” (Ibid.). Furthermore, regarding “the representation of indigenous-campesino peoples and communities in the legislative branch, Art. 147 stipulates ‘that the proportional participation of indigenous-

campesino peoples and communities will be guaranteed' and that quotas stipulating a certain number of indigenous representatives will be implemented" (Ibid.).

In terms of extending democracy, the 2009 Constitution supports economic, social, and cultural rights for underprivileged groups, proclaiming its primary goal is to achieve *buen vivir*, the good life (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 10). While the term remains vague, there is consensus that a "good life" contains human rights, political participation and pluralism, and a low degree of social inequality (Ibid.). To achieve this, the Constitution calls for "universalising access to the surplus generated by the use of non-renewable natural resources" (Arteaga 2015: 579). Hence, democratic expansion was to be funded by the "creation and/or strengthening of strategic state enterprises, the state's appropriation of the revenue generated by the oil and gas industry, and the redistribution of this revenue through transfers and royalties to subnational governments and conditional cash transfers to vulnerable groups, as well as the exponential increase in public investment" (Arteaga 2015: 573).

5.4 Summary of 2006-09 and power relations:

As Anria (2015) and Silva (2017) note, "in the opening phase of post neoliberalism the organic connection between the MAS and its social movement base ensured an alignment between them and Morales' government" (Silva 2017: 100). Furthermore, elite resistance toward the MAS and the Constituent Assembly and the conflicts that emerged meant that a variety of non-core social forces strategically supported the governing party in order to fight against the conservative opposition (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 12).

Aggressive elite responses to attempts to extend democracy during the constitutional change process fostered a centralisation of power in the executive to the exclusion of pluralism as the new government sought to overcome conservative and elite opposition (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 13). This centralisation was balanced however by a simultaneous deepening of democracy. Given Morales' vulnerability to the mobilisation or defection of core indigenous-peasant movements, the state-society power balance rested with the indigenous-peasant movements, thereby ensuring that the government could not diverge from societal demands (Balderacchi 2015: 21). Furthermore, given the histories of mobilisation, and the increases in collective and associational power experienced during the anti-neoliberal protests, the social movements, both core and strategic, were at the height of their mobilisational capacity, and were thereby capable of both defending the government from oppositional destabilisation tactics, as well as holding the government to account (Silva 2017: 100). Hence, while elite opposition to attempts to deepen and extend democracy did foster a centralisation of power in the executive, given that the state-society power relations during this period of conflict favoured the organised popular base - thereby allowing them to exert great influence over the executive, centralised power was actually used to advance the demands of societal actors, thereby creating a paradoxical "progressive centralisation", that is, a centralisation of power in the executive in order to deepen and extend democracy for those excluded under market democracy.

The international sphere also provided opportunities for the development of a post-neoliberal democracy. Thanks to the global commodities boom, which saw the price of Bolivia's principal exports dramatically rise, Morales had the economic power to extend democracy, with public investment increasing from 6.3 per cent of GDP in 2005 to 10.5 per

cent in 2009 (Weisbrot 2009). Debt forgiveness under the IMF's 2005 Heavily Indebted Poor Country's (HIPC) initiative reduced the leverage of the financial institution over Morales' government by releasing the country from rigid conditionalities (Silva 2009: 145; Webber 2011: 35). Furthermore, the availability of financing from the ideologically-aligned Hugo Chávez-led Venezuela liberated Bolivia to experiment in alternatives to market democracy. Additionally, conditionality-free multi-billion dollar investment deals with Russia, Iran, Brazil, and Argentina boosted the capacity of Morales to radicalise the project.

Membership of several new regional organisations free from western leverage also gave Bolivia the ideological space and economic support to advance post-neoliberal democratisation. Bolivia joined the ALBA and the Banco del Sur, thereby reducing dependence on US-backed trade deals and international capitalism embodied in the World Bank and IMF (Kennemore and Weeks 2011: 271). With US overreach in the Middle East, and the ideological rejection of neoliberalism across the Pink Tide countries, Bolivia was in a prime position to advance the post-neoliberal project and it is to Phase 2 of this process that I now turn.

6. Post-Inflection Sequencing Phase 2: 2009-14:

In the 2009 presidential elections Morales won in the first round, while the MAS obtained a majority in the congress. In the 2010 departmental elections for governors, mayors, and departmental assemblies, the MAS won six of nine governorships, up from three in the 2005 election. With the solid support that societal movements had given the government in the conflict with the conservative elites, and with boosted political power for the government, the stage seemed set for Morales adhere more closely to the October Agenda and deliver on the new Constitution. However, the 2010-14 period witnessed increasing government-

movement confrontations and divisions in the movement base that had brought Morales to power. Despite these issues, Morales and the MAS performed extraordinarily well in the 2014 elections, winning the presidency and a supermajority in both legislative chambers, as well as winning eight of the nine departments, including three out of four in the *media luna* region (Achtenberg 2016: 374).

To comprehend how and why Morales and the MAS continued to have such electoral success despite the breakdown of the collective and associational power of popular and indigenous social movements, we must understand how the post-neoliberal democratisation project has developed, evaluating if and for whom democracy has been deepened and extended, whether centralisation of power in the executive has occurred, and, crucially, how key power relationships between the government and society, economic elites, and international (f)actors have influenced proceedings.

6.1 *Extending Democracy:*

The commodities boom funded unprecedented amounts of public expenditure which increased by 500 percent between 2006 and 2013 (Arteaga 2015: 574), with significant investments in education and health, particularly in rural areas, while infrastructure projects across the country have led to improving human capital indicators, falling transport costs and increased domestic commerce (Faguet 2015). Bolivia's build-up of international reserves, which topped 48 percent of GDP in 2013, acted as somewhat of a buffer against the global financial crisis while also allowing the country to avoid the restrictive conditionalities attached to IMF borrowing (Johnston and Lefebvre 2014). While the government has in fact spent moderately on social goods, with just 1.6 percent of GDP being spent on cash transfer programs (McNelly 2016), poverty was reduced between 2005

and 2011 from 59.6 percent to 45 percent, and extreme poverty fell from 36.7 percent to 20.9 (Johnston and Lefebvre 2014). The percentage of Bolivians living on less than USD 2/day fell from 60 in 2006 to 30 in 2011 (CIA 2011 quoted in Kohl and Farthing 2012: 231).

Transfers such as the Bono Juancito Pinto, which is aimed at incentivising school attendance, covers 1.8 million children; 100 percent of the population are eligible for Renta Dignidad, an old-age pension; and the Bono Juana Azurduy aims to lower maternal-infant mortality rates and chronic malnutrition of children under the age of two. Programs aimed at zero illiteracy, malnutrition, and eye health have also been introduced (Postero 2010: 41). From 1999 to 2011, average income rose 45 percent, and 182 percent among rural populations (ARU, as cited in Faguet 2015). The real minimum wage increased by 87.7 percent from 2005-14 (Johnston and Lefebvre 2014). Inequality has also decreased, with the income of poorer sectors of the population growing much faster since 2006 than that of the higher-income households (Ibid.).

However, while the democratic extending offered under the Morales government assisted some of the most vulnerable sectors, the extent of changes to date have been questioned by some analysts. As Achtenberg (2013, citing the Fundación Jubileo) notes, in 2012, more than 5 million Bolivians lived in poverty, with extreme poverty persisting in rural areas. Meanwhile, Quiroga (2017: 13) notes that while cash transfers had a positive impact, their benefits were severely undercut by a regressive tax system, while property and wealth taxes were practically non-existent. Indeed, as Achtenberg (2013) notes, many people feel that, given the high levels of international reserves, changes to poverty and inequality should have been more dramatic.

The long-term sustainability of cash-transfers funded by booming resource prices has been called into question (Riggirozzi 2010; Schilling-Vacaflor 2017), while there is also concern as to how the extending of democracy has centred around Morales, such as via the “Bolivia Cambia, Evo Cumple” model of redistribution in which the central government directly finances both large and small scale projects (Revilla 2014: 59). The concern is that this model of redistribution opens the space for co-optation and hinders popular criticism of the maintenance of an elite-controlled primary-export model of capital accumulation that undergirds the structural conditions of inequality (Revilla 2014: 60; Webber 2016). The easy revenue from the commodities boom has meant that social and welfare spending could occur without any major redistribution of private property in what Riofrancos (Riofrancos and Farthing 2017) calls a “hydrocarbon-fuelled-social-democratic bargain”. As such, it is important to analyse why this reliance on primary commodities has been maintained and how it impacts the quality of democratic extending and deepening, centralisation, and the long-term outlook for efforts to build a post-neoliberal democracy.

6.2 Funding Democratic Extending, National Development Plans, and Government-Elite Relations:

While Morales and the MAS have presented their project as a radical alternative to neoliberalism which involves a diversification of the economy away from primary export-based development (Andreucci and Radhuber 2015: 280) accompanied by a nationalisation of Bolivia’s natural resources (Schilling-Vacaflor 2017), neither of these goals have been fully achieved. The “Heroes of the Chaco” decree and the increasing share of state company Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB) in gas activities and the establishing of new contracts regarding taxation with transnational companies (Schilling-Vacaflor 2017:

662) meant that the state received eight times more income from gas, increasing from \$673 million in 2005 to more than \$5 billion in 2013 (Solón 2016). However, Bolivia is more dependent today on primary exports than ever before, with primary goods increasing from 89 percent of total export value in 2000 to 95 percent in 2012 (ECLAC 2013: 111). Furthermore, the extent of nationalisation and state control over natural resources has in fact been limited (Andreucci and Radhuber 2015). PETROBRAS and REPSOL, two transnational companies retained control over 75 percent of natural gas production (Solón 2016). In the mining sector, despite some nationalisations, private transnationals retained control over approximately 70 percent of exports (Ibid.). We need to understand why this is the case to grasp the realities of Bolivian democratisation.

To fund programs that expand democracy and give the government legitimacy, the government had to maintain a healthy relationship with the agribusiness elites in the eastern lowlands (Wolff 2016: 129-131) and the transnational and domestic elites involved in mining and hydrocarbon extraction (Arteaga 2015: 575-6). The government is heavily dependent on transnational extraction firms to exploit the resources with which social-economic policies are to be funded (Kaup 2013: 102). When Morales took power, “most transnational mining and hydrocarbon firms had twenty-year contracts giving them access to the mineral and hydrocarbon reserves that bi- and multilateral-trade agreements legally guaranteed” (Ibid.). As such, transnational capital “had successfully embedded itself in Bolivia’s natural resource sectors for decades to come” (Ibid.). Meanwhile, agro-industrial elites from Santa Cruz with support from the US government and Brazilian rural elites with ties to Sao Paulo and international financial capital maintained influence over politics in the

region, preventing plans to implement radical agrarian revolution where 90 percent of the land is owned by 1 percent of the population (Gustafson and Fabricant 2017).

The development strategy of the government that relied on, and continues to rely on, redistribution of natural resource rents and agro-exports placed great power, both in the hands of the TNCs and the domestic economic elites who have links to foreign extracting companies and export markets (Kaup 2013: 102). Hence while Morales may be critiqued for failing to move beyond natural resource exporting, he was in a tough position whereby he had promised to boost the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable sectors, while the embedded power of elite actors ensured that he could not radically alter the nature of the extraction model. What is more, given the underdeveloped nature of the Bolivian economy and its basis on primary-commodity exports, Morales had to prevent a general deterioration in the business environment for exporting (Wolff 2016: 138), meaning that economic elites retained significant structural power, that is, capacity to influence government policy decisions due to control over vital investment funds (Fairfield 2015). The result is that progressive principles coexist with neoliberal continuities, favouring conditions for national elites and transnational investors, such as low tax and royalties²⁰ (Andreucci and Radhuber 2015: 283).

Despite anti-neoliberal rhetoric from Morales regarding radical agrarian land reform, wholesale nationalisations, and the construction of an economic model less reliant on natural resources, government-elite relations have in fact become relatively stable. As noted earlier, from 2006-09 business groups took a fiercely confrontational stance toward the government, using their links to the conservative autonomist movement and their control of

²⁰ For an excellent discussion of the mining sector and neoliberal continuities see Andreucci and Radhuber (2015)

the media to attempt to destabilise Morales. These attempts failed, however, due to the governments' domestic political strength (Wolff 2016: 137). Indeed, it is precisely because of the government's domination of the political sphere following the 2009 and 2010 elections that economic elites came to realise that relying solely on an alliance with right-wing political parties to gain political leverage was futile (Ibid.). Hence, economic elites switched their tactics of dealing with the Morales government from confrontation to dialogue, and ultimately, outright cooperation (Solón 2016; Wolff 2016).

The decline in the political power of right-wing parties, the continued power of TNCs and their links to domestic elites, and the rapprochement between the government and exporting elites had two important outcomes that would feedback onto the development of post-neoliberal democratisation. Firstly, weakened political opposition opened the space for greater centralisation of power in the executive. While this centralisation began in response to the elite destabilisation tactics during the process of forging the new constitution (García Linera 2010), it has advanced in the second and third legislatures during Morales' time in office where the MAS party "has held a two-thirds majority within the legislative assembly, has selected all ministers and has pre-selected the highest tribunals' judges" (Schilling-Vacaflor 2017: 671).

Secondly, given the reduction in government-elite confrontations, Morales is less reliant on the support of strategic movements to defend the post-neoliberal process, thereby weakening popular power. Indeed, given the power balance between the government and both the TNC and domestic elite, and his desire to economically advance Bolivia so as to have the capacity to engage in democratic extending, the second phase of the post-neoliberal democratisation project has witnessed elements of "exclusionary and

authoritarian tendencies...directed against ‘internal enemies’ and former allies” (Schilling-Vacaflor 2011: 13).

As such, and returning to the central concerns of the project regarding how to move beyond the confines of market democracy and simultaneously deepen and extend democracy, the above discussion suggests that the relative power balance between the state, elites, international (f)actors, and popular sectors greatly influenced the Bolivian process between 2009 and 2014. Given the government-elite relations outlined above, and the fact that the popular sector is not simply a unified bloc but is rather comprised of both core- and strategic-groups who have varying levels of power vis-à-vis the government, to gain a more nuanced understanding of efforts to deepen and extend democracy, as well as the level and form of centralisation of power in the executive, we must examine the process via the lenses of the two popular blocs. It is also necessary to analyse if and how differing power relations between the government and the core-bloc impacts the nature of relations between the government and the strategic-bloc.

6.3 Core-organic relations and democratisation:

As discussed above, the core bloc is comprised of those organisations that Morales has organic links with such as the Chapare cocaleros and the CSUTCB. In return for their support, Morales gives core supporters privileged positions in ministries, as well as power to nominate “personnel for positions of medium and low importance in the executive branch at the national, departmental, and local levels of government” (Silva 2013: 67).

Furthermore, Morales regularly consults with CONALCAM, which from 2009 onwards was principally made up of organic supporters. The interactions between Morales and CONALCAM on policy decisions, laws, and long-term strategies gives the member

movements great power to influence decision-making processes (Balderacchi 2015; Silva 2015). Once CONALCAM approves a proposed law, it is sent to the National Assembly where MAS representatives seek its approval (Balderacchi 2015: 18). Given the considerable presence of members of core social movements in both the National Assembly and the MAS, CONALCAM decisions are guaranteed to be taken into account by the legislative body (Ibid.). As Balderacchi (2015: 18) summarises, CONALCAM “can thus be viewed as an unofficial parallel legislative assembly, bridging the gap between state and civil society, where both laws and the most important sociopolitical events of the moment are discussed and examined”.

While core movements have certainly achieved access to the political decision-making channels, the nature of the relationship between Morales and the movements raises concerns. Given the economic power of the government to redistribute resources, some observers question whether autonomous deliberative and participatory space exists for core organisations members to challenge the government. For example, many observers state that the CONALCAM has in fact “primarily served to channel and constrain the autonomy of member groups and movements into support for the government” (Morales and Conroy 2017: 33). Schilling-Vacaflor meanwhile (2017: 665) describes how the unwavering support of leaders of the Six Federations coca-growers organisation for the government has inhibited the scope of the base to express grievances resulting from negative socio-environmental impacts of hydrocarbon activities and the lack of mitigation measures. As Schilling-Vacaflor (Ibid: 666) states, “before Morales became president... protest activities, or at least the threat of blockades against the...extraction companies, were quite common”. However, today the cocaleros, the municipal government, and community members do not

wish to challenge “their” government, even if government supported extraction policies negatively impact the well-being of some of the base (Ibid). The organic nature of the relations between government and the core organisations has thus hindered democratic deepening in some instances.

In 2013, the Law of Participation and Social Control was passed and the government created the National Mechanism for Participation and Social Control as part of the Ministry of Transparency. The law states that “participation is a right, condition, and fundamental element of democracy” and that as such, social organisations (not movements) should oversee the functioning of state organs and politicians, formulate and elaborate public policies and laws, and have independence to take decisions. As Farthing (2017) states, “ostensibly, grassroots organisations would now have more influence than the 1994 LPP since social control would expand to cover all three levels of government (municipal, departmental, and national)”. However, as Revilla (2014: 53) suggests, while the law contains “good intentions”, its actual application has been questionable. The state determines which organised sectors should be recognised, and each government ministry convokes meetings with a pre-established agenda (Zuazo 2010: 134; Farthing 2017). Furthermore, the organisations that do participate do so in a fragmented manner (Zuazo 2010: 134).

However, while there certainly appears to have been some instances of co-optation of organic movements, given the associational and collective power of core supporters, they have at times shown sufficient autonomy to critique and mobilise against Morales when they are not included in decision-making processes that have an impact on their livelihoods (Balderacchi 2015; Anria 2013: 37). For example, after the decree to cancel fuel subsidies in

December 2010 that led to an estimated 83 percent increase in fuel prices (Anria 2013: 37), popular revolts against the policy that came to be known as the *gasolinazo* forced the government to backtrack. As Balderacchi (2015: 23) notes, what was interesting about the protests is that core support groups including the cocaleros and CSUTCB leaders were involved. It was not simply the increase in gas prices that upset core supporters. It was the exclusionary method of decision-making that irked these groups (Mayorga 2011a).

In sum, core-movement opportunity and agency to influence a range of issues that resonate with movement demands was built, albeit through informal, un-institutionalised channels in return for active government support. As such, core movement-government relations exhibited characteristics of simultaneous deepening in conjunction with co-optation and centralisation. The organisational composition of CONALCAM – it is comprised almost entirely of organic movements supportive of the government - and its privileged position in accessing political decision-making channels raises a further fundamental concern regarding the deepening of democracy in Bolivia's post-neoliberal process. While the power of organic groups has prevented centralisation by holding the government to account, their very power protects Morales from having to engage fully with opponents of his regime, be they conservative opposition or former supporters, thereby actually opening opportunities for centralisation. An analysis of the relationship between the government and these former strategic supporters is thus required to identify if such centralisation has occurred.

6.4 Strategic-government relations and democratisation:

Relations between the central government and strategic organisations have tended to follow one of two paths; either they have been co-opted and become supportive allies, or

they have sought to retain autonomy and faced exclusion from participation. To fully comprehend such developments we must return to examine how elite forces have retained power over Morales as he seeks to develop an economy capable of supporting moderate democratic expansion.

The power of national and international elites to influence government policy has ensured that elite economic privilege is protected, thereby limiting the possibility of adhering to the October Agenda. This has resulted in disillusionment and anger amongst many strategic popular organisations who had demanded the industrialisation and complete nationalisation of Bolivia's natural gas resources so as to create jobs and boost state capacity to increase spending on welfare, education, and health needs (Iamamoto 2015: 35). Furthermore, the decision by the government to maintain an economy based on neoliberal relations of extracting where transnational and domestic elites dictate the process has led to confrontations between the government and strategic organisations due to a failure to engage in meaningful prior consultation with affected, predominantly indigenous, groups (see for example Schilling Vacaflor 2017). Ultimately what we see here is the MAS government caught between demands of strategic popular organisations and an elite whose power to dictate policy has not been broken. In response, the government has sought to weaken contestatory organisations via a divide-and conquer strategy.

This process has developed over time, beginning with the MAS insertion into areas where it had no organic base, but required electoral support, particularly in urban areas (see Anria 2013 for a detailed discussion). By incorporating militant leaders into the party structure, the MAS managed to ensure that they could count on the electoral support of popular organisations and their base members, as well as ensuring a docile society. As Tapia

(2011) notes, co-opted organisation leaders are required to show unwavering political loyalty if they wish to receive a cut of the public funds which they require in order to respond to the demands of their base. The result of this co-optation of erstwhile contestatory organisations, which originated in 2005 but deepened post 2009, is a monopolisation of power in the MAS to the “detriment of the exercise of concurrent and progressive powers of citizens with levels of autonomy and independent decision-making”, whereby participation that aims to transform living conditions “has been reduced to simple and uncritical support of the government” (Arteaga 2015: 583).

In conjunction with co-opting, the government has fostered *paralelismo*, that is, the creating of parallel organisations to existing contestatory organisations. The government divides existing organisations by identifying sectors who will support the MAS and uses its economic power to direct funding to this “loyal” section, while using its ideological power and media influence to side-line elements of the organisation who seek to retain autonomy (Morales and Conroy 2017; Arteaga 2015). The outcome is a divided and confused base whose associational and collective power is diminished, while social movements, indigenous communities, and former allies are turned against each other (Morales and Conroy 2017: 30). As a result, radical popular demands for a drastic overhaul of the structure of the economy and the nature of government-elite relations are greatly weakened. There are numerous examples of such government tactics toward strategic organisations, both urban and rural, where there now exist multiple versions of an organisation, one controlled and recognised by the MAS, and others which either claim autonomy or which have been co-opted by opposition parties, and which are not recognised by the central government. These processes of co-optation, division, and *paralelismo* are evidenced, amongst others, in

the cases of the CONAMAQ, CIDOB, the Central Obrera Departmental La Paz, urban popular organisations such as the FEJUVEs, and the Assembly of Guaraní People (APG)²¹.

6.5 A summary of democratic deepening: Self-reinforcing and Reactive Sequences:

In terms of deepening democracy, the outcomes of Bolivia's post-neoliberal democratisation process to date have been mixed. The MAS-societal relations fit neither a bottom-up nor a top-down schema (Disney and Williams 2014: 22; Azzellini 2010) "but a complex combination of both" (Anria 2010: 102). Wolff (2013: 56) notes that "participation by popular organisations remains largely informal and is shaped, at least in part, by attempts to co-opt and control social movements from above. At the same time, horizontal accountability continues to be weak. The result is a concentration of political power in the government, even if important formal and informal checks on executive power exist". What we witness is an almost paradoxical state of affairs whereby centralisation of power in the executive is accompanied by a deepening of democracy for some groups. As Schilling-Vacaflor (2011: 12) summarises, "we can argue that civil society participation in Bolivia has been strengthened under Morales since representatives of hitherto marginalised groups now play an important role in Bolivian politics. Nevertheless, certain sectors of society have been included to a far greater extent than others. Moreover, the decision-making power of society is being limited by the homogenizing and partly authoritarian tendencies of the current government".

²¹ The nature of co-optation, divisions, and *paralelismo* differ from case to case, requiring in depth analysis to comprehend outcomes. I offer such analysis from the urban perspective of El Alto in the next chapter; for an excellent analysis of divide and conquer processes in rural areas see Schilling-Vacaflor (2017) on the APG struggles; analysis of the TIPNIS conflict by Morales (2013) highlights the divisions forged in the CONAMAQ and CIDOB.

A partially self-reinforcing sequence emerged whereby organic movements that helped bring Morales and the MAS to power have maintained influence over government policy regarding redistribution of resources to their base, while at the same time, this very redistribution of resources ensures near unequivocal support for the government. The nature of the relationship between Morales and the organic groups and the power these movements retain due to their capacity to influence the electorate as witnessed in the 2009 elections, to mobilise in defence of the government – against elite opposition from 2006-09, and against former allies post-2009 - or to mobilise against Morales as witnessed during the *gasolinazo*, has ensured that early experiences of bottom-up participation have been reinforced over the duration of the democratisation project thereby preventing a full centralisation of power in the executive. On the other hand, the economic power wielded by the government has meant that core-group leaders have at times been co-opted, thereby allowing government interests, which are often set by powerful elite interests, to trump the concerns of base community members.

Democratic deepening for strategic organisations however has followed a more reactive sequence. While strategic organisations were included during the Constituent Assembly battle against the autonomist movement, once economic elites and the MAS government ended their stand-off, the influence of strategic sectors diminished. Elite-government relations and the economic plan of the MAS government has meant that some strategic movements have seen their demands side-lined, and ultimately, they have either been co-opted or ostracised. The result of such strategic-government relations limits

The proposals that can be put forward by the representatives of civil society organisations and inhibit their criticism of the government, making dialogue

between grassroots sectors of society and state institutions conditional on serving the government's interests, and thus depriving society of its prerogative to participate and/or influence proposed legislation and/or the development of public policies (Arteaga 2015: 573).

6.6 2014 Presidential elections:

In the 2014 presidential elections Morales won 61 percent of the vote, the MAS won a two-thirds supermajority in both houses, while also winning eight of the nine provinces, including “three of four in the eastern lowlands—leading him to proclaim the ‘defeat’ of the political Right, and the replacement of the *‘media luna’* by the *‘luna llena’* (full moon) of a united Bolivia” (Achtenberg 2016: 374). How Morales achieved these results offers some light as to changes in the democratisation process post 2009.

MAS gained support in the *media luna*, but lost ground in Andean strongholds like La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí, highlighting how Morales has tried to woo voters in erstwhile enemy territory, while also highlighting the rural nature of his continuing support coupled with a declining urban support (Centellas 2015). The use of core movements to mobilise electoral support sparked controversy amongst opposition politicians. CSUTCB leaders openly admitted that communities would be sanctioned according to the “norms of community justice” if they failed to support the MAS (Achtenberg 2014) while in the Chapare municipalities, over 95 percent voted for Morales (Schilling-Vacaflor 2017: 663).

Apart from maintaining its tight links to its core support who mobilise the electorate for the party, the MAS and Morales have expanded to the eastern lowlands, reflecting in part “the rapprochement between the government and the (agri-) business sectors (in Santa

Cruz, in particular)” (BTI 2016). Furthermore, “600 militants from the conservative Democratic National Action Party (ADN) of Santa Cruz, formed by ex-military dictator Hugo Banzer” were “welcomed by the MAS leadership after renouncing their party affiliations” (Achtenberg 2014). Indeed, several conservative leaders from the old neoliberal parties “reinvented themselves as MAS legislative candidates” leading to frustration amongst many long-time progressive constituents who feel unrepresented by them (Ibid.). As Achtenberg (2014) astutely noted, “while this strategy may further fracture the right, and may deliver more MAS votes on balance, these benefits may come at the cost of impeding more progressive policies in the Plurinational Assembly and diluting Bolivia’s so-called ‘process of change’”. In conjunction with the support of the core movements and the agri-elites, the co-opting of strategic sectors and *paralelismo* has also ensured that the MAS retains the support of some strategic organisations, while the continuance of cash transfers secures the votes of many of the most vulnerable sectors (Morales and Conroy 2017).

7. Post-inflection sequencing phase 3: 2015-present:

While the 2014 elections appeared to show that the MAS’s political power was continuing to grow, key events in 2015 and 2016 such as defeats in urban zones in local elections, a defeat in the referendum on presidential re-election for Morales, and the first impacts of the end of the resource boom on government economic power suggest that Bolivia’s post-neoliberal democratisation may be entering a new phase, the outcomes of which will depend on the balance of forces between the government, elites, various societal actors, and the international sphere.

7.1 *Declining urban support for the MAS:*

The 2015 subnational elections continued the trend of the 2014 elections, with the MAS consolidating its electoral power, but losing ground in the urban zones where it lost in eight of the ten principal cities, the departmental capitals, along with El Alto (Alberti 2016). Vice-president García Linera's observation that "the population accompany the project, but they were not in agreement with the candidates we selected" (as quoted in Molina 2015) highlights how the centralised selection of candidates without respecting the preferences of the base cost the MAS electorally in the cities. Clearly a gap has emerged in the original support bloc that brought Morales to power in 2005. Those core movements who have been included in decision-making retain, for the most part, support, though Nelson Condori, the Aymara representative on the executive of the CSUTCB, warned that "we will continue to support Evo only for as long as he listens to our demands" (interview with author). However, the government tactics of courting conservatives and elites and moderating the extent of the democratisation project, combined with the co-opting and creation of parallel organisations appears to have cost the government legitimacy amongst urban popular voters (see next chapter for detailed discussion of this phenomenon in El Alto).

7.2 Rescinding re-election restrictions:

The referendum on presidential re-election in 2016 also highlights the changing nature of support for a MAS-Morales-led project. As Acthenberg (2016) describes, at the inauguration of Morales' third term he outlined an ambitious 10-year development plan – "the 'Agenda Patriótica 2025' (Patriotic Agenda 2025) - to be financed by continued expansion of the gas-fuelled economy. With no other strong national leadership in the wings, MAS party logic held that a fourth presidential term for Morales was critical to accomplish this mission". Morales sought a referendum on modifying the Constitution so as to allow a third re-

election of the president and vice-president, drawing a varied response. A “No” coalition formed around traditional right-wing politicians, along with the new mayor of El Alto, Soledad Chapetón of the *Unidad Nacional* party, and the mayor of La Paz Luis Revilla of the *Soberanía y Libertad Bolivia* (Sovereignty and Liberty Bolivia-Sol.Bo) party (Achtenberg 2016: 375), a moderate social democratic party. Completing the coalition “were ex-MASistas and representatives of alienated Left-popular sectors seeking to rehabilitate what they perceive as a stagnating ‘process of change’, who constituted themselves as the ‘popular No’ bloc” (ibid.). The “No” coalition focused media attention on a series of scandals²², challenging the credibility of Morales and MAS (Alberti 2016; Achtenberg 2016: 375).

The referendum was narrowly defeated by 51.3 percent, thereby blocking the possibility of re-election for Morales. However, in September, the MAS asked the Constitutional Tribunal, which is an “old friend” of the president (Vaca Villa 2017) to rescind limits on elected authorities seeking re-election indefinitely, arguing that they violate human rights (Reuters 2017). On November 28th, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that all elected officials could run for office indefinitely (Farthing 2017a), with Macario Lahor Cortez, the head of the court, stating that “all people that were limited by the law and the constitution are hereby able to run for office, because it is up to the Bolivian people to decide” (as cited in Reuters 2017).

On December 3rd, judicial elections were held which “became a litmus test of the country’s political climate...due to an effort spearheaded by a coalition of former presidents,

²² For a discussion of allegations against high-ranking MAS politicians of mismanagement and corruption of the public funds see Alberti (2016); See Achtenberg (2016: 373) for overview of the “Zapata” affair in which allegations emerged regarding Morales and Gabriela Zapata and an allegedly still-living “love-child”, as well as the directing of multi-million dollar no-bid contracts from the MAS government to the Chinese company in which Zapata held a high-level post. Furthermore, an arson attack on the El Alto municipal building by MAS party militants which left 6 dead further eroded support for the re-election campaign.

vice-presidents, governors, and political party leaders to urge Bolivians to cast null votes ” (Farthing 2017a). While 84 per cent of the electorate voted, “51 per cent of the ballots cast were nullified leading the right-wing opposition to declare a victory and declare the result as evidence that support for Evo Morales is declining” (Ibid.). The ultimate outcome of the decision to allow re-election remains to be seen, but it has seriously damaged the image of Morales in the international sphere, while it is likely to galvanise the divided opposition (Vaca Villa 2017). Furthermore, responding to the Constitutional Tribunal’s finding to allow re-election, political analyst David Smilde posted on his Twitter feed that “as happened with Chavismo after 2009, this virtually guarantees an internal atrophy of the MAS. Lower and mid-level leaders now realise their political lives are tied to Evo, and critical feedback and independent thinking are not in their interest” (Smilde 2017b).

7.3 Changing international (f)actors:

The changing international market for Bolivia’s commodities adds to the likely fluctuations in Bolivia’s democratisation project. 2015 witnessed a steep fall in prices for Bolivia’s primary commodity exports, signalling an end to the resource-boom that fuelled Morales’ democratic extending programmes since the mid-2000s. From April 2014 to April 2015, the collection of Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons take had decreased by 16 percent (Alonso 2015). As such, during 2015 Morales began to prepare to adopt austerity measures (Alberti 2016: 33), although prudent economic management during the boom provided a safety net that has prevented social spending from coming to a complete stop (Achtenberg 2016: 373).

The Patriotic Agenda 2025 and the Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20 both outline the plans to continue using extraction to finance development. As vice-president García-Linera stated in August 2016, “we are going to use extractivism, for at least

two decades more” in order to develop and protect society. As Farthing notes, the continued focus on expanding extraction as the easiest way to boost infrastructure and services has meant that the government’s alliance with the traditional elites has steadily tightened (Riofrancos and Farthing 2017). By 2017, “the government had replaced its original discourse of societal transformation with one focused on the newfound economic stability it had delivered to the country, which has long been notoriously unstable. In the process, its political agenda became far more centrist; it moved away from its older commitment to communitarian socialism and towards policies that encourage capitalist growth that fuels government re-distribution” (Ibid). However, looking to the future, it remains to be seen how the government, elites, and the MAS support base, will respond to continued declines in the price of its principle exports.

The regional scenario has also fundamentally shifted since Morales took power, with the return of neoliberal presidents in Argentina and Brazil reducing ideological support for a post-neoliberal project in regional organisations such as the *Mercado Común del Sur* (Common Market of the South – MERCOSUR). Crucially, core ideological and economic ally Venezuela is mired in a deep economic and political crisis that threatens to result in dramatically reduced funding scenario for Bolivia (López Segrera 2016).

Meanwhile, Bolivia’s growing relationship with China provides both opportunities and challenges. Bilateral trade between the two countries increased from \$75.3 million dollars in 2000 by a factor of six by 2014 (Ellis 2016: 5), and China has become the fifth largest market for Bolivian exports, mostly raw materials such as minerals, hydrocarbons, wood, and soybeans (Achtenberg 2017). China has also become Bolivia’s chief bilateral creditor, accounting for 9.2 percent of the country’s foreign debt, much of which has been

used to purchase “a vast array of goods and services produced by Chinese companies (public and private) for the Bolivian state and its various enterprises, including roads, bridges, railways, hydroelectric plants, and mining facilities” (Ibid.). According to official rhetoric, Bolivia and China work together in a cooperative horizontal relationship, with Morales stating that the relationship has reduced Western leverage as “Bolivia has achieved independence from U.S.-dominated financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, whose onerous lending conditions in the 1980s and ‘90s undermined the country’s economic and political sovereignty”.

However, critics argue that Bolivia’s relationship with China serves Chinese expansionary interests rather than Bolivia’s productive capacity, and that in fact there is an increasing dependency on extractivism and foreign capital (Achtenberg 2017), with Rafael Puente (2017) suggesting that Bolivia is “substituting one imperialism for another”. As Achtenberg (2017) summarises,

For Bolivia, the relationship has deepened its dependency not only on China, but on a mode of development centred on megaworks and extractivism, that has led to growing social and political unrest. A significant portion of the country’s (current and future) resources are now pledged to outsized projects tailored to the interests and capacities of transnational conglomerates. In this sense, China’s presence in Bolivia has helped to foreclose opportunities for alternative development grounded in local and regionally-based sustainable production that could point towards resolution of the country’s deep-seated economic, social, and political conflicts.

8. Summary, issues, and questions going forward:

The historical development of Bolivia's post-neoliberal democratisation process detailed in this chapter has identified how the balance of power between government, and popular society, elites, and the international sphere has had a crucial impact on determining the outcomes to date. Indeed, it is the conflux of these various relationships that holds the current conjuncture together, offering both opportunities and pitfalls for the future of the project.

Fundamentally, the exclusion of popular groups who critique the government coupled with a moderated deepening of democracy that sees deep access for organic groups and a co-opted inclusion for some strategic organisations has stunted the Bolivian post-neoliberal democratisation process. By failing to foster self-reflexive dialectical flows of information that allow for popular concerns from the base to reach the upper echelon of government, the process led by Morales which promised to both extend and deepen democracy fails to respond to citizens' demands, loses legitimacy, and worryingly, leaves the door ajar for right-wing political actors to channel popular discontent. Furthermore, the commodity boom that has maintained the social pact in Bolivia in recent years has rescinded.

Several fundamental questions thus emerge regarding the next phase and the legacy of Bolivia's post-neoliberal process; will the government favour a deepening of austerity rather than challenge elite interests, and if so, what will the popular response to austerity be; will a popular political alternative to the MAS emerge; will right-wing parties re-emerge at a local and national level; have popular actors been too weakened to defend the process

meaning elite demands will dominate causing a reversal and return to full market democracy? The answers to these questions may well rest on whether popular actors can overcome the problems of centralisation, divisions, and *paralelismo*, re-forge autonomy from the government and re-build the associational and collective power that was prevalent in the run-up to Morales' initial election. Indeed, given the current balance of power between government, elites, and the international sphere, I suggest that if the project is to be radicalised, popular power must explode once more. To offer some response to these issues and identify what the lessons and legacies of Bolivia's attempt to deliver a post-neoliberal democracy are, I now offer an in depth analysis of the process to date in the urban centre of El Alto.

Chapter 5: The view from above: Democratisation in El Alto

1. Introduction:

This chapter examines Bolivia's attempts to engage in a post-neoliberal democratisation process from the perspective of urban strategic groups in the city of El Alto, an indigenous-migrant city that looks down upon La Paz, to which it is connected via a spiralling 30 minute drive. The previous chapter detailed how the relative balance of power between the state, domestic and transnational elites, and popular society – both core and strategic groups – influenced the democratisation sequencing and outcomes in terms of deepening, extending and centralisation of power. By examining the process via an appraisal of state-strategic group relations in El Alto, this chapter aims to offer a more nuanced understanding not only of the actually existing outcomes of the process to date, but also of the legacy, dangers, and difficulties of efforts to construct a post-neoliberal democracy in Bolivia.

El Alto offers a key site for analysis, firstly given the vital role its residents played in the anti-neoliberal protests that precipitated the election of Evo Morales, and secondly, because it has experienced, and continues to experience, the contradictions of the post-neoliberal process detailed in the previous chapter which many citizens across the country face. As such, the experience of El Alto residents offers a rich site to identify the lessons and legacies of the democratisation process in Bolivia more generally. While I focus predominantly on local experiences in El Alto, I also include analysis of departmental and national organisations in which El Alto organisations are members.

The TGPT framework developed in chapter 2 calls for an examination of the antecedent conditions that influence both the point of inflection – that is, the election of a progressive president – as well the aftermath sequencing, suggesting that the relative balance of power between the state, organised popular society, economic elites, and international (f)actors are key variables influencing the pathways and outcomes of the democratisation process. As such, a brief history of the city is offered, highlighting the building of militant popular power and the explosion of anti-neoliberal protest, particularly between 2003 and 2005. Based on four months field research in 2017 where I completed thirty interviews with key actors in El Alto, as well as attending multiple protests and political meetings and engaging in ethnographic data collection, the chapter then examines the evolving relationship between the MAS government and popular organisations, in particular the Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighbourhood Associations; FEJUVE) and the Central Obrero Regional-El Alto (Regional Workers Union of El Alto; COR), detailing how co-optation and centralisation have impacted on societal power, how the emergence of the phenomenon of *paralelismo* is impacting democratic outcomes, and what the role of opposition parties and economic elites has been on the process in El Alto. Next, a discussion regarding if and how societal power in El Alto prevalent before the election of Morales is likely to re-emerge and act as a counterweight to centralisation tendencies, thereby fostering the possibility of a “progressive centralisation”. Such analysis sheds light on the *how* and *why* questions regarding El Alto’s democratisation process. The chapter finishes by placing the El Alto analysis into the national context, thereby helping us to draw lessons from the city’s and Bolivia’s experiences for democratisation theory in general regarding how to move beyond the confines of market democracy toward a post-neoliberal model.

2. Antecedent Conditions:

2.1 *El Alto's Militant History:*

El Alto has a long history of community organising which stems partly from the rural Andean community traditions brought by the migrants who make up the majority of the population (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 67). In addition, neoliberal structural adjustment during the 1980s fostered the closure of many of the country's mines, resulting in mass migration of Quechuan miners, many to El Alto, who brought with them Marxist traditions of organising (Albo 2006a; Silva 2009; Crabtree and Chaplin 2013; Lazar 2008). The city is, then, a space with a rich experience of social organisation (Deledicque and Contartese 2010: 138), which over thirty years has “developed a dense, close-knit system of community associations organised mainly along territorial and geographic lines (district and neighbourhood) to meet basic needs in the face of government neglect” (Silva 2009: 135). In the 1980s, these local communities organised to demand access to basic services such as electricity, education, and street paving with the Central Obrera Regional-El Alto, infused with militancy from the miners, and the *juntas vecinales*, local neighbourhood councils who joined together to form the FEJUVE, playing leading roles (Silva 2009: 136-7). Women's' groups, students, *gremiales* – organisations of informal street traders, cultural groups and others have also developed in the city (Deledicque and Contartese 2010). This chapter focuses predominantly on the experiences of the FEJUVE and the COR as these were the most prominent popular organisations in the wave of anti-neoliberal protests that brought Morales to power. During the early stages of the development of the city, and during the anti-neoliberal protests of 2003-2005, these organisations offered an alternative mobilisation vehicle to traditional parties, and indeed, in moments where political parties failed to respond to citizens, they

filled this vacuum (Deledicque and Contartese 2010: 142). Furthermore, understanding the changing nature of the relationship between these popular organisations and representative institutions in the aftermath sequencing offers fundamental lessons for post-neoliberal democratisation theory.

The FEJUVE El Alto can be traced to 1957 when the first inhabitants of the then seven zones of El Alto formed a neighbourhood council to protest against discrimination faced by *Alteños* (residents of El Alto) at the hands of the leaders of the Federación Departamental de Juntas Vecinales de la Paz and to demand the state provide basic services such as water and electricity²³. Daniel Gutiérrez, the press officer for the FEJUVE located on the 6 de Marzo Avenue of El Alto, highlights how the FEJUVE has developed over time from a social movement that appeared at specific moments to focus on specific grievances, into a social organisation with much more general demands regarding the development of the city and the country (interview with author). It has grown to today encompass approximately 800 local neighbourhood zones organised into fourteen districts (Mancilla 2016: 65). The FEJUVE statute, forged during the Statute Congress in 2001, adopts elements of *ayllu* logic such as communitarianism and the notion of *rotatividad* whereby *dirigentes* (leaders selected by the base of the organisation) are to be replaced every two years (Ibid: 66-7; D. Gutiérrez, interview with author). Furthermore, article 1 states that the FEJUVE El Alto is a civic, democratic, participative, and apolitical institution. As such the organisation must prioritise the interests of the city's residents above serving any political party (Mancilla 2016: 68). The statute also enforces the point that the community must be the priority above any personal interests (Ibid.: 69).

²³ See Mancilla (2016: 63-70) for in depth discussion of the history of the FEJUVE El Alto.

In terms of structure, local barrios organise at the district level in which all of the *juntas vecinales* of the base of the district decide on and coordinate actions, while above the district level is the executive branch of the organisation, that is, the FEJUVE. The members of the executive are selected by the 14 district-level organisations (D. Gutiérrez interview with author). Fluid relations between the base and upper levels seek to provide a counterweight toward any tendency of top-down decision-making (Espósito and Arteaga 2006: 63). As discussed below, the nature of the structure gave the FEJUVE the capacity to mobilise enormous numbers during moments of resistance (Ibid.). Indeed, writing in 2013, Crabtree and Chaplin (2013: 69) stated that the FEJUVE had become the principle institution representing Alteños' interests, more so than the mayor or the elected city councillors.

The COR meanwhile was originally founded in 1985 to represent the demands of El Alto's workers and street traders (Mancilla 2016: 71). In fact, the "COR was paradoxically a result of the neoliberal adjustment package implemented in 1985, because as more unemployed workers turned to the informal sector, guilds grew exponentially and founded the organisation" (Albó 2006a). It was founded on the principles that it must retain autonomy and independence from all political parties. Indeed its purpose was to perform a contestatory role representing worker demands in front of the state. Furthermore, Article 5 of the organisation's statute highlights the Trotskyist traditions of the COR, stating that the organisation is antiimperialist and that it seeks the social and national liberation of Bolivia, and that it is to do so via direct action of the masses and hunger strikes (Mancilla 2016: 77). Article 25 of the statute states that members of the executive committee are elected for two year periods.

2.2 Party-society relations in the Antecedent Era:

The Law of Popular Participation (LPP)²⁴ introduced in 1994 meant that municipal governments assumed greater roles and responsibilities, while also empowering the neighbourhood committees because they were charged with overseeing municipal spending via “comités de vigilancia” (Silva 2009: 136; Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 71). However, the LPP also divided communities along territorial lines with local groups battling for their portion of the budget (Revilla 2007: 19), thereby weakening the class consciousness which had been fomenting in El Alto (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 71). The neoliberal informalisation of labour transformed relations between workers, with competition rather than unity developing in the labour market (Ibid.: 72). As Crabtree and Chaplin (2013: 72) state, “in this context, the neighbourhood associations became key mediators between the state and society, and increasingly formed a clientelistic relation” whereby political parties offered public works contracts in return for the political support of the leaders of popular organisations (Revilla 2007: 19). As such, while these organisations represented their base, there has always been a tendency for local political parties to control them from above (A. Cahuaya, interview with author), be that the right-wing MNR, the populist Conciencia de Patria (CONDEPA), or centre-Left Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) under the guidance of José Luis “Pepelucho” Paredes (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 71; Quispe 2003).

2.3 2002-05: Popular power, autonomy, unity, and anti-neoliberal contestation:

The period of 2002-05 witnessed a fundamental reformation of how popular organisations engaged with the municipal state and political parties. The divisions in El Alto’s social organisations that had been fomented from above and re-enforced by neoliberal policies

²⁴ See page 114 for more on the LPP.

were to be overcome, paradoxically, in response to neoliberal policies. The announcement in mid-2003 by the mayor of El Alto, José Luis Paredes, to introduce a land registry system to regulate transactions in real estate in El Alto irked *Alteños* who saw the proposed regulations as a new tax to extract more money from the poor (Arbona 2008: 36). Locals argued that they had already paid property tax, labelling the new payment as “*Maya Paya*”, an Aymara term meaning “once and twice”. Sentiment amongst indignant locals that they had already too much in property charges was captured by the commonly heard slogan “it is impossible that they demand us to pay taxes even on our dog’s kennels” (A. Cahuaya, interview with author).

The proposed tax led to local forums and debates centred on the notion of *Alteño* dignity, particularly in District 4 of the city (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). Initially, the FEJUVE, led by Mauricio Cori, did not support the District 4 calls for a forum due to the traditional *prebendalismo* (political parties giving perks to organisation leaders) and party-FEJUVE links that still existed at that time. However, local leaders in District 4 contacted *dirigentes* across the city without the support of the FEJUVE executive, rejecting the *Maya Paya* and calling for all *Alteños* to challenge the tax. A forum was organised and in the face of widespread rejection of the tax, the FEJUVE accepted that all of the districts should protest until the proposed tax was completely rescinded (the above discussion of the *Maya Paya* tax and protest is based on an interview with A. Cahuaya).

With the FEJUVE organising massive protests, and despite the mayor’s heavy-handed repressive tactics, the *Maya Paya* tax proposal was rescinded in September 2003 (Arbona 2008: 36). Meanwhile, state violence in Warisata in response to peasant roadblocks organised by Felipe Quispe and the CSUTCB indigenous peasants which led to the deaths of

six peasants²⁵ united the Aymara of the *altiplano* and set off a wave of peasant mobilisation across the country calling for the president's resignation (Kohl and Farthing 2006: 174; Silva 2009: 139). Many of the Aymaras of the highlands who supported Felipe Quispe and the Katarista ideals were "peasants with one foot in the countryside and one foot in the city of El Alto...El Alto was the bedroom of the migrants" who came to the city to sell their produce (C. Arze, interview with author). As such, the government response to the Warisata incident resonated deeply with the city's populace. Furthermore, with El Alto's neighbourhood organisations already mobilised against the proposed Maya Paya tax (Espósito and Arteaga 2006: 3), President Lozada's proposals to sell Bolivian gas to the United States via Chile was a catalyst that sparked a massive *Alteño* uprising in October 2003 that came to be known as the Gas War.

On October 8th, the FEJUVE-El Alto called for an indefinite "paro cívico" (general civil strike) (Lazar 2006: 184). Meanwhile, miners from Huanuni marched to El Alto to join the struggle (Spronk and Webber 2007: 36). The COR-El Alto also played a central role in the 2003 Gas War, in particular the *gremialista* sector of street traders who closed markets in concert with the general strikes called for by the FEJUVE and the COB (Lazar 2006: 192). The students of the public university of El Alto, the UPEA also joined the protests (A. Cahuaya, interview with author).

The exact role of the FEJUVE and COR leaderships in organising the Gas War mobilisations is however somewhat disputed. While Mauricio Cori, then president of the FEJUVE, maintained that that the organisation was always in control of the protests (as cited in Lazar 2006: 193), others suggest that it was the *pueblo* that revolted whereby the

²⁵ See section 3.4 of chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the events in Bolivia in general at this time.

neighbourhood organisation leaders had to follow the will of the grassroots base (Lazar 2006: 193). It is necessary to emphasise here the nature of the relations between the base, neighbourhood organisations' leaderships, and the government before the Gas War of 2003. In many ways, "democracy had reached its limits in 2003 whereby the people, instead of being incorporated or included in the plans for the development of the city, they had been excluded" and the *dirigencia* (of the FEJUVE and COR) simply towed the political party line (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). It was in this scenario, whereby regular citizens were becoming increasingly agitated regarding the economic and political scenario in the country, yet where the organisations charged with defending their interests failed to offer a response that reflected the sentiment in the city that the base sought to rejuvenate the COR and the FEJUVE.

Emanating from the successful Maya Paya resistance, there was "a thirst, a desire to analyse and comprehend the issues" that impeded the popular organisations from defending the needs of the base all of the time (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). There were local meetings that culminated in a *conscientisation* (Freire 1970) of the base, whereby the people realised that they must "oblige their *dirigentes* to respond to the needs of the *barrio*, and not to the political parties" (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). As Luis Flores highlighted (interview with author), the head of the FEJUVE, Mauricio Cori, faced threats from the municipal government to quell the rising protests against the government and the selling of gas, but at the same time, Cori was facing threats from the FEJUVE *dirigencia* to listen to the base.

There was a change in mentality, both of the base and of their *dirigentes*, in terms of how the FEJUVE should interact with the government (L. Flores, interview with author).

They emphasised that *dirigentes* must be clean, that they must not be corrupted by the parties and that they must not “extend their hand looking for presents” (L.Flores, interview with author). As Alfredo Cahuaya (interview with author) states, “if ever there was a moment, it was in 2003 when the El Alto *dirigencia* didn’t belong to any political party”. The *dirigentes* were “completely united around one mission whose objective was to improve El Alto” (C. Barrera, interview with author). Furthermore, the *dirigentes* of the FEJUVE in 2003 held strong Left-wing beliefs that had been formed over many years, and they ensured that the top-level of the FEJUVE was held to account (L. Flores, interview with author). Indeed, with the *dirigentes* from district 4 leading the way, all of the districts united behind the idea of re-taking the FEJUVE from the parties and restoring it to a popular organisation that would no longer fall prey to political co-optation (L. Flores, interview with author). The FEJUVE even replaced the secretary and the doorman that were paid for by the municipal government so that the organisation could ask “Well, what are we going to rely on the municipal government or the central government for...For nothing!” (L. Flores, interview with author).

Individual *juntas vecinales* organised communal cooking as food shortages became more acute (Lazar 2006: 193). They “organised defence committees to go round people’s houses and make them join the demonstrations, telling them ‘todos o nadies (sic) vamos a salir’ (‘either everyone or no-one goes out [to march]’)” (Ibid.: 194). As Carlos Arze states, in these two or three weeks in El Alto, “the authority, the state for the people was their *juntas vecinales* (neighbourhood councils). They controlled the traffic, the markets, what to sell and when, where to organise the barricades....They brought their memories of worker’s democracy...along with communitarian ideas from the indigenous and campesino Katarista

movements” to organise the city’s defence as well as to help with day to day running of the city (interview with author).

Webber (2012: 185-6) summarises the dialectic relationship between the grassroots base and the formal infrastructure and leadership of the FEJUVE and the COR, noting that,

Without the formal structures, the rank and file base would have been unable to coordinate their actions at a higher scale than their local neighbourhoods, while without the self-activity, self-organisation and radical push from the grassroots, the executive leadership of both El Alto organisations would have been more likely to engage in the normal processes of negotiation with the state, moderation of demands, and eventual fracturing and demobilisation of the rebellious movements.

The government sent the military in to quell the El Alto uprising, leading to the deaths of scores of residents (Postero 2010: 61). However, the aggressive actions of the state backfired with mass protests erupting across the country demanding the ouster of the president (Silva 2009: 142), and with an estimated half a million people (Hylton 2003) taking over the streets of La Paz and El Alto, de Lozada fled for exile in the US, with vice-president Carlos Mesa taking over (Spronk and Webber 2007: 36). The Gas War protest which originated in El Alto due to a unified base re-taking control of their erstwhile co-opted neighbourhood organisations had thus erupted into a national level movement which successfully removed a sitting neoliberal president.

2.4 El Alto’s Water War:

With World Bank support, “the municipal water utility that served the neighbouring cities of La Paz and El Alto was granted in a 1997 concession to Aguas del Illimani, a consortium

controlled by the French multinational Suez” (Spronk and Webber 2007: 39). Over the duration of the concession, the company continuously complained that it could not make enough money selling water to poor people in El Alto, and in 2002 the company lobbied the government regulator to approve increases in its charging structures (Ibid.: 41). The company managed to reduce the number of new connections it was obliged to make, eventually reducing this to zero, thereby leaving 200,000 people without access because they lived outside the “service zone” agreed between the government and the company (Spronk 2007: 20; Spronk and Webber 2007: 42). As Spronk (2007: 20) notes, “an additional 70,000 people without water and sewage lived within the served area but could not afford the US \$445 connection fees, the equivalent of almost nine monthly salaries”. This scenario led to Bolivia’s second Water War in January 2005.

At the head of the conflict was the FEJUVE led by Abel Mamani (who would go on to be named Minister for Water in the first Morales administration). While the FEJUVE had begun negotiating with the government in mid-2004, all out strikes were called with the FEJUVE mobilising its grassroots base (Laurie and Crespo 2007: 844) on January 9th 2005. The FEJUVE had built its legitimacy as a true representative of the popular sectors during the 2003 Gas War due to its autonomous stance from the political parties and the traditional clientelistic structures (Crespo 2005). Thousands “of citizens took to the streets yelling the slogan popularised during the Gas War, ‘El Alto on its feet, never on its knees!’” (Spronk 2007: 20). On January 11th, Mesa sent a letter to the FEJUVE stating that he was beginning the actions necessary to terminate the contract with Illimani (Ibid.). In response, the FEJUVE “gave Mesa’s government twenty-four hours to promulgate a decree immediately cancelling the contract with the water company or protestors would seize the company’s central

offices in El Alto” (Ibid.). The following day, Mesa formalised the cancellation of the contract via presidential decree and, after consulting with the local juntas vecinales, the FEJUVE called an end to the strike (Ibid.).

2.5 The second Gas War 2005:

The new leadership of the FEJUVE following the 2003 Gas War took on the mandate to advance the October Agenda, and the Water War against Illimani was perceived by FEJUVE members “as part of a much broader political project to restore Bolivia's economic sovereignty” (Spronk 2007: 19). As Spronk (Ibid.) states, “suddenly, not only was the FEJUVE working on local issues, but also on national political demands such as the call for a Constitutional Assembly and the nationalisation of natural resources”. Such a stance was considered vital because the Gas War of 2003 had “not lead to a revolutionary break with neoliberal capitalism” with Carlos Mesa adopting “a neoliberal reformist style of governance” (Spronk and Webber 2007: 37). As Webber (2010: 55) summarises, “his administration reached agreements with the IMF to guarantee the continuity of the neoliberal model, to respect the sanctity of the privatisations of state-owned enterprises that had been implemented by Sánchez de Lozada in the late 1990s, and to persist in paying back the crushing external debt of the country”.

Mesa’s framing of the questions in the July 2004 referendum on the issue of hydrocarbons offered a diluted response to demands of the social organisations in El Alto who had called for complete nationalisation of the country’s resources, and not simply a change to the levels of taxation and royalties paid by the TNCs (Webber 2010). With the FEJUVE already mobilised in response to the Water War, “Roberto de la Cruz of the radically anticapitalist social movement M-17 in El Alto and Jaime Solares of the COB were attending

meetings of FEJUVE–El Alto in an attempt to build solidarity across different sectors of the working class and peasantry” (Webber 2010: 61) in order to boost resistance to Mesa’s continuation of the neoliberal model. However, even the moderate changes advocated by Mesa were considered too much by the elites who organised counter-mobilisations to popular protests (Webber 2010: 54), ramping up the pressure on Mesa. Mesa, “underestimating the strength of the left-indigenous bloc, opted for an open realignment with the eastern-bourgeois bloc” (Webber 2010: 54). The response by the popular sectors, whose associational and collective power was at its zenith, witnessed hundreds of thousands of protesters taking to the streets, effectively shutting down the cities of La Paz and El Alto, thereby forcing Mesa to resign (Spronk and Webber 2007: 38; Webber 2010: 67).

2.6 Outcomes of anti-neoliberal mobilisation and the Election of Evo Morales:

Despite the collective and associational power that was built during the Gas Wars and the Water War, El Alto lacked a leader capable of harnessing the popular energy to take political power at the national level. While there was a fundamental questioning of the role and capacity of the existing state and model of democracy, the popular sectors were “not organised politically around a program or project that would allow us the possibility of truly taking power” (C. Rojas, interview with author). Furthermore, maintaining radical protest following the Gas War in the face of military and police repression and food shortages was impossible (C. Arze, interview with author). The demands of the radical actors of the Gas War - Felipe Quispe and the Kataristas, the miners, and the COR and FEJUVE of El Alto - for a fundamental transformation of the state were thus relegated to the side-lines (C. Arze, interview with author).

In a scenario of severe *desgaste* (exhaustion) with the traditional parties, protester fatigue, and with a lack of local alternatives, the MAS and Evo Morales came to fill the vacuum in El Alto. When the MAS initially expanded from its rural base in El Chapare, it faced resistance from Alteños who associated the party with drug-trafficking (Anria 2013: 32). However, with existing parties such as CONDEPA losing legitimacy amongst the popular base, and Morales emphasising his indigenous rather than his cocalero background (Revilla 2014: 58), initial rejection of the MAS softened. As such, the MAS and Morales gained ground in the city based on identity politics, not necessarily on ideological grounds (C. Arze, interview with author). Indeed, according to Carlos Arze (interview with author), while the MAS was certainly distinct from the traditional Right-wing parties, it did not differ from them greatly in terms of its conception of the state and democracy.

The Gas War and the Water War of 2004-05 helped the fragmented and co-opted neighbourhood organisations to unify and to forge an Alteño identity. Meanwhile, the removal of de Lozada, and later Carlos Mesa, from the presidency demonstrated what was achievable when the city's residents worked together, focused on a single objective, (Crabtree and Chaplain 2013: 21; Deledicque and Contartese 2010: 141), and retained autonomy from the political parties (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). However, the 2003-05 period represents a high-watermark concerning popular power in El Alto, and from 2005 onwards, there was a return to the traditional co-opting of the COR and FEJUVE.

A strategic alliance between the MAS and the FEJUVE and the COR began to forge around the 2005 elections (Anria 2013: 33). Local organisation leaders saw in the MAS an opportunity to gain access to the state and push toward achieving the October Agenda. The MAS meanwhile managed to infiltrate and co-opt the leadership of these two organisations

so as “to extend its influence and control throughout the territory and to recruit leaders who mobilise large numbers of voters” (Anria 2013: 33). As a result, Morales won the 2005 election with massive Alteo support (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 72).

3. Post-inflection sequencing:

3.1 2006-10: *Co-opting and Quietening of El Alto’s radical voice:*

The process of co-optation by the MAS of neighbourhood organisations in El Alto that had already begun before the 2005 elections deepened in the years that followed. As a central actor in the FEJUVE 2003 leadership notes, “from the moment the government of Evo Morales was elected, the FEJUVE, the social organisations, the *gremiales*, the COR...they became corrupted...the new *dirigencias* just entered the organisations to rob. And they didn’t even rob for the benefit of El Alto, but for their own personal benefit” (anonymous interview with author). The MAS captured neighbourhood organisation leaders into the state apparatus by offering jobs to those who supported them, as well as by offering to complete public works in the zones of leaders who remained loyal to the party (Lazar 2008; Anria 2013).

The international environment and booming gas and oil prices meant that President Morales had enormous economic power in his hands with which he could co-opt erstwhile autonomous, contestatory organisations that were demanding a radical overhaul of the Bolivian state and economic system. Having witnessed the power El Alto’s organisations had during the 2003-05 period and their capacity to force sitting presidents to resign or flee the country, Morales wanted to be sure that he could control the leaders of the COR, the FEJUVE and other popular organisations (Anria 2013: 33). Alfredo Cahuaya summarises the situation succinctly when he notes that “the *dirigencia* were disloyal to their own

neighbourhood organisations...and as a result the organisations became instrumentalised by the MAS and by the corrupt *dirigentes*”, just like in the pre-2003 era (interview with author). In sum, following the 2005 election of Morales, the autonomy of societal organisations and their capacity to control and manage the government from below, as democratisation calls for, was severely reduced, and indeed participation was “instrumentalised”, and popular sectors, particularly those with “radical” demands were “shut out of strategic decision-making about state policies” (Arteaga 2015: 580).

3.2 2010-2014: Deepening co-optation and corruption, weak democratic extending:

From 2010 onward, the centralised and top-down control by the MAS hierarchy and Evo Morales of El Alto’s popular organisations intensified, strangling their capacity to hold the government to account and demand adherence to the October Agenda. A leading MAS politician in El Alto admitted that the MAS had “committed many errors” regarding corruption, co-opting and controlling of the COR, FEJUVE and other organisations (anonymous interview with author). The MAS politician highlighted the case of Edgar Patana, the mayor of El Alto from 2010-14, elected on the MAS ticket. Patana was sentenced to four years in prison for using vehicles, which had been presented to him by the central government for public use in the city, to co-opt and control FEJUVE *dirigentes* (Correo del Sur 2015). The MAS politician concedes that the MAS made serious errors by not rooting out Patana before, but highlights that the MAS did not support such co-optive behaviour (interview with author). Indeed, the politician suggests that Patana and others have simply abused the MAS to enrich themselves, and that they should not be conflated with Evo Morales or the MAS as a whole. While it is plausible that Evo Morales and the MAS hierarchy were not supportive or aware of the behaviour of Patana, the fact that there were

continuous attempts to control the FEJUVE and the COR from as early as 2005 (Anria 2013) makes the claims that the MAS hierarchy did not support co-optive practices difficult to believe.

At the same time as popular organisations were losing their autonomy and capacity to direct and control the government from below, elite economic actors were tightening their links with, and control over, the central government²⁶. Indeed, in 2013, ten years after the Gas War, many Alteños argued that the government had failed to adhere to the October Agenda, and had instead capitulated to the demands of national and transnational elites (Achtenberg 2013a). As Luis Flores (interview with author) states,

The October Agenda demanded complete nationalisation, not a negotiation on the price of gas like the government has done...It has not demanded that the TNCs leave. This is not nationalisation. All the TNCs and businesses have actually been given even more help by the government. The October Agenda has revolutionary tendencies. And this is why the elites, now more than ever, have grabbed hold of the government, they have it in their hands, it is simply at the service of the TNCs and elites.

*3.3 2014-Present: Castigating the MAS and the emergence of *Unidad Nacional* and *paralelismo*:*

In frustration at the failure of Morales and the MAS to adhere to promises to boost economic and political inclusion, El Alto's popular sectors elected Soldedad Chapetón from the right-wing *Unidad Nacional* (UN) party as mayor in 2015, while six of the eleven city councillors elected were also from UN. The party was formed in 2003 by Samuel Doria

²⁶ See previous chapter for a detailed discussion of this process.

Medina, a businessman educated in economics in the US and the UK who owns the franchise rights for all of Bolivia to Burger King and Subway amongst other ventures. Medina formed the party after breaking from the MIR. While UN proclaim to be a social democratic party, and joined the Socialist International in 2017, the fact that the party receives the majority of its funding from Medina's SOBOCE cement company, along with Medina's status as one of the country's wealthiest businessmen, has meant that many Bolivians view UN as a business-party, and not a moderate Leftist party as Medina insists (Aguilar Argramont 2013).

The electoral results however should not necessarily be read as support for UN, but rather as a castigating vote against the MAS. Indeed, discussing Alteños voting trends in 2006, Xavier Albó noted that “when push comes to shove...people make decisions with a pragmatic attitude, and ideology becomes a rhetorical ornament. This would explain why in the 15 elections since the onset of democracy, Alteños have opted for six different parties, zigzagging through the entire political spectrum”. In light of the perceived failure of the MAS to adhere, at the national and local level, to the October Agenda, combined with a corruption case against former mayor Edgar Patana who “failed to provide works...or projects for the base” Alteños decided that they wanted a change (D. Ramos, interview with author). Soledad Chapetón thus took advantage of the *desgaste* with both Patana's corruption and co-optive practices (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author), as well as MAS co-opting tactics in general which fomented divisions in the FEJUVE and the COR leaderships regarding how the organisations should relate with the state, at local, regional and national levels (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). In this light, some *dirigentes* began to ask themselves “why am I obeying this person if they are corrupt” (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author).

3.4 Cracks in the FEJUVE and the COR and the emergence of *paralelismo*:

Up until 2016 there was one FEJUVE in El Alto, though it was functioning poorly due to MAS co-opting tactics (L. Flores, interview with author). The co-optive and clientelistic nature of the relationship between the MAS and some FEJUVE leaders caused divisions in the organisation's executive, and two congresses were organised simultaneously to select new leaders. One congress and its emergent executive committee was recognised by the central government and the MAS, while the other executive committee was backed by Soledad Chapetón and the UN (L. Flores, interview with author). For some, the blame for the creation of a parallel FEJUVE lies with the MAS government and Evo Morales (Carlos Rojas of the FEJUVE-*organico*²⁷, interview with author), while for others, it is the act of a Right-wing party seeking to divide and control a powerful popular organisation (Sandro Ramires of the FEJUVE-*original*, interview with author).

Sandro Ramirez, the current head of the FEJUVE-*original* states that the phenomenon of *paralelismo* originated when Chapetón was elected mayor and Rolando Huanca, who at that time was the chief *dirigente* of the FEJUVE, began to work in tandem with her and UN (interview with author). Other FEJUVE *dirigentes* stated that Huanca had broken with the FEJUVE statute by meeting with the mayor without first informing the executive committee of the FEJUVE, as well as by putting personal interests ahead of the city's requirements (Renán Cabezas quoted in hoybolivia.com). A portion of the FEJUVE executive therefore dismissed Huanca and selected Franklin Machaca as the new leader. However, Huanca and others maintained that he was the legitimate head of the FEJUVE, and it was from this

²⁷ I use the term "*organico*" to describe the FEJUVE located in Villa Dolores and "*original*" to denote the FEJUVE of Avenida 6 de Marzo. As will be discussed below, which FEJUVE should be recognized as the official organization is source of great contention. As such, I label each FEJUVE according to its geographic location rather than its historical status, ideological outlook, or party-affiliation.

moment that the FEJUVE divided in two, one located in the original 6 de Marzo site, and a second in Villa Dolores.

Which FEJUVE should be considered legitimate is the source of much debate in the city. For Daniel Ramos, the regional head of the MAS, Soledad Chapetón divided and fractured the FEJUVE for her own benefit, and the only officially recognised FEJUVE is that located on the original 6 de Marzo site headed by Sandro Ramires (interview with author). On the other hand, the FEJUVE-*organico* located in Villa Dolores claims that it should be the only recognised FEJUVE. Benigno Siñani, head of the Villa Dolores FEJUVE-*organico* states that “we succeeded Rolando Huanca, who was selected legitimately in a congress, we are the ones that come from the legitimate path...We respect the statute, we were recognised by CONALJUVE²⁸, not by a political party, the other FEJUVE leadership was handed over by a MAS senator” (interview with author). Furthermore, Carlos Rojas, a long-time activist in El Alto and active participant in the 2003 Gas War, former *dirigente* of the FEJUVE 6 de Marzo, and later *dirigente* of the FEJUVE Villa Dolores, stated that the MAS had captured leaders of the FEJUVE-*original* by offering money and personal gifts (interview with author) thereby breaking fundamental statute rules regarding organisational autonomy from political parties and the placing of personal gains ahead of the city’s needs. Benigno Siñani states that due to the economic power of the central government it can “make and unmake” societal organisations whereby the government simply says to the *dirigencias* “take this money and stay quiet” (interview with author). As such Rojas states that the true FEJUVE is the “contestatory, combative, organic” organisation located in Villa Dolores which called for an autonomous space that could challenge the government, and not be controlled from above by it. Siñani claims that “we leave politics in the house and we enter the FEJUVE to work

²⁸ The National Federation of Juntas Vecinales

cívicamente (with no political allegiances)...but unfortunately the central government labels us as being right-wing...Any type of organisation that is not supporting the government, they always label them as *derechistas* (right-wingers)” (interview with author).

However, Daniel Gutiérrez, international press officer for the FEJUVE-*original* questions the actual contestatory nature of the FEJUVE established by Carlos Rojas and Benigno Siñani. Gutiérrez highlights that at the initial congress establishing the FEJUVE-*organico* and the new executive committee, members of Soledad Chapeton’s team were present, congratulating the new *dirigentes* and drinking beer with them (interview with author). A photograph of the event was released “and this was proof for us and for the population to identify that the mayor was interfering in this FEJUVE...and that it was not autonomous or independent like the new *dirigentes* said” (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author). Gutiérrez continues, stating that “we call it the yellow FEJUVE²⁹...a FEJUVE created by Soledad Chapetón, it obeys the mayor and thus it obeys Samuel Dorian Medina, the leader of the clearly right-wing UN party...There is an ideological battle here, between Left and Right”. Despite denials by both Benigno Siñani and Carlos Rojas regarding possible co-optive practices by the UN of the FEJUVE-*organico*, a key FEJUVE *dirigente* during the Gas War stated that “Carlos Rojas was a great *dirigente*...he is my *compañero*, but he has been corrupted” (interview with author, anonymous) by working with UN. Furthermore, a city-councillor in El Alto who stated that they have tight links with the FEJUVE-*organico* leadership, stated that they had been asked specifically by Soledad Chapetón to take their role in the municipal government as part of the UN party (anonymous interview with author).

²⁹ In reference to the traditional yellow party colours of the *Unidad Nacional*.

The nature of the relationship between both the FEJUVES and political parties raise fundamental questions. Considering that the statute of the FEJUVE states that the organisation must have political autonomy from any political party, irrespective of party ideology, it appears that both the *original* and *organico* FEJUVES have broken from their own founding principles. When I discussed accusations that the FEJUVE-*organico* was a “yellow FEJUVE” with a leading politician in the city council they stated that “it is true that Soledad Chapetón asked me personally to take my role as *concejala* for UN...While you are correct to ask about autonomy and my links to the FEJUVE-leadership in Villa Dolores and the UN, you need to understand that political parties will come and go, and so they can be used to achieve the goals and demands of the base” (anonymous interview with author). Daniel Gutiérrez of the FEJUVE-*original* meanwhile states that “we support the initiatives and the social programs advanced by the MAS, and we participate in the political events organised by the MAS, and this has led to confusion” regarding the MAS-FEJUVE relationship (interview with author). However, Sandro Ramires head of the FEJUVE-*original* says that “just because we support the government does not mean that we are the MAS, but rather that the government has opened doors for the benefit of El Alto. The process of change that we are looking for, that there is a transformation of the city...Look, if the mayor (Chapetón) invites me tomorrow to do something that will benefit the city and I have to work with her in return, I would do it, because it is for the benefit of the neighbourhood base that we must work” (interview with author).

While the sentiment of *dirigentes* of both FEJUVES that they must work with and take advantage of whichever political party offers them resources is understandable, and likely a political reality, the tight relations between the FEJUVE-*original* and the MAS and FEJUVE-*organico* and UN dismantle the scope for autonomous popular control of political decision-

making processes. The loss of autonomy and the divisions with the FEJUVE means that “El Alto’s organizations are pawns between political parties...co-opted and useless, incapable of defending our radical 2003 agenda” (C. Barrera, interview with author). As Carlos Calle, head of the Central Obrero Departmental-La Paz (Departmental Workers’ Union of La Paz, COD), states, popular organisation-political party interactions, and the interactions between the base and their organisation leaders, are guided by money and political favours, whereby *dirigentes* now ask “What party are you with? If you are of this party I will listen to your demands, if you are of the other party, I won’t” (interview with author). El Alto city councillor for the Sol.Bo party Javier Tarqui echoes such sentiments, stating that “what the city needs is a political party that understands the importance of an autonomous COR and FEJUVE” (interview with author). Abraham Paco, spokesperson for the Comité de Defensa de La Paz (Defence Committee for La Paz, CODELPA), though talking primarily about the MAS, notes how parties tell popular organisations that “if you support me, I will finance you, I will give you power. They (popular organisations) have been co-opted, for me, they have been extorted. Both the government and the *dirigentes* have become delinquents” (interview with author).

The COR-El Alto has also suffered from the issues of co-optation, corruption, and *paralelismo*. According to Franklin Troche, the international press officer for the COR located on Avenida 6 de Marzo³⁰, the original site of the COR, “the right, and the mayor have created their own COR with their own people” (interview with author). Martha Yujra meanwhile, the head of this alternate COR, highlights that it was Evo Morales who divided the organisation so as to control the popular forces of the city (interview with author).

³⁰ For the purposes of distinguishing between the two existing CORs today in El Alto, I label the COR located on Avenida 6 de Marzo as the COR-*original*, and the alternate COR headed by Martha Yujra as the COR-*contestario*.

The COR-*original* has no relationship with the municipality and mayor Chapetón of the *Unidad Nacional*. In February 2016 there was a fire in the city hall in which six people died³¹. The mayor blamed radical sectors of the COR-*original* for the incident, which they vehemently deny, and since then all links between the municipal government and the COR-*original* have been severed (F. Troche, interview with author). The COR-*original* does however have “very good relations with the central government ever since the Gas War of 2003. We supported the government in the Constituent Assembly, we supported them in Sucre against the autonomists. The government and the COR, we were very close.” (F. Troche, interview with author). Troche continues, stating that “as an organisation for the workers, we cannot align with governments or parties of the right. We did not have any relationship with Tuto Quiroga, Doria Medina or any of the right-wing parties...We are leftists, and so we have to continue on the side of Evo Morales because the MAS is a party of the left”.

While Troche emphasises that it is normal for the COR-*original* to work with a left-wing party, the nature of the relationship between the COR-*original* and the MAS has raised serious concerns amongst some sectors in El Alto. Martha Yujra notes that when she was part of the COR executive in 2005, “we weren’t part of any political party, we were contestatory. We served the base, the proletariat, the workers, the family of *gremiales*” (interview with author). However, from 2007 onwards, with the election of Edgar Patana as the executive of the COR, the organisation “never defended El Alto” (M. Yujra, interview with author.). Patana was accused by some sectors of the *gremialistas* of working too closely with the MAS (NoticiasFides.com 2007). For Irene Mamani, part of the FEJUVE *dirigencia* during the Gas War, due to MAS co-optive tactics, *dirigentes* of the COR and FEJUVE use the

³¹ For a discussion of the events surrounding the fire see Mancilla (2016).

popular organisations as “trampolines to become deputies, senators, city-councillors, to run for mayor like Edgar Patana...This was the beginning of a fault-line in the COR, FEJUVE, the organisation of the *gremiales*...They split them all” (interview with author). Mamani continues, stating that the MAS “divided the organisations that had been united in 2003 because they could have risen up to topple even Evo Morales. So, what suited Evo? To divide them”. According to Martha Yujra the COR became servile to the MAS and failed to defend the base of the organisation; “people were fired, and the COR said nothing. There were *gremiales* that were flattened by the mayor, nobody said anything. There was harassment of women in the workplace. And this COR led by Patana said nothing” (interview with author).

A central concern regarding the *COR-original* has been the lack of *rotividad*, or rotation, of leadership which the statute calls for every two years, leading to the issue of *prorroguismo*, or “extensioning” (Mancilla 2016: 77). In terms of “the duration of executives in their roles, the situation is chronic, because some *dirigentes* have held their positions for more than fifteen years, and in some cases, even twenty. For example Remigio Condori and Sebastián Condori, who since 2000 have continued to be *dirigentes* in the COR” (Ibid.). For critics, these leaders simply do what the MAS and Morales tell them to, “they are servants of Morales...They don’t have the force to defend the workers” (M. Yujra, interview with author). Indeed, a central figure in the *FEJUVE-original* noted that “the COR has been completely co-opted by the government. The *dirigentes* who now seek roles in the organisation all have the notion that when they finish their time as a *COR dirigente* they will become a senator or deputy, or minister or vice-minister” (anonymous interview with author). Edgar Patana “left as executive of the COR and became the mayor of El Alto (under the MAS banner)...Remigio Condori was a *COR dirigente* and he became a MAS city-

councillor in El Alto. Sebastián Condori too” (M. Yujra, interview with author). After Remigio Condori relinquished his position as secretary-general of the COR so as to take up his position as city-councillor, he was replaced by Eliseo Suxo who had been the first secretary of the COR (Rivas 2015). Suxo was a MAS deputy for the La Paz department before returning to head the COR, again highlighting “how the statute is written but not respected” (anonymous *dirigente* from the FEJUVE-*original* executive, interview with author). Indeed a member of the COR-*original* executive committee told me, under the condition of anonymity, that Suxo was deeply damaging the organisation because

one minute he is openly supporting Evo Morales, the next he is not. The COR has been sullied and dirtied, and it must be purged, but this could take a generation. We should have kept our autonomy. I do not agree with how the COR has been directed. We have lost all legitimacy. We are working on the problem that is Eliseo Suxo. Perhaps after supporting the government during the constituent assembly, we got too close to be critical.

The issue of autonomy and scope to critique the government is at the centre of the demise in legitimacy of the COR. In conversations with Alteños during fieldwork I heard complaints on a daily basis from a range of citizens regarding the COR who felt that “it is nothing but a space for the swapping of political favours” (anonymous bus driver in El Alto)... “Those guys don’t want change, they are happy so long as the government keeps paying them to be happy” (anonymous tea-stall owner, El Alto). Even Daniel Ramos, the regional director of the MAS, highlighted the issue of Eliseo Suxo having been a MAS deputy, stating that

When you have occupied a political position, you do not have credibility before the population. And I could talk of other organisations here in El Alto where ex-deputies, ex-

councillors have taken over. It gives a bad signal. I have said many times that there must be a renovation of these organisations. But the issue is that these people are old and astute, they are cunning and they do not allow new leaders to emerge. This is the issue facing us today, and this error has been taken advantage of by the right (interview with author).

The result of the MAS co-optive tactics and their support for COR *dirigentes* who do not adhere to their own statutes has fostered a schism in the organisation, and the *Unidad Nacional* party has, just as in the case of the FEJUVE, encouraged these divisions and supported and financed the development of a parallel COR (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author).

The result is confusion and division amongst the many sectors and unions who are now aligned with one or other COR. Indeed, the relationship between the COR-*original* and the COD, and the COB highlights the confusion and division³². The COR-*original* is aligned with the COB, headed by Guido Mitma, and the COD headed by Carlos Calle. While the COR-*original* has been co-opted by the MAS, both the COD and the COB have been extremely critical of the MAS government for interfering in popular organisations. At the end of a massive march from El Alto to La Paz organised by the COD and the COB on June 12th 2017 in response to the government's plans to raise the electricity tariff by 3 percent, Guido Mitma, leader of the COB, shouted to the crowd that "we cannot allow the government to continue with these neoliberal policies. We cannot continue with this dictatorship of a government who make decisions that affect workers without even engaging with the COB

³² The COB is the national body of the union. Below this level there is a COD for each department, while below the departmental level, there are numerous CORs at a more local level.

and the base. With *paralelismo* they have tried to fracture the COB. The entire *proceso de cambio* has been a betrayal”.

The relationship between the *COR-original* and the union hierarchy, the COD and COB, on one hand, and the central government and the MAS on the other seems to leave the COR in an awkward position. Franklin Troche of the *COR-original* states however that “it is not the case that we are in the middle, and when we want to we support the government. We have our own line of thinking and we are going to keep this” (interview with author). As Troche explains, “we have to do what our base tells us to. They didn’t like the increase in electricity prices, and so we had to take the streets to block it”. Indeed, the *COR-original* has in some instances confronted the central government. For example, Eliseo Suxo stated that the COR would join the marches organised by the COB due to the lack of government engagement with the unions regarding the retirement fund for workers, modification to the Pensions Law, and the increases in electricity and gas prices (Sarsuri 2017). However, the *COR-original* has generally sought to avoid open criticism of Evo Morales as they are concerned as to who would be in a position to replace him as president. As a central figure in the *COR-original* leadership explains,

What would happen if we were to push Evo and he was to fall? ...The liberal right would return, the military governments would return. As such, this must be part of our thinking. We can, and do, critique the government. But there must be a successor. A leftist successor from the *pueblo*. Someone who is with the workers. But at the moment, such a person does not exist. So for the moment, we cannot push too quickly (anonymous, interview with author).

Such a sentiment highlights the difficult tightrope balancing act facing popular organisations regarding how to critique a progressive leader from a Leftist position without opening space for the opposition to take advantage. However, while limiting critique to internal discussions may be necessary, it is essential that popular organisations do not lose their capacity to engage in autonomous constructive critique of government performance. As is discussed below, failure to maintain such a position severely debilitates efforts to construct an alternative to market democracy.

3.5 *Outcomes of co-optation and paralelismo:*

The central government and the MAS, the municipal government and the UN, and self-serving neighbourhood organisation *dirigentes* must all take a share of the blame for the phenomenon of co-optation and *paralelismo*, which have had a number of debilitating effects on the capacity to develop a post-neoliberal democracy.

a. Weakened societal power:

The “problem with the divisions in the FEJUVES is that the government is not adhering to its promises because today in El Alto there is no popular force...What can the organisations do when they are in the service of the parties...Nothing...What are they going to demand...Nothing!” (L. Flores, interview with author). There is a sense that the popular power of El Alto so prevalent in the 2003-05 period has been debilitated, and that as a result, the government has bowed to the demands of elite sectors and *cocaleros*. Alteños “have given our lives for the *proceso de cambio*, but what have we received in turn? The East, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, they received strong investment. But El Alto, what did we get?” (B. Signañi, interview with author).

Co-opted organisations must walk a tightrope between responding to popular needs, while avoiding open confrontation with their benefactor parties. Signañi of the Villa Dolores FEJUVE says that the FEJUVE of 6 de Marzo has entered into pacts with the MAS, and as such, while they receive economic rewards, they have to “keep their mouths shut, they cannot say anything” about issues facing the city (interview with author). For example, Signañi states that El Alto’s organisations must not accept the planned electricity tariff increase, but that the FEJUVE 6 de Marzo cannot say anything as the government has bought them off (interview with author). Some members of the FEJUVE-*original* agree with such sentiments, with a central figure in leadership stating that; “we are not in agreement with the tariff increase. But neither can we organise a big mobilisation against it because this would mean that we would no longer receive support (from the central government) for other projects. Unfortunately this is how politics works. If you go against the party, the government doesn’t help you” (anonymous FEJUVE-*original* dirigente, interview with author). Furthermore, the FEJUVE associated with the MAS has been blocked by the UN and the mayor from receiving municipal funding (D. Gutiérrez interview with author). As such, the FEJUVE-*original* has no choice but to maintain good relations with the MAS in order to receive funding which the municipality is unwilling to provide. The outcome of such pact-making is diminished capacity for the base to hold the state to account, be that at municipal, regional, or national level.

b. Fragmenting of Demands:

Paralelismo also fragments the social demands “into a multiplicity of small claims, which state institutions can deal with by offering clientelist special benefits” (Arteaga 2015: 581). The result is that in place of a coherent overarching development plan that responds to the

fundamental requirements of the city, white elephant projects are offered in tandem with small local works projects. For critics of Evo Morales and the MAS, the centralisation of decision-making in the executive and central government regarding the development of El Alto means that local demands are not met. On the other hand, “now that the mayor has her own FEJUVE and COR, she prefers to work just with them...there is no co-ordination between the FEJUVE 6 de Marzo and the mayor” (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author).

With no unified popular voice, and no coherent development plan for the city as a whole, the provision of services that should be the duty of the state are instead used as political bargaining chips by politicians and corrupt neighbourhood organisation leaders alike. Politicians dictate to organisation leaders what project they must support. *Dirigentes* then tell the base that they should accept the proposals and funding of the political parties, presenting it as the best deal available. Due to the poverty and lack of services in the city, combined with the lack of a coherent and unified popular organisation to represent the base, the general population are left in no position to turn down the funding or projects, which they do require, but which may not represent their most pressing needs. In sum, the very nature of state-society relations and the role of popular organisations that would signify a deepening of democratisation has been flipped on its head in El Alto. Instead of demands flowing from below through the conduit of a neighbourhood organisation to the state to demand what the city requires, decision-making flows from top to bottom, with divided and co-opted neighbourhood organisations acting as pawns for the political parties

whose “public works are disconnected from any overall development plan and designed mainly to garner more votes in the next election” (Farthing 2017³³).

c. Erosion of former alliances

Perhaps the saddest outcome of *paralelismo* is that erstwhile allies now see each other as an enemy to be overcome. *Dirigentes* of the 2003 Gas War have been co-opted by one or other political party. As such, rather than focusing a unified popular movement toward achieving fundamental transformation of the city, El Alto’s popular organisations are engaged in a spiral of accusations, further eroding their capacity to lead a democratisation process. As a key *dirigente* in the FEJUVE-*original* admits, “all of the organisations interpret their statutes as it suits them, and when we see an adversary breaking their statute we confront them. But when we infringe on the norms, we say nothing” (anonymous FEJUVE-*original dirigente*, interview with author). Associational and collective power, as well as the unity of purpose of societal demands - the factors that give society power over the state - have thus been greatly damaged. The outcome is that movements become depoliticised and focus simply on sectoral demands, avoiding issues of a city-wide or national nature (Revilla 2014: 60).

The processes of co-optation, *prebendalismo*, and *paralelismo* have delegitimised not only the political parties, but also the COR and the FEJUVE. Leaders are seen as corrupt, simply serving either personal interests, the interest of only a segment of the social organisation members, or the interests of a political party. In 2003, the organisation leaders “were selected by the base according to their abilities and their connection to the residents of each district...today to be a *dirigente* of the FEJUVE you just get selected by a political

³³ While Farthing (2017) is discussing the MAS and Bolivia as a whole, the same actions can be witnessed in El Alto, by both the MAS and the UN.

party” (L. Flores, interview with author). There is “*desgaste* with the social organisations, such a change from October 2003 when everyone was unified” (D. Gutiérrez, interview with author). The leaders today have no legitimacy (A. Cahuaya, interview with author). The “*pueblo* is sick, its leaders are sick and are simply ambitious for power, and so the organisations are also sick” (L. Flores interview with author). Furthermore, the co-opting of the organisations has blocked the path for clean, new leaders to emerge as the old *dirigentes* retain power with the aid of the parties (A. Cahuaya, interview with author).

The above discussion of the impacts of co-optation and *paralelismo* highlight how popular society has been weakened, and how ultimately, power rests with the state. Before El Alto’s popular organisations were divided and co-opted, they had enormous power to frame and influence not only local development plans, but also those of the entire country. The COR and the FEJUVE used to function as a conduit between the base and the state, allowing for a bottom-up flow of demands to direct and influence political decision-making. However, the co-opting of the leaders of these organisations leads to a blockage in this system. Without a critical feedback loop from the bottom-up that acts as a control over state decision-making, the deepening of democracy is obstructed, and ultimately the post-neoliberal process enters the risk of atrophying. The decapitation and division of movements that helped gain El Alto’s reputation as the “*Ciudad Rebelde*”, in conjunction with the “the integration of significant portions of the eastern lowlands agribusiness and conservative political elite into the MAS project” has fostered the “political and social realignment of the MAS - and its transformation from a ‘government of the social movements’ to a ‘big tent’ hegemonic power” (Achtenberg 2016: 374). Radical demands contained in the October Agenda for a fundamental transformation of Bolivian society have

been ignored and “not even a pencil belonging to the multinationals has been expropriated...The revolutionary project of the FEJUVE of 2003 has been destroyed” (C. Rojas, interview with author). Morales has become “partners” with transnational exporting firms (J.L. Álvarez, *dirigente* with the La Paz Federation of Educational Workers, FDTEULP, interview with author). In sum, co-optive practices meant that popular sector voices had no democratic space to truly hold the government to a radical agenda, and without such a counter-balancing force against elite and transnational pressure, the government adopted a diluted October Agenda that failed to fundamentally address the structural sources of poverty and inequality in El Alto, and Bolivia as a whole.

4. Collective memories of popular power: Waking the “sleeping lion”

The above discussion regarding issues of co-optation and *paralelismo* raise concerns regarding the legacy of Bolivia’s experiment in delivering a post-neoliberal democracy. Unfortunately, such practices are not contained to El Alto. Indeed, the city reflects realities across much of the country regarding state-society relations. Farthing (Riofranco and Farthing 2017) states that

The weakening of the social movements in a place like Bolivia, given its political culture of the streets, has been devastating. Social movements still aligned with the government have been coopted, in the process losing the ability to launch any sort of viable progressive challenge...Today, the country is characterised by an overdependence on a charismatic leader controlling a weak party: the classic Latin American *caudillo*.

As such, Farthing suggests that the opportunity for progressive change once hinted at by powerful social movements has been compromised. The divide and conquer tactics by both government and opposition parties and the phenomenon of *paralelismo* appears to have left societal actors in a weakened position to challenge the centralisation of decision-making power in the executive, and, subsequently, policy decisions that harm their well-being.

While Farthing's concerns regarding a missed opportunity are certainly prudent, El Alto does offer some hope for the possibility of a long-term legacy of the post-neoliberal democratisation process. The theoretical framework detailed in chapter 2 suggests that centralisation of power in the executive in response to elite resistance to redistribution must be counter-balanced from below by powerful popular actors if it is to become "progressive centralisation" – that is, used to redistribute resources and boost popular control over decision-making. Furthermore, the framework suggests that the history of popular sector organising may feed back onto the process, thereby ensuring that the president is controlled from below.

At present it appears that El Alto's historical experiences of collective organisation and mobilisation have failed to prevent a co-optive centralisation of power in the presidency. However, key popular actors in the city suggest that memories of past mobilisations and collectivist organising traditions may in fact act as the springboard for a popular response to the disappointing capitulation of the "progressive" government of Evo Morales to elite and transnational interests, and the failure to adhere to constitutional guarantees regarding democratic deepening. As (now ex-) FEJUVE-*organico* leader Benigno Signañi states, "we need to take a cold bath and begin to react" to what the central government has done to the city's popular organisations (interview with author). While Luis

Flores admits that the co-opting of organisations and the “disinformation” that *dirigentes* tell their bases makes it difficult for a unified popular movement to re-emerge in the city, he believes that compared to two years ago, the situation is changing. Before, people did not want to criticise the government of Morales because the base felt that “it is from our class, it is of our people”, but people are now realising that the government of the MAS has failed to adhere to grassroots demands (L. Flores, interview with author). Flores predicts a new phase of popular mobilisation will erupt within two years, so long as “clean” voices emerge “waving the flag of October 2003” as a reminder of what the popular actors in the city are capable of when they are united (interview with author). Alfredo Cahuaya does not believe that this next mobilisation can be led by the FEJUVE(s) or the COR(s), but given the conflux of campesinos, miners, and workers residing in El Alto who all have a long tradition of resistance in Bolivia, he does foresee a new wave of popular mobilisation in the city rejecting the centralist and moderate outcomes to date of the *proceso de cambio*. Daniel Ramos describes El Alto as “a sleeping lion” (interview with author) whose rebellious spirit will erupt once the *pueblo* feel that they are being ignored. Indeed, El Alto reflects Bolivia’s traditions of Left-wing organisation as a whole. As Carlos Arze states (interview with author)

We have a proletariat that comes from communitarian and socialist traditions...Take for example a young guy working in the mines, twenty years old. He does not know that there were coups in Bolivia. He has lived most of his life under Evo. But it is in the subconscious, you inherit it, because here in Bolivia, in the home, the collective sentiment is fostered. Neoliberalism proffered individualism, and it has continued with this regime. But it did not succeed in eradicating the collective mind-set.

Austerity and poor economic conditions may act as the spark which could awake the “sleeping lion”. The worsening possibilities of finding employment, “just like we had in 2003 causes people to mobilise and to rebel...We are not far away from this situation again because the government does not have a real economic plan for the country” (C. Rojas, interview with author). The “thirst, hunger, lack of security, lack of work, the lack of a roof, of a house, of bread, of clothes...these are why the base are rebelling against this government...The *pueblo* is angry. While some *dirigentes* have been co-opted, we are already changing, we are going to re-connect and organise ourselves...Not necessarily to overthrow the president, but so that he stops with the *politiquería* (political manoeuvring)” (A. Paco, interview with author).

While the global commodities boom was in full swing, the government had sufficient resources to maintain social spending and to “co-opt the leaders of allied groups with patronage and the provision of public services” while “clientelistic ties with urban-popular organisations (the most electorally crucial of all MAS allies) were cemented, and the governing coalition held together” (Anria 2016: 105). As Webber (2016) details, Bolivia’s gas export deals to Brazil and Argentina in recent years have been at locked-in prices, and so the “the fall-out of the global crisis has not yet fully registered in the Bolivian economy”. However, once the full effects of the end of the boom and the global financial crisis hit Bolivia, the prospect of deepening austerity under the watch of Morales is likely to rear its head (Ibid.). As Alfredo Cahuaya (interview with author) states, “the fight will begin first in the local arena as the people become conscious again of the realities in their city, that in ten years nothing has really changed for them, despite some mega projects that have been left as white elephants...the wallet of the poor has not been bolstered”.

As witnessed in countries across the region, including in countries with remaining or recently departed centre Left or Left governments, the decline in state revenues following the end of the boom has witnessed the retraction of social programs that were extended during the “lush years...rather than sustaining those social programs through aggressive taxation of the rich, expropriations, socialisation of key economic sectors, and so on” (Webber 2016). For Alfredo Cahuaya, the moment that the government is forced (due to declining hydrocarbon prices) to reduce the *bonos* that the Morales government has delivered to date, people will say to themselves “we have been cheated” by this government (interview with author).

Indeed during fieldwork I witnessed almost daily protests from miners, doctors, street cleaners, *gremiales* and others regarding the standard of living. While most of the protests remained relatively small and isolated, on the 12th of June 2017, the COB organised a mass protest from El Alto to La Paz in reaction to government proposals to increase the electricity tariff by 3 per cent. Guido Mitma, head of the COB, chanted to thousands of supporters in the Plaza San Francisco in La Paz that “we cannot allow the government to continue with these neoliberal policies, this *tarifazo* of a 3 percent rise” (fieldnotes, June 12th, 2017, El Alto and La Paz). Carlos Calle of the COD suggests that this protest is important, as it shows that the base is “waking up...it has been asleep while it received some crumbs of benefit. Seven years ago, to come out and protest against this government was a big deal because everybody would whistle at you, you couldn’t protest. But now we are seeing the reality, and the new perspective of the people” (interview with author). Indeed, as the march wound its way down from El Alto to the city of La Paz below, I spoke to dozens of protesters from students groups, neighbourhood councils, and unions. While the

proposed tariff increase was the frame for the protest, a more general sense of frustration with the government was apparent, with many protesters expressing the belief that the government had forgotten about El Alto despite “the vital role we played and the blood we shed so that all of Bolivia could be free” (anonymous female protester from district 4 of El Alto). The sentiment that insufficient change had been achieved under Morales was tied to the issue of co-optation and *paralelismo*. During the protest and amidst the near constant cacophony of exploding homemade fireworks I interviewed Jaime Solares, ex-leader of the COB and central figure in the 2003-05 anti-neoliberal protests. Solares emphasised that the “COB lost its way, it became servile to the Morales government. The COB must be contestatory. It is time for all our popular organisations to re-claim their autonomy from the government”. Echoing Solares’ sentiments, a protester chanted over a megaphone “this is a demonstration against this government, this lying government which has tried to undermine the workers’ protests”. As the protest reached a conclusion in the Plaza San Francisco in the heart of La Paz, an effigy of Evo Morales was set alight to chants of “*Fuerza fuerza fuerza, fuerza compañeros, que la lucha es dura, pero venceremos* (Don’t give up comrades, though the struggle is tough, we will overcome)”.

As the economic power of the government wanes, simmering popular discontent is beginning to bubble over, opening a great opportunity for popular actors to re-forge the collective and associational power required to re-ignite the battle for a post-neoliberal democracy. As Luís Álvarez (interview with author) highlights,

When the government had the economic capacity, it offered palliative responses to the country’s issues, but it never resolved the problems of unemployment or (lack of) industrialisation. Obviously, when there are resources to give out, the base is

slower to break from the politics of Evo Morales. But now that this moment of high incomes from natural resources is over, the process of breaking from the government will accelerate.

Indeed, while in the waves of anti-neoliberal protests from 2000-05 the miners and organised working class played a moderate role, some analysts suggest that these two sectors will be key in the next step moment of post-neoliberal democratisation. There “is still a strong workers and revolutionary tradition, a communitarian tradition” in El Alto, and Bolivia in general (C. Arze, interview with author) and the “miners, the proletariat will not put up with the continual *golpes* that the government is imposing...In fact, we are already at the entrance to this conjuncture” (L. Álvarez, interview with author). There is a key difference between Bolivia and Venezuela in this sense; “In Venezuela there is no real history of Trotskyism...this tradition of popular movements, of the miner’s movement, of the worker’s movement is going to reappear because popular struggles never begin from zero, they always begin from accumulated experience, from the collective memory. This is the big advantage we have here in Bolivia” (L. Álvarez, interview with author). As Luis Álvarez (interview with author) summarises, “the unions and organisations that were controlled by the MAS and that fought for the MAS are now breaking with the politics of the MAS...the notion of *paralelismo* will not bear fruit...Those who engaged in parallel organisations will be isolated from the popular rebellion of the workers against the politics of the government”. Álvarez continues, stating that “the time of believing that the politics of ‘indigenismo’ and of Evo Morales would resolve the issues of free-market economics and guarantee employment is over...The rebellion that is coming, this moment of discontent is going to be led by the physical presence of the proletariat”.

5. Lessons and legacies of democratisation in El Alto and Bolivia:

Returning to the central concerns of this thesis regarding how an alternative to market democracy may emerge, develop and sustain itself, El Alto's experience has several lessons, both for Bolivia and for democratisation theory more generally. To contextualise the critique outlined above regarding the government's failure to adhere to the October Agenda developed during El Alto's waves of anti-neoliberal protest, why it engaged in co-optation and fostered *paralelismo*, and what the impacts on the long-term legacy of Bolivia's democratisation process under Evo Morales are likely to be, it is important to return to framework detailed in chapter 2. Moving beyond the confines of market democracy toward a post-neoliberal model that simultaneously deepens and extends democratic inclusion, thereby threatening entrenched elite interests – both domestic and international – is an extremely arduous process that is bound to encounter barriers. To overcome elite destabilisation efforts, the framework identified that centralisation of power in the executive may be a necessary condition of building a post-neoliberal democracy. However, if such centralisation is to be used progressively, and to avoid the pitfalls of sliding toward “despotic” centralisation or of ceding too much ground to elite forces, executive power must be counterbalanced by autonomous popular power. That is, autonomous popular power must be capable of engaging in mobilisation that is disruptive, is on a mass scale, can last for long periods of time, and can frequently and rapidly convene. As Fairfield (2015: 426) notes, “popular mobilization can counterbalance or even overwhelm business power, as policymakers struggle to restore order and governability or even remain in power”. In moments where popular power is strong, governments are more likely to adhere to popular demands for inclusion, even if this involves challenging elite demands. As such, the

framework suggested that to understand the sequencing of efforts to build a radical substantive democracy, analysis must account for the relative power of four key sectors, namely the Left-led state, the organised popular sectors, domestic elites, and international (f)actors. It is the continual dialectical push-and-pull of these forces that influence the outcomes of the process in terms of the quality and extent of deepening and extending, the scale and form of centralisation, and its long-term legacy.

The complexities and paradoxical outcomes of Bolivia's post-neoliberal democratisation process must be understood in reference to the nature of the underlying development plan of the government which revolves around social welfarism funded by natural resource extraction. Vice-president García Linera (2017) highlights that for a poor developing country like Bolivia to build an emancipatory project, it must first create the material conditions to satisfy the basic needs of the population, to build wealth, and to redistribute it with justice. As such, he sees extractivism not as an end point in the process of building a radical substantive democracy, but rather a jumping off point from which to construct a new material base that boosts the benefits of the working population (Ibid.). Hence, from the outset the government sought to recuperate greater levels of rents from natural resources so as to re-found and strengthen the state after the disastrous neoliberal years (Andreucci 2015). Indeed, doing so was one of the central demands of the October Agenda.

To fund redistributive policies the government entered a pact with both domestic and transnational elites whose control over resource extraction and agribusiness – the prime sources of wealth in the country – was extensive³⁴. The compromise reached between the elites and the government meant that both indigenous demands for control over extractive

³⁴ See section 6.2 of chapter 4 for discussion.

policies and October Agenda demands for wholesale nationalisation of resources were not achieved. While in the following analysis the nature of the government-elite pact is critiqued, one must consider that Bolivia was an economically weak, socially divided, and geographically marginal country (Andreucci 2015), and as such its scope to engage in more radical change was limited by the extensive power of domestic elites and transnational (f)actors.

Clearly any process that seeks to challenge market democracy faces a difficult balancing act between responding to popular demands for increased political and economic inclusion, while at the same time maintaining policies that powerful domestic and transnational elites are willing to accept. In the Bolivian case, it is the pace of change and the scale of concessions to elites that must be questioned. Over the course of Morales' time in charge, early plans for societal transformation were side-lined and economic stability underpinned by capitalist growth to fund moderate, but essential, social welfare spending became the aim of government policy (Farthing in Riofrancos and Farthing 2017). Without diminishing the realities of the global capitalist system and the extensive power of elites in Bolivia, after more than a decade of MAS rule, the nature of employment in Bolivia was not improved, with informal, precarious employment the norm; the "great industrial leap" that was supposed to occur was limited to exporting primary commodities; while indigenous communities' economies were "systematically sacrificed for the expansion of...the frontiers of resource extraction and agri-business" (Andreucci 2015).

Kaup (2010) describes the reform of control of the gas sector as "neoliberal nationalisation" whereby despite the increased share of rents for the state, there was no complete nationalisation accompanied by expropriation. While one must recognise that

state gas company YPF had been destroyed due to decades of irresponsible neoliberal policies, “it is clear that YPF should have much more state support so as to be able to play an important role in the productive chain” (Andreucci 2015). Instead, transnationals like Repsol and Petrobras have consolidated their dominant position in the sector (Ibid.). Even in the mining industry where Bolivia has sufficient capacity so as to not rely on transnational technology or expertise, there were limited nationalisations and the most profitable deposits were granted to transnationals under very favourable conditions (Ibid.). The new arrangements in the hydrocarbon and mining sectors “favoured strong growth in production and exports. At the same time, plans to use recovered rents from ‘nationalised’ hydrocarbons to diversify the economy and promote ‘plurinationality’ were not translated into concrete policies, thereby deepening dependence on gas exports” (Kaup 2017: 175).

Furthermore, while the pace and scope of the *proceso de cambio* failed to match popular demands to reclaim full control over resources and to engage in a much more profound restructuring of the economy (Iamamoto 2015: 35), the preceding analysis of co-opting and *paralelismo* in El Alto raises a further issue with democratisation process. García Linera (2017) states that “extractivism does not link us to capitalism, nor does non-extractivism lead us directly to socialism. Everything depends on political power, of the social mobilisation capable of guiding the productive processes – extractivist or not – toward ever increasing communitarian control over their operation and of the redistribution of the wealth earned”. However, given the government’s failure to wholly nationalise the most important sectors of the economy, promises to increase bottom-up influence and control over policy and agenda setting fell short, while dissenting voices who challenged the

underlying agreement with elites and transnationals were side-lined via co-optation or *paralelismo*.

While this chapter detailed the restrictions on participation for urban strategic groups in El Alto who sought to hold the government to the October Agenda demands, Andreucci (2017: 174) details how “as indigenous demands for territorial self-government appeared increasingly incompatible with the government's developmentalist policies, the MAS strengthened its alliance with the campesino leadership and isolated the indigenous movement”. Much like with El Alto's popular organisations, the government co-opted and divided the two principle national indigenous federations, CIDOB and CONAMAQ, creating parallel organisations loyal to the government while at the same time repressing and marginalising those who refused to be co-opted (Ibid.).

In such a scenario where strategic groups who sought to challenge the nature of government-elite relations were divided and/or co-opted, the balance of power between government, popular society, elites, and transnational forces shifted so that the state became “less open to progressive demands” (Andreucci 2017: 175) from either the indigenous or popular-urban groups, with the focus instead shifting to “securing resource-based accumulation and control over hydrocarbon rents” (Ibid.). In sum, while García Linera cogently outlines why Bolivia must make use of natural resources to build an emancipatory project, and while he states that such a process must be accompanied by, and indeed guided by, organised popular forces, actual outcomes to date do not match his aspirations, with natural resource control remaining outside state hands, while democratic deepening has in fact veered toward “despotic” centralisation. Indeed, while the “main justification for the all-encompassing power of the national executive...is that it guarantees the political-

party unity essential for confronting powerful and aggressive adversaries” (Ellner, 2013: 13), there has been a shift in focus on who these “powerful and aggressive adversaries” are, with strategic urban and indigenous groups replacing domestic and transnational elites. Indeed, the Bolivian case raises fundamental concerns as to whether real democratic deepening that delivers autonomous bottom-up control over policy-making is possible in a scenario where state autonomy is limited by the power of domestic and transnational elites.

In sum, democracy has been deepened, with indigenous and popular sector recognition and inclusion drastically increased from the era of market-democracy. Democracy has been extended, and the redistribution of taxes earned from hydrocarbon sales act as a crucial bulwark against extreme poverty for Bolivia’s most vulnerable citizens. However, once hydrocarbon prices decline and elite actors seek to maintain their profit levels, further pressurising Morales to adhere to their demands, serious questions regarding the long-term legacy of the *proceso de cambio* are likely to emerge.

While Morales had to respond to the appalling levels of poverty facing the country when he came to power, and while this entailed entering a Faustian pact with domestic and international elites, the decision to undercut contestatory popular organisations was a grave error. A powerful popular sector with high levels of associational and collective power is the best defence against elite destabilisation tactics. Furthermore, given the possibility of a return of the Right to state power, a powerful popular base is vital to ensure that wholesale backsliding to the days of market democracy does not occur. Indeed, it is central to radical processes of change that both the Left-led state and the constituent-base increase their powers *in tandem* vis-à-vis domestic and transnational elite forces. While such a re-dressing of power requires an extremely difficult balancing act, any process of change that fails to

achieve this will tend toward “despotic” centralisation, re-constituted neoliberalism (Webber 2011), and, as witnessed in the case of El Alto, a fracturing of the state-popular society relations that opens space for Right-wing actors to (re)emerge.

Chapter 6: Venezuelan democratisation in historical context

1. Overview:

Following the TGPT framework outlined in chapter 2, this chapter offers a historical analysis of the key moments of recent attempts to construct a post-neoliberal democracy in Venezuela. The TGPT outlines how the relational power balance between the government, organised popular sectors, economic elites, and international (f)actors impacts on the emergence, development, and outcomes – understood as the quality of democratic deepening and extending, the nature and extent of centralisation of power in the executive, and the long-term legacy - of the democratisation process. The TGPT framework suggests that antecedent conditions and the history and nature of popular sector organisation and mobilisation influences not only the point of inflection, that is, the election of the new-Left president, but also feeds back onto the process at various stages, influencing the democratisation trajectory and outcomes. Given the varied nature of the antecedent conditions in Bolivia and Venezuela, as well as the different relative power between key actors in both cases, the analysis in this chapter helps to set up a comparative discussion (see chapter 8) from which lessons for radical-substantive democratisation can be drawn.

As such, in order to properly gauge the successes and failures of recent attempts by the Left in Venezuela to deepen and extend the quality of democracy, it is necessary to root such assessment in “the legacy of the illiberal Punto Fijo democracy” which began in 1958 (Buxton 2011: xiii). The theory-guided framework therefore examines the emergence of this Punto Fijo democracy; the rise and fall of the import-substitution industrialisation period; the adoption of neoliberalism; the mass protests against neoliberal political and economic

exclusion, detailing the histories of societal mobilisation in Venezuela; the emergence of contemporary Bolivarianism and the “inflection point” of the election of outsider candidate Hugo Chávez; and the self-reinforcing and reactive sequences of the democratisation process. A weak history of popular organising in the antecedent era fostered a vanguard relationship to emerge between the new president Chávez and popular sectors. As the process radicalised and sought to extend democracy, economic elites responded aggressively to protect their entrenched interests. In response to elite destabilisation efforts, power became centralised in the executive. While this centralisation was counterbalanced by attempts to construct from the top-down a grassroots inclusionary democracy, over time, particularly since the election of Chávez’s successor, Nicolas Maduro, the balance of power between state and society has ultimately culminated in a centralisation spiral which became despotic with internal debate and popular deliberation side-lined. With international conditions becoming less favourable to the construction of an alternative to market democracy in the region, the long term legacy of the process remains uncertain.

2. Introduction:

Hugo Chávez’s rise to power in 1998 until his death in 2013, and the continuation of the “Bolivarian revolution” by his successor Nicolás Maduro, fostered a process of controversial political and economic change in the country. The Venezuelan government was transformed by the drafting of a new constitution in 1999, the structure of the economy has been transformed via a program of renationalisation, popular participation has become an integral part of state policy, and in the geopolitical sphere Venezuela has taken a leading role in new regional movements that seek autonomy from, and sometimes openly criticise, the United States (Smilde 2011: 1). The Bolivarian process has challenged the neoliberal

fundamentals of free markets and liberal democracy, with state-sponsored avenues of participatory democracy opening “new dimensions in debates on citizenship, civil society, and the meaning of democracy” (Buxton 2011: x, xii). As Duffy (2015: 1475) outlines, “Venezuela has pursued a political project that aims to expand the scope of democratic engagement by complementing representative democracy with constitutionally guaranteed avenues for the exercise of participatory and direct democracy”. Furthermore, there have been extensive attempts to extend democracy via state provision of subsidised housing, education and health care, along with efforts to redistribute land (Yates and Bakker 2014: 7).

While promoting new forms of democratic engagement, this Bolivarian process did not eschew liberal democratic mechanisms such as elections, constitutionalism, and the legitimacy of formal institutions (Buxton 2011: xv), at least until more recent times since the election of Maduro to the presidency which has witnessed a sharp increase in centralisation of power in the executive. Indeed, from about 2006 on, liberal critics of Venezuelan democratisation have described the government as competitive authoritarian or electoral authoritarian (see for example Corrales & Penfold 2010, Hidalgo 2009, Kornblith 2013, Levitsky & Loxton 2013, Mainwaring 2012), while in the international sphere, various organisations such as the Organisation of American States (OAS) have suggested that Venezuela has broken from democracy (as cited in Cannon and Brown 2017). Furthermore, those from the radical Left within Venezuela itself have attacked the government for hoarding too much power in the executive, while at the same time successes in extending democracy are being eroded due to falling oil prices and economic crises. In order to gain a nuanced understanding of the regarding the outcomes of Venezuela’s process to date, the

next section offers an examination of the antecedent conditions beginning with the emergence of the Punto Fijo era pacted-democracy.

3. Antecedent Conditions:

3.1 *Punto Fijoism, market democracy and exclusion:*

In the context of the Cold War, Rómulo Betancourt's Acción Democrática (AD) party was ousted from government in a coup, leading to the instalment of a military regime between 1948 and 1958 (Hellinger 2012: 139). When General Marcos Pérez Jiménez fell in 1958, elite leaders of the main party groupings – Betancourt of AD, Rafael Caldera of the Christian Democratic Party (COPEI), and leaders of other non-communist parties, agreed to a power-sharing pact in Caldera's home, the villa "Punto Fijo" in Caracas (Ibid.). This pact, while guaranteeing the signatories' influence over the new government after presidential elections, which were won by Betancourt, also excluded the Communist Party. Other elite pacts ensured that the post-1958 regime "would not challenge fundamental interests of domestic businessmen, the military, and the Church" (Ibid.). This "pacted democracy" (Karl 1990) set the scene for "a political condominium, mainly between AD and COPEI, under which the two parties competed for influence not only in government...but throughout various social and economic sectors – including unions, professional associations, business confederations, student organisations etc." (Hellinger 2012: 140).

The Punto Fijo pact provided for competition between AD and COPEI for access to oil rents, which were used to legitimise the regime via the provision of economic well-being and the promotion of societal development (Smilde 2011: 3). The state, using the vast oil wealth at its disposal, "was able to attend simultaneously to the demands of private capital for accumulation and to the majority's demands for social and economic well-being" (Ibid.). As Smilde (2011: 3) notes, many political scientists considered Venezuela to be a model of

democratic stability. However, while democracy may have been stable, Hellinger (2012: 140) highlights that the pact increasingly divorced parties from representation of the social sectors and there was little room for national social movements to emerge, as happened elsewhere in Latin America in the struggles against military or other authoritarian regimes. While elections were held, freedoms and collective well-being were restricted as a result of massive inequality and exclusion, with little popular input in decision-making, a narrow choice of political candidates, clientelistic networks based around oil wealth, and often violent repression of dissent (Duffy 2015: 1476).

The Punto Fijo pact was based upon oil revenues and generous social spending, but by the 1980s, falling oil prices and the Latin American debt crisis “exposed the material and political limits of this system” (Hetland 2014: 376). A fiscal and current account crisis and the subsequent currency devaluation in 1983 broke the basis of Punto Fijo social pact (Hellinger 2012: 140). During the 1988 presidential campaign, neither major candidate – Eduardo Fernández of COPEI or Carlos Andrés Pérez of AD – prepared the electorate for the “economic shock treatment that lay just around the corner” (Roberts 2014: 217). Indeed, Pérez fostered the belief that his election would allow for a return to the “generalised affluence of his first presidential term of the 1970s” (Ibid.). Despite such promises, in February 1989, Pérez, who had been elected on a centre-left, social-democratic platform, implemented a severe structural adjustment package known as the *gran viraje* – “the great turnaround” - under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a classic example of “bait and switch” electoral politics (Ibid.).

The structural adjustment package emphasised deep cuts in public spending, deregulation of prices including on food and transport, deregulation of interest rates, devaluation of the national currency and the introduction of a unitary foreign exchange

rate, the introduction of a value-added tax, restructuring of the foreign debt, privatisation of banks, airlines, telecommunications, ports, and other activities, while trade liberalisation was called for (Silva 2009: 200-01). Decisions regarding the adoption of these neoliberal policies were taken by a closed group of free-market technocrats and business people who were given top cabinet positions (Ibid.). These technocratic decision-makers were schooled in the private business school Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA) and, in analogy to Chile's Chicago Boys, they were known as the IESA Boys (Fernandes 2010: 22-3). Silva (2009: 201) highlights that such decision-making procedures represented a first step in restructuring the state so as to separate politics from economic policy making.

3.2 *The Caracazo*:

Eleven days after announcing the structural adjustment measures, on February 27, 1989, a 100-percent increase in bus fares sparked a spontaneous "five day rebellion known as the *Caracazo*" (Roberts 2014: 218) which resulted in the deaths of between 246 and 1500 people in riots and military responses, while thousands were arrested in popular neighbourhoods, particularly those that had histories of Left-wing guerrilla activity (Silva 2009: 204; Roberts 2014: 218; Ciccariello-Maher 2013). The "floodgates to anti-neoliberal contentious politics opened after the *Caracazo* with some 5,000 protests recorded in the three years that followed" (Silva 2009: 205). However, as De La Torre (2013: 30) highlights, "social movements were relatively weak and lacked the organisational strength to engage in sustained mobilisations". The *Confederación de Trabajadores Venezolanos* (CTV), the principle labour confederation at the time, despite calling several general strikes at crucial moments, never sustained leadership or coordination of anti-neoliberal mobilisation³⁵ (Silva 2009: 195). Rather, uncoordinated strikes, marches and demonstrations in which each

³⁵ For a detailed discussion of the CTV's declining role in organising protest, see Silva 2009, Chapter 7

group focused on its own specific grievances, occurred almost daily (Ibid.: 209). With no central, guiding force, these protests “did not generate more coordinated efforts that built into larger waves of contention over time” (Ibid.).

3.3 More neoliberalism, more exclusion, popular-military movements and the emergence of Hugo Chávez:

The *Caracazo* was followed by two coup attempts in 1992 against Andrés Pérez, the first of which was led by Hugo Chávez (Hetland 2014: 376). The Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement-200 (MBR-200) led by Chávez began as a clandestine group of officers seeking reform of the armed forces (Smilde 2011: 7; López Maya 2003). The waves of protests following the *Caracazo*, though they failed to deliver a political alternative, did manage to block the realignment of the dominant political forces. It was in this unstable situation where power from the top was unable to govern, while power from the bottom was unable to offer a valid alternative (Antillano 2010), that popular protesters galvanised behind “a military-led political opposition committed to profound institutional change and revenge against a rapacious ruling class” (Hellinger 2012: 143). The MBR-200 officers, who followed the ideals of Simón Bolívar and his continental project for democracy, felt the Venezuelan oligarchy had betrayed the country (Smilde 2011: 7) and that the Punto Fijo pact had become corrupted and “significantly excluded the interests of the popular sectors” (Silva 2009: 215). Following the attempted coup, the MBR officers, including Chávez, were jailed.

It is important to highlight that, as in Bolivia, the neoliberal calls for decentralised government had an important influence in generating space for new parties and Leftist organisations to emerge. In 1984, “the Presidential Commission for Reform of the State (COPRE) proposed a slate of reforms, that in addition to transference of powers from the central government to regional and municipal levels, sought reforms of the judicial system,

the electoral system political parties, and the civil service” (Fernandes 2010: 59). Furthermore, in 1989 the organic Law of Municipal Regimes gave greater fiscal independence to municipalities (Ibid.). The greater focus on local and regional units of government “marked a shift away from traditional corporatist structures of mediation and allowed new power bases to emerge” (Ibid.). Following the unsuccessful coup attempts launched by Chavez in 1992, “the proposal by COPRE to replace centrally appointed regional officials with directly elected ones was finally passed”...strengthening the position of mayors and governors and alternative political parties” (Ibid.). In the 1992 gubernatorial and mayoral elections, alternative Leftist parties including the Causa R (Radical Cause) and the Movimiento al Socialismo or MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) won heavily (Ibid.).

In May 1993, the president was impeached on corruption charges and Rafael Caldera became the first elected president not to come from AD or COPEI (Smilde 2011: 6). Caldera had broken with COPEI and forged a makeshift coalition which included the small leftist party MAS. Caldera had stridently opposed the neoliberal model in the campaign, even going so far as to rationalise the 1992 coup as “an expression of outrage at Perez’s reforms” (Roberts 2014: 221). Indeed, in an attempt to stabilise civil-military relations, in 1994 Caldera pardoned the rebellious junior officers of the coup, including Hugo Chávez (Silva 2009: 221). However, following the collapse of several banks which the state placed in receivership in 1994, with mounting outlays for subsidies and price controls, and in the context of low international oil prices, the fiscal deficit and inflation far exceeded government targets (Ibid.). In 1996, Caldera announced an agreement with the IMF on a \$3.3 billion structural adjustment package in a “sweeping turnaround” (Ibid.). Furthermore, the tranche of reforms relating to currency rates and controls, gasoline prices, interest

rates, sales taxes, and increased commitment to privatisation had been devised by Teodoro Petkoff, the historic leader of the leftist MAS (Roberts 2014: 222).

Market democracy faced a growing legitimacy deficit. In economic terms, poverty increased from 36 percent in 1984 to 60 percent in 1991, while extreme poverty increased from 11 percent to 35 percent by 1993 (Coker 2014: 101). Between 1981 and 1997 unemployment almost doubled, with massive increases in numbers working in the informal sector, with the poorest of society bearing the brunt of a 37 percent decrease in average wages (Smilde 2011: 5). Inequality spiked, with the poorest 40 percent of the population earning less than half of what the top 10 percent earned (Ocampo and Martín 2003: 236). The continuing economic decline, and the second packet of severe structural adjustments called for by the IMF in 1996 had “consequences that went beyond class polarisation. It spurred a fundamental realignment in social-class identity and political cleavages. In effect, Venezuela moved from a modern conflict between Right and Left, to a postmodern clash between those with a place in organised, formal society, and those without” (Smilde 2011: 5; Castells 1997).

A second wave of anti-neoliberal protests developed during Caldera’s presidency, the characteristics of which were very similar to earlier moments of contention (Silva 2009: 221). Public sector unions, teachers, students, transport workers, and neighbourhood protests dominated this second wave, while oil workers occasionally joined in, as did militant unions controlled by the Causa R party (Ibid.). The CTV even staged a second strike (Ibid.). Like the previous wave, protests were decentralised, with no group framing mobilisation around larger strategic objectives (Ibid.: 222).

4. Point of inflection:

4.1 *The election of outsider-candidate Hugo Chávez:*

The “two bait-and-switch processes of market reform had produced an overarching pattern of neoliberal convergence, one that encompassed Caldera and MAS as well as AD and COPEI – thus demonstrating the failure of partisan electoral competition to generate policy alternatives that accurately mapped onto the programmatic divide in Venezuelan society” (Roberts 2014: 223). Indeed, the decline in social-democratic discourse throughout the 1980s and 1990s witnessed the institutionalised, electoral Left “move to the right and become indistinguishable from it” (Smilde 2011: 6). An abrupt fall in oil prices in 1998 led to an economic and fiscal disaster in Venezuela; “oil prices hit a historical low, provoking an acute sense of frustration among Venezuelans and reinforcing their repudiation of traditional elites, the parties, and moderate proposals” (Lopez-Maya 2011: 219). The divide in Venezuelan society became “superimposed on an establishment/anti-establishment political cleavage, allowing outsiders to politicise inequalities and mobilise the popular constituencies that consistently opposed the neoliberal model” (Roberts 2014: 223).

It is in this setting that Chávez and the Bolivarian Movement emerged as an electoral force, “a context in which the majority were experiencing ever-decreasing socioeconomic prospects and enjoying virtually no political representation, but were increasingly literate and informed” (Smilde 2011: 6). Following the failed coup of 1992, the leaders of MBR-200 spent two years in jail, during which time they developed their plans and ideology, and once out of prison they began forming a “civic-military” movement based on popular organisations like the Bolivarian Circles³⁶ (Ibid.: 7). The waves of protest “encouraged

³⁶ The Bolivarian Circles were popular organisations formed in the 1990s to act as the organised expression of civilian support for the MBR (Hellinger 2012: 145). These small cells of up to eleven individuals swore to defend the Bolivarian Constitution and its principles (Hawkins and Hansen 2006: 102-3; Rhodes-Purdy 2015: 5).

former MBR-200 putchists to form a political party to take advantage of expanding electoral volatility and party system change” (Silva 2009: 220). In 1997, the MBR changed its name to the Movimiento V República (MVR) as Chávez decided to directly seek the presidency. When Chávez announced his candidacy for the presidential elections of 1998, he was “a marginal figure with popularity in the single digits”, but as Venezuela’s economy declined and the party-system continued to self-destruct, his candidacy surged (Smilde 2011: 8). Chávez “adopted a radical and polarizing anti-neoliberal discourse that offered to ‘fry the heads’ of the corrupt traditional elites and get Venezuela out of the crisis situation through deep social and political change” (Lopez-Maya 2011: 219). The centrepiece of his campaign “was a pledge to convoke a constituent assembly and re-found the republic, promising an institutional rupture with the post-1958 political order that AD and COPEI had so thoroughly dominated” (Roberts 2014: 224).

In a last-ditch attempt to constrain Chávez, AD and COPEI abandoned their original presidential candidates, instead backing “the most viable anti-Chávez independent, Salas Römer as the candidate of the establishment” (Roberts 2014: 224). The move backfired, tainting Römer and crystallising “the outsider/establishment cleavage that separated Chávez from the field” (Ibid.), leading to the election of Chávez “with 56 percent of the vote and a clear mandate for his overtly anti-neoliberal platform and critique of neoliberal representative democracy as a barrier to protagonist participation” (Duffy 2015: 1476).

4.2 Government-societal power relations at the Point of Inflection:

Unlike Bolivia or Ecuador, Venezuela did not have a mass-based indigenous movement, and the national labour confederation, the CTV was too closely intertwined with AD to channel popular social resistance to market democracy (Roberts 2014: 218; Silva 2009: 195). The lack of popular organisations preceding the election of Chávez “determined a different

relationship between mobilisation and governance” than was the case in other Pink Tide countries such as Argentina or Brazil (Hanson and Lapenga 2017: 180). Chávez “tapped on the opportunity to organise and to mobilise the excluded understood as those without work in the formal economy, the poor, and those without formal education” (de la Torre 2013: 40). He “drew on a discourse appealing to popular sectors and his administration encouraged popular mobilisation—disruptive or otherwise—in support of the ‘Bolivarian revolution’” (Hanson and Lapenga 2017: 180). As such, Chávez came to power “with strong emotional and symbolic identification but with a fragile organisational base” (Gómez Calcaño 2009: 70; de la Torre 2013: 31). As Collier and Handlin (2009: 318) emphasise, “understanding this demobilised and fractured starting point is crucial for thinking about how the Chavista project has unfolded”.

However, while it is certainly true that protests were in general disorganised and uncoordinated, some mobilisations were co-ordinated by popular movements evidencing strong associational and collective power. In some popular *barrios*, for example El 23 de Enero, popular organisations and collectives with strong histories of mobilisation and organisation exist (Ciccariello-Maher 2013). Such movements had their origins in the clandestine movement against the 1950s military regime, the post-transition era of guerrilla struggle in the 1960s, as well as in the cultural activism and urban committees of the 1980s (Fernandes 2010: 5, 6; Velasco 2015). The years of intense armed struggle during the 1960s were formative for many of the contemporary leaders of organisations from some popular barrios (Fernandes 2010: 48). As established corporatist institutions such as trade unions and political parties lost power, and as neoliberal reforms created deep unrest in popular

areas, greater space emerged for unaffiliated barrio-based organisations, with their roots in longer-term social movements, to build their bases (Ibid.: 59, 69).

While there were key pockets of well organised popular society at the moment of Chávez's election, and, as will be discussed, these movements have played a powerful role in the development of Chavismo, in general, popular society was fractured and Chávez played a crucial role in providing a point of reference (Balderacchi 2015: 11; Wilpert 2007). As López Maya and Lander (2011: 75) state, the popular movement "lacked an organic base, tradition, and networks which might have given it the strength and autonomy to take action vis-à-vis the state". In this context, with the Punto Fijo political parties and the neoliberal development model discredited, Chávez called for a Constituent Assembly to begin the process of forging a new constitution, and it is to the 1999 Constitution that I now turn.

5. The 1999 Constitution:

Chávez immediately organised a constituent assembly to begin drafting a new constitution. The process was not simply dictated by Chávez; it had input from women's movements, indigenous groups, Afro-Venezuelans, human rights groups and others (Hellinger 2012: 145). However, the president did exert "strong and decisive influence over much of its content" (Ibid.). As Hellinger (2011: 28) notes, the traditional liberal system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers was considered to be insufficient to prevent the "the iron law of oligarchy" (Michels 1915). Instead, new participatory institutions were included in the constitution to prevent the pacted Punto Fijo democracy from occurring again (Hellinger 2011: 28).

With the aim of reaching a social equilibrium, the Constitution Guidelines "present three foci around which politics should revolve, each one pertaining to a distinct and crucial

dimension of the structural condition of exclusion, and all promoting popular organisation and mobilisation” (López Maya and Lander 2011: 64). The first area focuses on “the correction of the unjust distribution of income and wealth”; the second focuses on “overcoming discrimination in access to fundamental human rights such as nutrition, health, housing, and education”; and the third focus is the “development of full citizenship, which is characterised by members of society possessing attributes such as solidarity, responsibility, and participatory and democratic attitudes” (Ibid.).

The preamble of the Constitution in its “Exposition of Motives” states that the Bolivarian Republic will have a government whose political organs “shall always be democratic, participatory, elective, decentralised, alternative, responsible and pluralist, with revocable mandates” (CRBV 1999 as cited in Hellinger 2011: 28). The Constitution sought to deepen democracy by guaranteeing citizens’ rights to direct, semi-direct, and indirect participation, not only via the vote, but also via the “formulation, execution, and control of public administration” (CRBV 1999; López Maya and Hetland 2011: 59).

The Constitution also called for an extending of democracy. The Exposition of Motives of the Constitution claims that the Republic has been “refounded” so as to create “a more democratic society. Not only is it the state that should now be more democratic, but also society” (CRBV 1999). Democracy, therefore should not be limited to the political sphere, but should “impregnate all the spaces of social life” (López Maya and Lander 2011: 58). The second article states that “Venezuela is constituted as a Democratic and Social State of Law and Justice which in its legal order and actions holds as highest values life, liberty, justice, equality, solidarity, democracy, social responsibility and in general, the pre-eminence of human rights, ethics, and political pluralism” (CRBV 1999). Indeed, social

inequality is considered social exclusion, and the objective of the state's social-policy must therefore be to build inclusion and deliver social rights (López Maya and Lander 2011: 63).

The Guidelines of the constitution identify both the state *and* society (citizens, families, and organised communities) as the key actors in social transformation, with the goal being the creation of substantive citizenship; the state is seen as a “facilitator of empowerment for those who ought to make decisions and control public administration” (López Maya and Lander 2011: 64). This differs from previous administrations where an interventionist state was the main actor involved in delivering citizenship (Ibid.). Article 62 states that “the participation of the people in the formation, execution and control of public matters is the means necessary to accomplish the protagonism (*protagonismo*) that will guarantee their complete development, both as individuals and as well as the collective” (CRBV 1999). Articles 326, 70, and 184 call for “co-responsibility” where society is to play a “protagonist” role via participation in public affairs via “elections, petitioning, recall referendum, and public consultation” along with “the execution of welfare service projects at decentralised levels of government in which service delivery may be transferred to organised groups of society” (McCarthy 2012: 130).

To examine and explain the successes and failures of efforts to deliver on the goals of the 1999 constitution, the rest of this chapter evaluates how government, popular society, economic elites, and international (f)actors have influenced the democratisation process through several periods. Phase 1 of the post-inflection era encompasses the moderate stage of 1999-2001 and the period of elite resistance of 2001-04. Phase 2 includes the radicalisation period of 2004-07, and the period from 2007-13 which witnessed attempts to construct 21st Century socialism and the communal state. Phase 3 examines

2013-present, reviewing the Maduro era and the creeping authoritarianism associated with it.

6. Post-Inflection Sequencing Phase 1:

6.1 *Moderate Beginnings: 1999-2001:*

When Chávez first came to power, he was oriented toward a “Third Way” strategy like that espoused by Tony Blair (Buxton 2016: 9). He saw himself as a democratic socialist “who wanted to build a participatory democracy, institute a basic welfare system, and address Venezuela’s chronic social problems” (Ibid.). However, the ratification of the 1999 Constitution strengthened presidential powers, and by the end of 1999, “Chávez had weakened institutional checks and balances on executive authority and set the stage for new elections in 2000 under the terms of his Bolivarian constitution” (Roberts 2014: 259). While in the 1998 campaign, the MVR was primarily an electoral structure that allowed the MBR-200 party to establish alliances with groups of different ideological inspiration that nevertheless supported Chávez’s candidacy”, the “successive electoral triumphs of the MVR between 1998 and 2000 led to the replacement of the MBR-200 by the MVR as the movement’s party” (López Maya 2011: 217). The MVR, unlike the MBR-200, was a “vertical, centralised electoral structure serving the Chávez candidacy, without internal debate or any pretensions of providing an ideological formation for its members” (Ibid.).

In the 2000 elections, none of the traditional parties ran a candidate, and Chávez won the election with 59.8 percent of the vote (Roberts 2014: 259). The MVR captured 46.7 percent of the seats in the new National Assembly, “while the MAS and other allied leftist parties added another 15.1 percent, giving the president a strong legislative majority” (Ibid.). As such, Chávez had extensive political power over the fractious opposition, and,

given the de-legitimation of neoliberalism and Punto Fijo democracy, he also had the ideological space to begin to implement the new CRBV 1999.

While the majority of Chávez's support came from the popular classes, his electoral success did cross class lines and, although "much of the business community had opposed Chávez in the 1998 election, he successfully courted some business figures who sought access to state policymaking channels and resources" (Roberts 2014: 259). As such, Chávez avoided sharp departures from the economic orthodoxy of his predecessor, Caldera. Furthermore, Chávez's economic power was weak; he inherited an economy in recession, and oil-prices were at a low of \$8-barrel. As such, he followed relatively austere fiscal policies and declined to control prices and interest rates (Ibid.: 260).

Chávez did however call for a civilian-military anti-poverty agenda called Plan Bolivar 2000 with each branch of the military devising programs that would benefit the poor (Wilpert 2003). Plan Bolivar 2000 repaired thousands of houses, schools, homes, parks and clinics while over two million people received medical treatment; two million children received vaccinations; while thousands of inexpensive markets were opened, to name but a few of the successes (Ibid.). However, the programs were criticised by some for being poorly managed and for lacking transparency, leading to charges of corruption (Ibid.), issues that would continue to be directed against military involvement in democracy expansion over the course of Venezuela's post-neoliberal democratisation.

6.2 Elite Destabilisation Efforts, Centralisation, Popular power and radicalisation: 2001-04:

Despite the moderate economic policies, the new Constitution still provoked open opposition from business elites (Roberts 2014: 260). The focus on state provision of social

rights, the prohibition of privatisation of social security and the state oil company, increased job protection for workers, the incorporation of informal workers and housewives into the social security system, and allowing private property to be expropriated for social use led to criticism from Venezuela's peak business association, Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela (The Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Production – Fedecámaras) (Ibid.). The period from December 2001 to August 2004 "saw an intense and protracted struggle between the Chávez government and opposition political and economic forces" comprised "mainly of those who have (or at least had) a solid place in formal society" such as members of the "traditionally conservative Catholic Church, industry, commerce, and construction" (Smilde 2011: 9-10).

Following the 2000 election, the National Assembly passed an enabling law, allowing Chávez to rule by decree for one year (Roberts 2014: 260). In November 2001, Chávez used this authority to issue 49 legislative decrees, including new laws that moved beyond political reform. They sought to democratise property and production (Lander 2017b) by allowing for the expropriation of unutilised farm lands, promoting and financing cooperative production, and reasserting executive control over *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.* (PDVSA) - the state oil company - and financial institutions, thereby challenging elite interests (Hellinger 2012: 260; Roberts 2014: 261; Lander 2017b). Indeed, the new laws were described by the elite business sector and their political wings as an attack on private property indicating a move toward communism (Lander 2017b).

A "sense of urgency" emerged amongst the elite in response to the government's attempts to alter the social and economic spheres (Smilde 2011: 9). Despite Chávez's electoral victories, the elite still maintained multiple sources of economic, political, ideological, and military power. Indeed, the initial strategy to respond to the "attacks on

private property” was marked by the establishment of the Democratic Coordinator, “a heterogeneous grouping of political parties, NGOs, the business association Fedecámaras, the trade union confederation, and the CTV (Venezuelan Workers’ Confederation, *Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela*), with Catholic Church and media support” (Cannon 2014: 54). The traditional unions called a nationwide strike in December 2001 (Smilde 2011: 9). In April 2002, a coalescence of dissident military members, sections of the Venezuelan business community, and opposition supporters “launched a coup d’état against the Chávez government with the support of several private media stations” (Gill 2016: 367). An interim government headed by business leader Pedro Carmona was installed (Smilde 2011: 9). The US government supported the overthrow openly – via White House statements advocating dubious claims regarding government repression of opposition protests purported by the opposition controlled Venezuelan media (Martin, Young, Pilger 2007) - and more covertly via funding from USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for opposition parties (Cannon 2009: 191; Coker 2014: 92). However, a countercoup two days later, in conjunction with mass popular demonstrations, brought Chávez back to power (Smilde 2011: 9).

In the period following the coup, elite-opposition forces in the form of the NED-funded Súmate organisation pushed for a recall referendum (Cannon 2009: 191), but political deadlock led them to instead make use of their economic power by calling a national work stoppage in December 2002. The elites retained influence not only over the unions linked to the Punto Fijo parties, but the managers of PDVSA as well (Smilde 2011: 9.). The opposition tactics failed, however, as the government, making use of their political and ideological power, called in loyal and retired workers and asked for help from abroad, and fired about half of the 30,000 PDVSA employees (Ibid.). In the process, the government

boosted their economic power, while substantially weakening that of the elite by regaining control over the country's primary source of revenue, oil (Ibid.). Furthermore, Chavista loyalists also replaced leading members of the army who had participated in attempts to overthrow the government, thereby augmenting the military power of Chávez (Ellner 2017).

Other responses to efforts to extend democracy saw elites use their economic power "as they have done throughout history when they consider their interests threatened" to create a scarcity of important commodities (Ellner 2013: 67). Following the general strike, the government responded to scarcities (which pushed up prices) by implementing price and exchange controls in February 2003 (Ibid.). The private sector responded by reducing production and exporting more. To fill the gaps in the market (and to intimidate the private sector into maintaining production and distribution at normal levels) the government began expropriating companies (Ibid.).

The reversed 2002 coup constitutes a fundamental turning point in the Bolivarian process (Cicariello-Maher 2014: 243). It was the mass street mobilisation by the "constituent masses" (Ibid.), and the interventions of more organised elements such as the Bolivarian Circles that played the key role in returning Chávez to power" (de la Torre 2013: 31). The vulnerability of the Chávez government to elite opposition forces and their use of aggressive tactics to prevent attempts to extend democracy forced it to "be particularly responsive to the demands and aspirations of its movement's rank-and-file members in order to count on their ongoing mobilisation" (Ellner 2013: 78).

The government's perception of participation drastically changed; classic autonomous civil-society "became a formidable foe of the Chávez government" while "pro-Chávez participatory groups provided key support during the struggle" (León and Smilde 2009). The president maintained that he would "devote his remaining time in office to

enriching the lives of Venezuela's popular classes who had saved Chávez from his deposal, or worse" (Gill 2016: 367). As such, Chavismo entered a new stage of radicalisation in response to the opposition tactics and the "massive spontaneous mobilisation that helped restore Chávez to power after the brief coup" (Hellinger 2011: 33).

In early 2003, the government introduced the *misiones*, a series of state-sponsored programs aimed at delivering the socioeconomic goals of the new Constitution to popular communities in the areas of health, education, urban land reform, and nutrition (Hawkins, Rosas, and Johnson 2011: 190; Hellinger 2012: 146). The *misiones* are defined by the government as the "conjunction of constituted power and constituent power" (MINCI 2007: 7, 12); their purpose "is not only to bring the benefits of the welfare state to the poor, especially those in the informal sector, but to alter the governance of the economy from one emphasizing atomistic participation in the market to one relying on cooperatives, state coordination, and local know-how – in a word, what the government celebrates as 'endogenous development'" (Hawkins et al. 2011: 190). Muhr (2012: 26) differentiates the *misiones* from conventional social welfare schemes found in social democracies as they seek to combine short-term poverty alleviation with long-term structural change.

However, as Hellinger (2011: 33) explains, these new policies were not only designed to expand welfare and involve citizens in committees and popular organisations linked to the spending programs. They "were linked to a mobilisation strategy in anticipation of a possible recall referendum" (ibid.) which the opposition did successfully convene in June 2004. Chávez altered his campaign strategy for the 2004 *revocatorio* recall election by "reducing his reliance on the MVR politicians and successfully appealing to his supporters in the Circles to form 'electoral battle units' in support of a 'No'" (Hellinger 2012: 146). Other organisations of state-sponsored participation such as Urban Land Committees (CTUs) and

Mesas Técnicas de Agua (Water Roundtables or MTAs), along with the Bolivarian Circles, provided Chávez with a more organised popular society that he could rely on to provide “a popular bulwark against...elite efforts to destabilise his administration” (Hetland 2017: 5).

In a paradoxical process, the “shift from deepening democracy in the first couple of years of the Chávez government toward extending it to the social and economic realms” was “accompanied by a progressive centralisation of political and economic power in the executive branch” (Smilde 2011: 11) as Chávez sought to prevent elite destabilising tactics from impeding the democratisation process. Elite tactics meant that Chávez was heavily reliant on popular protests and mobilisation to drive the democratisation process forward, which should in theory place power with society over the government and foster “progressive centralisation”. Progressive centralisation occurs when increasing executive power is used to overcome elite opposition, while it is simultaneously counterbalanced from below by popular power, thereby fostering a dual process of democratic extending and deepening for popular sectors. However, the lack of associational and collective power and the weak organisational histories of popular actors meant that spaces of grassroots participation such as the Bolivarian Circles, CTUs, and MTAs were not autonomous from the central government. Rather, these state-sponsored spaces of participation were managed from the top-down toward “the defence of the revolution at times of serious threat” (García-Guadilla 2011: 94-98; Rhodes-Purdy 2015: 5). Indeed, citizens involved in these organisations “felt compelled, either by a sense of duty or direct pressure from Chavista elites, to do their part in defending the revolution in a time of peril” (Ibid.). While it must be stressed that many popular actors did want to support the revolution, the balance of power between the government and popular actors, in conjunction with elite destabilising tactics, fostered the emergence of a vanguardist state-society relationship. In sum, one of the key

elements of progressive centralisation, namely bottom-up oversight of executive power, existed, but in a somewhat contorted form that simultaneously combined bottom-up inclusion and top-down control.

7. Post-Inflection Sequencing Phase 2: 2004-13:

7.1 2004—07: *Oil boom, changing international context, and debilitated opposition: Toward 21st Century Socialism:*

Chávez's sweeping victory in the 2004 recall with 58.3 percent of the vote (Roberts 2014: 262) coupled with a strong increase in oil prices significantly boosted his political and economic power, putting the government in a position to deliver real benefits to their core bloc of supporters (Buxton 2016: 9). A "demoralised opposition made little effort to contest local and gubernatorial elections later in 2004, allowing Chávez supporters to capture twenty-one out of twenty-three state governments and 90 percent of municipalities" (Roberts 2014: 262). Furthermore, the following year, the main opposition parties boycotted national legislative elections entirely, "giving Chávez's MVR and allied leftist parties a complete lock on the national assembly" (Ibid.). In the 2006 presidential elections, the opposition coalesced behind Manuel Rosales of a new party, *Un Nuevo Tiempo* (UNT), but Chávez again won with a record 62.8 percent of the vote (Ibid.).

As oil prices rose in 2004, Western leverage over the Chávez government declined. The Bush administration was preoccupied with Iraq and the Middle East. Meanwhile, China and Russia, two countries who would not seek to restrict Chávez in an ideological sense, were seeking new trading partners in Latin America (Buxton 2016: 9). Furthermore, the "Pink Tide" – that is, the election of left-leaning presidents across much of the region such as Lula da Silva in Brazil, Kirchner in Argentina, Morales in Bolivia, and Correa in Ecuador offered ideological and political support to the Venezuelan government (Buxton 2016: 9).

This conjuncture marks the beginning of a radicalisation that transformed the Bolivarian revolution from a “Third Way”, moderate government, to an anti-imperialist, openly socialist one that began to “experiment in all seriousness with direct democracy and non-capitalist relations, property, and production” (Cicariello-Maher 2014: 243). No longer facing a national referendum on his rule (Hellinger 2011: 34), Chávez announced on his weekly television program *Aló Presidente* that the Bolivarian revolution should construct a “new socialism of the 21st century” (Burbach and Piñeiro 2007: 183), distinct from the “real socialisms” of the 20th century where the “process of seeking and building is guided above all by values such as collectivity, equality, solidarity, freedom, and sovereignty” (Azzellini 2013: 26). Chávez stated that “popular power is the soul, nerve, flesh and bone, and essence of Bolivarian democracy, of a true democracy” (quoted in Sosa 2007: 52). As de la Torre (2013: 31) delineates, unlike orthodox Marxist models, the proletariat is not the central subject of Venezuelan 21st Century Socialism; rather the subject is the *pueblo* understood as the huge mass made up of the “unemployed, the poor, and the excluded” (Álvarez 2011: 113). The goal of 21st century socialism is the “construction of a revolutionary socialist democracy that will transcend representative liberal democracy” (de la Torre 2013: 31) with “real quotidian exercise of power by the great majority of common people” (Acosta 2007: 22). According to Burbach and Piñeiro (2007: 181), the core difference of the Venezuelan attempt to deliver socialism and that of past experiences is the commitment to participatory democracy and the exercise of power from the community level. Socialism of the 21st century therefore calls for a bottom-up revolutionary movement to transform social, economic, and political relations (Harnecker 2010: 125; Salazar 2013: 5) in an attempt to advance the goals of the 1999 constitution by “reconfiguring institutions and thus

individuals' activities according to the principles of equality and solidarity" (Burbach and Piñeiro 2007: 184).

7.1a Consejo Comunales:

One of the most important laws passed during the Chávez presidencies to promote the building of 21st century socialism was the 2006 Law of Communal Councils (Hellinger and Spanakos 2017: 8). Communal councils (CCs), initiated in part in response to existing practices of direct democracy among urban social movements (Fernandes 2010), "are based on the idea that local-level citizen participation in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of community development projects establishes a platform on which a new 'protagonist' democracy can be built" (Wilde 2017: 141). Chávez saw the CCs as the cornerstone of the move toward 21st century socialism, claiming that their formation "marked the beginning of a transfer of political, economic, and administrative power from the 'constituted power' of the state to the 'constituent power' of civil society" (Ibid.). David Velasquez, who chaired the committee that authored the Communal Council law states that the CCs seek to "transfer power and democracy to organised communities to such a degree that the State apparatus would eventually be reduced to levels that it becomes unnecessary" (as cited in Ciccariello-Maher 2013: 245). The CCs, therefore, are seen by the government as "the vehicles to reach the full implementation of a system that aims to give a protagonist role to the citizens in the decision-making process" (Salazar 2013: 13). As Salazar goes on to describe, the CCs are "supposed to be autonomous, flexible and self-ruling community entities, ready for the proposition and execution of projects led by their members in their geographical spaces". The hope is that they will become "incubators" of self-managing critical citizens who will be leaders in their community, leading to the

formation of “self-sustainable economic units which trigger the transition to new structures” (Ibid.).

Although funds for projects may come from several sources including municipal and regional governments, the majority of funding comes from the national government (Wilde 2017: 142). In a 2006 speech, president Chávez called for the CCs to “be built as a subsystem of decision making and avoid becoming only adjuncts to the mayors, governors, or political parties” (cited in Motta 2011: 37). As such, the CCs represent attempts to “create a new set of state institutions that bypass the traditional state and distribute power in a democratic and participatory manner” (Motta 2011: 37)³⁷.

As Strønen (2017: 161) notes, the communal councils have received considerable attention from the academic community in recent years (see, e.g., Álvarez and García-Guadilla 2011; García-Guadilla 2008; León and Smilde 2009; López Maya 2011; Machado 2008, 2009), receiving both praise and criticism. For some the CCs are not autonomous spaces for participation, but rather state-dominated institutions. Financial dependence on a rentier state and regulation by a charismatic president who centralises decisions in the executive are said to neutralise grassroots actors’ ability to articulate independent political claims and impact political decision-making (Wilpert 2007; Uzcátegui 2010; Garcia-Guadilla and Mallen 2013). While acknowledging the “rough edges” of CCs, other analysts have highlighted the potential benefits of increasing state funding to historically excluded sectors of society (Ellner 2009). As Wilde (2017) details, another strand of scholarship suggest that the CCs “subject constituted power to constant constituent pressure, binding the two in a dialectical chain toward ever more radical and direct representation” (Ciccariello-Maher 2013a: 129). In such perceptions, the CCs offer the possibility of decentralizing power away

³⁷ For a technical discussion of the process of establishing a CC and the internal structuring of a CC see Motta (2011) and Salazar (2013).

from the state toward empowered publics (Azzellini 2010). As will be discussed shortly, the divergent opinions on the role and potential of the CCs reflect the wider debate surrounding Chavismo and the nature of state-society relations in deepening and extending democracy.

7.1b The PSUV:

Following the series of elite efforts to remove Chávez from power between 2002 and 2004, and following his landslide victory in the 2006 election which “provided him with significant political capital not only with respect to the opposition but vis-à-vis his allies and supporters as well” (Hetland 2017: 22), Chávez initiated the process of forming the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela—PSUV), thereby bringing together the majority of political parties that supported him under one umbrella (Ibid.: 2). In fact, from the outset Chávez maintained that if any existing progressive parties did not join the PSUV then they would have to leave the government (Cannon 2009: 59).

The formation of the PSUV offered Chávez the opportunity to clarify the political-ideological objectives of his project of developing 21st century socialism (Hetland 2017: 21). Indeed, its creation “represented another of Chávez’s efforts to organise the popular sectors and, in particular, to do so by constructing a political organisation that would be more solid and cohesive—and thus more strategically useful—than the MVR” (Hetland 2017: 21). The PSUV members are “drawn from the popular movement in the barrios and show resistance to slavish adherence to the *oficialista* line” (Hellinger 2012: 160). The aim was to provide opportunity for grassroots input in policy formation, uniting leadership and base into one single body (Cannon 2009: 60). It was hoped such a move could counteract bureaucratisation and attendant issues of clientelism and corruption and ultimately foster an independent popular movement that was not dependent on the president or any one figure for its survival (Ibid.).

However, as Hellinger continues, the “PSUV has yet to show a willingness or ability to say ‘no’ to its charismatic leader”. Indeed, according to Webber (2016), the PSUV, despite initially generating enthusiasm and millions of new members, “never realised its potential due to its rigid verticalism, lack of internal debate, and the generalised absence of participatory democracy within the party”. As a result, the PSUV became a top-down structure (Gonzalez 2017) which proved slow in responding to grassroots demands, while those social movements that did not align themselves with the PSUV were sidelined (Velasco 2017).

7.1c New Regional Organisations:

Venezuela played a key role in developing new regionalist projects such as UNASUR and ALBA which promote “new geographical and ideological boundaries while fostering new consensuses that are defined regionally, not globally”, and which are “supported by the mainly state-led practices, institutions and funding mechanisms in new social fields such as education, health, employment, energy, infrastructure and security” thereby “setting new regional boundaries beyond the historical hub of what defined US and market-led regionalism” (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012: 6). In 2004, Venezuela led the process of establishing the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). ALBA rejects the logic of 1990s regionalism that was based on Latin American countries competing to lock-in deregulation and attract foreign investment; rather, ALBA seeks, in direct opposition to neoliberalism, to extend 21st century socialism into a regional integration scheme (Riggirozzi 2011: 434). ALBA proposed an “alternative model of development and accumulation underpinned by new principles of solidarity and complementarities” (Ibid.). UNASUR meanwhile sought to develop an autonomous space for South American nations vis-à-vis Western leverage (Ibid.: 432) allowing for a “normative re-engineering and debate in

relation to the purpose of regional integration beyond trade policy” (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2017: 17) into the spheres of democratisation, inclusion, social development, physical integration, defence and identity (Riggirozzi 2011: 432).

TeleSur, a pan-Latin American satellite television station sponsored by the governments of Venezuela, Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, and Bolivia was established with the goal of providing a “counterweight to the ‘imperialist’ information provided by the regular television channels” (López Maya 2011: 225). Furthermore, Venezuelan-led energy integration projects such as PetroCaribe have developed bilateral trade agreements to provide subsidised oil to Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay, as well as joint ventures for exploration with Argentina and Uruguay (Riggirozzi 2011: 432). Banco del Sur meanwhile was established to offer loans to member countries for the construction of infrastructure and social programs, reducing the influence of IFI institutions such as the IMF.

The new regional agenda opened debates over how best to serve participatory and redistributive democracy as well as how to boost regional autonomy redefining the Latin American regional agenda (Riggirozzi 2011: 423). Reclaiming the region “became not only a way of resisting US power but a genuine reflection of what Latin American should mean in the face of the crisis of neoliberalism” (Ibid.: 426). The new regional environment reduced US economic and ideological leverage over Chávez, and the region, as Venezuela actively replaced the USA in terms of under-writing debt and offering strategic injections of capital to regional allies (Ibid.: 434). In this scenario, regional space and support for a post-neoliberal democratisation process was boosted (López Maya 2011: 25).

With such a favourable conjuncture in terms of the relative balance of power – extremely high levels of political, ideological, and economic power for the government vis-à-vis a discredited and debilitated elite opposition, coupled with reduced Western leverage

over the government – Chávez sought to radicalise the process of constructing an organised popular base.

7.2 Constructing the communal state: 2007-2010:

In 2007, Chávez announced “five motors”³⁸ needed to accelerate the path to socialism, calling for the “revolutionary explosion of communal power” (López Maya 2011: 227).

Chávez argued that the CCs, as the instruments of constituent power, should face no restrictions (Ibid.). As such, he proposed a constitutional reform that would build a “Popular Power” which would act as a new layer to the government (León and Smilde 2009: 5). The proposal called for a new hierarchy of communal power that would be “brought under the power of the executive branch instead of local governments as previously formulated” (Smilde n.d: 27) with funding for participatory initiatives to come directly from the central government rather than through municipalities as the 1999 constitution states (León and Smilde 2009: 5). This “popular power would not be elected but somehow emerge directly from ‘the people’ which, in practice, would mean that its functionaries would be selected by the executive branch” (Ibid.).

The proposed reform however was narrowly rejected by the electorate. Smilde (León and Smilde 2009: 5) highlights that the reform failed due to resistance by numerous sectors that had previously been sympathetic or at least neutral regarding the Chávez government. It is important here to highlight that the Bolivarian movement is comprised of a number of competing ideological and organisational tendencies (Wilde 2017; Ellner 2013). Radical Venezuelan intellectual Roland Denis suggests that the “bureaucratic-corporatist republic” in the form of the Bolivarian government seeks to lead the popular movements that give it legitimacy, while a second current, the “self-governing socialist body”, possesses an

³⁸ See Lopez Maya (2011) and Smilde (n.d.) for overview.

“entirely different logic, based in self-government of land, social spaces, and spaces of production” (Denis cited in Spronk et al. 2011: 247-248). Indeed, these divisions can be seen within the PSUV which Hetland (2017: 12) classifies into right, left, and moderate wings. Hetland (Ibid.: 28) contends that “the popular sectors, particularly those organised into grassroots movements, tend to favour the party’s left while the generals, the state bureaucracy, and the boliburguesía³⁹ favour its right and moderate wings”. Indeed, the moderate and the right Chavista forces dominate the upper echelons of the PSUV (Hetland 2017: 31).

There are clear ideological and strategic differences among these wings regarding “extending vs. restraining popular power, confronting vs. accommodating issues of bureaucratisation and corruption within the state (and the military), and achieving ideological clarity vs. maintaining unity” (Hetland 2017: 28). The “endogenous right” “is characterised by accommodation with capital, rejection of any serious attempt to move toward socialism or infringe upon property rights, opposition to worker control and to participatory democratic control over state decision making, and a preference for managerial/technocratic decision making” (Ibid.). The endogenous right, in particular some army generals, have engaged in corrupt practices for personal gain. However, because of his desire to maintain party unity, Chávez, and later Maduro, was tolerant of this wing of Chavismo and the PSUV (Ibid.). Within the PSUV the Left wing of the party advocated a more confrontational attitude toward capital and the party’s right wing, highlighting bureaucracy and corruption as the main obstacles to the advancement of the revolution,

³⁹ As the government side-lined Fedecámaras businesspeople involved in attempts to topple Chávez, a new economic class emerged in their stead, many of whom have grown rich through government contracts, while others have profited illicitly from their positions within the state bureaucracy (Ellner 2017; Hetland 2017).

while also advocating greater participatory measures and worker-control of the economic sphere. (Hetland 2017: 29).

Smilde (n.d.: 27) states that while the original goal of Chavismo “was simply to empower civil participation on the assumption that this would lead to the emergence of a general societal consensus, the government has progressively moved towards seeking to control participation in order to defend and further its interests (which it assumes are the true interests of the collectivity)”. Webber (2016) points out that the defeat of the 2007 referendum, the first electoral defeat for Chavismo, was a “product of top-down decision making in the lead up to the referendum and skepticism about the bureaucratizing direction of the Bolivarian process” indicating popular dissatisfaction with increasing vanguardisation and centralisation of the process of change. Smilde (n.d.: 20) suggests however that while this defeat temporarily set back the centralizing tendencies of the government, the rejected reforms have in fact been adopted “piece by piece through the 2009 referendum abolishing term limits, the 2010 passage of a package of laws creating the ‘communal state’, and the decree of various laws through the Enabling law in 2011 and 2012.”

In July 2008, with a presidential enabling law placing extensive political power in his hands, Chávez announced twenty-six laws by executive decree. These laws contained significant elements of the failed 2007 reform, and sought to bypass governors and mayors and give extensive new duties to the Communal Councils in issues regarding “national defence, agro-industrial policy, and the formation of the ‘popular economy’” (León and Smilde 2009: 5). From 2009, several new laws were introduced which sought to reformulate the role of popular participation and the idea of the state because, as Azzellini (2013: 29) states, since 2007 “the government’s ability to reform has increasingly clashed with the limitations inherent in the bourgeois state and the capitalist system”. In his inauguration

speech in January 2007, Chávez stated that he hoped that the CCs would develop sufficiently to allow for the emergence of “communal territories”, and that by 2010 a “communal power” would develop via a national confederation of CCs, leading to the gradual replacement of municipal and provincial governments (Burbach and Piñeiro 2007: 191-2). However, for Chávez it became increasingly clear that capitalism was a “monster” that would swallow up any local initiatives, and as such “a radical leap toward socialism was needed if the Bolivarian process was not to come to an abrupt halt” (Ciccariello-Maher 2016: 16).

As such, the 2009 Law of Communal Councils, an *organic* law that sought to place the CCs on a par with any other form of public power, was adopted (Ciccariello-Maher 2013: 246). Furthermore, new laws in 2010 including the *Ley Orgánica de las Comunas* (Organic Law of the Communes), the *Ley Orgánica del Sistema Económico Comunal* (Organic Law of the System of Communal Economy), and the *Ley Orgánica del Poder Popular* (Organic Law of Popular Power) were established. The aim was to increase popular power by allowing autonomous development and decision-making along with the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services via the grouping together of multiple communal councils into *comunas* (communes). The *comunas* were envisioned as “representing a fourth level of government” allowing project design on “a wider scale in accordance with state planning” (Ellner 2013: 76), with decision-making retained at local-levels in CC assemblies (Azzellini 2013).

The attempts to broaden the *consejo comunales* into a system of *comunas* so as to simultaneously allow for greater deepening and extending of democracy “brings an increase in the conflicts between the state and its popular base...as well as within the state itself,

which becomes a site of class conflict” (Azzellini 2013: 29). As Azzellini (Ibid.) cogently summarises,

Not surprisingly, the deepening of social transformation multiplies the points of confrontation between top-down and bottom-up strategies. But simultaneously, because of the expansion of state institutions’ work along with the consolidation of the Bolivarian process and growing resources, state institutions have been generally strengthened and have become more bureaucratised. Institutions of constituted power aim at controlling social processes and reproducing themselves. Since the institutions of constituted power are at the same time strengthening and limiting constituent power, the transformation process is very complex and contradictory.

We can see here the scope for a simultaneous deepening-centralisation scenario whereby top-down creation of spaces for popular participation certainly boosts popular power, but at the same time, given that the new spaces for participation are so tightly linked to the central state and reliant on it for resources, these spaces may lack sufficient autonomy to criticise the government. Furthermore, by seeking to construct parallel state institutions so as to bypass local levels of government, Chávez radically opened the space for real democratic deepening. However, given that state-society and government-opposition power relations were heavily tilted toward Chávez, such a process also opened the possibility for a centralisation of power in the executive. Indeed writing in 2009, Smilde (León and Smilde: 2009: 7) suggested that government appeared to be “in a strong position to build a hegemonic regime that mobilises citizen participation but progressively neutralises its independence and autonomy”. The sequencing of the process and whether centralised power was used progressively – that is, to overcome elite destabilisation tactics

while simultaneously deepening democracy - or in despotic manner – whereby popular is co-opted - is discussed below.

7.3 2010-13: The electoral emergence of the MUD, “Comuna o Nada”, and the death of Chávez:

As described earlier, from 1998 to 2006, elite opposition to Chavismo, buoyed by financial and political support from the US, USAID and the NED, relied on extra-constitutional means such as economic blockades, lockouts, a coup, street demonstrations, and media disinformation campaigns (Buxton 2017a: 5). However, as Chávez survived such destabilisation efforts, elite opposition abandoned such confrontational strategies and “embarked on a process of ‘partidization’ through the MUD (*Mesa de Unidad Democrática*, Democratic Unity Coalition), featuring a return to predominance of politics and political parties, a privileging of electoralism, and a unification of policy platforms and electoral strategies” (Cannon 2014: 49).

The MUD was composed of multiple parties across the political spectrum, but was dominated by Primero Justicia (Justice First, PJ), Acción Democrática (AD), Voluntad Popular (Popular Will, VP), and Un Nuevo Tiempo (A New Era, UNT) (Sonneland 2017). The leadership of these parties was comprised of individuals with links to the traditional political establishment (Buxton 2017: 6), while AD was one of the signatory parties of the Punto Fijo Pact. For example, Henrique Capriles, head of PJ, has links to the old political and economic elite of the Fourth Republic and ran his first electoral campaign for COPEI, (Cyr 2013: 377) the other Punto Fijo party. Leopoldo López broke from PJ to form the radical-Right wing VP. López was a “highly visible figure” during the 2002 coup (Wilpert 2011: 31-2), signing the “infamous Carmona Decree, which during the short-lived coup suspended the Constitution

and dissolved the National Assembly and the Supreme Court” (Ibid.). According to sociologist Ociel López (2016), VP has ties to billionaire Lorenzo Mendoza, the CEO of Empresas Polar, Venezuela’s largest food company, and long-time critic of Chavismo (Forbes 2016). Indeed, Ociel López describes VP as a “Mendoza family franchise” (2016). UNT meanwhile was founded by 2006 opposition presidential candidate Manuel Rosales. Another prominent voice of the radical-Right wing opposition was María Corina Machado, who also had links to the traditional elites (Cyr 2013: 377), and who founded the Súmate organisation which aimed to promote the 2004 re-call of Chávez. In 2005, Machado was photographed smiling and shaking hands with president George Bush following her invitation to the White House to discuss the “perspective of civil society about democratic values and the spread of democracy in particular in my country, Venezuela” (Machado cited in Gindlin 2005).

The Venezuelan elites and their political vehicles are a representation of *Mantuanaje*, the name given to “the sectors that occupied the peak of the social pyramid since they arrived by European military invasion” (López 2015: 104). Many opposition parties are linked to the notion of what Ociel López describes as “lineage” (Ibid.), an “inherited nobility limited to the handful of elite Spanish-descended families from which opposition leaders like Machado, López, and Capriles are drawn” (Ciccariello-Maher 2016: 56). During colonialism these families fortified their commercial power by inter-marrying with others who shared the “mantuado lineage” (López 2015: 104). These elites are guided by an attitude of *sifrinaje*- snobbishness – and whose historic control over importations has facilitated a “natural” alliance with sectors of US power, especially with Republicans (Ibid.: 105).

While the parties comprising the MUD followed different strategies, from the outset their common goal was to “re-establish the elite coalition that governed Venezuela during its pre-Chávez history, forcibly destabilising the regime that excluded them from the state’s redistribution of wealth and power” (Boccardo, Caviedes, and Contreras Kallens 2017). In sum, the MUD’s core commitments were a return to market democracy, that is, liberal democracy underpinned by market economics (Buxton 2017: 6; Cannon 2014).

In the lead up to the 2010 legislative elections, a unified candidate system was adopted in an attempt to end tendencies to diffusion amongst MUD members (Cannon 2014: 54). As Roberts (2014: 263) notes, by winning 47.2 percent of the vote compared to 48.3 percent for the PSUV, and despite the PSUV winning a legislative majority of 55.8 percent of the seats, “the combined opposition forces made their strongest electoral showing and achieved their highest level of representation since the dissolution of the 1998 congress”. Consequently, in the face of increasing popular discontent over crime, corruption, and government inefficiency, and with Chávez battling against cancer, the 2012 presidential elections witnessed an increasingly competitive electoral arena (Roberts 2014: 263). The opposition coalition unified behind Henrique Capriles of PJ. However, despite the strengthened political power of the elite opposition, following a massive electoral mobilisation campaign, Chávez captured 55.1 percent of the vote to Capriles’ 44.3 percent.

Less than two weeks after his victory, Chávez delivered his *Golpe de Timón* (Strike at the Helm) speech to the first meeting of his ministers (Bellamy-Foster 2015: 1). Chávez called on his ministers to make rapid changes to the upper echelons of the Bolivarian movement in order to promote the creation of the “communal state” requiring a fundamental transfer of power to the people via the creation of the *comunas* (Ibid. 1,3). What Chávez called for in the speech was the realisation that a transition to socialism could

not be achieved without first creating an alternative popular, participatory, protagonist base (Bellamy-Foster 2015: 3). In sum, Chávez insisted that the future of the Revolution depended on the *comunas*, stating that it was “*comuna o nada*” - either the commune or nothing.

8. Post-Inflection Sequencing Phase 3: 2013-Present:

8.1 *Maduro, radical elite destabilisation and “despotic” centralisation:*

Chávez succumbed to cancer shortly after the *Golpe de Timón* speech, opening a range of new power struggles in the development of a post-neoliberal democracy. Nicolas Maduro, Chávez’s handpicked successor, narrowly defeated Henrique Capriles with 50.6 percent of the vote to 49.1 percent in the April 2013 election. From the moment of his election, “the political and economic pressures imposed on Venezuela have been relentless” (Bellamy-Foster 2015: 12). Nearly victorious in the 2013 election, “the opposition swarmed at the sight of fresh blood” (Ciccariello-Maher 2016: 77). They failed to recognise the election results, despite the fact that the international community, with the notable single exception of the US, did so almost immediately (Hetland 2017: 16). Furthermore, the radical end of the elite opposition coalition used their ideological and political power to call for protests which quickly turned violent, a tactic that would be used extensively over the coming years to destabilise the government.

The opposition turned its attention to the December 2013 municipal elections, framing them as a referendum on Maduro (Hetland 2017: 16). They were confident that they could build on the gains made in the April presidential election. However, the PSUV won 49.24 percent compared to the opposition’s 42.72 (Ibid.). Meanwhile, the PSUV and its

allies won 76 percent of the mayoral elections and 14 of the 24 gubernatorial elections (Ibid.).

However, 2013 witnessed the beginning of an economic slide for Venezuela. By April, month on month inflation had reached 6 percent (Sagarzazu 2014: 322). While the economy struggled, the country began to witness scarcities of basic products. Furthermore, violent crime levels rose alarmingly (Ibid.). Under these conditions where the government's economic power was weak but their political power remained relatively high, and, following their electoral defeat in the December elections, where the political power of elites was weak, the radical opposition parties began to turn away from an electoral strategy toward one of destabilising street protests to remove Maduro from power.

In 2014, sections of the MUD headed by María Corina Machado of *Vente Venezuela* and Leopoldo López of *Voluntad Popular* instigated a campaign via social, private domestic, and international media to instigate "*La Salida*", or "The Exit", calling for massive protests to "ignite the streets with struggle" and make the country ungovernable for Maduro (Bellamy-Foster 2015: 12; Ciccariello-Maher 2016: 52). The protests rapidly turned violent, and 43 people were killed, approximately half being opposition activists, and half being government supporters and security forces (Hetland 2017: 16). Responsibility for the deaths has been heavily debated, though it would appear that while heavy-handed state repression was certainly a factor (Ibid.), the "dominant narrative of government repression" in the mainstream and social media provides only part of the reality (Ciccariello-Maher 2016: 53). Meanwhile, the jailing of leading opposition politicians Antonio Ledezma and Leopoldo López on charges of fomenting a coup against the government, sparked "an international outcry and condemnations from organisations accusing Maduro of political repression"

(Hetland 2017: 18). While Maduro managed to survive the protests, his international image was badly damaged via the elite manufactured media campaign.

Oil prices fell by 50 percent from June to December 2014 (Smilde 2015: 49). With oil revenues accounting for “approximately 95 percent of export earnings, 60 percent of budget revenues, and 12 percent of GDP” (Buxton 2016: 7), the economic power of the government was hobbled. The pressure on the government was “further intensified with widespread hoarding of imported goods - a form of economic corruption introduced by vested interests of the rentier-importer economy, directed at thwarting price controls introduced to regulate the growing inflation” (Bellamy-Foster 2015: 12). In addition, foods sold at government regulated prices were also hoarded and transported across the Colombian border where they were sold for extensive profits (Ibid.). Disturbingly, it was not simply the traditional elites who engaged in such practices, with widespread accusations that government and military elites charged with managing the supply of US dollars for purchasing price controlled goods, as well as the supply of food and medicines, were heavily involved in corruption (Gonzalez 2017). Meanwhile, the US, seeing Maduro’s vulnerability, introduced a range of sanctions thereby discouraging Western banks and investors from doing business in Venezuela at a time when the country was in desperate need of dollars (Hetland 2016a).

In the December 2015 legislative elections, the PSUV was “trounced in the urban barrios” (Hellinger and Spanakos 2017: 2) whose residents were “sending a powerful signal—either by abstaining or voting for the opposition—of their displeasure with the government” (Velasco 2016). The PSUV were punished for the endless lines found around the country as people queued for scarce goods, for inflation levels that had reached 100

percent, and for rising poverty levels (Hetland 2017: 17). The opposition gained a two-thirds supermajority in the National Assembly giving them substantial legislative power, the first time the opposition achieved such a position since Hugo Chávez arrived to power in 1999 (Cannon and Brown 2017: 614). However, the Venezuelan Supreme Court (TSJ) reduced the opposition's number of elected deputies by three due to irregularities in their elections. As Cannon and Brown (2017: 616) note, "this prompted the National Assembly to unilaterally reincorporate the suspended deputies in July leading the TSJ to 'declare congress illegitimate', effectively neutering that body and any legislation it may pass". 2016 witnessed a deepening of the economic and social crisis. Oil prices dipped to \$34/barrel, GDP declined by 25 percent between 2013 and 2016, inflation was estimated at 720 percent, with food inflation reaching 1,400 percent (Santos 2017: 58-61). In this scenario, and with capital flight and debt repayments further reducing available dollars, food imports fell 40 percent in the first half of 2016 alone (Hetland 2016a). With little domestic production, scarcities of vital goods, medicines, and food soared. While falling oil prices and elite tactics certainly worsened the crisis, the single greatest cause was government mismanagement of its currency (see Weisbrot 2016 for detailed overview). In 2017, the economic scenario worsened as inflation rose, while the black market exchange rate for dollars in August 2017 stood at 16,280bolivares/US\$1, up from a rate of 18bs/US\$1 in 2013 (based on author's own observations).

The economic and social crisis has been accompanied by a political crisis and deepening control of state bodies by the executive. In February 2016, the MUD announced three parallel strategies to remove Maduro from power including "wide national popular mobilisation" demanding the President's resignation; the passing of a Constitutional

Amendment “voted for and defended by the people” (although by which means is not specified) to shorten the presidential mandate and hold elections in 2016; and the initiation of a Recall Referendum (Cannon and Brown 2017: 625). However, the government controlled national electoral council, the CNE, claimed there were irregularities in the signature collection process, and suspended the recall process⁴⁰. The CNE also postponed regional and municipal elections due to take place in December 2016, violating Chávez’s proclamation that Venezuela’s process of building socialism differed from the Soviet Union due to its adherence to electoral democracy (Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017). In March 2017 the government controlled “Supreme Court stripped the National Assembly, the only opposition-led government body, of its authority to legislate, temporarily taking that power for itself” (Hellinger 2017). While Maduro back-tracked on this position and the Supreme Court rescinded the decision a few days later, and while the National Assembly had clearly taken unconstitutional measures, such as to “snap their fingers and grant amnesty to all so-called political prisoners, some of whom had engaged in very violent actions” (Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017), the initial move was heavily critiqued, even by Chavista sympathisers such as attorney general Louisa Ortega Díaz who decried it as a “rupture with the constitutional order” (Hellinger 2017). Furthermore, in April 2017 the government prohibited opposition leader Henrique Capriles from participating in elections for fifteen years on “dubious” accusations of corruption (Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017).

By “closing off constitutional avenues for opposition, the government has played into the hands of the more radical sectors of the MUD and reduced the influence of those who had hoped to use the recall and the electoral process to end the Bolivarian era” (Hellinger 2017a). The result was a wave of almost constant street protests for three

⁴⁰ See Cannon and Brown (2017) for detailed discussion.

months. While it would be erroneous to suggest that all of these protests incited violence, in many of the mobilisations there have been attacks on public buildings (Hellinger 2017a), lynching and burning alive by right-wing activists of brown and black men “just for looking like Chavistas” (Atenea Jiménez of the National Network of Comuneros, interview with author), and the use of *guarimbas* –violent protests that involved the barricading of streets with burning tyres and the hanging of galvanised wire across intersections to decapitate motorcyclists (Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017).

International media coverage, especially in the US, ignored much of this violence (Hellinger 2017a) instead highlighting incidences of violence carried out by state forces and government supporters. The so-called *colectivos* of armed government supporters have been blamed for inciting violence, and while there is no doubt that some *colectivos* have killed protesters, “reporters unfailingly use the term *colectivos* indiscriminately, suggesting that all are violent” with coverage eliding “the fact that most *colectivos* are mainly dedicated to government-supported projects in poor communities” (Hellinger 2017). While *colectivos* certainly were/are partisan, “working to support the Chavista cause in elections, most are not involved in paramilitary organisations” (Ibid.). Over one-hundred people died in the street protests, yet as Wilpert (2017) notes, a “follower of CNN or the New York Times would not know that” of the deaths, “27 were the direct or indirect result of the protesters themselves”, “fourteen were the result of lootings”, a further fourteen “are attributable to the actions of state authorities”, while forty-four “are still under investigation or in dispute” (Ibid.).

8.2 National Constituent Assembly:

In the midst of protests Maduro “doubled down on the loyalty of the security forces and the risk of alienating even his Chavista supporters by calling for a constituent assembly to rewrite the 1999 constitution” (Hellinger 2017a). Without holding a consultative referendum in advance – unlike in 1999 when Chávez relied on popular support to convene a constituent assembly - on June 30th a vote was held to elect the 545 member assembly (Smilde and Ramsey 2017; Hellinger 2017a). The electoral process faced accusations of bias to guarantee that, in spite of the majority of the population not supporting either the constituent process or the Maduro government, “Madurismo wins a majority” (Lander 2017). The election of the 545 delegates was split between 181 “sectoral” and 364 “territorial” representatives, with sectoral members chosen by members of communal councils, labour, peasant organisations, students, pensioners and other groups who must first be selected by the government controlled CNE (Hellinger 2017a). Given “the fact that many of these...come from government-affiliated organisations that make up the PSUV base gives Chavismo a clear advantage” (Smilde and Ramsey 2017). Furthermore, the division of territorial representatives also favoured the government with outsized weight given to government supporting, low-population, rural municipalities, while opposition dominated densely-populated urban areas were under-represented (Ibid.). The opposition decried the move as an attempt to avoid facing presidential elections in 2018, and declined to participate (Smilde and Ramsey 2017).

Maduro claimed that the forming of the ANC was necessary to overcome the political impasse and violence in the country and to advance the country’s revolution, but many observers questioned the timing of the process, suggesting that it was “the initiative

of an unpopular leader avoiding fair elections at all cost”, paralleling previous moves to suspend the recall referendum and postpone regional elections (Smilde and Ramsey 2017). Lander (2017) concurs, stating that the government recognised that it could not win in universal, direct, secret elections and so designed a new system to maintain control. Once convened, the ANC quickly moved to remove attorney general Ortega Díaz from office due to “serious failures in the exercise of her role” (as cited in Aporrea 2017), and replaced her with Tarek William Saab, a close ally of Maduro. Ortega Díaz stated that her removal was due to her investigations into corruption and abuses of human-rights cases against high-ranking government officials and members of the ANC (Aporrea 2017). The series of events since the opposition won the December 2015 legislative elections has been described, even by progressive analysts, as “creeping authoritarianism” (Hetland in Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017).

International condemnation of the process has been severe. With the Right-ward shift in several key South American nations including Brazil and Argentina, the Venezuelan opposition’s analysis of the political and economic context was supported by Mercosur who suspended Venezuela, while Luis Almagro of the Organisation of American States (OAS) called for the organisation’s democratic charter to be invoked against Venezuela (Cannon and Brown 2017: 617; Hellinger 2017). Florida Senator Marco Rubio openly threatened the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Haiti with punishment if they failed to cooperate with Washington’s plans to “delegitimise the government of Venezuela” (Weisbrot 2017). Mike Pompeo, director of the CIA, admitted to coordinating with the Mexican and Colombian governments to overthrow the Maduro government (cited in Aporrea 2017a). The Trump administration and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson openly called for regime change, which

emboldened the radical sectors of the opposition who did not seek a negotiated or peaceful solution to the political impasse (Weisbrot 2017a), and whose aim was “not only to get rid of Maduro, but to destroy Chavismo itself” (Gonzalez 2017). Furthermore, US sanctions against Venezuela, and the threat of further sanctions, led to investors withdrawing money, and the black market dollar exchange rate falling 45 percent in just four days (in the first weeks of August 2017) (Ibid.). As Weisbrot (2017a) emphasises, there was a real attempt on the part of the US to further destroy an economy which was already a wreck so as to force the government from power.

8.3 Increasing Militarisation:

This scenario fueled an entrenched attitude on behalf of the government (Velasco 2017a) with an increasing militarisation of the upper echelons of Chavismo. Maduro, whose control over the military was always more tenuous than that of Chavez’s, strove to cultivate a “loyal core among security officials” (Smilde 2016a). Of the 32 ministers of Maduro’s cabinet in 2017, 12 were from the armed forces (Reyes 2017). Between 2013 and 2017, fourteen new military-run companies in key areas of the economy such as construction, transport, finance, oil, agriculture, manufacturing, and communications were established (Armas 2017). In Defense Minister General Vladimir Padrino López took over as head of the “Grand Supply Mission”, thereby taking control of Venezuela’s entire food supply system. Since then, the Armed Forces (FANB) were charged with “regulating food and medicine distribution and overseeing all major ports across the country” (Ramsey 2017). Both Ramsey (2017) and Smilde (2016a) raised concerns that by allowing the military to oversee food production, Maduro “made the armed forces a direct stakeholder in the permanence of the regime” whereby military officials had such capacity for economic gain that they would side

with the government instead of the people if there was social upheaval (Ramsey 2017). Furthermore, Smilde (2016a) highlighted how Maduro appointed military personnel facing charges in the US, thereby raising the exit costs of the government losing power and ensuring the loyalty of high-ranking officers. Major General Manuel Quevedo, who had initially been named on US senator Marco Rubio's 2014 list of Venezuelan officials who should be sanctioned but who did not appear on the final Treasury Department list, was appointed by Maduro to head the state oil company PDVSA (Ulmer and Buitrago 2017). While Maduro stated Quevedo's appointment was to root out corruption, sources within the company suggest this was a front to allow Maduro to sideline rivals and deepen control of the industry by appointing a military-ally (Ibid.).

Opposition leaders Julio Borges and Leopoldo López openly called for the military to revolt (Weisbrot 2017a), and while the political and economic power granted to the FANB by Maduro helped maintain their loyalty, there were signs of unrest. General Baduel, a former close associate of Chávez was arrested in 2017 for supposedly plotting against the government, while in August 2017 a group of military personnel attacked the Paramacay military base.

Meanwhile, it became increasingly clear that the military elites "were openly involved in corruption, especially in trafficking medicine, food, and foreign currency, which directly affects popular sectors" (Velasco 2017a). While currency manipulation was first undertaken as an emergency response to the oil industry strike of 2002, by 2017 it had become a byzantine three-tiered currency control system with enormous gulfs between official and black market rates. This created serious incentives for corruption whereby state/military officials with access to dollars at the lower official rate can then resell them at

black market rates, making enormous profits (Cannon and Brown 2017: 619). The outcome was a shortage of dollars for food imports, lengthy queues for the little food that was available, and a greatly inflated black market for those same goods (Ibid.).

8.4 Rising popular discontent:

2017 witnessed an increase in popular protest, not against the government per se, but against poverty and corruption (Velasco 2017). In the barrios “the government is not only weakened, but discredited, even among the most committed Chavistas, for whom the government reacts with timidity and incoherence against what they perceive as a violent opposition” (Velasco 2017a). As Velasco (2017) notes, popular sectors felt abandoned by the government. Figures suggest that by mid-2017, 13 percent supported Maduro, 37 percent supported the moderate opposition, 25 percent the radical opposition, and crucially, disaffected Chavistas represented 25 percent of the population (CEP-UCAB 2017).

A growing “Chavismo-no-Madurista” movement emerged made up of “critical Chavistas” such as the Marea Socialista group who claimed to represent a critical-Left voice distinct from the PSUV and the MUD (Marea Socialista 2017). Marea Socialista denounced lack of universal citizen participation in the formation of the ANC, which Art. 71 of the 1999 Constitution had guaranteed (Aporrea 2017b). Indeed, the group stated that the ANC was formed via co-optive state practices which fundamentally rupture with the goals of Chavismo (Ibid.).

In August, deputies Eustoquio Contreras, Germán Ferrer and Ivone Tellez separated from the PSUV to form an alternative Left bloc in the National Assembly (PuntoDecorte 2017). UPP 89, a new political party comprised of Leftist-groups emerged in opposition to the PSUV, claiming to represent and adhere to the ideals set out in Chávez’s “Golpe de

Timón” speech (PuntoDecorte 2017a). Furthermore, the Communist Party and the Patria Para Todos party sought to construct a space for a leftist critique within Chavismo (Eduardo Samán cited in Aporrea tví 2017). In sum, the political power of the government was challenged, not only by elites and opposition parties, but also from some popular sectors and Leftist groups.

8.5 Maduro’s staying power and the MUD in disarray:

In October 2017 gubernatorial elections, despite popular discontent, elite pressure, and transnational efforts to destabilise Maduro, the PSUV trounced the MUD, winning 18 of the 23 states. Making use of its ideological power, the MUD rapidly contested the shock results through its social and international media connections, claiming fraud and that it had been robbed (Boothroyd-Rojas 2017b). However, while the government certainly engaged in efforts to hinder the MUD, such as via the CNE’s refusal to substitute candidates after the opposition’s primaries as well as its decision to move the electoral centres of 700,000 voters 72 hours before the election (Smilde 2017), it was declines in voter turnout in opposition strongholds from the 2015 electoral victory that was “by far the biggest driver of change in vote share” (Kronick and Rodríguez 2017). The shock results and lack of opposition turnout may be partially explained by the divisions in MUD strategy, with Corina Machado calling for abstention of the elections, while other parties of the coalition advocated it would be better to confront the government (Ibid.). However, the principal cause for low opposition-voter turnout appears to have been the lack of policy proposals that respond to actual voter concerns, with efforts simply aimed at regime change (Ibid.).

Following the MUDs incapacity to offer a coherent program other than “the negative appeal of a generic anti-government position” (Buxton 2017: 6), the October election results

“practically destroyed” the opposition bloc, with the rifts that had always existed in the bloc coming to the fore in the aftermath of the defeat (Straka 2017). With “the opposition more divided than ever, the government...wasted no time in capitalizing on the moment to announce plans for municipal elections” (Ramsey 2017a) in December. In disarray, the MUD called for an electoral boycott, which the main constituent parties adhered to, but other parties did not (Smilde 2017a). The PSUV and allies won 308 of the 335 municipalities (teleSur 2017), which are important given their capacity to raise their own funds through taxation, manage their own police forces, and police protest which is likely to see pro-government mayors more hostile to opposition street mobilisations (Smilde 2017a). The divided political power of the opposition meant that they were unable to mobilise their base in October elections, and they were unable to pull off a boycott in December indicating a “worst-case scenario” for the opposition (Ibid.) whereby they ceded entirely the municipalities to the government, thereby significantly boosting the political, economic, and military power of the government at the local level.

8.6 International response to the “wrong” election results:

In response to the October elections, the US added ten more Venezuelan officials to its sanctions list, stating that the elections “were marked by numerous irregularities that strongly suggest fraud helped the ruling party unexpectedly win a majority of governorships” (US Department of Treasury 2017). Furthermore, the sanctions were placed on individuals supposedly involved in “undermining electoral processes, media censorship, or corruption in government-administered food programs in Venezuela” (Ibid.). These sanctions were a response both to election results which boosted the political power of the government, as well to Maduro’s efforts to boost his economic power via a proposed

meeting with creditors to discuss a restructuring of Venezuelan debt; the Trump administration warned that “US bondholders that attended this meeting could put them in violation of US economic sanctions against Venezuela” (Weisbrot 2017b) which could lead to penalties of 30 years in prison and up to \$10 million dollars in fines for businesses (Ibid.).

Supporting US efforts at regime change, Argentina’s neoliberal president Mauricio Macri stated that the Trump administration “should dramatically tighten its sanctions on Venezuela by imposing a full embargo on its oil exports to the US” (Financial Times 2017). Indeed US secretary of state Rex Tillerson engaged in a Latin America trip in early 2018 visiting conservatively-led Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Jamaica seeking to drum up support for an escalation of sanctions to include restrictions on the oil industry (Cohen 2018). Tillerson went so far as to suggest that Maduro could be toppled by his own military, while stating that “we are looking at options and we are looking at how to mitigate the impacts on US business interests” (as quoted in Cohen 2018). Considering that over 95 percent of Venezuela’s export revenue comes from oil sales, “cutting off the government’s access to dollars will leave the economy without the hard currency needed to pay for imports of food and medicine” (Rodríguez 2018). The Trump strategy appeared “to be to prevent an economic recovery and to worsen the shortages (which include essential medicines and food) so that Venezuelans will get back in the streets and overthrow the government” (Weisbrot 2017b). As Weisbrot (2017b) summarises, “this is what regime change efforts are all about: delegitimation — if the election results don’t concur, they must be declared fraudulent — and economic strangulation”.

8.7 Leverage and Linkage: The role of Russia and China:

The international environment became less favourable for the government from 2014 on. Despite maintaining support from Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cuba and El Salvador, the economic and political weight of these countries in comparison to regional powers Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, not to mention the US, all of whom had conservative-Rightist governments, meant the Venezuelan government was virtually isolated in the Americas.

Meanwhile, declining oil prices, apart from contributing to the economic crisis, further weakened the government's capacity to adequately invest in the productive capacity of PDVSA, the state oil company (Hellinger 2017). In 2001, more than 3 million barrels/day were pumped, but by October 2017, crude production had fallen to 1.95 million (Nussbaum and Kassai 2017). As PDVSA sold less oil, it fell behind on debt repayments, increasing the possibility of a Venezuelan default (Semple and Krauss 2017). Consequently, Venezuela was "more dependent than ever on foreign investment" (Hellinger 2017). Goldman-Sachs bought \$2.8 billion of PDVSA bonds at deeply discounted prices, while the government offered bonds worth \$5 billion for just \$1 billion through a Chinese brokerage (Ibid.) in what came to be known as "hunger bonds" (Hellinger 2017a).

It is estimated that Russia and China loaned more than \$60 billion to boost oil production, prepaying for more than a billion barrels (Nussbaum and Kassai 2017). Furthermore, Russia announced plans to restructure roughly \$3 billion in Kremlin loans to ease the pressure on Maduro in November 2017 (Krauss 2017). However, Russia's economic support was not unlimited, and "while the Russian government has been willing to accept higher risks in backing Maduro, they do not appear to have the resources to provide an indefinite lifeline" (Ramsey 2017b). China on the other hand had greater economic capacity

to maintain support, “but appears to have more interest in looking beyond the Maduro government than its Russian counterparts” (Ibid.). China lent far more to Venezuela than Russia and as such had more to lose from a potential default. While China allowed Venezuela to fall behind on payments so as to avoid default, it stopped issuing new loans in 2016 and in 2017 “PetroChina announced that its US affiliate would respect the US debt sanctions announced by the White House in August” (Ibid.).

8.8 Power relations in early 2018:

The political power of the government was boosted by election results in the latter part of 2017, while the placing of military and ex-military members to positions of strategic importance in the running of the economy has ensured that the military retained support for the government. There were some signs of strain within the military however, with the emergence of the “4F group” who protested that Maduro had relinquished the revolutionary project of Chavismo (Boccardo et al. 2017). Despite such critiques, to date Maduro has managed to maintain the support of most high-ranking military figures. However, despite increasing its control over the oil company, the economic power of the government fell sharply following the collapse in oil prices. Combined with staggering external debt and transnational efforts to encircle and topple the government, Maduro entered 2018 facing serious challenges.

The political power of domestic elites meanwhile was greatly debilitated with the ANC sidelining of the opposition-controlled AN. Furthermore, divisions in the MUD’s leadership regarding strategies to overthrow the government, alongside an incoherent policy agenda, greatly debilitated both the political and ideological power of the opposition who were discredited in the eyes of many Venezuelans.

While a critical, dissident, Leftist-wing of Chavismo, centred around Marea Socialista, and comprised of former secretaries of Chávez and Maduro, academics, and social and political leaders, was beginning to emerge in 2017 and 2018, “this wing lacks development and does not have enough power to significantly influence the political scenario. Thus, the main actor in the resolution of the crisis of Chavismo remains the military, whose general support for Maduro greatly explains why he remains in power” (Boccardo et al. 2017).

9. Summary, issues, and questions going forward:

The election of Hugo Chávez in 1999 at the head of a vanguardist-progressive movement that sought to construct a post-neoliberal democracy set in motion a complex, and at times paradoxical, process, the outcomes of which have been profoundly influenced by the relative power of the government, economic elites, popular sectors, and the international sphere. The political and economic exclusion of popular sectors under market democracy sparked a wave of protests through the 1980s and 1990s. With both Right- and (supposed) Left parties converging on neoliberalism, the protests opened the door for the election of outsider-candidate Hugo Chávez who headed a state-led process of democratisation that sought to both deepen and extend democracy (Silva 2017: 108). While in Ecuador and Bolivia, the leading edges of anti-neoliberal mobilisation were well organised, in Venezuela they were not; as such, “Chávez focused on organizing the unorganised or weakly organised into self-help associations” (Ibid.).

In terms of extending democracy, the process had, at least initially, very positive outcomes on the quality of social citizenship. By taking control of the country’s oil reserves, and with booming prices, social spending approached 70 per cent of the national budget (Lander in Lang and Lander 2018). Public spending on health, education, food, housing and

security effectively transformed the living conditions of the majority of the population (ibid.). Illiteracy was drastically reduced, while medical access and public education was extended to all the population (Boron in Chavez, Ouviaña and Thwaites Rey 2017: 34). There was a drastic reduction in poverty, nutritional improvements for popular sectors, declining infant mortality rates, and a closing of the inequality gap (Lander in Chavez et al. 2017: 36).

However, despite the impressive gains in extending democracy, there was little effort to fundamentally alter the productive model of the country (Lander 2017a), while government plans to overcome the recent economic crisis called for a deepening of the extractive model (oil and mining⁴¹) (Svampa in Chavez et al. 2017). Meanwhile, attempts to build a communal economy were in reality minor (Lander 2017a), with 70 percent of the economy remaining privately owned (Ellner 2016). By continuing the tradition of financing social protection with volatile oil export revenue, efforts at extending democracy were thus unstable (Buxton 2017), while the structural power of domestic and transnational elites to moderate policy making was not broken (Ramírez 2017). Successive governments failed to create a reserve for when oil prices fell, and when the inevitable happened and oil prices collapsed, the economy entered a profound recession (Lander 2016). Soaring inflation, of food and medicine prices in particular, have eaten away at many of the social citizenship gains from earlier stages of Chavismo, with malnutrition rising and more half of all homes living in extreme poverty in 2016 (Boccardo et al. 2017).

While the Bolivarian process did not entirely transform the structure of the economy, Chávez' efforts to extend democracy and rollback neoliberal policies did foster an aggressive, antidemocratic response from elites and international actors who had "the

⁴¹ In 2016 Maduro decreed that 12 percent of the entire national territory centred around the Arco Minero de Orinoco would be opened to mining companies, including transnationals (Lander 2017b).

organisational strength and the perception that the stakes were serious enough to use collective action to defy and even to try to topple Chávez” (de la Torre 2013: 28). Elite destabilisation efforts in response to efforts to extend democracy fostered a centralisation of power in the executive, raising the question of whether “revolutionary change, insofar as it directly challenges the interests of entrenched elites, [is] compatible with liberal democracy?” (Velasco 2016a).

While elite destabilisation efforts fostered a centralisation of power, they also highlighted Chávez’ reliance on the popular sectors to act as bulwark against such forces. There was an active effort from the government to foster the development of an organised popular society capable of driving the democratisation process from below. As such, while power was centralised in order to overcome elite blockages, this power was used progressively, both to extend democracy via the redistribution of booming oil rents, as well as to deepen democracy by boosting popular power and its access to decision-making channels.

There is however an inherent risk in such a strategy of boosting democracy; by tying spaces of inclusion to the state and redistribution, opportunities for clientelism emerge raising concerns over autonomy of, and scope for, popular control and critique of the process. Following elite destabilisation and the defence of the process by the popular sectors, and with oil prices booming, popular sectors began demanding something more concrete from their efforts to defend the government (Velasco 2017). Up until this moment, there had been a “tremendously popular movement based on popular participation and protagonism in the state” (Velasco 2017), but with the emergence of the *misiones* in response to popular demands for economic inclusion, according to Velasco (2017), at this

moment something was lost. When the oil boom hit, concentration of power in the executive at the expense of organised popular sectors increased (Velasco 2016). There were “contradictions between the discourse and the logic regarding organisation of the base, popular mobilisation, and participative democracy on the one hand, and a verticalist and statist logic on the other” (Lander in Chavez et al. 2017: 42). As López Maya and Lander (2011: 74) state, “it is obvious that the relation between the two subjects of social transformation, that is, the state and the organised citizenry, is unequal. The Venezuelan state can count on financial, institutional, and organisational resources that give it political and economic advantages with respect to the popular sectors. And the initiatives and pressures of the state endanger the autonomy of civic and community organisations”. As Hellinger (2012: 157-8) notes, the direct provision of resources from central government to organised society, for example via the communal councils, creates new avenues for clientelism and vote buying.

A crucial question thus emerges from the current moment regarding the future pathways of the process. Given the antecedent conditions of weak societal power, first Chávez and later Maduro operated as a central hub that filled the gaps between disconnected, disenfranchised “micropublics” (Spanakos 2011: 19). The democratic legacy rests on whether or not this vanguardist, top-down building of popular power has succeeded in fostering a popular sector capable not only of guarding the process against elite destabilisation efforts, but also of ensuring that centralisation of power in the executive is used progressively rather than despotically. Given the disorganised nature of the popular sector in the antecedent era, such a scenario would suggest that the vanguard-stage of Chavismo was a necessary stepping-stone toward preparing the base to lead an organic bottom-up democratisation process. Conversely, we must ask if the vanguard state-society

relations have instead fostered a co-opted popular sector incapable of defending their rights and of holding the government to account, suggesting a weak legacy of the process. To respond to such concerns, in the next chapter I examine the Bolivarian process via a local lens in two popular Caracas *barrios*, Petare and El 23 de Enero.

Chapter 7: View from the barrios: Democratisation in Petare and El 23 de Enero

1. Introduction:

This chapter examines Venezuela's efforts to forge a post-neoliberal democracy from the perspective of urban dwellers in two of Caracas's most emblematic popular *barrios*, Petare and El 23 de Enero. While the *parroquia* of Petare is comprised of a middle-class and historic zone, this research centred on the third sector, comprised of the popular *ranchos* (rickety homes built by the residents themselves) which make up the largest *barrio* in Latin America. In particular, research focused on popular organisations that emerged since the election of Chávez in 1998 in and around the Jose Félix Rivas zone of the *barrio*. The second site of analysis, the *parroquia* of El 23 de Enero has been at the centre of the Chavista process since its beginnings. As Velasco (2017c) summarises, it was in El 23 where the army entered in 1989 to repress the *Caracazo*, and where in 1992 Chávez launched his failed coup against President Carlos Andrés Pérez (1974-79 and 1989-93). It was here too that the first *misiones* were established. Chávez used to cast his ballot in the neighbourhood, and the *parroquia* consistently had one of the three highest levels of support for Chavismo in Caracas. Chávez' tomb is also located in the heart of the neighbourhood. In comparison to Petare, El 23 de Enero has a deeper history of popular protest and left-wing guerrilla urban warfare. As such, the two sites offer a rich array of voices who faced exclusion under market democracy, who have been both the drivers and recipients of change, and who are thus in a position to offer a nuanced critique of the Bolivarian process. While research centres on

these two locations, it is supplemented with discussions of urban popular organisations which are located both inside and outside Petare and El 23 de Enero.

Research focuses on *consejo comunal* and *comuna* members, as well as popular social movement leaders, detailing how top-down efforts to build associational and collective power for the base have proceeded, while identifying successes and challenges in the process. While the chapter traces the evolution of efforts to boost political inclusion since the beginning of the Bolivarian process, given the current crisis facing Venezuela, analysis focuses predominantly on the actually existing state-society relations so as to highlight the legacies of the process as well as its possible future pathways. The chapter seeks to examine if and how earlier experiences or lack of experience in organising influenced the democratisation process, and whether centralisation of power in the executive in response to elite and international destabilisation efforts has been counter-balanced by popular power from below. As such, the chapter examines the extent to which centralisation has been “progressive” – that is, that it has overcome elite opposition while simultaneously opening space for popular sector control of the decision-making process – as well as the scope of “despotic” centralisation whereby popular sector voices have been side-lined and/or co-opted. Furthermore, analysis seeks to identify if, despite the top-down nature of building popular power, the Bolivarian process has fostered a more organised and politically literate popular sector capable of defending and advancing the democratisation process in the face of both elite destabilisation as well as rising levels of “despotic” centralisation. On the other hand, analysis examines whether vanguardist state-society relations have fostered a co-opted and clientelistic relationship between the base and the executive, thereby stymying popular society’s capacity to defend their rights, influence the pathways and speed of the

democratisation process, or critique the reform process. The chapter concludes with an overview of the lessons from Venezuela regarding state-society relations in processes of radical and substantive democratisation.

2. Building bottom-up participation from above: successes and issues:

2.1 *Chávez and popular participation:*

The efforts from above to guide and construct a popular power from below were crucial given the general lack of associational and collective popular power before the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998. Even in El 23 de Enero where there was a long history of left-wing mobilisation, the links to other *barrios* within Caracas, let alone with popular actors outside of Caracas, were weak. Indeed, not only was the collective and associational power of the popular base weak, there was a general lack of popular engagement with the political system. As Erika Escalona, a UBCh⁴² member in Petare, emphasises, “before Chávez, when I was younger and saw someone talking about the constitution we turned off the television because we felt that politics did not matter for us, it was only for ‘them’” (interview with author). However, as Escalona continues, “When Chávez came he asked us ‘Do you know what this constitution says? Do you agree with what this says?’ He encouraged us to ask questions”. For Betty Lugo, *comuna* member and resident of the Zone 10 in Petare, “Chávez awoke us, he ingrained strength in us so that even in bad times we would not lose our direction, that we would continue to struggle...This is the legacy of Chávez...the awakening of our consciousness. To see a leader who actually lived by his ideals awoke the consciousness of the *pueblo*” (interview with author). This conscientisation of the popular

⁴² The UBCh, or Unidades de Batalla Bolívar-Chávez (Battle units of Bolívar and Chávez) are grassroots activists linked to the PSUV, and whose task is to study and spread Chavista doctrine, defend the revolution’s gains, to organise sectors before elections, and to act as a conduit between the base and the party.

sectors, the sentiment of being turned on to politics and the belief that the state and the political system could in fact be used to improve the livelihoods of the poor is a view that I heard throughout my fieldwork in the popular *barrios* of Caracas.

Whilst popular actors had discussed building socialism before Chávez' election, Atenea Jiménez states that such discussions "were mainly theoretical...they were not attached to anything concrete, anything real. It was an airy debate of what we could do. We used to read, to debate. We didn't have a solid foundation. Chávez' biggest contribution, regarding true democracy, was the revitalisation, the redefinition, the deepening of the concepts, the radicalisation of our thinking" (interview with author). Chávez helped the popular base to "see clearly how to create what we had read in books. He helped us discover how to put socialism into practice and make it part of our daily routine, of giving it flesh and bones" (A. Jiménez, interview with author). Indeed, before Chávez, "the state persecuted and tortured the poor...We couldn't say anything against the government, that the president was a thief for example. We have family and neighbours who ended up disappeared because of their ideas" (B. Lugo, interview with author). However, "now we can talk freely, even to the media. Although the traditional private media have never interviewed us about our past (relating to the torture and disappearing of people)" (B. Lugo, interview with author). Dayelin Quevedo, spokesperson for the Comuna *Simón Bolívar* concurs, stating that "I used to live in fear because I was living in a family that supports the Left. It has a very hard time. When we talk of the past of the Caracazo, my daughter reminds me 'Well Mom, thank God we live in the Chávez era and those things don't happen anymore'. It is good to remember the past so that we can understand what we are living in the present, and what we want from the future" (interview with author). Luis Isturiz, PSUV delegate and member of the

Símon Bolívar *comuna* in El 23, highlights that before Chávez, “in the IV Republic, you couldn’t meet up to discuss Left-wing politics, they took you prisoner, they disappeared you, they murdered you. With the new Bolivarian Constitution we have assemblies of 300, 400 people talking and proposing how to improve the community, or how to strengthen the revolution. Chávez changed everything, he brought the sky to the earth” (interview with author). Atenea Jiménez summarises the crucial role Chávez played in helping to organise the popular base, stating that

Before Chávez, through the history of Venezuela, there have been ebbs and flows of popular movements; there's a background of guerillas, of strong social movement. In the 80s and 90s these organisations focussed on solving the problems afflicting Venezuelans, such as water supply to the *barrios* of the big cities. It was an issue that mobilised people and brought them together. Like with the explosion, the *Caracazo* in 1989. But, what is the difference after the arrival of Chavez? The capacity of people to organise themselves, to improve our organisational processes. Before we had explosions but then we would lose the capacity to organise the people as a whole in order to achieve a change. Until the arrival of President Chavez. He gave us strength; he activated the process of organised participation and actually unleashed new elements of social participation.

As Erika Escalona notes, “there was a before and an after Chávez. In terms of formation, Chávez left us the power to be able to defend ourselves” (interview with author). As such, while “there was a centralisation and a cult around the figure of Chávez, he sought to use the state apparatus to repeatedly stimulate popular organising from below” (G. Hetland, interview with author). While there are inherent risks in such a process of building a

connected and conscientious popular base, it is questionable “whether there was an alternative” and indeed without “a strong leader” it is unclear how the process would have survived the early stages of its development and the elite aggression from 2001 onwards (G. interview with author).

2.2 Grassroots independence from the state:

Even though Chávez sought to boost popular sector organising – especially after the elite destabilisation efforts during the 2001-04 period⁴³ - analyses which suggest that this top-down building of popular power completely blocked the scope for autonomous participation vis-à-vis the state is incorrect. One example is the National Network of Comuneros and Comunerías (NNCC) which was established in 2009 with the aim of promoting and linking communal councils (CCs) and *comunas* in both urban and rural environments. While the CCs and *comunas* were promoted by Chávez and the central state as a means of building popular power, the NNCC sought to use the state-sponsored framework to link diverse popular organisations “without the mediation of the state” (A. Jiménez, interview with author). Spokesperson for the NNCC Atenea Jiménez states that the decision to maintain autonomy from the state was key because “we considered that the Minister for the Communes would change all the time. Given that the *comuna* is fundamental to our form of socialism, we could not depend on bureaucratic fluctuations, we had to maintain independence”. The Red Nacional grew to encompass diverse social, cultural and artistic groups, farmer, fisherman, and worker movements, as well as CCs and *comunas*. By 2017, the Red Nacional “had a presence in 20 states, linking about 500 *comunas* and 100 social movements” (Ibid.). Jiménez continues, stating that other groups like the Corriente Bolívar

⁴³ See section 6.2 of Chapter 6 for discussion.

and Zamora (CRBZ) also have ideas for promoting socialism that are autonomous from the state. The CRBZ is comprised of the peasant organisation, the Ezequiel Zamora National Campesino Front (FNCEZ) and the Simón Bolívar National Communal Front (FNCSB) which links together communal councils and *comunas*. The CRBZ represents one of the largest radical currents within Chavismo with a presence in 14 out of 23 states. As Azzellini (2016: 71) states, the establishment of the CRBZ was the result of “an autonomous focus of the FNCEZ that postulates the building of a revolutionary current with organisational autonomy within the Bolivarian movement”. The CRBZ is a member of the PSUV but has “always had a critical position, a position of disagreement regarding certain practices we have questioned, a position that involves questioning corruption, bureaucratism and reformism” (Rangel 2018). Organisations such as the CRBZ and the NNCC and their constituent *comunas* do receive some state funding for their projects, “but this has not prevented us from being critical of, or supporting different projects to the government” (A. Jiménez interview with author). As such, although they collaborate with the government, “the focus...is the autonomous creation of a project for a socialist society” (Azzellini 2016: 72).

2.3 Lack of grassroots autonomy, elite and international pressure, and side-lining internal critique:

At the same time that there are examples of popular sectors whose associational and collective power has been boosted via state-led schemes and who have maintained autonomy from the state, the Chavismo model for deepening democracy has also fostered tensions between the state and the base. The central issue relates to the nexus between the state and society, namely the principle Chavista party, the PSUV. While the party was forged by Chávez to help organise the popular sectors and to construct a cohesive political

organisation, rifts have emerged between the CCs and *comunas* on the one hand and the PSUV on the other. A central figure in the Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra in Petare's José Filax Ribas *barrio* states that while the base and the *comunas* work every day of the year to develop the local community, the party "only becomes active in neighbourhood 6 months or 3 months before an election. The party dictates what has to be done, when they come to the *barrio* they want to take control of what we do every day" (anonymous interview with author). There is "a division between what people bring up in the CCs and the *comunas* and the decisions taken by the Government" (A. Jiménez, interview with author). As such, while "the *comunas* are an institution and we take our decisions independently while maintaining links with the government" (E. Guilarte of the Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra, interview with author), there is "dissatisfaction regarding Chavismo for all those struggles that never achieve a conclusion due to bureaucratic blockages and corruption" (A. Jiménez, interview with author). While presidents Chávez and Maduro were not deemed to be at fault, issues of bureaucracy and a lack of engagement with the base on the part of mid-level PSUV functionaries were common complaints raised during research, even amongst ardent supporters of the process, in communal councils and *comunas* in both Petare and 23 de Enero. In sum, the principle critique emanating from the popular base regarding state-sponsored spaces for participation centred on the lack of a "link to allow communication between the party and the popular movements" (A. Jiménez, interview with author).

In a polarised scenario with an aggressive opposition ready to pounce on any divisions within the rank and file of Chavismo, the rupture between the party and the base places popular Chavista actors in a difficult position. Elite destabilisation efforts led the government to overemphasise loyalty, foment intolerance, and allow political fealty to serve

as a cover for corruption (Ellner 2017a). As Ellner (2017a) notes, “a favourite slogan of both Chávez and Maduro, ‘Unity, unity and more unity’ is often used to exhort followers to close ranks and set aside internal criticism to focus on facing down a ruthless enemy”. As one *comuna* leader in Petare stated, “the problems regarding how the *comunas* interact with the state are discussed amongst Chavistas, but at a public level, the *comunas* go hand in hand with the party...We stand by our political party in the face of the MUD”.

However, this lack of space for criticism has greatly debilitated the democratisation process. Chávez was “willing to overlook military corruption, total inefficiency, and ineptitude on the part of people who showed loyalty” (G. Hetland, interview with author). Furthermore, the lack of space for leftist critique of the project has allowed “a bureaucracy of the Right to be replaced by a bureaucracy of the Left” (anonymous *comuna* and UBCh member in Petare, interview with author) whereby PSUV inefficiencies and corrupt practices go unpunished, fomenting *desgaste* (exhaustion) with the process amongst many popular sectors, even in the Chavista heartland of El 23 (Velasco 2016). As an anonymous *comuna* member from Petare highlights, “the people leading the government entities and the party have turned everything into a bureaucracy; you now need to have a *palanca* (a contact or influence) just to speak with them. These people are backed by the party, but not by the people like it was supposed to be. And what happens? I am stuck if I don’t have a contact to receive my complaint” (interview with author). Such concerns regarding the process are common, even amongst the Chavista base, which debilitates willingness to participate in state-sponsored spaces of participation. Like in “the Soviet Union and other countries seeking to develop socialism, initiatives have been bureaucratised. People don’t want to participate in such a scenario; they don’t see any change, it seems to just be more of the

same, and in the end, the popular movements just remain entrenched in their own spaces” (A. Jiménez, interview with author).

While there was discontent amongst the Chavista base, and despite the deterioration of the economy to the point where there was mass migration out of Venezuela, overt anti-government protests or critique was generally limited, at least until the latter part of 2017. Several factors appear to explain the reluctance of the popular base to protest. The nature of the relationship between sectors of the popular base and the government limit the likelihood of bottom-up critique. It is important here to re-emphasise that the Chavista base should not be understood as one monolithic bloc. It is comprised of various groups with distinct histories and relations to the state. For popular sectors who had limited organising and mobilising outside of and against the state before Chávez’ election, critiquing Maduro - who was Chavez’ hand-picked successor - is understood as counter-revolutionary. While Chavismo had always relied on a centralised power in the executive, popular sectors had maintained support for the government because there was a sense that the power was being centralised in “their” government. A common sentiment heard in the José Felix Rivas *barrio* in Petare is that “the government is ours, we chose it, and we voted for it. They are like a part of us” (B. Lugo, interview with author). Furthermore, popular actors who had never participated in the political process before the 1998 election of Chávez not only began voting, but were incorporated as citizens, both in a political and social sense as they engaged in state-sponsored participative and deliberative spaces such as the CCs, *misiones*, and *comunas*. When one considers that the Chavista governments fundamentally transformed the quality of citizenship of the popular sectors who for decades had been excluded from society it should not be wholly surprising that overt anti-

government critiques were somewhat muted. What is more, given the common sentiment in the *barrios* that the opposition parties “are part of a continuation of the war against the *pueblo*” (B. Lugo, interview with author) and that if they were to replace Maduro there would be a return to the exclusion experienced under market democracy – both political and economic- popular protests against government failings that could be of benefit to the opposition are thus restricted.

At the same time that Chavismo boosted popular incorporation, the top-down building of popular power and the tying of participatory spaces to resources from the central government also had a deleterious impact on the ability of the popular base to challenge the government. The most obvious example of this emerged during the economic crisis. The severe food shortages following the economic collapse hit popular sectors hardest and as such they were deeply dependent on the government providing subsidised food bags via the *Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción* or CLAPs program. The CLAPs originated in April 2016 as partnerships between grassroots organisations and the government to provide an alternative food distribution network in all 24 states (Schiavoni and Camcarro 2016). The objective of these is to curb the black market and to get food items directly into people’s homes at government regulated prices. However, the program has been heavily criticised as being a “cynical form of political patronage...rife with corruption” (Henri Falcón, presidential candidate in the 2018 elections, cited in Aponte and Martinez 2018). McCoy (2018) states that the CLAPs are part of a system of “social control and intimidation” whereby “political party check-in booths near voting centres” require “hungry voters to register with the party’s card and show that they voted in order to get a bag of subsidised food”. While it is extremely difficult to confirm the extent of such “social control and intimidation”, my fieldwork in 2016 identified competing stories from voices in

the *barrios*. Some respondents stated that the CLAPs were delivered to all poor houses irrespective of political colours, while others stated that as opposition supporters, despite being poor, they had failed to receive any government assistance. Furthermore, when I sent questions via e-mail to Chavistas in Petare and El 23 de Enero in 2018 about issues of clientelism and patronage in the delivery of CLAPs, they avoided responding to them. Indeed, there was a reluctance to engage in any criticism of the government, and the only questions that garnered a response were those centred around their efforts to mobilise the base for upcoming presidential elections. Such responses are representative of a more general trend amongst Chavistas whereby internal critique of the process is permitted, but openly chastising the government is generally restricted. There is widespread - and not wholly unjustified sentiment, amongst the support base of Chavismo that any popular critique of the government will be misrepresented by media sources beholden to traditional elites and forces of imperialism.

However, while popular critique of the shortcomings of the process remained generally subdued, especially while Chávez was president, under Maduro there have been some more overt critiques of the process, particularly from the radical sectors of Chavismo. With the economy in tatters, due to both government ineptitude and elite and international efforts to cripple the government⁴⁴, the government had to develop pacts with historical enemies of the process. While in many regards Maduro has simply followed Chávez' relationship with business⁴⁵, the economic crisis has drawn popular critiques of government-business relations into the open. While Chávez and Maduro sought to forge a tactical arrangement with "friendly" businesspeople over those represented by Fedecámaras (Ellner 2017), whose involvement in the 2002 coup was detailed in the

⁴⁴ See section 8, Chapter 6 for discussion.

⁴⁵ See Ellner (2017) for a discussion of business relations under Chávez.

previous chapter, corruption has festered under both presidents. While Maduro did offer some resistance, his actions “have done little to contain corruption, which has become routine and highly visible” (Ellner 2017). Meanwhile, the economic and political crisis forced the government to engage in negotiations with the opposition MUD coalition⁴⁶. Such negotiations with the political opposition and local capitalists “required unquestioning obedience” and as such the government decided that the more radical sectors of Chavismo that demanded a deepening turn toward socialism as the way out of the crisis had to be silenced (Gilbert 2017).

Such divisions between the government and the radical base are centred around differing conceptions of how to achieve a truly radical-substantive democracy. For the government, alliances with some members of the private sector are considered a tactical necessity to secure “enough political and economic stability to sustain the process of change” (Ellner 2017), especially given the near-constant efforts of domestic and international elite forces to remove the government from power. However, for radical sectors of Chavismo, such alliances are seen as impediments to the process of change, and that “at the earliest sign of the possibility of regime change, pro-government businesspeople would be the first to abandon ship” (Ellner 2017). While such concerns are real, as Ellner (2017) cogently highlights

It is clear that objective conditions have not allowed for mass expropriations or all-out confrontation with capitalists. If capitalism in Chavista Venezuela will remain a reality for some time, the government has two options: ignore distinctions among

⁴⁶ The negotiations were hosted by the Dominican Republic. However, negotiations broke down due to the government’s refusal to meet opposition demands regarding electoral conditions as well as US pressure on the opposition not to sign an agreement with the government. For a discussion, see Ramsey (2018) and Weisbrot (2018).

the capitalists and treat them as one and the same, or take advantage of fissures within the business class. Given Fedecámaras's sudden switch—from decades as a supposedly apolitical body to a staunch enemy of Chávez, even before his 1998 election—the government would be foolish not to cultivate relations with those businesspeople who reject the organisation's hostile line.

While the government cannot ignore the realities of power and the fact that the domestic and international economic spheres are dominated by capital, the failure to deal with festering corruption and its treatment of internal critique from radical sectors of Chavismo has debilitated the process of change and should be challenged. In fact, Maduro has used centralised power in a despotic manner to ensure that critical voices or those demanding a radicalisation of the process are side-lined. During the Maduro government “the *comuna* project has been overlooked...In the face of economic warfare he chose to make an alliance with the bourgeoisie. But we feel this was an error; if we are talking about economic warfare, about class struggle, then you should be behind the people in order to confront the enemy of the popular sectors” (long-time political activist, Chavista, and member of the National Network of Comuneros and Comuneras, anonymous interview with author). Left-wing group Marea Socialista critique both the direction of the process and the despotic centralisation in response to elite and international destabilisation efforts, highlighting that “the Madurista bureaucracy with its pro-neoliberal, authoritarian and anti-popular politics...have demoralised the very social base necessary to face such aggression” (Marea Socialista 2018).

Such Chavistas to the Left of the government and who oppose ceding any ground to the opposition and business sectors are in an extremely difficult position. As Gilbert (2017)

suggests, “Chavistas who want to oppose this kind of pact and preserve the original socialist project will need a great deal of political shrewdness. Contradictions with the governing group need to be downplayed, since this group has Chávez' mark of approval and is also a bulwark against imperialism”. While radical sectors have generally maintained a critical support for the government in the face of elite and international pressures, the government has largely accepted the support while challenging the critique, labelling those who question the process in this time of difficulty as anti-revolutionaries or *derechistas* (Right-wingers) (Y. Vargas, spokesperson for Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra, interview with author, August 1st, 2016).

While many sectors of the Chavista base had in general refrained from protesting or publicly voicing their discontent with the government, a furthering of despotic centralisation in 2017 increased tensions between the radical base and the government. While elite and international efforts to achieve “regime change” were certainly a reality, Maduro used such pressures to justify the silencing of internal critique from radical Chavistas, thereby sliding toward despotic centralisation. The emergence of the government-sponsored National Constituent Assembly (ANC) did foster a spike in popular mobilisation as some grassroots Chavista organisations, particularly those that came into existence after the election of Chávez, actively mobilised the base to participate in the election process (anonymous UBCh member in the José Felix Rivas barrio, Petare, interview with author). However, while the ANC may have acted as a mobilisational tool for some, for many Chavista sympathisers the ANC damaged the move toward radical democracy while the election process of candidates “made it clear that Maduro would sooner steal than lose an election if his political survival was at stake” (Velasco 2018: 74-5). While the process clearly hindered opposition

participation, Leftist-candidates who sought to run on an alternate ticket to that of the PSUV were also side-lined (Lander in Lang and Lander 2018). In El 23 de Enero for example, exclusion of local Chavistas from the ANC led to protests, highlighting a widening gap between the government and the PSUV on the one hand, and the popular base on the other. On the 30th of June 2017, the announcement of the ANC election results which showed that the slate of representatives from El 23 was going to be comprised entirely of PSUV candidates led to protest with local *colectivos* – armed civil groups in popular *barrios* who have been key supporters of the Bolivarian process – crying fraud (Velasco 2017b; Velasco 2017c: 6). As Velasco (2017c: 6) notes, Valentín Santana, leader of La Piedrita - one of the longest-serving *colectivos* – had been postulated for the ANC by a coalition of local groups, independent of the PSUV. His proposals had included “absolute loyalty to Chávez; complete power for the *comunas*; dissolution of intermediary institutions; war without imprisonment against bureaucracy; and maximum penalties for corrupt traitors” (Ibid.). The exclusion of Santana and other local independent candidates and the subsequent protests highlighted the sense that true revolutionaries were being excluded in the government-controlled ANC.

The elections for mayors in December 2017 saw the PSUV win an astonishing 308 out of 335 municipalities, despite the severity of the economic crisis facing the country. While such results helped stem elite destabilisation efforts by boosting the political power of the government, the centralised, top-down nature of candidate selection further stoked the growing rifts between the radical popular base of Chavismo and the state. In several states in the run up to the elections, allies of the PSUV in the Gran Polo Patriótico – the coalition of Chavista parties – sought to select their own candidates rather than allowing the

PSUV to determine the entire ticket (Rodríguez Rosas 2017). The case of Angel Prado, a commune leader in the El Maizal commune in the state of Lara, is emblematic of base-state tensions. A press release signed by dozens of Venezuelan intellectuals and social movement activists describes how the government-controlled National Electoral Council (CNE) sought to block Prado's candidacy (Boothroyd Rojas 2017b outlines the statement). However Prado overcame the CNE efforts to prevent his name appearing on the electoral ticket and ran as a candidate for popular Patria Para Todos party. Furthermore, despite Prado gaining 57.45 per cent of the vote compared to the PSUV candidate Jean Ortiz' 34.07, the CNE awarded Prado's votes to Ortiz due to alleged irregularities. The following quote from the press release (as cited in Boothroyd Rojas 2017b) highlights the growing tension between the base and the government;

This conflict between the constituent power of the communal people of Simón Planas and the bureaucracy clearly expresses a revolutionary disjuncture. If the state (the CNE and the ANC presidency) and a part of the ruling elite continue to deepen the decisions they have been making, they will be moving away from democratic legality and their commitment to socialism.

While the government dominated the municipal elections, the growing critical Chavista bloc did gain some electoral success, with 500,000 votes cast across the country for the PPT and Communist parties, creating a "leftist reference point within Chavismo" (Samán 2017).

In early 2018, Maduro and the CNE announced that presidential elections were to be held in April, though following sustained pressure from international observers, the date was pushed back to May. While the majority of the MUD opposition coalition

decided to boycott the elections, apart from ex-Chavista Henri Falcón, some radical Chavistas also rejected the elections. Marea Socialista for example stated that “regime has engaged in electoral window-dressing beginning with the fraudulent Constituent Assembly. The elections for governors and mayors, and now with the ‘presidential’, they are attempting to maintain a democratic appearance where in fact there is only a state-led politics of repression, intimidation, and terror toward a population exhausted from the economic crisis and the social disaster” (Marea Socialista 2018). However, despite the widening rift between radical Chavistas and the moderate bloc headed by Maduro and Diosdado Cabello, the Communist Party (PCV) and the Left-wing PPT party backed Maduro’s candidacy for the elections (Boothroyd Rojas 2018). The “move was announced after both parties had previously indicated that they would not automatically throw their weight behind Maduro due to concerns over his handling of the country’s ongoing deep economic crisis and what they describe as a failure to adopt revolutionary measures” (ibid.). The PCV gave their support as they recognised that “the growing immoral, illegal, and criminal interventionist aggression from US imperialism and its allies in Europe against the Bolivarian process puts at the risk the national liberation” project set in motion by Chávez (PCV as cited in Boothroyd Rojas 2018). Similarly, the PPT stated that despite issues of “sectarianism, bureaucracy and corruption” in the government, it was necessary to defend Maduro against “imperialism” and the “unconventional warfare” being waged against the country (PPT as cited in Boothroyd Rojas 2018). The radical CRBZ group also backed Maduro, stating that “beyond any internal contradictions there may be in regards to methods and practices, we understand that the current moment demands that we close ranks because there is a greater contradiction to resolve: the confrontation with imperialism” (Rangel 2018).

2.4 How long can the breach hold? Legacies and the future of Chavismo:

The discussion above highlights the variance in the make-up of the Chavista base in terms of radical sectors who are more ready to critique the government and whose organisational histories tend to pre-date the election of Chávez, and the “regular” base whose engagement with the political system began in earnest with the election of Chávez and who are more reluctant to openly critique the government. In the midst of the worst economic crisis the country has ever experienced, Maduro has managed to prevent a full-scale popular mobilisation by pointing the finger at imperialist and elite forces. Indeed, in some regards the only thing holding the coalition of Chavista forces together is the shared anti-imperial, anti-elite agendas of the government and the base.

Popular sectors are in a tough position; “on the one hand, there’s a sense that the government has completely forsaken them, even in some cases actively turned against them. (For instance by stoking and feeding corruption and lack of accountability by the military)...On the other hand, there’s the paralysis that comes with a lack of alternatives. As bad as things are, the opposition in power would be an even worse option” (Velasco 2016). Furthermore, with the dramatic decline in the quality of living for poor Chavistas, while many still support the government in a defensive manner, they “simply don't have the time or the energy or the fighting spirit that they had a decade ago. The willingness to not only defend the government but to go on the offensive and say, ‘okay, this is the kind of government we really want; here’s a government that we can push in the directions that we want them to move’ — that has all but disappeared” (Ciccariello-Maher in Hetland and Ciccariello-Maher 2017). While radical groups have offered their backing to Maduro for the presidential elections, it is clear that the rift between the Maduro government and

the radical base has widened. In the early stages of the process, centralisation of power in response to elite and international pressure was accepted by the base once it was used progressively to redistribute economic resources and to boost political participation for popular sectors. However, the current despotic centralisation in response to elite and international pressure which entrenches the upper echelons of the PSUV in power while side-lining popular voices who seek a more radical response to the economic crisis is unlikely to retain the support of the base. If such a critical popular bloc within Chavismo is to have any success in influencing the government and guiding the process in a more democratic manner, they must continue to build their associational and collective power by organising “across Venezuela’s vast territory” (Gilbert 2017) so as to “build a solid alliance between both urban and rural revolutionary Chavismo” (Ibid.). Indeed, the principle challenge for these radical edges of Chavismo may be to offer concrete solutions to the issues facing the “regular” popular base who have become disillusioned with the Chavista project.

While the current juncture represents an extremely difficult moment for Chavismo, it is important to remember just how far the process has come. The initial promise of the process was to boost the political and economic inclusion of Venezuelans who had been excluded and repressed by market democracy. Despite the current crisis, communal councils are still actively meeting to discuss solutions to issues of food and cash shortages while in some *comunas* there are discussions regarding methods of connecting with other *comunas* that do not rely on the state as the central binding glue (personal observations in 2016, and personal communication with actors in Petare and El 23 de Enero, April 2018). As such, while centralisation certainly moved in a more despotic manner over time whereby popular voices demanding a radicalisation of the process were side-lined, “the Bolivarian

Revolution offered both a mandate to mobilise and a tool to do so, and that remains” (Velasco 2016), albeit in a more limited form at present, thereby representing a spectacular change from the Punto Fijo era. Indeed, while the scope for critiquing the government from a popular-Leftist position has been narrowed by government actions, the above discussion regarding the top-down selection of candidates for the ANC and municipal elections in 2017 and the subsequent popular protests led by *comuna* and local leaders, both in *barrios* with long histories of autonomous organising and those without, highlight that there is a (re)emerging popular voice that is willing to challenge state decisions. As a result of Chavismo, popular sectors have developed self-respect (Zibechi in Chávez et al. 2017: 35), understood that they too have a right to inclusion, and have forged new links that have boosted their associational and collective power. Whatever happens next in Venezuela, the stability of any “project that emerges from this moment of intense crisis, will depend on the ability of those sectors to understand that it’s impossible to side-line or marginalise the demands — especially for participation — not for handouts, not for immediate goods or services, but for participation of popular sectors” (Velasco 2017b).

3. Conclusion and Lessons from Venezuela’s democratisation process:

Returning to the central issues of this thesis regarding how an alternative to market democracy is likely to emerge, develop and leave a lasting legacy, the above discussion of popular actors’ experiences under Chavismo highlight lessons for Venezuelan democratisation, and for democratisation theory more generally. To contextualise and evaluate popular experiences and understandings of the process to date, we must place discussions within the framework developed in chapter 2. Progressive presidents or governments who attempt to extend democracy and boost the social citizenship of excluded

sectors of society is likely to lead to confrontations with economic elites and their allies, both domestic and transnational, who seek to defend entrenched privileges. As such, progressive leaders may feel compelled to centralise power in the executive so as to overcome and weaken elite destabilisation efforts and to push through reforms that boost the socio-economic inclusion of popular sectors. While such a strategy may be necessary in the face of a recalcitrant elite, it contains inherent dangers for democratisation processes. To avoid centralisation becoming “despotic”, it is vital that executive power is tied to a radical deepening process whereby the power of the executive is counterbalanced by an autonomous popular power from below.

The experiences and views of popular actors in El 23 de Enero and Petare highlight both the potentialities and risks of the Venezuelan efforts to deepen and extend democracy. While Chávez sought to use centralised power to overcome elite impediments to democratic extending, this centralised power was combined with efforts to deepen the quality of democracy whereby organised popular actors could directly influence the decision-making process. Like Chávez, Maduro has faced near constant elite and international efforts to topple the government. However, while centralised power was used to act as a defence against domestic and international elite destabilisation efforts, it was also used to side-line critical popular voices who questioned the increasing corruption, bureaucratisation, and militarisation of the process. Furthermore, while the radical edges of the popular base have confronted the government regarding the direction of the process, many sectors of the popular base were more reluctant to do.

As such, a key issue emerging from the Venezuelan democratisation experiment relates to how to link a progressive government to the base via redistributive measures and

the top-down construction of spaces for participation, while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls of a co-opted and docile popular sector incapable of critiquing and controlling “their” government. Indeed, as Smilde (2011: 25) cogently notes, state efforts to mobilise popular sectors present a paradox as “on the one hand, in conditions of radical inequality, relying on autochthonous, independent participation in civil society simply perpetuates this inequality. On the other hand, mobilising popular sectors through the resources of the state undermines the autonomy that is at the heart of the role civil society is supposed to play”. Emerging from the above discussion of popular experiences in El 23 de Enero and Petare, a core lesson for radical-substantive democratisation processes is that “popular power, especially when it is tied to state resources, can fall prey to corruption or, worse, *falta de compromiso*—a lack of commitment, if there aren’t prior experiences of organizing outside the state underpinning them” (Velasco 2016a). As such, while redistributing resources via state-sponsored spaces of participation is essential to overcome entrenched poverty and to boost the capacity of popular actors to take part in the political process, it is necessary to first generate opportunities for local-level organisations to emerge independently of the state (Velasco 2016a). Without prior organisational capacity and autonomy, revolutionary processes that alter elite interests may fall into a “despotic” centralisation spiral as the executive reduces liberal separation of powers so as overcome elite obstacles, while also weakening the counterweight of popular power, thereby risking the erosion of earlier democratic accomplishments.

A powerful autonomous popular base capable of critiquing and directing progressive governments is also vital to ensure that the political leaders of radical-substantive democratisation processes adhere to their mandate. Indeed, as Ellner (2016) states, while

“temporary ties between a socialist government and business groups may be inevitable in any prolonged process of bringing about socialism by democratic means...an internally democratic party with a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the state is the best guarantee that such ties will not solidify in time, and that corruption is kept in check”. In the Venezuelan case, the lack of internal democracy in the PSUV is thus a fundamental issue for the democratisation process because the specifics of a strategy of how to maintain socialist commitments while engaging in a world dominated by capitalism requires “input from those closest to the mood of the people. Decision-making cannot be the exclusive preserve of the party’s national leadership, still less of the president’s inner circle. A truly democratic party is essential in Venezuela not only as a matter of principle, but because the very survival of the country’s revolutionary process depends on it” (Ellner 2017a).

While the current balance of powers between state, elites, transnational (f)actors and popular actors appears to impede the democratisation process, any process of profound change must proceed in stages, with ups and downs as power balances shift. Before Chávez’ election in 1998, the popular sectors were, with notable exceptions in El 23 de Enero, lacking the associational and collective power necessary to guide any process of radical change from below. While the top-down efforts at constructing such popular power have turned more “despotic” in recent times, the guiding figure of Chávez to bind the popular sectors together following disconnected anti-market democracy protest was a necessary, though not sufficient, condition to produce radical change.

Collective and associational popular power was developed over the course of the project, and we are now witnessing the germination of a critical popular bloc that is connected via the CCs, *comunas* and popular parties across a broad geographical territory.

While there remains a large proportion of the popular Chavista base who retain uncritical support for the government, the growing popular calls for a radicalisation of the democratisation process led by an autonomous base highlights that the Bolivarian project is organically evolving. As Dayelin Quevedo states, “the process at the national level is like a child who hasn’t really learned how to walk, a child who still requires the indirect guidance of the father but who complains if the father tries to help, even if that help is necessary. In order to take the first steps, the father’s guidance is necessary. But we must learn how to take these steps ourselves and put aside the help, even if we make mistakes. We need to move away from the institutionalism because if we don’t, we will never be able to achieve our goals” (D. Quevedo, interview with author). The era of a top-down process aimed at constructing a popular power may thus be understood as a fundamental stepping-stone in the development of a post-neoliberal democracy.

Chavismo fostered a more politically literate population, who until recently experienced improved living conditions thereby allowing them to actively engage in the political process of change. Crucially, the state-sponsored spaces of participation, while either co-opted or ignored at present, shed light on the possibilities of a democratisation process guided from below. The *consejo comunales* and the *comunas* offer a framework and a springboard for popular sectors to re-organise an organic, autonomous movement. The future of the revolution depends on the capacity of the critical popular Left to emerge from the shadow of the PSUV bureaucracy. This does not suggest that the process should abandon the state; rather, it calls for overcoming the “dual powers” of two Lefts (Poulantzas 1978) that have emerged due to the divisions between the radical base and the governing party structure. Paradoxically, overcoming these divisions requires increasing the autonomy of the base from the state structure so that the organised movement has the space to

engage in constructive critique of the state reform process (Harnecker 2010a: 42). While this appears a daunting task, given the debilitated economic power of the central government to maintain clientelistic control over the base, coupled with the associational and collective popular power that was built over the course of Chavismo, the time may in fact be ripe for another explosion of popular power, that, unlike the uncoordinated protests of the *Caracazo*, will be guided from below by an interconnected and educated popular base.

Chapter 8: Bolivia and Venezuela in Comparison: Lessons for democratisation

1. Introduction:

This chapter compares and contrasts the outcomes and experiences of the Bolivian and Venezuelan efforts to move beyond the confines of market democracy by deepening and expanding participation in both a political and economic sense. In chapter 2 a theoretical framework was developed to identify the key events likely to influence radical-substantive democratisation processes. The framework suggests that for such a democratisation process to emerge, political and economic exclusion experienced under market democracy must foster mass popular protests. Such protests would then deliver a mandate to a progressive party or leader to boost citizenship. If elected, and if a progressive leader adheres to the mandate to boost social citizenship and extend democracy, the TGPT framework suggests that they will enter into conflict with elites who seek to protect their entrenched interests. The elite backlash will entail a destabilisation effort aimed at impeding the progressive government from altering the status quo. In response to this backlash, the government will be forced to centralise power in the executive if it is to adhere to the popular mandate to boost citizenship. As such, a balancing act emerges between centralisation so as to overcome elite obstacles while simultaneously deepening democracy by increasing grassroots control over decision-making processes. Centralisation should be understood as existing on a sliding scale, and the form that it takes is influenced by the context and configuration of the relative power between key actors. The centralisation scale runs from “progressive” – whereby it is used to push through redistributive reforms while also building spaces for popular political inclusion – to “despotic” – whereby it is used to maintain the

government in power while excluding popular sectors from decision-making channels.

Indeed, the actual form that centralisation takes may simultaneously contain progressive and despotic elements.

The framework also suggests that the antecedent conditions to the point of inflection – the election of a progressive leader - may also influence the process, both at the moment of election, as well as in the subsequent democratisation sequencing. Protest movements spearheaded by co-ordinated grassroots movements are more likely to foster an organic state-society link between the newly elected president and the base. Conversely, ad-hoc explosions of popular discontent are more likely to produce a vanguardist-type relationship between base and leader. Finally, the framework suggests that cases with long histories of co-ordinated popular movements are more likely to witness progressive centralisation, while cases that lack such a history of popular mobilisation vis-à-vis the state run a greater risk of sliding toward despotic centralisation.

The framework outlines how the democratisation process will be affected by the relative power of four key sectors, namely the Left-led state, organised popular society, economic elites, and international (f)actors. The push-and-pull of these four groups and the constantly evolving power relationships between them open and close opportunities for democratisation, influencing the extent of democratic extending and deepening, the form of centralisation, and the legacy of the process. In the preceding chapters, this framework was applied to the Bolivian and Venezuelan processes. For the remainder of this chapter, the emergence, development, and outcomes of both processes are compared and contrasted, highlighting lessons for radical-substantive democratisation theory.

2. Comparison of democratisation outcomes:

2.1 *Extending democracy in Bolivia and Venezuela:*

Left-led governments in Bolivia and Venezuela sought to boost levels of social citizenship and economic inclusion for those most excluded under market democracy. In Bolivia, increased social spending and cash-transfers (*bonos*) boosted popular access to healthcare and education, infrastructure was enhanced, while pension and minimum wage levels increased⁴⁷. In Venezuela meanwhile, social spending, often via the *misiones*, greatly boosted popular access to education, healthcare, housing and subsidised foodstuffs. While there were clear and successful efforts to extend democracy in both cases, some critiques have been levelled against the extent and durability of changes. In Bolivia, some of the benefits of the cash-transfers were undercut by a regressive taxation system while property and wealth taxes remained extremely limited. In Venezuela, the economic and political crises from 2014 on which witnessed disturbing levels of inflation and food and medicine shortages eroded many of the gains to social citizenship achieved in earlier years of the democratisation project.

In both cases, extending democracy was financed by increasing state-control over natural resource rents. In Bolivia, the government applied the decision of a 2004 referendum to increase taxation of transnational extractive companies while also increasing the share of state-owned companies in gas and oil extraction. However, despite such changes, transnational oil and gas companies retained significant control over extraction and production. In Venezuela, there was a more radical overhaul of the hydrocarbon sector, with the state reclaiming control over the country's massive oil reserves. While both cases

⁴⁷ See chapters 4-8 for more comprehensive overview of democratic extending in both cases.

demonstrated a fundamental reliance on primary commodity exports to fund democratic extending, the Bolivian government struck a more moderate accord with elite and transnational sectors who maintained significant space for continued operation in the country, while in Venezuela transnational companies in the oil sector became more subordinate to the state.

2.2 Deepening democracy and centralisation in Bolivia and Venezuela:

The democratisation processes aimed at deepening popular political participation in Bolivia and Venezuela yielded complex, and at times paradoxical outcomes. In Bolivia, in comparison to the era of market democracy the quality of political citizenship for popular and indigenous sectors was certainly boosted, perhaps most emblematically during the constituent assembly process which allowed for the direct participation in the re-writing of the Constitution. Indeed, the 2009 Constitution, passed by referendum, recognised indigenous cultures, languages and norms, while social-movement actors were offered access to the state via appointment to ministry positions. While there were, at least initially, efforts to deepen democracy, they were accompanied by an increasing centralisation of power the executive in response to elite destabilisation efforts. The centralised power was used progressively whereby the core support base⁴⁸ of the MAS government, in particular the *cocaleros*, were given direct access to the president, influencing state decision-making processes. However, the centralised power in the executive was also used in a despotic manner whereby popular sectors who grew critical of the government - particularly those who formed part of the strategic base of support for the MAS in the early stages of the

⁴⁸ See chapter 4 for detailed discussion of support base of the MAS.

democratisation project - were side-lined and debilitated via co-optation, clientelism, de-legitimation, and *paralelismo*.

Likewise in Venezuela, democracy was greatly deepened in comparison to Punto Fijo era market democracy. Efforts from above to construct a popular power from below, most emblematically via the *misiones*, *consejo comunales*, and the *comunas*, created new opportunities for popular sectors to interact with the government. Following elite destabilisation efforts, power was centralised in a progressive manner whereby it was used to attempt to construct a popular sector bulwark against further destabilisation. Funding flowed from the central state to new spaces of democratic inclusion in a process of state-sponsored participation. However, over time centralisation simultaneously took on more despotic features whereby state resources were used to co-opt some popular sectors, while dissenting radical popular voices were quietened via top-down selection of “loyal” electoral candidates, by excluding small Leftist parties from inclusion in the political process, and by de-legitimising and labelling critical voices as enemies of the revolution.

In both the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases, there were successful efforts to boost the political inclusion of the popular base. However, in both cases centralisation of power in the executive, despite being essential so as to protect the government and the democratisation process from elite destabilisation, took on despotic features. Ultimately, internal feedback loops from a supportive but critical popular base were blocked, meaning that while progress was certainly made, efforts at constructing a truly participatory and deliberative democracy that radically boosted the political citizenship of the base fell short of early aspirations. To gain a more nuanced understanding of why the processes unfolded as they did, as well as to delineate lessons from the Bolivian and Venezuelan experiences, the next section offers a

brief review and comparison of the varied antecedent conditions and power relations in both cases.

3. Explaining outcomes: Antecedent variance and relational power analysis:

Chapters 4-8 traced the development of the democratisation processes, highlighting how the antecedent conditions to the election of progressive presidents and the relative balance of power between the state, popular sectors, elites, and international (f)actors influenced the sequencing and pathways of Bolivia's and Venezuela's recent democratisation experiments. In both cases, the adoption of market democracy, at times by surprise, by both Right- and supposed-Left parties and the extreme political and economic exclusion experienced by large swathes of the population fostered eruptions of popular discontent and opened the door for radical-outsider candidates to be elected to the presidencies. However, variations between the cases regarding the nature of protest as well as their histories of organisation impacted both the point of inflection and the aftermath sequencing. As Silva (2017: 112) notes,

During the neoliberal period the configuration of popular sector forces drive the process, primarily through mass mobilisation. This relationship changes when outsider left parties become government. Although the party hews to the project from below, it nonetheless adapts it, thus turning it into a project from above. How it does this depends in large measure on...the type of left party in office and its linkages to the configuration of popular forces forged during the neoliberal period.

In Bolivia, which has a long history of popular sector organisation dating back to the Marxist-miners inspired 1952 Revolution, protests were led by powerful popular

organisations who built high levels of associational and collective power. Emerging from these waves of popular mobilisation, Evo Morales was elected president. Morales shared tight, organic links to some popular sectors, in particular the *cocaleros*, while he received the strategic support of other groups who had played a key role in the protests such as urban-popular and lowland indigenous groups. In Venezuela, where there was a general lack of a historically powerful and well organised popular base, anti-neoliberal protests were ad hoc with no central guiding force. In such a scenario, Hugo Chávez emerged as a binding figure and a vanguardist relationship developed between the base and the new president.

The sequencing of Bolivia's democratisation following the point of inflection, that is, the election of Evo Morales, was greatly impacted by the relative power of the state, popular sectors, elites and international (f)actors. Briefly summarising, following the organised popular anti-neoliberal protests Morales was given a clear mandate to deepen and extend democracy. However, efforts at extending democracy which would impact on entrenched elite interests witnessed a backlash from the political-wing of elite forces whose clamour for autonomy nearly brought the democratisation process to its knees. In the tug-of-war between elite and popular demands, with the government located in between, the antecedent power of the base was key for Morales who relied on the support of both core and strategic groups to prevent elite destabilisation from succeeding. Power was centralised in a progressive manner whereby Morales overcame elite efforts to block reform, and despite moderations to the final draft, a new Constitution that promised to deepen and extend democracy was enshrined.

The political power of the government resulting from the support of both core and organic sectors greatly debilitated the political power of the opposition, and economic elites

quickly recognised that they needed a new strategy to protect their interests. While the political power of the elites was debilitated, their structural power remained high because Morales relied on them to extract, produce or sell the primary commodities on which democratic extending was to be financed. In such a scenario, elites and Morales came to a compromise whereby partial nationalisations occurred which, while boosting government revenue, fell far short of the demands outlined in the protest waves.

With booming natural resource prices, Morales initially managed to maintain this balance, whereby he deepened and extended democracy for powerful core supporters, while using resource redistribution to maintain support of or co-opt strategic sectors. However, over time elite interests increasingly clashed with strategic sectors who wanted full nationalisations and greater control over policy-making regarding primary commodities. Given that elite destabilisation efforts had ceased, Morales was no longer as reliant on strategic sectors for support. Furthermore, given their high levels of collective and associational power forged before and during the anti-neoliberal protests, these strategic groups increasingly came to be seen as an issue for Morales. They opposed the pact he had forged with elites to maintain funding for his redistributive policies, and upon which the support from his core base relied. Given the organisational and mobilisation power of strategic groups, Morales increasingly used centralised power in a despotic manner to debilitate these strategic sectors via co-optation, *paralelismo*, and de-legitimation.

In Venezuela, following efforts to reclaim state control over land and oil, powerful elites aided by the US engaged in extensive efforts to impede the democratisation project. In response to such powerful adversaries, and in a scenario where the base lacked prior experience of organising and had weak levels of associational and collective power, Chávez

built from above a popular power capable of defending the process. More so than in Bolivia, the process challenged elite interests and so therefore the backlash was more powerful, as was the subsequent centralisation of power in the executive to overcome elite and international destabilisation efforts. With the support of the military and a loyal base headed by a vanguard political leader, power was centralised and the oil industry was brought under state control, thereby significantly boosting the power of the government. Unlike in the Bolivian case where Morales was forced to compromise with elite and international forces, Chávez' capacity to control Venezuela's oil gave the president greater autonomy to further radicalise the project. Unsurprisingly however, whereas the government-elite/TNC pact in Bolivia led to a lessening of tensions between Morales and business sectors, while fostering tensions between Morales and strategic supporters of the process, in Venezuela early efforts to radicalise the process fostered continuous elite and transnational destabilisation efforts, as well as building support from the base whose political and social citizenship were boosted. Furthermore, such destabilisation efforts allowed the government to justify centralising more power in the executive while still retaining the support of a base.

However, given the top-down nature of building a popular base and the tying of spaces of popular participation to state resources, popular sectors were less likely than their Bolivian counterparts – both core and strategic - to challenge the government in the case of disagreements about the direction of the process, or to even identify that there were issues with the process. When oil prices crashed, and following the death of the vanguard-leader Chávez, the government's power was significantly weakened. Elite and transnational forces increased efforts to topple the process, and combined with government ineptitude and

corruption, a severe economic crisis engulfed the country. Moreover, international and elite efforts to topple the government fostered an entrenched attitude in the upper echelons of the government who surrounded themselves with loyal military leaders. Cracks began to emerge in the support base of Chavismo as the newly enfranchised base sought a radicalisation of the process as a response to the crisis and a movement away from the centralised reform project which had become corrupted and militarised. However, rather than including and responding to such demands, centralised power instead became despotic and radical popular voices were shut out from participation.

4. Legacies:

The varied antecedent conditions and balances of power in each case also influenced the possible legacies of the democratisation sequences. Considering that the framework adopted here sees democratisation as an ever evolving process, with continuously ebbing-and-flowing relative power relationships making and re-making different democratic “outcomes”, offering a comparison of the legacies of different processes is in some ways an impossible task. As such, rather than stating that a point has been reached where a path-dependent future democratisation sequence must occur, analysis instead offers a discussion of the contemporary moment and the possible pathways forward toward a more radical and substantive democracy which did not exist before the election of Leftist presidents in Bolivia and Venezuela. Likewise, analysis assesses the possibilities of a *de*-democratisation process emerging whereby political and economic citizenship are weakened. As such, analysis compares the extent of “institutionalisation” of the democratisation processes whereby institutionalisation represents a measure of popular sector capacity to demand that a government, whether Left- or Right-led, guarantee social citizenship even in the face of elite

opposition to democratic extending. Furthermore, the existence of a progressive party that allows for bottom-up control and that is capable of competing electorally should signify that elite-controlled political parties would refrain from pushing for a wholesale return to market democracy. Legacy may also be associated with the capacity of popular sectors to overcome despotic centralisation.

In both cases, the pathway toward a more radical and substantive democracy was outlined in the new constitutions forged during the post-neoliberal era. Both documents, if they are fully adhered to, represent a fundamental overhaul of citizenship from the market democracy era. In both Bolivia and Venezuela, the processes have entailed a conscientisation of the base; in Bolivia, the first ever indigenous person was elected president and the constitution offered for the first time recognition to indigenous languages, cultures and customs. This break with the past political system which was dominated by elite-families linked to colonial forces encouraged indigenous people to participate politically and to believe that a different Bolivian citizenship model is possible, one where everyone is included. Similarly, in Venezuela the election of dark-skinned Hugo Chávez from a poor rural family broke with the Punto Fijo era politics which was dominated by the political parties of the traditional European-descended elite. Chávez fostered an enormous sense of pride in poor Venezuelans and encouraged them to engage with politics and to transform their own lives. Like Morales in Bolivia, one of the key legacies of the process was the emergence of a belief amongst long-time excluded sectors that a better life was possible and the state could be a partner rather than an oppressor in building a truly inclusive citizenship.

While conscientisation has evolved and while constitutions mapped out possible pathways toward liberation and inclusion, concerns over the legacies of the processes exist. In Bolivia, despite the organic-type MAS party which emerged out of popular protests, only core supporters have retained capacity to influence the government, and even amongst the core support base there are issues concerning co-optation and clientelism. Meanwhile, the strategic popular bloc has been considerably weakened via the processes of clientelism and *paralelismo*. However, while centralisation has increasingly moved in a more despotic manner, and despite divisions amongst the formerly united base, the long history of popular organisation outside and against the state has meant that there is in fact an emerging popular critique of the *proceso de cambio* and its lack of adherence to the 2009 Constitution. A new power struggle in the democratisation process is emerging between core supporters of Morales and those sections of the strategic bloc who have been sidelined. While the future impact of such struggles remains undecided, a divided popular base does open the door for a populist-Right party to emerge and capture popular discontent with the performance of Morales.

In Venezuela, the PSUV and the central government have increasingly centralised power in a despotic manner. With international forces and domestic elites circling and fomenting “regime change”, the popular base is in an extremely tough position where they maintain support for a government who has diverged from the path toward deepened democracy, yet who act as the only force preventing a return of elite-parties. However, the vanguard-process of building popular power from above, while riddled with risks and which has led at times to a subservient rather than protagonistic base, has also fostered the development of associational and collective popular power that did not exist before the

point of inflection. Indeed, there is an emerging, though still relatively small, popular bloc of critical Chavistas who seek to defend Chavismo and the 1999 Constitution. While many of the actors involved in this emerging movement come from areas that did have a history of popular organisation and mobilisation against the state such as El 23 de Enero, popular actors who did not participate in the political sphere before Chavismo are now offering a critique of “their” government. The popular protests against top-down candidate selection and the exclusion of “radical” Chavistas from spheres of participation, and the linkages between popular actors across geographical and sectoral boundaries should be understood as a positive sign that the democratisation process has fostered an awakened and connected base that did not exist during the Punto Fijo era.

ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS		POINT OF INFLECTION				SEQUENCING AND POWER				OUTCOMES				
<u>Protest History:</u>	<u>Protest Form:</u>	<u>Initial state-society relations:</u>	<u>State:</u>	<u>Elite:</u>	<u>International:</u>	<u>Popular Society:</u>	<u>Extend:</u>	<u>Deepen:</u>	<u>Centralisation</u>	<u>Legacy:</u>				
Strong	Highly coordinated	Organic relations with core support base; Strategic-electoral relations with non-core popular-indigenous support base	Military: Strong Economic: Weak	Military: Weak Economic: Strong	Leverage and Linkage: High due to dependence on PCE sectors dominated by TNCs	Collective and Associational links: Strong	Moderate	Partial-deepening for core support; initial deepening for strategic sectors, tending to exclusion over time	Early progressive centralisation; slide toward despotism over time	High conscientisation; divided strategic sector; weak internal party-democracy				
			Ideological: Moderate Political: Strong	Ideological: Moderate-strong Political: Weak	International Support: Strong support initially from regional Left-governments. Greatly weakened over time	Antecedent Organising Feedback: Prior experience key to defending against despotism centralisation								

Table 2: Bolivian democratisation outcomes and influences. (Author's own elaboration)

ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS		POINT OF INFLECTION				SEQUENCING AND POWER				OUTCOMES			
Protest History:	Protest Form:	Initial state-society relations:	State:	Elite:	International:	Popular Society:	Extend:	Deepen:	Centralisation	Legacy:			
Weak	Ad-hoc, un-coordinated	Vanguard leader-base relationship	<p>Military: Strong</p> <p>Economic: Strong when oil price high, weak when low.</p>	<p>Military: Weak</p> <p>Economic: Strong control over food, finance and crucial import sector</p>	<p>Leverage and Linkage: Reliance on international market for oil sales and imports gives great leverage to US and conservative regional forces</p> <p>International Support: Russia and China support; weakened regional support</p>	<p>Collective and Associational links: Weak, but growing</p> <p>Antecedent Organising Feedback: General lack of historical organising, therefore weak feedback to prevent despotic centralisation</p>	Great efforts to boost social citizenship, undercut by weak economic model	Partial boosting accompanied by clientelism and side-lining of critique	Early progressive centralisation, slide toward despotic over time	High conscientisation; emerging popular power; weak internal party-democracy			
			<p>Ideological: Strong</p> <p>Political: Strong</p>	<p>Ideological: Strong</p> <p>Political: Weak</p>									

Table 3: Venezuelan democratisation outcomes and influences. (Author's own elaboration)

5. Lessons for radical-substantive democratisation:

The table and comparison of the processes in Bolivia and Venezuela highlights the complexities and multiple variables which influence the possibility of an alternative to market democracy emerging, developing, and leaving a lasting legacy. Differing combinations of antecedent conditions (such as the extent of political and economic exclusion under market democracy, what type of party applies neoliberal reforms, pre-existing experiences of popular sector organising, and the type of protest movement that emerges) will impact the type of leader that is elected to power, what their mandate will be, and how they will relate to the base, at least in initial stages. Following a point of inflection where a Leftist is elected to state power, levels of antecedent popular power and histories may feedback onto the process at later stages. Adding to the complexity, varied and ever-fluctuating combinations of relative power between the state, popular society, economic elites, and international (f)actors will influence the post-inflection point sequencing, leading to varied outcomes in terms of extending and deepening democracy, the extent and form centralisation of power takes, and the depth of institutionalisation of change.

Given the complex nature of democratisation processes, drawing universal lessons from the comparison of the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases is a task fraught with dangers of oversimplification and of making spurious claims⁴⁹. However, if we proceed with caution, and identify key variations and similarities between cases in terms of antecedent conditions or power relations, as well as between outcomes, some more general lessons from the experiments can be gleaned.

⁴⁹ As highlighted in chapter 2, the focus in this thesis has been on cases where centralization of power in the executive is a possibility. Strongly institutionalised parliamentary systems would likely demonstrate varied pathways and outcomes to presidential systems.

Where a party-system breaks down due to universal convergence around neoliberalism, cases that exhibit prior histories of popular organising outside of and against the state, and where the associational and collective power of the popular base is high during periods of protest are likely to tend toward an organic state-society relationship, at least in the initial phase of democratisation. Furthermore, such antecedent conditions and early phase relations build collective memories regarding the power of an autonomous base to foster change. Such collective histories may feedback onto the sequencing at a later stage whereby impediments to the process due to despotic centralisation are more readily contested. Conversely, cases where there is a weak history of collective autonomous mobilisation and disorganised protest waves, state-society relations tend toward a vanguardist position. In such cases, popular defence of the process, in particular against corruption or clientelistic practices carried out by the vanguardist Left-led state, is less likely to emerge. In sum, outsider-party led radical substantive processes are more likely to avoid, or at least to challenge, despotic centralisation where prior experiences of popular associational and collective power building exist.

While the antecedent conditions certainly influence early pathways and may feedback on to the process, they do not foster a path-dependent process with pre-ordained outcomes. Rather, the relational power between the Left-led state, elites, international (f)actors and the organised popular base may drive the democratisation process forward, impede its development, or even foster de-democratisation. Given that the balance of power is influenced by the collective and associational power of popular sectors, the leverage of western institutions over domestic governments, and the relative ideological,

military, economic and political power between Left-governments and elites, detailing the outcomes of every combination of power is beyond the scope of this analysis.

However, the Bolivian and Venezuelan processes and outcomes do offer some generalisable guidelines. Higher levels of popular power drive radical-substantive democratisation processes forward and act as a counterweight to elite and international pressures on the Left-led government. Conversely, higher levels of elite power and western international leverage over the Left-led government act as impediments to democratisation. As such, the goal must be to limit the power of these groups, while boosting popular power. However, as was evidenced in both the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases, given the need for left-governments to boost the social citizenship of popular sectors in a domestic and global environment dominated by neoliberal capitalism, reducing elite and transnational power is a difficult task. Indeed, Left-governments will be pushed by popular sectors toward radicalising the process and extending democracy while at the same time it will be pulled back by elite and transnational powers demanding adherence to pro-market orthodoxy and protection of their interests. In general, the greater the power of elites and transnational forces to impede efforts to extend democracy, the greater the pressure on progressive leaders to centralise power in the executive will be.

Indeed, the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases examined here raise the question of whether it is possible to “reach a cross-party or inter-elite consensus over some measure of social and economic redistribution or, whether on the contrary, an entrenchment of socio-economic privilege is still the price that must be paid for liberal democracy” (Grugel and Ruggirozzi 2018: 561). In both cases, elite and transnational destabilisation efforts following attempts by the governments to extend democracy fostered a centralisation of power in the

executive which challenged the traditional liberal democratic separation of powers. Without such centralisation, it is questionable whether efforts to radically challenge entrenched economic exclusion and inequality could succeed in the face of destabilisation efforts on the part of economic elite and transnational forces. As such, somewhat paradoxically, in an environment dominated by economic elites and mobile transnational capital, centralisation of power in the executive may be a necessary, though not sufficient condition for democratisation to occur.

To ensure that centralisation of power in the executive actually fosters democratisation rather than de-democratisation, it is essential that popular power from below is tethered to, and guides, the government/president. As witnessed in the Venezuelan case, while the top-down vanguardist process certainly did encourage the deepening of democracy and the building of popular power, the lack of space for oversight from the popular base allowed for massive corruption to go unchallenged. Indeed, the gross levels of corruption committed by members of the government and the upper echelons of the military in combination with elite and international efforts to remove the government from power fostered an entrenched position within the party leadership of the PSUV. In this scenario, all critique came to be considered “derechista” – from right-wingers – even when it came from radical-Left popular voices. Ultimately, a division emerged between the state-reform project centralised in the government and the PSUV hierarchy, and the radical popular base that had been fostered from above by Hugo Chávez.

Furthermore, in the absence of a powerful autonomous popular base capable of directing the state actors, Left-government actors may be bought off by and cede too much ground to elites. For example, where elite and transnational economic power and leverage

over a government is high, but where the government maintains strong political power in comparison to elites, a compromise between elites and the Left-led government is likely. Such a scenario occurred in Bolivia whereby Morales dominated the political sphere while elite parties were obliterated; yet his continual reliance on TNCs and elites to extract and sell gas gave them great economic power over the government. The subsequent compromise however brought the government into confrontation with some sectors of the powerful popular base who saw the agreement as reneging on earlier promises. In this scenario, the government sought to use centralised power to weaken the contestatory sectors so as to maintain the pact with elite and transnational forces. In both the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases, elite power has ultimately fostered a division between the progressive-government and sectors of the popular base.

The more general lesson from the two cases is that substantive democratisation that extends social and economic citizenship, thereby challenging entrenched elite interests, may require a centralisation of power in the executive to overcome elite barriers. The scale of the challenge to entrenched elite interests will dictate the extent of the elite-led destabilisation backlash, which in turn impacts the pressures on the progressive government to centralise power. Such centralisation bends the liberal democratic model, and while it may be a necessary component of a radical-substantive democratisation process in a domestic and global order dominated by capital, it contains inherent risks, not only to the political and civil rights of elites, but more worryingly to those of the popular sectors whose political citizenship is supposed to be boosted.

While centralisation of power may be necessary if a radical challenge to economic exclusion is to occur, making concessions to business so as to ensure capacity to socially

redistribute, even if more moderately than hoped for, may also be a necessary condition. The Bolivian and Venezuelan governments were initially elected to respond to both the political and economic exclusion of the popular sectors. As such, even in Venezuela where Chávez was more aggressive in recuperating full control of the oil reserves, they had to make some concessions to business elites so as to fund redistribution. Indeed, the heavy reliance on primary commodity exports in both cases ensured that efforts to extend democracy were reliant on domestic and global capital chains of extraction, distribution, and consumption. In conditions of extreme poverty and inequality, building social citizenship is essential. Indeed, extending democracy is not simply an outcome of democratisation, but is an essential component that allows popular sectors to take part in the democratisation process itself. As such, the use of primary commodities and of making deals with elites to ensure redistribution occurred in Bolivia and Venezuela was necessary.

While centralisation of power and engaging in government-elite pacts may be necessary conditions for radical-substantive democratisation in the current conjuncture, the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases have failed to avoid the pitfalls of such a process. By ceding ground to elite forces and moderating the processes of change, governments irked radical sectors of the popular base. When these popular sectors confronted the government, rather than adhering to or responding to demands from below, the presidents used centralised power to weaken and side-line internal critique.

Given the long-term nature of democratisation processes, risk-laden centralisation of power in the executive and engaging in deals with business elites to fund redistribution may be necessary components of radical-substantive democratisation. To avoid the pitfalls of such a process and to ensure that a despotic centralisation spiral is avoided, and despite the

difficulties involved in striking a balance between elite demands and popular needs, it is essential for processes seeking to move beyond the confines of market democracy that the necessary extending of democracy – and all that it entails – is accompanied by a real deepening of democracy.

For Poulantzas (1978: 260), the only way to avoid centralisation becoming despotic and sliding to “authoritarian statism” is to combine the radical transformation of the state and representative democracy headed by a progressive government with the unfurling of forms of direct and participatory democracy that maintain autonomy from the state itself. An active, autonomous, powerful popular base capable of guiding the democratisation process from below acts as a protective buffer to ensure that centralised power is used progressively and not in a despotic manner.

Furthermore, an autonomous popular base also “constitutes a guarantee against the reaction of the enemy” (Poulantzas 1978: 263) so long as the process of change from above works in tandem with, and not in opposition to, the process of change from below. As such, centralisation in response to elite power must avoid leading to a “dual power” of two lefts (Poulantzas 1978: 263), whereby the Left party and government enter into confrontation with the popular base, with each bloc following its own specific course. Such a scenario greatly weakens the democratisation process, allowing elite and transnational power to take advantage.

Unfortunately, the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases have failed to fully avoid such a scenario of dual powers of the Left. In Bolivia, elite power forced Morales to make pacts with business and TNCs, and the centralised power that had earlier been used to overcome conservative opposition to the democratisation process was instead used to weaken and

attack popular and indigenous actors who opposed the new state-elite relations. However, despite government efforts to weaken contestatory popular voices, given the long history of popular sector organising and mobilising, and the associational and collective power that was built during anti-neoliberal protest waves, a new phase of state-base conflict is emerging, although this time between two progressive forces.

In Venezuela, elite and transnational destabilisation efforts and the “economic war” against the governments of Chávez and Maduro led to a scenario whereby loyalty to the party and the government above all else was promoted. Given the vanguardist nature of building popular power and the popular support for centralising power in the executive to overcome elite destabilisation, issues of corruption, government inefficiency, and bureaucratization of the spaces of participation went unchallenged for too long by too many popular actors. When a tipping point was reached under Maduro during the economic crisis, and radical-popular critique of the government’s despotic control of the democratisation process became more overt, the government sought to silence contestatory voices coming from the base. Like Bolivia, a new phase of the democratisation process has opened, offering both possibilities and dangers. The popular critique of the progressive governments and the demands for a radicalisation of the process is in fact evidence that democratisation has occurred under the Left governments. The dangers, however, of having dual powers of the left is that they end up annihilating each other, opening the space for the Right to return and capture the state.

While maintaining a united front between the base and the government is essential for democratisation processes that seek to challenge market democracy in a global and domestic setting dominated by neoliberal rationale, how the base interacts with the state is

equally important. In both cases, the moments of popular explosion that opened the space for outsider candidates to be elected tended toward “passive revolution” (Gramsci 2000: 263-4) whereby demands for social change were diffused and absorbed into a statist reform project that ultimately maintained existing capital relations (Andreucci 2017: 172). While this thesis has sought to emphasize the difficulties of radical-substantive democratisation given the power of elite and transnational forces, the co-opting of the core support base in Bolivia and the clientelism in Venezuela seriously weakened the possibility of achieving radical change. While arguments can be made that the governments had to behave in a pragmatic manner so as to avoid full-on confrontation with elites and international actors, weakening rather than strengthening popular actors was a debilitating error.

By blocking critical feedback loops from the base, either via the fomentation of a “dual power of the Left” scenario, or by encouraging the pacification of popular power, both experiments have achieved mixed results. The governments have acted “as if only they knew what the people needed...Political participation became a sort of acclamation of the executive” (Lang in Lang and Lander 2018). As Lang (Ibid.) continues, “if there is no corrective by a strong and organised society, one that can demand, correct, protest and also criticise, then the project will be diverted” from its transformative course.

As Farthing (2017) cogently notes, “no matter how fractious social movements can be or how difficult government can find it to meet their demands...more radical social change will not happen unless these movements are active and independent”. This does not suggest a complete severing of relations between state and societal actors. If radical-substantive democratisation processes are to avoid the pitfalls outlined above, it is central that both the Left-led state and the constituent-base increase their powers *in tandem vis-à-vis* domestic

and transnational elite forces. Such a relationship entails tight links in terms of bottom-up influencing over government decision-making, while at the same time ensuring the space for popular organisations to engage in constructive criticism of the government without fear of reprisal or being labeled a supporter of the Right.

By co-opting, corrupting and destroying their Left-wing base, progressive governments seal their own doom, and that of the democratisation process too. Political leaders “must come to realise that their best defence lies in the organised rebelliousness of the popular masses” (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013a: 141) and that by “seeking refuge in the movements” the revolutionary process is safeguarded, “providing the best guarantee that they will quicken, radicalise, and deepen” (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013a: 141) in the face of elite resistance. While achieving such state-popular society relations whilst simultaneously confronting powerful elite and transnational forces requires an extremely difficult balancing act, any process of change that fails to do so will tend toward despotic centralisation, re-constituted neoliberalism (Webber, 2011), and a fracturing of the relationship between the popular base and the progressive government that opens space for Right-wing actors to (re)emerge.

Chapter 9: Can democracy be saved? Time for a new research agenda

This thesis opened with a discussion of the crisis of democracy engulfing the so-called “developed” democracies of the US and Western Europe. The dominant narrative in mainstream analyses of the contemporary state of democracy has centred on the emergence of extremist “populist” leaders and parties who have a weak commitment to democratic rules of the game, deny the legitimacy of their political opponents, tolerate or encourage violence, and who are willing to curtail the civil liberties of opponents, including the media (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018: 23-4). If any such party or leader emerges as an “electoral threat”, the “gatekeepers” of democracy, the traditional political parties, must unite together to ensure the defeat of the “extremist” and thus save democracy (Ibid.: 20, 26). The concerns of these authors is that the populist leaders will challenge the “guardrails of democracy” which are vital to ensure its survival, namely the constitution and courts, as well as the “unwritten rules of the game” – the norms relating to the shared conduct of behaviour (Ibid. 101). The norms include mutual toleration for opponents and institutional forbearance, that is, avoiding actions that while respecting the letter of the law violate its spirit (Ibid.: 102, 106). Without these guardrails, the result is a cycle of escalating brinksmanship, and in deeply polarised societies where parties become “wedded to incompatible worldviews, and especially when their members are so socially segregated that they rarely interact, stable partisan rivalries eventually give way to perceptions of mutual threat” (Ibid.: 116).

Levitsky and Ziblatt’s (2018) concerns regarding the stability of liberal democracy, which echo Linz’ (1990) concerns relating to the perils of presidential systems and the risks

of allowing the executive branch to weaken other institutions of liberal democracy, are legitimate. Any analysis which seeks to offer solutions to the contemporary woes of democracy would therefore be well-advised to heed their warnings. There is a further component, however, that must be discussed relating to the crisis of democracy and its stability, namely *why* leaders and parties that critique liberal democratic norms and institutions have emerged.

As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, while democratic stability and consolidation must be the focus of our attention, to achieve a stable democracy requires challenging the existing status quo. While extremist and outsider parties must be treated with caution, so too must those arguments that call for the blocking of any leader or party who wishes to challenge the existing form and content of democracy. In conditions of widening inequality and a democratic system that has been co-opted by economic elite forces and which blocks the possibilities of developing a more inclusive citizenship regime, democracy cannot be stable. Indeed, as the cases of Bolivia and Venezuela discussed in this thesis highlight, a pacted-democracy in which there is Left-Right party convergence around market principles accompanied by the commodification of society is not a recipe for democratic stability, just as Karl Polanyi (1944) suggested many years ago. In the “developed” democracies of Europe and the US there has also been a capitulation of centre-left parties to neoliberal logic leading to a “consensus of the centre” (Mouffe 2018) with those sectors of society suffering from the worst effects of neoliberal globalisation effectively abandoned (Ibid.). As mainstream parties of the Left and Right support the elite agenda that promotes state retrenchment and removes protection for citizens from the ravages of the “free” market, and as former rights that were once conceived of as fundamental components of citizenship

are commodified, swathes of the population have become disillusioned with the political system. As Rodrik (2018) states, “liberal democracy is...being undermined by a tendency to emphasise ‘liberal’ at the expense of ‘democracy’”, whereby “rulers are insulated from democratic accountability by a panoply of restraints that limit the range of policies they can deliver. Bureaucratic bodies, autonomous regulators, and independent courts set policies, or they are imposed from outside by the rules of the global economy” (Ibid.). As “we entered the era of globalisation, the key challenge for transnational elites was how to make the world safe for transnational capital (hence polyarchy) and available to transnational capital (hence neo-liberalism)” (Robinson 2013: 230). A “new global financial architecture was created to facilitate the easy international flow of liquid money capital to wherever it could be used most profitably” (Harvey 2010: 16)⁵⁰. The “balance between the market and the state shifted to the disadvantage of the regulatory state and hence to the disadvantage of democracy” (Merkel 2014). Citizenship has been reduced to success in the market, irrespective of whether the individual has the means, or could ever hope to attain the means, to participate and compete for goods. Neoliberal ideology advocates a clear pattern of policy choices that entails reduced government spending on health care and pensions, increasing labour supply, reducing public sector employment, and flexibilisation of labour via a weakening of collective bargaining (Weisbrot 2017c).

With economic and political exclusion for popular sectors now entrenched, and in the absence of any alternative offered by the Left, many working-class and popular sectors “have turned to parties proposing economic and cultural security through nationalism rather than social democracy” (Afonso and Rennwald 2017). The election of Donald Trump, the Brexit vote, and rising support for the National Front in France, among other cases,

⁵⁰ For excellent discussions of the financialisation of capital see Harvey (2010) and Merkel (2014).

should thus be understood as part of “a series of political uprisings that together signal a collapse of neoliberal hegemony” (Fraser 2017) whereby voters are rejecting “corporate globalisation, neoliberalism, and the political establishments that have promoted them” (ibid.). The fact that democracy has been subsumed by neoliberalism and that the Left have failed to offer an alternative that protects vulnerable citizens, thereby opening the door for the far-Right to make political headway amongst disenfranchised citizens, should thus be considered the real crisis of democracy, a “crisis of too little democracy”.

This combination of a technocratic, elitist, thin model of liberal democracy underpinned by a neoliberal logic has created a sense of political and economic exclusion for many citizens. In such a scenario, when an inevitable crisis of capitalism occurs (Harvey 2010), democracy will also enter into crisis. As such, seeking democratic stability by protecting liberal democracy in which the liberal component trumps the democratic component, and where liberal has come to mean neoliberal (Mouffe 2018a), is a Sisyphean task. A critical paradox thus emerges. While Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) demonstrate how the erosion of the “guardrails” for democracy may cause democracies to “die”, if, as Crouch (2004), Harvey (2005, 2010) and Mouffe (2018a) amongst many others suggest, the norms of market democracy are set so as to provide the perfect environment for the protection of entrenched elite interests and the free mobility of capital, which in turn fosters inequalities, exclusion and recurring economic and environmental crises, how can democracy be saved? Hence, while Grugel and Ruggirozzi’s (2018: 561) question as to whether entrenched socio-economic inequality is the price that must be paid for liberal democracy is pertinent, in the long-run, this dichotomy must be overcome if democracy is to be saved. This then is the task for democratisation theorists and practitioners; we must begin to discuss how democracy

can simultaneously be deepened and extended, for this is the only long-term solution to the democratic crisis.

Mouffe (2018a) calls for a Left-populism to counteract the “post-democratic”, “post-political” neoliberal hegemony secured by the capitulation of the likes of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton to market rationale (Riofrancos 2018). Against “a regime that subordinates democratic sovereignty to the market, that appeals to bipartisan consensus and the rule of experts, Mouffe advocates for the construction of a unified popular will targeting the hegemonic order in all its instantiations” (Riofrancos 2018). Mouffe (2018, 2018a) highlights that as a result of financialised capital, wider sectors of society are affected by capitalism than under the Fordist model of capitalist logic. As such, the Left’s task according to Mouffe is to “establish a stark frontier between the people and the oligarchy, mobilize the heterogeneous masses under the banner of equality and social justice, wrest power from feckless elites, and radicalize democracy” (Riofrancos 2018).

While Mouffe’s (2018a) argument that a radically distinct Left political leadership is required to broaden the scope of the political marketplace is certainly accurate, we must ask two further questions if we are to respond to the crisis of democracy; what would happen if such a party were elected to state power, and how would the party leadership interact with the base in such a scenario. The examination of the Bolivian and Venezuelan experiments to challenge the constraints of market democracy in this thesis sheds some light on these matters. While one must be careful to avoid conceptual stretching when seeking to draw universal lessons from specific cases, the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases do provide insight into the challenges and risks facing “post-neoliberal” democratisation processes.

Firstly, the framework developed in the thesis highlights how the push-and-pull of the progressive government, popular forces, economic elites, and international (f)actors and the constantly evolving power relationships between them open and close opportunities for democratisation. Building on Roberts (1998), a hypothetical causal mechanism was advanced which outlined that if attempts to deepen democracy are accompanied by efforts to extend democracy, a strong reaction from domestic and international economic elites who seek to defend their privileges is likely. This backlash may take multiple forms depending on the specifics of each case, for example via lobbying of government officials, threats to withdraw investment or lower credit-ratings, using political parties beholden to economic elites to block the legislative process, coups, economic blockades, smear campaigns. Whatever the tactics used by elites, in all scenarios the goal will be the same; the protection of the current distribution of wealth and the impediment of any process or policy that seeks to redistribute political and economic power. As such, the extent of change that is possible, even if a progressive political leader captures state power, must be placed within the relative power framework.

The cases studied in in this thesis demonstrated that economic elite and transnational actors' power to use the liberal democratic system itself to impede the democratisation process fostered a belief on the part of the presidents that the only way to engage in radical-substantive democratisation, was, paradoxically, to strengthen executive power. While the scope of a progressive leader in a parliamentary system in a developed Western democracy to centralise power in a similar manner would be far more limited, the more general lesson remains; progressive political leaders will face economic elite resistance to change, and adherence to liberal democratic standards while simultaneously overcoming

elite resistance to redistribution will likely be mutually exclusive. Some analysts may argue that the mechanism detailed here is overstated – namely that democratic extending fosters elite destabilisation. Such analysts may argue that Brazil under Lula da Silva, Uruguay under the Frente Amplio governments, or the European social democratic governments in the post-World War 2 era did achieve success in extending democracy without fostering elite destabilisation efforts. The question here is ultimately about scale; once the progressive governments do not push too far in seeking to extend democracy, elite resistance will be more moderate. However, should a progressive government call for a radical overhaul of political and socio-economic exclusion, the elite backlash is likely to be far more aggressive, as witnessed not only in the Venezuelan case examined here, but throughout Latin American history (Allende in Chile, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and even moderate social-democratic reformer Dilma Rouseff in Brazil, amongst a litany of other examples). While in Europe and the US the elite backlash to progressive reforms may have been less overt than in Latin America, as Harvey (2005) stresses, the past four decades of neoliberal reform have ultimately been a class-based project to recuperate ground ceded during the Keynesian era. Furthermore, one may look to Greece’s efforts to challenge elite interests in the aftermath to the debt crisis of 2008 to witness that progressive leaders do not operate in a vacuum and that their policy autonomy is greatly constrained by domestic and transnational forces beholden to economic elites. As Weisbrot (2017c) highlights, the European Central Bank (ECB), the European Commission and the IMF, along with the Eurogroup of finance ministers constrained the economic decision making of the elected Left-wing government and the economic policies set out by these bodies and actors “represent an elite consensus” which differs greatly from public opinion within individual countries (Ibid.).

The power-framework raises crucial questions for democratisation theory. In times of economic crisis and widening inequality levels, the tension between liberty and equality becomes more fraught. From below, popular sectors demand a response to socio-economic impoverishment. If and when a progressive leader is elected and seeks to adhere to their mandate, they face the constraints of a global system dominated by neoliberal rationale and economic elites who play by no rules of the game or democratic norms and who will resort to an array of tactics to maintain privilege. This is precisely what we witnessed in the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases, with the leaders determining that a strengthening of executive powers was required to push forward with reforms and to weaken the power of economic elites. Indeed, while protecting minority rights from the “tyranny of the majority” is an essential component of democracy, describing economic elites as minorities, despite the fact that they wield sufficient power to prohibit a more equitable distribution of political and economic resources, means that democracy in its market-liberal incarnation has come to be understood – at least by those excluded from participation - as a veil to maintain elite privilege. For leaders like Chávez, for theorists such as Colin Crouch (2004) and for swathes of disaffected citizens across the globe, market democracy has become a “tyranny of the elite minority”.

As discussed in the previous chapter, centralisation of power in the executive did, at least for a period of time, follow a “progressive” path; executive power was used not only to overcome elite destabilisation, but also to promote a deepening of democracy whereby the office of the president was bound to spaces of participation from below. However, despite these initial efforts to adhere to Poulantzas’ calls (1978: 260) that the state reform project from above be guided from below via the unfurling of institutions of direct and participatory

democracy, the realities of operating with the bounds of a national, regional and global environment dominated by economic elites ultimately fostered tensions between the base and the leaders, and centralised power became increasingly despotic. In the end, particularly in reference to Venezuela under Maduro, the popular base was unable to prevent the leader from falling to the perils of presidentialism (Linz 1990). Such concerns point to the second issue regarding Mouffe's (2018) call for a populist-Left in response to the crisis of democracy, namely the nature of the relationship between leader and base.

Mouffe (2018) argues that in efforts to challenge the limits of market democracy, popular protests must be followed by an engagement with political institutions via a structured political movement (that is, political party) if they are to achieve significant results (Riofrancos 2018). Riofrancos (2018) takes issue with this notion, questioning "why is the choice movements *or* parties, or the implied sequence movements *then* parties?" Riofrancos (2018) suggests that if parties are "not accompanied by extra-electoral protest movements, then the former are unlikely to achieve...sweeping changes... After the left achieves power, rebellious grassroots activity is absolutely necessary to hold elected leaders to account". While the Bolivian and Venezuelan cases discussed support Riofrancos' assessment, they also highlight the complexities and challenges of the relationships between Left-governments and the organised popular base. In the Venezuelan case, in the general absence of a well co-ordinated popular base, Chávez sought to build from above a popular power from below. While the process had many successes and should not be understood as a simple effort on the part of a leader to control an electorate, there were inherent tensions regarding the lack of autonomous spaces to critique the government and the only partial success in overcoming issues of top-down decision-making. However, echoing Mouffe

(2018), Chávez did serve as a “relay point of affective bonds among a...dispersed people” (cited in Riofrancos 2018). The challenge now for the Chavista base, and the more general lesson for any vanguard-type democratisation movement, is to maintain organisation around the ideals of the movement while engaging in critique of the political-wing of the process. However, this is clearly easier said than done. The realities of getting this balance right, between critical support for the government in times of open confrontation with economic elites and transnational forces, and protesting government decisions that cede too much ground to the interests of elites, is an extremely delicate balancing act.

In Bolivia, where a powerful organised popular base pre-dated the election to power of Morales, achieving the perfect balance between working with the political leadership while maintaining sufficient autonomy to guide the process from below has also proven to be extremely difficult. Issues of government co-optation on the one hand, and government-led division and exclusion on the other remain real dangers for any democratisation process that involves a progressive movement from above and from below. Striking the balance between constructive criticism of the political leadership so as to demand adherence to the democratisation path, while avoiding a confrontational “dual power” of two lefts scenario (Poulantzas 1978) that opens space for the Right to benefit, while at all times working within the realities of a globalised world dominated by economic elite forces is the great challenge that any progressive movement seeking to escape the confines of market democracy must face.

Future studies should therefore examine the form of market democracy in each case that fostered political and economic exclusion, the scale and organisation levels of popular protest movements, the type of Left-leader/party elected, the political, economic, military,

and ideological power of the progressive government vis-à-vis economic elites, the leverage of regional and international (f)actors over democratisation processes, and the capacity of popular movements to hold the government to a progressive agenda. Differences and similarities between these factors, as well as between the type of political system (presidential versus parliamentary) should be teased out so as to gain a nuanced understanding as to *how to democratise democracy and overcome pressures to maintain the status quo, while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of despotic centralisation*. For analysts who care about the actual lived experiences of *all* citizens under democracy and who seek to engage in fundamental discussions about how to recuperate democracy, this is the central task.

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Appendix 1: Interviews

Table of interviewees:

NAME	COUNTRY	ORGANISATION/AFFILIATION AND ROLE	GENDER	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Álvarez, Jose Luis	Bolivia	FDTEULP, spokesperson	Male	La Paz	July 2017
Arcila, Sonia	Venezuela	Consejo Comunal Lomas del Ávila, member	Female	Petare, Caracas	June 2016
Arocha, Carlos Guillermo	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , City councillor for metropolitan area of Caracas	Male	Las Mercedes, Caracas	June 2016
Arze, Carlos	Bolivia	CEDLA, researcher	Male	La Paz	August 2017
Barrerra, Carlos	Bolivia	FEJUVE member 2003	Male	La Paz	June 2017
Barroso, Jorge	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , President of the Sucre Municipal Council	Male	Petare, Caracas	July 2016
Borges, Stevie	Venezuela	Consejo Comunal Bolivariano de Palo Verde, spokesperson	Male	Petare, Caracas	August 2016
Boyer, José	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra, spokesperson	Male	Petare Caracas	July 2016
Cahuaya, Alfredo	Bolivia	UNITAS, researcher	Male	La Paz	August 2017
Calle, Carlos	Bolivia	COD—La Paz, executive	Male	La Paz	July 2017
Condori, Nelson	Bolivia	CSUTCB, executive	Male	La Paz	July 2017
Escalona, Erika	Venezuela	Consejo communal in zone 6 of Petare member, Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra member, and UBCh for zone 6	Female	Petare, Caracas	July 2016
Fernández, Silvia	Bolivia	Cabildeo Collective Foundation, executive	Female	La Paz	June 2017

Fernández, Vicente	Bolivia	FEJUVE member 2003	Male	El Alto	July 2017
Flores, Luis	Bolivia	FEJUVE member 2003	Male	El Alto	August 2017
Francisco	Venezuela	UBCh for José Felix Rivas	Male	Petare, Caracas; Electronic interview	August 2016, February 2018
Gil, Marlene	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , consejo communal organiser	Female	Petare, Caracas	July 2016
González, Ybiskay	Venezuela	University of Newcastle, Australia, researcher	Female	Chacaito, Caracas	June 2016
Gutiérrez, Daniel	Bolivia	FEJUVE- <i>original</i> , press officer	Male	El Alto	August 2017
Henry	Venezuela	Comuna Hugo Chávez Frias, spokesperson	Male	23 de Enero, Caracas	July 2016
Hetland, Gabriel	Venezuela	University of Albany, assistant professor	Male	Electronic interview	January 2018
Huanca, Oscar	Bolivia	<i>Unidad Nacional</i> , president of city council	Male	El Alto	July 2017
Isturiz, Luis	Venezuela	PSUV city councillor	Male	23 de Enero, Caracas	July 2016
Javier	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra member	Male	Petare, Caracas	August 2016
Jiménez, Atenea	Venezuela	National Network of Comuneros and Comuneras, director	Female	Centre, Caracas; Electronic interactions	July 2016; multiple contacts throughout 2017 and 2018
López Maya, Margarita	Venezuela	Central University Venezuela, professor	Female	Bello Monte, Caracas	July 2016
Lugo, Betty	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo	Female	Petare,	August

		Gamarra member		Caracas	2016
Machado, Armado	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , city councillor for Baruta	Male	Baruta, Caracas	July 2016
Mamani, Irene	Bolivia	FEJUVE 2003, member	Female	El Alto	August 2017
Mijares, Juan Vicente	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , Director of Fundasucre	Male	Sucre, Caracas	July 2016
Mitma, Guido	Bolivia	COB, secretary general	Male	La Paz	June 2017
Montilla, Napoleon	Venezuela	Comuna Símon Bolívar member	Male	23 de Enero, Caracas	July 2016, multiple contacts throughout 2017 and 2018
Navarro, César	Bolivia	MAS, Minister for Mining	Male	Electronic interview	September 2017
Nina, Fany	Bolivia	Ex-leader of the FEJUVE- <i>original</i> , current El Alto mayoral candidate for Sol.Bo	Female	El Alto	June 2017
Paco, Abraham	Bolivia	CODECPA, director	Male	La Paz	August 2017
Palacios, José	Venezuela	<i>Primero Justicia</i> , city councillor for Petare	Male	Sucre, Caracas	July 2016
Quevedo, Dayelin	Venezuela	Comuna Símon Bolívar spokesperson	Female	23 de Enero, Caracas	August 2016
Ramos, Daniel	Bolivia	MAS, regional director for El Alto	Male	El Alto	August 2017
Rangel, Jalexi	Venezuela	U.N.E.S (Experimental Security University) teacher; consejo communal spokesperson in Minas de Baruta	Female	Minas de Baruta, Caracas	June 2016
Revilla, Carlos	Bolivia	UNITAS, researcher	Male	La Paz	July 2017

Rojas, Carlos	Bolivia	Ex- <i>dirigente</i> of FEJUVE- <i>original</i> and later FEJUVE- <i>organico</i>	Male	El Alto	June 2017
Serano, Legna	Venezuela	Comuna S�mon Bolivar, spokesperson	Female	23 de Enero, Caracas	August 2016
Si�ani, Benigno	Bolivia	FEJUVE- <i>organico</i> , director	Male	El Alto	June 2017
Smilde, David	Venezuela	Tulane University, professor	Male	New Orleans, USA	December 2016
Solares, Jaime	Bolivia	COB, ex-secretary general	Male	El Alto	June 2017
Trigo, Pedro	Venezuela	The Gumilla Centre, researcher	Male	Centre, Caracas	July 2016
Troche, Franklin	Bolivia	COR- <i>original</i> , international press officer	Male	El Alto	July 2017
Vargas, Marina	Bolivia	Sol.bo, office worker; El Alto resident for forty years with extensive knowledge of the city's development	Female	El Alto	July 2017
Vargas, Yenni	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra spokesperson	Female	Petare, Caracas	August 2016
Vielma, Misael	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra member	Male	Petare, Caracas	August 2016
Wilmer	Venezuela	Comuna Rogelio Castillo Gamarra member	Male	Petare, Caracas	August 2016
Yujra, Martha	Bolivia	COR- <i>organico</i> , director	Female	El Alto	June 2016

* Not every interviewee is cited in the main text. However, each of the interviews did inform my research and helped to shape the direction of the project. In some cases only the first name of the interview respondent is provided. This is due to interviewees choosing not to give their surnames. Furthermore, as highlighted in Chapter 3, I have chosen to anonymise some interviewees given the sensitive nature of the data provided. Anonymous interviewees are not included in the list above.

Indicative interview questions:

1. Who are you, and have you any organisational affinities?
2. Could you give an overview of the function of the organisation?
3. When did the organisation originate, and what role has it played in organising the base?
4. What is the relationship between the organisation and the government (local/regional/national)?
5. How are decisions taken in the organisation?
6. How has the relationship with the government changed?
7. How has your locality developed in the past 15-20 years? Successes, issues?
8. If you are unhappy with government performance, how do you engage in critique?
9. Has the base made errors during the process of change? What lessons can be drawn from your experiences?
10. Has the government made errors during the process? What lessons can be drawn?
11. What are your views on the next phase and direction of the process?

It must be noted that each individual interview was adapted to the interviewee depending on the organisational links, political affiliations, and history.

3. Information about the researcher(s), collaborator(s), and/or supervisor (if the researcher is a postgraduate student)

Please include letter from the supervisor (*see template at the end of this form*) outlining how the student is suitably prepared/qualified and will have adequate support to carry out the type of research proposed.

Name:	Qualifications or Student No:	Address/Dept.	Email: <i>Provide Maynooth University contact details</i>	Telephone: <i>Provide Maynooth University contact details</i>	Role in the project:
John Brown	14250841	Sociology	John.brown.2015@nuim.ie	-	PhD student
Dr. Barry Cannon	PhD/ Lcturer in Politics	Sociology, Auxilia House	Barry.cannon@nuim.ie	(+353) 1 708 7147	Supervisor

4. Previous ethical approval for this project (if applicable)
(please attach a copy of your approval letter)

Other Ethical Approval	Reference
Maynooth University Ethical Approval [] Yes [x] No	<i>SRESC-201x-xxxxx</i>
Other Institutions N/A <i>If you are carrying out research in collaboration with another organisation/group you might require ethical approval from this organisation/group as well as Maynooth University. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure such permissions are in place. Please indicate whether or not such approval is required. Where applicable provide a copy of the application and letter of approval.</i>	<i>Name and Address of organisation</i>

5. Title. Brief title of the research project:

Democratisation and the radical-Left in Latin America: Towards a post-neoliberal citizenship regime? Lessons from Bolivia and Venezuela

6. Research Objectives. Please summarize briefly the objective(s) of the research, including relevant details such as purpose, research question, hypothesis, etc. (about 150 words).

This project aims to analyze the political-economies of Venezuela and Bolivia to identify if alternatives to neoliberal policy application are being put in place. Firstly, the project aims to define the forms these post-neoliberal movements are taking, and to assess if they represent a new distinct political-economy model. Political ideologies and actually applied policies of each government will be identified, and an analysis offered on how each of these interact and influence one another. Next the project will assess similarities and differences between post-neoliberalism and both the state-managed model of Import Substitution Industrialisation, and the market-managed model of neoliberalism.

In phase 2 the project aims to identify if post-neoliberalism changes are sustainable. To answer this, the project seeks to identify the embeddedness of the new *model*, assessing if it offers simply a change in government discourse in response to crises of neoliberalism, or if post-neoliberalism represents a more profound structural change of the neoliberal political-economy model. Next, the project shall outline key barriers to the sustainability of post-neoliberalism -economic (overreliance on primary-commodity exports, little use of redistributive taxation, exclusion of informal workers), social (social polarization, cooptation of social-movements), and political (International Financial Institutions and TNC interference, domestic opposition, corruption/inefficiency, weak institutions and concentration of power in the executive)-and assess if and how governments are overcoming them. Country-specific factors influencing the development of post-neoliberalism such as political-cultural history and resource endowment shall also be examined.

7. Methodology.

a. Where will the research be carried out?

Location(s)	<p><i>Please describe the locations where the research will be carried out. If research will be carried out abroad illustrate how you have given due consideration to the ethical norms for the country/culture etc. Note that when working with institutions abroad you might also require ethical approval from that institution/organisation (see Question 4 above).</i></p> <p>Research shall primarily be conducted in the office of the interviewee, as the majority of participants shall be elites (social movement leaders, trade union leaders, politicians etc). For interviews with informal workers and indigenous leaders, data would be collected in the home of the respondent or if they prefer, in a public location such as a café or restaurant. Direct observations shall be carried out at community councils (local group meetings on issues facing the locality) and in worker co-operatives (businesses run and operated by workers, with no single owner of resources). This will require research trips to Venezuela and Bolivia.</p> <p>In Venezuela, Article 60 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela protects the right to a private life and privacy. Article 48 establishes Habeas Data Protection and Article 28 guarantees the secrecy and confidentiality of private communications in all of its forms. Venezuela does not have a general privacy law but there are provisions dealing with privacy rights in various laws, including: the Telecommunications Privacy Protection Law; the Data Messages and Electronic Signatures Law; the Special Law on Computer Crimes; the Working Environment and Working Conditions Law and Regulations Concerning the Use of</p>
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	<p>Electronic Banking Services. (Source http://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/files/global-data-privacy-directory-52687.pdf)</p> <p>To adhere to these laws when collecting personal data, I shall expressly and clearly inform data subjects, verbally and in written form, of the purpose for which the data is being collected, who may receive the data, the existence of a database, my and my supervisors contact and mail addresses, the consequences of providing the data, of refusing to do so, and the data subject's access, rectification and suppression rights. Any data (manual/electronic) maintained by me shall be truthful, adequate, pertinent, and not excessive, be used exclusively for the purpose for which it was legally obtained and be deleted on completion of that purpose.</p>
Proposed start date	1-10-14
Approx Duration	48 months

b. Please describe briefly the overall methodological design of the project.

Political ideologies of each government shall be assessed by analysing constitutional changes, party publications/discourse, and through party-member interviews. Social, political and economic policies shall be identified through analysis of policy publications, legislation, and previous empirical work. Comparison of ideologies and policies shall identify if policy application and outcomes match discourse. A macro-historical review of ISI and neoliberalism shall be completed and compared to post-neoliberalism, outlining cleavages and continuities between the models.

How governments are embedding post-neoliberalism and overcoming the challenges to its sustainability will be analysed. Silva's (2009) power-structure framework measuring economic/political/military/transnational/and ideological power will be applied, identifying which institutions/actors are afforded space and power to obtain their goals. An examination of changes to laws and regional and foreign policy, direct observation of post-neoliberal structures (community councils, worker-cooperatives) and a series of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with business and political elites, union leaders/informal workers, and social-movement members should shed light on the depth of changes and the strategies to overcome challenges. discourse and policy application analysis in opposition-led sub-national regions should identify the goals and strength of opposition.

c. Depending on the methods/techniques to be used, please elaborate upon the research context(s), potential questions / issues to be explored, tasks/tests/measures, frequency/duration of sessions, process of analysis to be used, as appropriate.

Relevant details regarding the procedures for data collection should be reflected in the content of the Information Sheet. This project shall use semi-structured interviews and direct observation to record data. The purpose shall be to identify real changes to economic and social policy implemented by left-led

governments, to quantify how sustainable these changes are, and to measure structural changes and power configurations in society. The project will also seek to identify opposition views to these changes. As such, interviews shall include; questions relating to trust/belief in government discourse; Questions to political party members identifying party ideology (and how ideology has shifted over time); questions to social movement leaders/business elites/trade union leaders as to the space their institutions are afforded and how relationships with the government, and other institutions in society, have changed; questions surrounding what are the greatest challenges facing current governments as they attempt to establish a new socio-economic model (post-neoliberalism).

Interviews and observations shall be one-time procedures, with an expected duration of 45 minutes.

8. Participants.

a. Who will the participants be?

Research is to be carried out on political party members, trade-union leaders, social-movement leaders, indigenous community leaders, business elites, citizens from various class backgrounds and informal workers

b. Approximately how many participants do you expect will be involved?

70

c. How will participants become involved in your project? If you have formal recruitment procedures, or criteria for inclusion/exclusion, please outline them here.

Where gatekeepers are involved in the process of participant recruitment, please clearly outline procedures relating to their involvement. I shall contact all potential participants via email or telephone before leaving Ireland. I shall gain access to contact details for participants through the web pages of their university/political party/social movement etc. My supervisor also has many contacts in the region and he shall request that I be allowed to contact them in regards the project. I have also forged contacts in both focus countries during previous trips to the region. It is anticipated that new contacts will be established while in the field through recommendations from respondents. Participants shall be chosen due to their links to an institution /party or due to their position in their society (specifically for indigenous leaders).

d. What will be the nature of their participation? (e.g. one-time/short-term contact, longer term involvement, collaborative involvement, etc.)

One-time interviews are planned

e. If participants will include those with whom the researcher engages in a relationship of power e.g. student/employee/employer/colleague, explain how the possibility of the power relationship and/or conflict of interest will be minimized.

Such a relationship shall not arise

f. Will the participants be remunerated, and if so, in what form?

Participants shall not be remunerated

9. Persons Under 18.

a. Will the research be carried out with persons under age 18? [] Yes [X] No

Please see section Child Protection Policy (in particular section 5)

<http://foi.nuim.ie/section16/documents/ChildProtectionPolicyandGuidelines.pdf>

- b. If yes, will the sessions be supervised by a guardian or a person responsible for the individual(s)?
 Yes No

NOTE: If the sessions are to be unsupervised, you are required to undergo Garda vetting. Research cannot begin until Garda clearance has been completed. For Maynooth University researchers, this is facilitated by the Maynooth University Admissions Office (708-3822, admissions@nuim.ie).

10. Vulnerable Persons.

- a. Will the research be carried out with persons who might be considered vulnerable in any way?
 Yes No

- b. If yes, please describe the nature of the vulnerability and discuss special provisions/safeguards to be made for working with these persons.

NOTE: Depending on the nature of the vulnerability, sessions may need to be supervised or the researcher may need to undergo Garda vetting as stated above under point 4. In such cases, the researcher must also be prepared to demonstrate how s/he is suitably qualified or trained to work with such persons.

11. Risks.

- a. Please describe any possible risks or conflicts arising from the research techniques or procedures such as: power relationships or other conflict of interests i.e. supervisor-student relationship, physical stress/reactions or psychological emotional distress or reactions.

Please consider any potential risks that may arise from the publication of results of this research. It is important to note that power relationships may exist in situations other than supervisor-student relationships.

Venezuela is polarized along political lines, and as such there is a low potential risk to respondents. However, given that questions in interviews shall not be of a sensitive nature, but rather shall be based primarily on economic issues and space for institutions to operate in, and the fact that information received from interviews shall not reveal any hidden sensitive data about participants, it is not anticipated that participating in the study should have any adverse consequences for the participants in their relations with the state or other entities.

- b. If you anticipate the possibility of risks, how will these potential risks be addressed and what measures have you put in place to minimize them?

Please consider that issues may arise for participants following research participation. Where appropriate, contact details for relevant sources of information and/or support should be included in the participant's Information Sheet.

For participants who wish to remain anonymous, I shall strive for the greatest confidentiality possible under law. Participants will be informed of the limits to confidentiality as set out in the Data Protection Act

1988. Should participants choose to be identified, I shall obtain their explicit, unambiguous informed consent. However, if I feel that there is a risk in exposing a participant, I shall not disclose their identity. Respondents will be allowed to refuse the presence of recording devices.

I shall inform participants of all aspects of research that might influence their willingness to participate, and I will indicate their right to withdraw at any point, without any negative consequences. I shall not provide any form of payment that is so attractive as to induce participants to undertake risk against their better judgement. Direct observations of worker co-operations and community councils will only be carried out in what would normally be considered a public space where those observed would normally expect to be observed by strangers. I shall also be considerate of the possibility of intruding upon personal privacy in situations where individuals, while in a public space, feel they are unobserved.

It is unlikely that participants will be affected by stress or related factors after participating as questioning is not of a sensitive or personal nature

12. Informed Consent.

Please answer the following questions about how you inform participants about your research and then obtain their consent:

NOTE: Please see the template at the end of this form showing standard information that must be included on all consent forms.

a. Do research participants sign a written consent form and receive a copy for their records? If not, do they receive an information sheet that provides what they need to know before deciding to participate?

Participants shall sign a written consent form, and a copy shall be presented for their own records. The consent form shall contain my name, address, and contact details, as well as those of my supervisor. For those interviewees who shall not remain anonymous, the consent form shall indicate their right to withdraw consent at any time up until publication, and that they may view their data at their discretion. The following shall also be included:

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner"

Simple language shall be used (in both English and Spanish), with an outline of my PhD offered. The role of respondents in data collection shall be outlined, and I will explain how data is to be used to address the issue of the sustainability of post-neoliberalism. An outline of what the research is about, why it is being conducted, where the results will appear shall be given to participants. The consent form shall also outline the duration data is to be retained, how the data is to be stored, and when and how it shall be destroyed. For those respondents who wish to remain anonymous, the limits to confidentiality shall be outlined and the following statement included:

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

b. When, where, and by whom is consent obtained?

Where possible, consent of potential respondents shall be obtained in advance via electronic means. I shall personally contact all respondents in advance. If electronic confirmation is not possible, I will deliver a hard copy of the consent form to potential respondents in advance of data collection, giving sufficient time for respondents to read and comprehend details.

c. If children or vulnerable persons are involved, please explain your procedure for obtaining their assent.

N/A

d. For projects in which participants will be involved over the long term, how will you ensure that participants have an ongoing opportunity to negotiate the terms of their consent?

Please bear in mind that in order to negotiate further consent identifiers will have to be collected with the data. If data is completely anonymous please ensure that consent is sought from participants at the outset to maintain and re-use their data.

N/A

e. What will the participants be told about the study?

Participants shall be told that the study is to help complete a PhD, and a full synopsis of the proposed research shall be made available in both Spanish and English, including dissemination plans, so as to fully inform the participants of the purpose of the project.

f. What information, if any, will be withheld about the research procedure or the purposes of the investigation? Please explain your justification for withholding this information. If any deception will be involved, please be sure that the technique is explained above under methodology, and explain here why the deception is justified.

No information about the project shall be withheld

13. Follow-up. As appropriate, please explain what strategies you have in place to debrief or follow up with participants.

Participants shall be offered an electronic version of the completed project should they wish.

14. Confidentiality/Anonymity of Data.

Please consult Maynooth University data protection procedures:
http://dataprotection.nuim.ie/protection_procedures.shtml

a. Recording of personally identifiable information about research participants

Identifier <i>(Typically, by their very nature projects involving repeated contact with research participants require the collection and retention of identifiers)</i>	Y/ N (Select all those applicable)
Name and Contact Details	y
Details regarding Geographical location, culture, ethnicity etc.	y
Video recording	n
Audio recording	y
Other please specify	
Not applicable	

b. If yes, to any of the above please explain how confidentiality and/or anonymity are assured?

Please ensure that participants are informed of the limits to confidentiality as outlined in section 3.3 of the ethics policy
(<http://research.nuim.ie/system/files/images/Ethics%20Policy%20Approved%20by%20AC%2012%2002%2012.pdf>)

The following or similar text may be used in consent/information sheet.

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

All data shall be stored in a safe and secure manner (please see below for further details). All participants shall be informed of the limits to confidentiality. All participants shall be given the option to refuse the use of recording devices. Data included in published results shall in no way allow for respondents to be identified (should they wish for anonymity) – for example place names, personal data, role in an institution, ethnicity etc.

c. If yes, to any of the above please explain the following: how you will safeguard this information; if identifiers will be removed from the data, at what point will they be removed; if identifiers will not be removed, why they must be retained and who will retain the key to re-identify the data.

If identifiers are collected they should be stored separately to the data.

Please state who will have access to the identifiers and/or the data.

Data should be encrypted and stored on campus either on a desktop computer or secure server

Data should be removed from mobile devices as soon as possible following collection. (mobile devices should be either password protected or encrypted where possible).

All data, manual or otherwise, shall be stored safely and securely. In the case of manual data, it will be stored in securely locked cabinets in a room with limited access. For electronic forms of data, it shall be protected through use of passwords, encryption, access logs and backup, while firewalls and up to date anti-virus software shall be employed. Data shall only be stored on a desktop computer with a secure server. Recording devices shall have password protection. Transcription of interview recordings shall be carried out as soon as feasible. Following transcription of interview recordings, the original taped transcript shall be erased and the transcribed version protected as outlined above. Once transcribed, the data shall be given identifiers which shall only be known and retained by me. Identifiers shall be stored separately from data, and shall be treated with the same level of protection and security as the data itself. As there shall be a large amount of data, identifiers shall be necessary to interpret the source of the data.

d. After data analysis has taken place, will the data be destroyed [] or retained [x]

If the data will be retained, please explain for how long, for what purpose, and where it will be stored; if there is a key code connecting subjects' data to their identity, when will the link be destroyed?

Please bear in mind that identifiable data cannot be retained in definitely.

If data is to be retained consent must be sought before anonymisation

If identifiers are to be retained then further consent must be sought for any subsequent use of data

Data shall be stored for a period of 10 years following publication of findings so as to ensure possible future reassessment of data. Data shall not be used for any other purpose than outlined in the methodology of the project. All data, manual or otherwise, shall be stored safely and securely. In the case of manual data, it will be stored in securely locked cabinets in a room with limited access. For electronic forms of data, it shall be protected through use of passwords, encryption, access logs and backup, while firewalls and up to date anti-virus software shall be employed. Data shall only be stored on a desktop computer with a secure server. Respondents shall be made aware of the storage of data before collection commences. The key code for identifying data shall be destroyed after the 10 year period elapses, and shall be stored separately from data.

e. If the data will be destroyed, please explain how, when, and by whom?

Electronic data should be overwritten

Paper data should be destroyed by confidential shredding

Paper data shall be destroyed by confidential shredding once the retention period has expired. I shall carry out this procedure. Electronic data shall be overwritten 3-5 times upon completion of the data retention

period. If changing PC, a member of NUIM's IT staff shall be employed to clean the hard drive. Recorded interviews shall be destroyed as soon as they have been transcribed. Tapes shall be erased and overwritten.

NOTE: Include this information in the consent form, information sheet, or consent script.

15. Ethics in subsequent outputs. What are your plans for protecting the safety and integrity of research participants in publications, public presentations, or other outputs resulting from this research? How will subjects' permission for further use of their data be obtained?

Data shall only be used for the purpose for which it was originally gathered, expressly agreed upon with research participants. All data shall be kept safe and secure. Only those participants who sign a consent form to waive anonymity shall be mentioned by name in any publication or presentation. To provide anonymity to those who desire/require it, no mention of names, institutions or any information that would allow for identity of participants to be revealed shall be released in any form of publication or presentation. Any further use of data beyond that which was originally agreed upon by participants shall be proceeded by the requisition of unambiguous written consent from the participants.

NOTE: If the data is not anonymised, additional consent would have to be obtained before the data could be deposited in an archive such as the Irish Qualitative Data Archive (<http://www.iqda.ie/>) or the Irish Social Science Data Archive (<http://issda.ucd.ie/>).

16. Professional Codes of Ethics. Please append a professional code of ethics governing research in your area to this protocol, and/or provide a link to the website where the code may be found.

http://www.sociology.ie/docstore/dls/pages_list/3_sai_ethical_guidelines.pdf

Informed consent sheet:

Informed consent form – please complete if you are happy to take part in the study.

TITLE • Democratisation and the radical-Left in Latin America: Towards a post-neoliberal citizenship regime? Lessons from Bolivia and Venezuela

Name of Researcher: John Brown e-mail: john.brown.2015@mumail.ie Room 34, Sociology Department, Auxilia Building, NUIM, Kildare, Ireland

Name Of Supervisor: Dr. Barry Cannon e-mail: barry.cannon@nuim.ie Phone: (01) 7087147 Room 3.6, Sociolgy Department, Auxilia Building, NUIM, Kildare

Where participants do not choose anonymity, participants may remove their consent at any time up until the work is published, after which time consent may not be withdrawn. Such participants are entitled to access their data at their discretion.

Please indicate by circling whether you wish to remain anonymous or not:

YES, I wish to remain anonymous

NO, I do not wish to remain anonymous

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the research information sheet for the above study.
2. I have spoken to the above researcher and understand that my involvement will involve being interviewed at a time and place to suit me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

- 3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

- 4. I understand that the above researcher from the Maynooth University who is working on the project will have access to my personal details.

- 5. I understand that all data will be stored securely and is covered by the data protection act.

- 6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Project information sheet:

PROJECT TITLE: Democratisation and the radical-Left in Latin America: Towards a post-neoliberal citizenship regime? Lessons from Bolivia and Venezuela

This project aims to map changes to economic and social policies of current and previous governments in Venezuela and Bolivia, and to identify attitudes of key members of society to said changes. This research project forms the basis of a PhD in Sociology from the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM). It is a four year project and data generated shall be used to assist in the writing of academic literature to be published in journals or books. Participants involved in the project shall be interviewed so as to gather their opinions on a range of social, political, and economical issues.

All data collected shall be stored safely and securely. Manual data shall be stored in securely locked cabinets in a room with limited access. Electronic data shall be protected through the use of passwords, encryption, access logs and backup, while firewalls and anti-virus software shall also be employed. Transcription of recorded interviews shall be carried out promptly, and the recordings will then be erased. For participants who chose to waiver anonymity, any future use of data pertaining to them shall be preceded by the attainment of their explicit consent to do so on each occasion the data is to be used. Data shall be kept for ten years from the date of first publication in order to allow for future reassessment of data. After this period, manual data shall be destroyed using confidential shredding, while electronic data will be overwritten, erased and wiped clean by a professional IT staff member from Maynooth University.

It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

