

Incorporation as a Social Contract: Parties, Popular Sector Organizations, and the Durability of Pink Tide Era Interest Intermediation Regimes

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During the neoliberal era, Latin American governments adopted market-led development models that largely ignored or repressed popular sector demands. Effectively shut out of the political arena and facing ever worsening living conditions, various popular sector groups mobilized to demand a change of course in state-society relations and the dominant development model, away from laissez-faire economics and towards a more mixed-economy with greater state intervention and attention to substantive needs (Silva 2009). In most Latin American countries, reformist political parties picked up these popular sector demands and rode the wave of discontent all the way to the presidency, in what became known as the Pink Tide.

In their attempt to overcome the market models and the political, social, and economic instability they engendered, Pink Tide governments pursued new projects of popular sector incorporation, understood as a process of state recognition and channeling of popular sectors' demands through political institutions and policy. These projects sought to transition from neglect and repression to recognition and fulfillment of popular sector demands (Rossi 2017). The relevant political institutions that mediated popular sector demands and subsequent policy were electorally competitive political parties and the state (especially the presidency and line ministries).

These new projects of incorporation were different from those of the mid-twentieth-century incorporation in at least two important ways. First, differences in the subjects of

incorporation and their degree of homogeneity called for different mechanisms of interest intermediation. While the undisputed protagonist of the first wave of incorporation was a relatively homogenous formal urban working class, Pink Tide governments were dealing with highly heterogeneous popular sectors (including actors as different as indigenous peoples and precariously employed or unemployed workers, peasants and residents of poor neighborhoods). This heterogeneity required the creation of novel interest intermediation regimes (IIRs) that took on a segmented form, much more adaptable than the twentieth century state corporatism of the first wave of incorporation (Silva 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018). Second, and relatedly, the degree of institutionalization of the linkages between political institutions and politically relevant popular sector organizations (and popular sector subjects more generally) varied greatly. Whereas the formally institutionalized relationship between labor unions, political parties, and the state characterized the first wave of incorporation, the IIRs of the second wave were based – more often than not – on informal rules and routinized practices (Silva 2017).

However, the two waves of incorporation also shared one fundamental trait. Despite all their differences, both incorporation projects sought to establish a new *social contract*, which we define as the bundle of formal and informal institutional arrangements over distributive issues that define the limits of what dominant social groups may do to subordinate groups in pursuit of capital accumulation. These arrangements enhanced the capacity of the state to manage social conflict by addressing previously unattended demands and channeling tensions between competing interests in a non-violent way, thus rendering state-society relations more predictable and politics more stable (Loewe, Zintl and Houdret 2021: 1). In this way, incorporation-era social contracts ensured a modicum of *governability*, understood as a peaceful non-repressive

way of attaining political stability, which stood in stark contrast with the sociopolitical instability that characterized the pre-incorporation period.

In pursuit of establishing a new social contract, Pink Tide incorporation projects forged formal and informal linkages to subordinate social sectors and expanded basic socioeconomic and political rights to incorporate the demands of marginalized social groups, in the hope that it would confer broader legitimacy and social peace to democratic regimes. The return to power of conservative parties cast a shadow over the sustainability of the new interest intermediation mechanisms. And, as the new right-wing governments attempted to roll back popular sector incorporation, political and social unrest similar to the neoliberal era resurfaced.

This paper seeks to make two contributions. First, it puts forward a theoretical framework to conceive incorporation as the establishment of a new social contract that expands the socioeconomic and political rights of subordinate groups. We push back on narrow definitions of incorporation as a one-time unrepeatable sociopolitical process to understand it instead as a continuous process of negotiation and renegotiation of a social contract between the state and social groups. Drawing on analytical approaches to social contracts, we propose that incorporation projects depend on three factors (Loewe, Zintl and Houdret 2021): (1) the scope of the actors involved and the mechanisms connecting popular sectors to the state – i.e., the segmented IIRs; (2) the deliverables exchanged between the state and popular sectors – i.e., the public policy that flows from IIRs; (3) the durability of the arrangements over time. The determinants of (1) and (2) have been investigated before (Silva 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018); the second contribution of this paper is to fill the gap regarding the third factor. To do so, we investigate under what minimal conditions a social contract is more likely to last. In particular, we seek to understand what explains variation in the durability of popular sector incorporation

projects across Latin America in the face of conservative roll back, and what are the effects on governability.

We argue that the durability of the new incorporation projects rested on two components: (a) the characteristics of the *mechanisms* of incorporation themselves – i.e., the segmented IIRs and socioeconomic policy – and (b) the continuity of the *agents* of incorporation – i.e., the organizations that represent popular sector interests in the political sphere. Whereas any incorporation project is ultimately realized in the implementation of IIRs and public policy, no popular sector incorporation is possible without popular sector representation in the political sphere. As a matter of fact, in their attempts to rollback Pink Tide incorporation projects, conservative governments took aim at both the mechanisms and the agents of incorporation, as they tried to revert public policy, hollow out IIRs, and push reformist political parties out of the electoral arena.

The paper argues that the success of rollback attempts hinged on the strength of the popular-sector coalition, and in particular on what we call the *overlap* between popular sector representation in the political sphere (i.e., reformist political parties) and popular sector organization in the associational sphere (i.e., social movements). The more politically cohesive the popular coalition, the more likely are reformist political parties and social movements to coordinate political action, and the more costly it is for the conservative government to rollback Pink Tide incorporation projects. On the contrary, fissures across the popular coalition's political and associational spheres weaken the prospects of popular sector incorporation and undermine governability in the long term.

We analyze the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador to illustrate the plausibility of our framework. We show how in Ecuador the disconnect between the major reformist party *Alianza*

PAIS and popular sector organizations made it difficult to coordinate political action across the political and associational spheres. This deficiency paved the way for conservative forces to roll back major portions of the segmented IIRs and socioeconomic policies promoted by the Correa government. This sparked recurring waves of mass protest against economic stabilization and structural reform programs. In Bolivia, on the contrary, the cohesion between the MAS and popular sector organizations – renovated after the ouster of Morales – and their capacity to act in tandem hindered rollback by a comparatively more repressive conservative government. This enhanced governability after the conservative government was voted out of power as long as the MAS remained unified. We address alternative explanations in the concluding section of the paper.

Incorporation After Neoliberalism: The Challenge of Popular Sector Heterogeneity and the Emergence of Segmented Interest Intermediation Regimes

Pink Tide governments promoted new popular sector incorporation projects after the crisis of Washington Consensus free-market development models. The challenge they faced lay in the heterogeneity of the popular sectors under conditions of inequality in relation to both dominant classes and among themselves (Roberts 1998; Luna 2014). Collective action problems had to be overcome (Olson 1971). During the neoliberal period, many popular sector groups besides labor gained political significance, including indigenous peoples and peasant movements, unemployed workers, denizens of poor neighborhoods, precariously employed workers, landless peasants, and rural day laborers (Silva 2012; Silva and Rossi 2018). The emergence of new actors raised important questions. Can governments incorporate in recognizable IIRs politically relevant popular sector groups with varied degrees of organization, diverse and sometimes conflicting

interests, and mixed mobilization capacity? How did a new incorporation project emerge? How could it contribute to political stability?

The experience of Pink Tide governments provided an answer to these questions. They developed a new and more malleable type of IIR for popular sectors and poor subaltern social groups than the union-party hub and state corporatism of the mid twentieth century (Collier and Collier 1991; Collier 2009). These were *segmented popular interest intermediation regimes* (Silva 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018). Using a variety of forms of interest intermediation, they *differentially* articulated heterogeneous but identifiable and politically relevant popular sector social groups and their interests to the political arena, understood as the state, legislative institutions, political parties, and the policy process. Thus, a modal type of segmented popular interest intermediation *regime* does not exist, as was the case in the first incorporation with state corporatism. Segmented popular IIRs vary across cases according to the mix of *forms* of intermediation that link popular sectors to politics.

Pink Tide governments drew on four recognizable forms of interest intermediation: the amalgamation they chose defined the particular variant of segmented popular sector IIRs. The first two forms are familiar: an adapted form of state corporatism persisted and traditional clientelist modes.¹ In addition, the 2000s gave rise to two new forms of popular sector interest intermediation: state managerialism and contestatory intermediation. State managerialism entailed recognition of popular sector demands and public policy to address them, while keeping the popular sector organizations that raised those demands out of the policy process. Instead, the state manages popular sector demands directly through programmatic social policy and targeted benefits, including subsidies to consumption. Contestatory interest intermediation constituted an

¹ In this paper, we exclude clientelist modes because it persists largely unaltered over time.

informal form of interest intermediation in the absence of formal channels of access to the state. It involved routinized interactions where government proposes a policy, affected popular sectors protest, negotiation between them ensues, and the government then abides by the resulting bargain (Silva 2017).

The *ad hoc* combination of different forms of interest intermediation granted flexibility to the new popular IIRs and made them capable of addressing different demands from heterogeneous sectors. It is precisely this flexibility that contributed to political stability by controlling tensions between government and popular sectors, which might have otherwise boiled over, as they had during the cycles of anti-neoliberal contention. As a matter of fact, Pink Tide governments and their incorporation projects were able to ensure a modicum of governability after a period of chronic political instability that characterized most Latin American countries between the 1990s and early 2000s. The return of right-wing governments seeking to roll back popular sector gains and to *dis-incorporate* them again has contributed to heightened protest and political turmoil (Rossi 2017). These roll back attempts, however, had varying degrees of success. As we will see, the success of these attempts depended on the strength of the popular-sector coalition, and in particular on the degree of overlap between electorally predominant reformist parties operating in the political sphere and popular sector organizations operating in the associational sphere.

Popular Sector Incorporation and the Establishment of a New Social Contract

Popular sectors make demands based on necessity, and intense waves of mobilization based on necessity can cause political instability and undermine governability (Zuern 2011). Until those necessities are met, instability is likely to continue, and governability is difficult to attain.

Incorporation, in its different forms, constitutes a solution to break the pattern of mobilizations based on necessity. Conceptually, in our usage popular sector incorporation in the political arena involves the transmission of the popular sector's expressed demands to the state and the state's response to them. Therefore, popular sector incorporation is about the ways in which the state recognizes interests and demands and turns them into policies that address them.

The Pink Tide governments' new incorporation projects, and the recognition and fulfillment of popular sectors' demands over basic necessities they entailed, formed the basis of a new social contract that facilitated governability after the upheavals, growing socio-economic inequality, and political instability of the neoliberal period. It replaced the "neo-pluralist" – individual in the market – social contract that the neoliberal era had tried to impose (Oxhorn and Ducatenzeiler 1998). In the analytical usage of the concept, social contracts are formal or informal agreements between the state and social groups defining their respective rights and obligations towards each other (Loewe, Zintl and Houdret 2021:1). Read through the lens of incorporation, social contracts establish the limits of what dominant social groups may do to subordinate social groups in pursuit of capital accumulation. Violations of these limits create feelings of injustice that generate moral outrage and anger, rousing subordinate social groups against rulers and dominant groups (Moore 1978: 17-18). Understood this way, incorporation, in contrast to the more pluralist concept of inclusion, explicitly recognizes power imbalances among social groups. Popular sectors are not simply marginalized groups waiting to be let in, they are subordinate social groups (defined by location in the structure of production, race, and ethnicity) in an unequal social order demanding recognition and political action in favor of their expressed interests and demands. Demanding justice or, in other words, a more equal distribution of rights and obligations across social groups.

The effectiveness of social contracts in maintaining governability depends on their scope (the actors involved), their substance (the deliverables exchanged between state and society), and their temporal dimension (beginning, evolution, and duration) (Loewe, Zintl and Houdret 2021:1). Social contracts are effective so long as they “establish acceptable rules for the government and other actors on how to behave and interact [allowing] contracting parties to manage conflict” (Loewe, Zintl and Houdret 2021:3). Social contracts are not fixed in time, they are occasionally renegotiated. Sometimes major social groups propose social contracts that are not accepted by other major social groups – for example, the market version was roundly rejected in many countries, witness the cycles of mobilization against them. Radical non-market versions are also roundly rejected by property owners (Oxhorn and Ducatenzeiler 1998).

If the incorporation of popular sectors in the political arena is part of the process of establishing a new social contract, then it fundamentally hinges on the three abovementioned dimensions. First, segmented IIRs determine the scope of actors involved and the variety of mechanisms that link rulers to popular sector actors. The importance of IIRs rests on two vital functions that they perform: (a) they channel conflicts over competing interests and policy preferences among organized social groups in the policy process; and (b) they regulate the exchange of deliverables between state and society. Second, policy outputs establish the content and size of the deliverables that the state provides to popular sectors (e.g., basic infrastructure, social services, economic opportunities). This is the substance of incorporation: political institutions (parties and state) recognize and fulfil popular sector demands based on necessity through policy. Without exchange of deliverables through public policy there is no incorporation. Third, the resilience of incorporation projects and their capacity to withstand rollback determines

the durability of the social contract. The resilience of incorporation projects was put to the test when conservative governments returned to power.

Once back in power, conservative parties sought to terminate the social contract renegotiated under Pink Tide governments to return to the previous state of affairs, where popular sector demands were largely ignored, repressed or coopted. To terminate the Pink Tide-era social contract, conservative governments strove to roll back the mechanisms that connected popular sector actors to the political arena and severely reduce the deliverables exchanged between state and society. These attempts took the shape of a selective hollowing out of segmented popular IIRs and a reversion of the social policies that addressed popular sector demands. These actions, however, did not guarantee that Pink Tide incorporation projects were extinguished. To ensure that, conservative governments had to find ways to push reformist parties out of the electoral arena and prevent their return to the presidency.

The New Incorporation Projects: Mechanisms and Agents

The durability of the new incorporation projects rested on the functioning of two components: the *mechanisms* of incorporation and the *agents* who implemented and enforced them. As previously mentioned, the mechanisms of incorporation are formally or informally institutionalized channels that transmit popular sector's expressed demands to the state and state responses to them in the form of public policy. IIRs and related public policy outcomes are the ultimate realization of the incorporation projects, their crystallization that produces new patterns of state-society relations.

However, to continue functioning, incorporation mechanisms must be supported by a democratic state's major institutions of representation – i.e., the executive and legislative

branches. Incorporation mechanisms are likely to cease functioning if there is no political organization defending them in the political arena. For this reason, agents of incorporation – i.e., the reformist parties that represent popular sector interests in the political sphere – are a crucial component of incorporation projects: the functioning and durability of incorporation mechanisms ultimately depends on their active presence within state representative institutions.

It is thus no surprise that conservative reaction to Pink Tide-era incorporation took aim not only at the mechanisms of incorporation – in the form of interest intermediation regimes and policy outcome – but also at the agents of incorporation themselves. As a result, efforts to hollow out interest intermediation regimes and roll back social policy came along with different attempts to weaken (or outright annihilate) the reformist political parties that made incorporation possible by winning the presidency. These attempts aimed to impede the return of reformist parties to the presidency, either by curtailing their electoral capital (through, for instance, judicial attacks on their leaders) or to foreclose the electoral path altogether by postponing elections, impeding the inscription of the party or threatening to ban it.

Popular Incorporation Durability: The Importance of the Overlap Between Political and Associational Spheres

We argue that the success of conservative roll back, and thus the durability of incorporation projects, hinged on the strength of the popular-sector sociopolitical coalition, and in particular on the degree of overlap between popular sector representation in the political sphere (i.e., reformist political parties) and popular sector organization in the associational sphere (i.e., social movements). The more aligned are the interests of the main organizations within each sphere, the more likely are reformist political parties and social movements to coordinate political action,

and the more difficult it is for the conservative government to rollback Pink Tide incorporation projects. On the contrary, fissures within the popular coalition's political and associational spheres weaken the prospects of popular sector incorporation and undermine governability in the long term.

The importance of the relationship between political parties and social movements has been widely documented (Samuels and Zucco 2015; Anria et al. 2022). This is particularly true for the popular sectors, which normally must organize and mobilize to achieve any political goal. Indeed, political parties and social organizations operate in different spheres and must rely on each other to engage in successful, coordinated political action both during and between electoral cycles. Parties mainly operate in the political sphere, specifically in the electoral one, as they compete for votes to take control of state branches and steer policymaking. While historically they have been at the front and center of social mobilization, over the last half a century political parties around the world have gradually but surely withdrawn from the associational space to restrict themselves to electoral competition, often to the point of losing any autonomous capacity for extra-electoral mobilization. Thus, when mobilization becomes necessary beyond elections – e.g., to support a policy reform, prevent policy roll back, or mobilize against electoral manipulation – political parties are forced to rely on allied social movements that are still capable of mobilizing. On the contrary, social movements operate mostly in the associational sphere, where they engage in mobilization and coordinated action to promote their policy interests and try to influence policymaking. Without connections to political parties, though, their political influence is limited (Amenta 2006; Tarrow 2021).

Overlap (or lack thereof) between reformist parties and popular sector organizations determines their political possibilities and shapes the strategy that they pursue. When the

interests of the reformist parties and those of popular sector organizations are aligned the two can act in a coordinated fashion. Parties gain a foothold in the associational space and can effectively mobilize outside of elections while social organizations can channel support into the electoral sphere and secure an electoral outlet to represent their interests within national political institutions. In addition, overlap between parties and social organizations allows them to exert political pressure simultaneously in different venues (e.g., in the legislature and in the streets). On the contrary, when the interests of the reformist parties and those of popular sector organizations diverge, parties do not have the organizational resources to mobilize support outside of elections. Likewise, social organizations cannot channel support towards an electoral vehicle. They are thus unable to convert into ballots the support obtained through mobilization, which is likely to dissipate quickly. Moreover, when reformist parties and popular sector organizations have divergent interests and pursue different political goals, they might end up vying for the leadership of the popular sector. This “competition” often gives rise to an infighting within the popular camp that resembles a zero-sum game, where every action that incidentally benefits the other contender is deemed counterproductive. In this pattern of interaction, reformist parties and social organizations have the incentives to prioritize the narrower, particularistic interests of their own organization over the general interests of the social sectors they represent, with detrimental effects on the popular sectors at large.

Importantly, the overlap (or lack thereof) between reformist parties and popular sector organizations also affects the calculations of the conservative government when deciding whether to rollback social policy and to what extent. When the interests of parties and social organizations within the popular camp diverge, political parties cannot mobilize, social organizations have no representation in the electoral arena, and the two cannot coordinate

political action. In this scenario, the conservative government can adopt a *dividi et impera* strategy: counting on the fact that an alliance between parties and popular sector organizations is unlikely, it can negotiate with them individually, play one off against the other, and neutralize them through a combination of repressions and small, targeted, and even temporary concessions. The lack of an electoral outlet puts popular sector organizations in the position of having to settle for ephemeral victories because they are unable to gain access to policymaking at the highest level. Under these conditions, the conservative government can avoid making important concessions and has little incentive to refrain from rollback. On the contrary, when the popular camp pursues shared political goals and engages in coordinated political action across electoral and associational spheres, the conservative government is faced with a cohesive bloc and must negotiate with parties and social organization collectively. Rollback would spark mobilizations that cannot be easily dampened through minor concessions because popular sector organizations are not simply guided by short-term, particularistic interests but have as their ultimate goal the success of their electoral outlet. A minor, ephemeral victory is not enough when they could gain access to policymaking at the highest level. Under these conditions, rollback is more likely to lead to an adverse electoral outcome for the conservative camp, making it more costly and thus less likely.

Our argument situates itself squarely in the literature on the connections between parties and social organizations. There is a growing literature on the importance of linkages between parties and popular sector organizations for the type and durability of equity-related policies (e.g., Anria and Bogliaccini 2022; Anria et al. 2021; Chouhy 2022; Pribble 2013). This body of literature has made important advances in illuminating the relationship between party linkages, incorporation of popular sectors, and social policy outcomes. In this article we seek to

complement these scholarly efforts to provide a more complete picture of the attempted recent regional process of incorporation in historical perspective. Our analysis diverges from the abovementioned literature in four ways.

First, instead of party linkages and their varying strength, we focus on the concept of overlap between political and associational sphere. Linkages imply a strong relationship between political parties and social movements, involving organizational ties, preferably formal, or at least the transfer of personnel (e.g. social movement leaders taking on roles within party bureaucracies) between them. In this sense, strong linkages are arguably a sufficient condition for the formation of a cohesive sociopolitical coalition; yet they are not a necessary one. Parties and social organizations can act with some degree of coordination while remaining organizationally separated, simply because of having compatible interests and pursuing common goals. The concept of overlap thus sets a much lower bar to describe the type of connections between parties and social movements that result in coordinated political action.

Second, the abovementioned literature mainly revolves around the concept of democratic inclusion – generally used to indicate the bottom-up participation of popular sectors in policymaking, as opposed to the top-down fulfillment of their social demands without their direct involvement in decision making. Instead, the main normative concern of our analysis is *governability* – i.e. the capacity of a state to channel tensions over interests among social groups and thus manage societal conflict (Huntington 1968; Pizzorno 1981; Schmitter 1981). While the question of *how* societal interests are addressed is an important one, it arguably presupposes (and is logically subordinated to) the question of *whether* they are somehow addressed in the first place. Therefore, our analysis is preoccupied not so much with whether popular sector demands are incorporated from the bottom up or from the top down, as opposed to whether these demands

are in fact channeled in some fashion through formally or informally institutionalized mechanisms.

Third and relatedly, the object of our study is the durability of the segmented new interest intermediation regimes that Pink Tide governments built to channel popular sector demands, and associated policies. IIRs establish the rules of interaction between state and society and mediate conflict between adverse interests, which makes them a key component of any democratic regime. In particular, the new IIRs that emerged during the Pink Tide were an explicit recognition of popular sectors' expressed interests/demands during earlier cycles of anti-neoliberal mobilization and worked as the foundations of a new social contract. As such, they channeled volatile tensions between social sectors back into the policymaking realm, thus increasing governability and contributing to create a modicum of political stability (Silva and Rossi 2018). Unlike previous waves of incorporation, and because of the fragmentation of popular sectors after neoliberalism, the Pink-Tide-era IIRs were segmented, involving differential responses by governments to the diverse segments of the popular sectors (Silva 2017). As a result, in this paper we focus on the durability of specific channels and forms of interest intermediation and of the policies that flowed from these channels.

Fourth, we posit that coordinated political action between parties and popular sector organizations increase the chances of survival of IIRs and thus facilitate governability. Anria and Bogliaccini (2022) argue that strong party-society linkages can sometimes block progress in addressing popular sector demands because certain party-linked groups leverage their privileged position in the coalition and block further inclusive reforms unfavorable to them. While that possibility is well documented in their account, we argue that party-society coalitions are also the

best bulwark against conservative rollback and their strength is related to more durable IIRs and equity-related policies.

Case Selection: Popular Incorporation Durability in Bolivia and Ecuador

To illustrate the plausibility of our theoretical framework, we investigate the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador. The cases are comparable in that they both constructed segmented interest intermediation regimes that incorporated the organizations and/or expressed interests of the popular sectors involved in the politically destabilizing cycles of anti-neoliberal contention of the 1990s and early 2000s. Each secured higher levels of governability for most of the Pink Tide period. In addition, popular sectors in both countries are characterized by high levels of organizational density in the associational sphere –peasant and indigenous constituencies in particular.

What were the main characteristics of Bolivia and Ecuador’s segmented IIRs? Bolivia under Evo Morales and the *Movimiento al Socialismo* combined three varieties of interest intermediation: state managerial, adaptive state corporatist, and contestatory. Ecuador under Rafael Correa and *Alianza PAIS* relied primarily on state managerialism, although he also resorted to adapted corporatism and contestatory intermediation to incorporate less important popular sector organizations (peasant, indigenous, and afro-descendant) incapable of challenging his rule. Our basic hypothesis is that segmented IIRs will be less vulnerable to dismantlement, and policies promoting socio-economic equity less susceptible to rollback, depending on the degree of overlap between popular sector organizations and left parties and their capacity for coordinated political action in both the political and associational spheres.

Case Studies

*Ecuador*²

In Ecuador, conservative pro-market forces came back to power by surprise during the presidency of Lenín Moreno (2017-2021). Moreno was Correa's vice-president for two terms and in 2017 ran and won office on the AP party platform. Substantial continuity with Correa's government was expected alongside some potentially positive changes. Correa's tenure had created significant rifts with the business community, with CONAIE, and the traditional labor movement (notably the FUT). Moreno promised dialogue to heal those divisions. Despite economic hard times brought on by the end of the commodity boom and the fall in oil revenues, he pledged to protect the social safety net. However, Moreno progressively moved away from the AP party platform and closer to the positions of the pro-market opposition, and by his second year in office he had already launched a full-scale attack on Correa's form of segmented popular IIRs and socioeconomic policies.

These developments unfolded in two moments. The first moment held out the hope of strengthening its corporatist component with semi-institutionalization of consultation and bargaining roundtables. This constituted an attempt to re-equilibrate the Correa era interest intermediation regime after negotiation with politically aggrieved popular organizations and business associations. The second moment involved rollback of state managerialism and toughing out protests reminiscent of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

² In this section, we will focus on examining the Moreno administration (2017-2021). Moreno ended up becoming the first conservative president after a decade under reformist president Rafael Correa. We focus on the Moreno presidency because he took the first decisive steps to roll back Correa's popular sector incorporation project. The dynamic described in our analysis of the Moreno administration carries over to Lasso (2021-present), who only deepened and pushed further the roll back attempts of his predecessor.

Expansion of adaptive corporatism? Moreno's first move in power was to try to build bridges with societal organizations – both popular-sector and business – that were left out of Correa's incorporation project and were thus at odds with AP. To do that, president Moreno established a series of National Dialogue Roundtables (*Mesas de Diálogo Nacional*) in July 2017 to get societal input for solutions to Ecuador's most pressing issues (El Universo 2017a). Topics included the business climate, labor relations, extractive development and its impact on communities (especially indigenous peoples), the fiscal deficit, protecting social policy, and reviewing restrictions on the press. In addition to state officials, each roundtable included a range of affected societal interests, such as business, labor, and broader civil society participation more generally, such as indigenous, farmer, environmentalist, university staff and administrators (El Comercio 2017). They participated at the presidency's invitation, not by right. Most of the Dialogue Roundtables operated between July and October 2017.

The roundtables were arenas in which invited social group organizations submitted policy positions to state officials who considered them as recommendations, opportunities for direct negotiation, or ignored them. The roundtables helped government officials shape consensus on policy reforms, reduce social conflict, and bolstered legitimacy for government initiatives. Not all groups had the same weight. Discussions around investment, taxation, financial markets, and labor relations favored private sector interests, particularly in reducing the role of the state in the economy, promoting investment by reducing intervention in financial markets and corporate taxation, and more flexible labor relations (Secretaría General de Comunicación de la Presidencia 2017). Yet, participating popular sector organizations did not come out of the roundtables completely empty handed. Moreno committed to protecting the social safety net Correa had built to protect vulnerable populations in hard economic times. Getting control of

fiscal deficits and improving competitiveness would not come at the expense of the people. Ecuador would not, government officials claimed, go down the road of austerity politics (Celi Moscoso 2017).

Significantly, Moreno attempted rapprochement with the CONAIE, which maintained a very tense relationship with *Correismo* despite the ideological affinity. In mid-2017, Moreno reinstated state-supported national bilingual education programs that Correa had terminated in his first administration and gave CONAIE control over them. He also made available free of charge a new headquarters on a 100-year lease. Moreno made further overtures in December 2017 after meeting with indigenous leaders. He suspended concessions for mining and hydrocarbons and for operations already underway until all requirements for project implementation were met, especially free and informed prior community consent. CONAIE responded cautiously, “It is a first step, an important step that the president listen to us.” (Mongabay 2017) However, since they were only verbal agreements CONAIE pushed Moreno for written orders to the relevant ministries (CONAIE 2017). Government hedging was evident. Whereas CONAIE demanded termination of large-scale extractive projects in favor of alternative sustainable development, the government gave companies two months to make tangible headway in the evaluation of concessions. Nevertheless, in a further show of good faith, Moreno arranged for the Ministry of the Environment to work directly with CONAIE in the Dialogue Roundtable on Environment and Biodiversity (Ministerio del Ambiente 2017).

Moreno also included organized labor, which also had maintained a conflictive relationship with Correa, in the dialogue process. In September 2017 he established a National Dialogue Roundtable for labor code reform. This was a classic tripartite forum involving government, employers’ associations, and labor unions. All three of the major union

confederations participated: the FUT, the CUT, and the *Parlamento Laboral* (Ministerio del Trabajo 2017a). Their platform stressed that all workers had the right to join unions, unions should be able to organize by economic sector, and the power of the labor ministry should be increased. The CUT also wanted the government to provide a permanent headquarters. The goal was to complete a draft labor code reform bill by December 2017 (Ministerio del Trabajo 2017b). When the deadline lapsed, March 2018 became the new target deadline (Gobierno de la República del Ecuador 2017).³

While he was trying to get popular sector organizations on the government's side, Moreno strove to defeat the *Correista* faction within AP, which was growing worried of Moreno's drift away from the economic and political project he inherited. To kill two birds with one stone, Moreno proposed a referendum for February 2018 containing seven questions that emerged from the Dialogue Roundtables. The first three questions aimed to neutralize Correa: a ban on corruption-connected politicians at a time when many former *Correista* officials were under investigation; election term limits, which made it impossible for Correa to run for the presidency; and restructuring the *Consejo de Participación Ciudadana* to replace members appointed during Correa's tenure. Questions five and seven were clear nods to indigenous peoples and environmentalists: one supported a ban on mining on protected lands; the other limited oil exploration to one third of the surface previously considered. Question six, which proposed eliminating a controversial special 75 percent tax on speculative real estate and land deals was a nod to property owners. All of socio-economic and political forces of Ecuador supported them, with the exception of Correa's AP faction, and all seven questions passed by

³ <http://parlana.secom.gob.ec/presidente-lenin-moreno-se-reune-movimientos-trabajadores/>;
<http://www.eltiempo.com.ec/noticias/ecuador/4/427404/primer-borrador-de-proyecto-codigo-organico-integral-del-trabajo-estaria-listo-en-primer-trimestre-2018>.

large majorities. From CONAIE's perspective, these results were encouraging. They meant a restraint on extractivism while also neutralizing Correa and his AP faction, which had consistently sought to block their policy objectives, delegitimize, and weaken them. It was expected that Moreno's government would, at least to some degree, implement referenda results.

Yet, there was a troubling ambivalence to Moreno's messaging that made popular sector organizations cautious. Although Moreno included labor unions in discussions of labor code reform, he also asserted the need for flex-labor to accelerate job creation. Similarly, Moreno listened to CONAIE's long-standing demand for indigenous control over territory and the resources on it. He temporarily suspended new concessions for large-scale extractive development projects and put the question on the constitutional referendum but also publicly supported extractive development (Amazon Watch 2018). Despite the ambivalence, these signs of goodwill were enough to suspend the Correa era antagonism between government and popular sector organizations. Most importantly, this showed how Moreno could leverage the lack of overlap between popular sector organizations and the main reformist party to weaken the latter without making any firm policy commitment to the former.

The Unraveling of Correa-Era Segmented Interest Intermediation. In the midst of Moreno's maneuverings, Ecuador's troubled economy took a turn for the worse. It had recovered somewhat from the 1.5 percent contraction of 2015 due to a modest rebound in oil prices, expanding by 0.2 percent in 2017. However, its fiscal deficit (and the current account deficit) grew in 2017 to 6 percent of GDP. In a crucial turning point in late July 2017, Moreno publicly announced that Ecuador's finances were in trouble and that the outgoing government had misrepresented the public debt: instead of 27.7 percent of GDP it stood at 59 percent (Wolff

2018: 282). Because this surpassed the legal level of 40 percent of GDP, the government had to trim expenditures. Everything now depended on the government's approach to managing fiscal debt: deep fiscal cuts to pay foreign creditors or attempt debt restructuring to protect employment, wages, and social programs.

While Moreno committed to protect education, health, housing, and social services (Wolff 2018: 283; El Universo 2017b), the feeling that Moreno's promises to popular sector organizations were destined to remain unfulfilled intensified with the appointment of Richard Martínez as Minister of Finance in May 2018. Martínez was a former president of the premier business peak association *Comité Empresarial Ecuatoriano*, well connected to multilateral lending institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, and had supported Moreno's initial US\$ 1 bn. cut in capital expenditures to trim the budget deficit; a move that still protected flagship social transfer programs. The government's interest in pursuing orthodox economic stabilization and market-oriented structural reforms became transparent when in that same month it invited representatives of the IMF and the World Bank to discuss Ecuador's economic situation (Secretaría General de Comunicación de la Presidencia 2018).

The turn to economic orthodoxy in mid-2018 caused a break between Moreno and the popular sectors and, consequently, the end of Correa-style segmented popular interest intermediation. Already in June the government dashed any hopes CONAIE may have had for gaining a measure of control over extractive activities in indigenous territory. Moreno unequivocally backed mining and hydrocarbon extraction to offset lost oil revenue and to court international private investors. The government lifted the partial moratorium on concessions, including in the Yasuní and militarized conflicted mining zones to protect mines coming on line,

like Río Blanco (Mongabay 2018). It was clear that Moreno would not follow through on the referendum items of interest to CONAIE (France24 2018).

The opening salvo in Moreno's turn to IMF-backed austerity came quickly in August 2018. Popular sectors believed it signaled the government's intention to make them pay the costs of adjustment. One measure involved laying-off some 1,500 public sector workers by eliminating seven "coordinating" ministries and 22 public institutions (La República 2018a). Far worse, the government raised subsidized fuel prices – one of two pillars of the state managerial component of Correa-era segmented popular interest intermediation along with social policy. This undermined a key mechanism for the incorporation of popular sector interests as expressed during the anti-neoliberal cycles of protest from the 1990s to the early 2000s. This weakening of the post-neoliberal social pact, provoked the first FUT protest against Moreno's government (La República 2018b). Adding insult to injury, the legislature approved a law to boost economic production centered on tax breaks for private industry and guarantees to foreign investors (El Comercio 2018).

CONAIE responded in mid-November 2018 with widespread protests in major cities to pressure the government into honoring the constitutional referendum's mandate with respect to extractive development. Demands centered on water for communities over mining and oil companies, the scaling back of extractive-based development, and the application of community prior consent laws to energy projects that posed risks to ancestral lands. CONAIE threatened to radicalize protests if the government ignored it (La República 2018c) but the lack of synergy with the main opposition party in the legislature – i.e., *Correísmo* – dampened the effect of such threats.

Indeed, Moreno's government did not back down. It was deep into negotiations with the IMF for a three-year Extended Facility Fund loan and in February 2019 an IMF mission in Quito was finalizing the deal. Meanwhile, the Ecuadorian government attempted to justify the unpopular decision. It needed US\$ 8bn for 2019 to manage the fiscal deficit and an IMF seal of approval could help the country get cheaper loans in international financial markets. (Ecuavisa 2019). Both CONAIE and the FUT mobilized in early February against the impending IMF austerity package (El Universo 2019a). Between February 27 and March 1, about 10,000 public employees were laid off (NODAL 2019). CONAIE and FUT rightly concluded that the fuel price increases imposed on them the previous year were a bona fide to the IMF of the government's worthiness for assistance as were the measures favoring the private sector.⁴ *Correismo* was vocal against IMF involvement as well, but no common front with CONAIE and FUT was in sight.

The IMF three-year Extended Facility Fund for US\$ 4.2 bn. announced on 11 March 2019 ended all possibility of building on or maintaining Ecuador's Correa-era segmented popular interest intermediation regime. The government had made its choice for austerity thereby shifting the burden of costs of economic adjustment on the popular sectors. Those costs would be imposed, not negotiated, thus truncating development of a new corporatism and gutting major portions of state managerial interest intermediation – subsidies to consumption, state supported employment and capital investment, and what remained of union protection for workers. Pro-poor social transfer programs were the one pillar of state managerialism that remained standing, as it was supported by complimentary loans from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Andean Common Market Development Fund among others.

⁴ LatinNews.com, Latin American Weekly Report, 7 February 2019.

Missed Opportunity for Expanding Contestatory Intermediation. As the return of the IMF to Ecuador spurred widening protests, contestatory forms of intermediation might have expanded from its stringently limited contours under Correa. But they did not. Organized popular sectors protested vigorously, but the government was single-mindedly intent on meeting IMF conditionality. Thus, agreements, however tenuous they might have been, were abandoned as the government redoubled its efforts to impose austerity.

By end-August 2019 the FUT was organizing a national strike for September/October 2019 to protest of labor code reforms, laying off public sector workers, undermining collective bargaining, and plans for the privatization of state enterprises (La República 2019a). In response, the government stiffened its position. After passing an IMF review, Finance Minister Richard Martínez confirmed Ecuador would stay the course: “The immediate challenge within this pathway to economic recuperation is to implement the pending structural reforms” (El Universo 2019b). In July 2019, confronting CONAIE, Moreno declared his intent to make mining one of the pillars of economy and threw his weight behind multinational mining companies by offering guarantees to property and profits (less taxes and regulations) (La República 2019b).

Facing down expanding opposition, on 1 October 2019 Moreno underscored his government’s resolve to implement IMF-supported fiscal austerity and structural reforms. Decree 883 removed all subsidies to diesel and gasoline fuel, projected to save the treasury \$1.2 bn. a year (El Universo 2019c). This demolished another key pillar of state managerialism; a second one, government capital expenditures and purchases of goods and services, was already gone. Fuel prices were expected to rise 25 to 75 percent overnight. Moreno also announced that Ecuador was leaving OPEC effective 1 January 2020 hoping that increased production would raise revenue (Reuters 2019a). He reiterated his commitment to tax and labor code reform bills

sent to congress to generate \$600 m. in revenue and to “facilitate the hiring of those who are seeking work” (El Telégrafo 2019).

The elimination of fuel subsidies triggered a general strike on 3 October 2019. Twelve days of intense popular sector and indigenous “uprising” shook the country with epicenters in Quito and Guayaquil. It involved all of the major private and public labor confederations including teachers, the CONAIE (which also protested intensified extractive investment), transport unions, and the general citizenry, mostly of underprivileged social groups.⁵ Moreno doubled down, declaring a state of exception accompanied by violent police repression that only intensified resistance. Fearful of indigenous columns marching on Quito he moved the government to Guayaquil on 7 October. The next day indigenous protesters burst into the National Assembly to demand Moreno’s impeachment (DW 2019a). Moreno sought to establish dialogue with CONAIE and, after making contact, on 9 October returned to Quito. He declared himself open to dialogue but insisted, “the measures are correct and adequate” (CNN Español 2019). Neither CONAIE nor the union movement let up on protests even as dialogue proceeded. They insisted fuel subsidies had to be reinstated.

Moreno bowed to the CONAIE-led protests on 13 October 2019 after reaching an agreement in which he rescinded Decree 883 in return for CONAIE demobilizing. The 12 days of protest left at least 11 dead, 1,500 injured, and 1,200 arrested. Here was a clear opportunity for expanding contestatory interest intermediation. However, negotiations promised to be difficult. Moreno was on record saying austerity could not be avoided (some sacrifices had to be made on both sides). CONAIE demanded the IMF agreement be made public and the dismissal of the ministers of interior and defense for violently repressing the protests (DW 2019b).

⁵ The transport unions bowed early after striking a deal with the government that permitted them to charge higher fares and accelerated depreciation rates on vehicles to offset higher fuel prices.

Positions hardened on both sides of the dialogue by mid-November 2019. The government, needing to meet IMF conditionality, wanted to raise taxes and to find alternative ways of cutting fiscal spending now that it could not eliminate fuel subsidies. For example, it sought to cut some US\$ 455 m. in the public sector wage bill and US\$ 246 m. in government procurement of goods and services (Primicias 2019). Meanwhile, the *Parlamento de los Pueblos* (organized by CONAIE and including major union federations, peasant unions, FEINE, and FENOCIN, teachers, and students) defined its own policy positions. These involved shifting the cost of adjustment on those with greater capacity to pay. Countering the government's tax reform bill it proposed to levy a 4 percent tax on higher income earners, slap a tax on the assets of the 270 largest corporations in Ecuador, and reduce the VAT from 12 to 10 percent. They argued this proposal could raise US\$ 2 bn.⁶

Moreno's administration paid little heed. At first, it introduced a new version of an economic reform bill that the National Legislature had rejected the year before. It contained 404 articles on "optimization" of expenditures, business-friendly labor code reform, tax increases to finance government debt, and on fiscal transparency. Both popular sector and indigenous organizations opposed it, as did the major business chamber (CIP). The legislature rejected the bill (Reuters 2019b). The administration revised the bill, narrowing down its scope hoping to raise US\$ 620 m and satisfy IMF conditionality. This version passed in National Assembly. It raised taxes on high earners as well as indirect taxes on selected non-essential goods and services. It also contained tax reduction measures to appease critics such as the tourist industry, indebted students, and agricultural producers (DW 2019c). The IMF was appeased and dialogue with popular sector organization was abandoned.

⁶ LatinNews.com, Latin America Weekly Report ,7 November 2019.

Disconnect Between Party and Popular Sector Organizations. The missed opportunity for contestatory intermediation showed how detrimental was the disconnect between the major reformist party AP and popular sector organizations, mainly the FUT and CONAIE, for the protection of socioeconomic policies that benefitted the popular sectors. The lack of coordination between popular sector representation in the political sphere and popular sector organization in the associational sphere made roll back much easier for the Moreno government.

On the one hand, popular sector organizations did not have any access to political institutions and thus could not work in tandem with any major political party to put pressure on the government and hinder roll back. In this sense, political institutions lost their capacity to process social conflict and ensure a minimum degree of governability. The only way popular sector organizations had to pressure the government was to stay mobilized. Yet, mobilization could not be sustained ad infinitum – especially as they were met with fierce repression – and this forced social movements to settle for cosmetic concessions even knowing that the government would renege on (or find a way around) them to pursue its project of disincorporation. Moreover, during the October 2019 protests CONAIE was looking to regain a central role on the national political scene after *Correísmo* forced it out of the spotlight for over a decade (Becker 2013). As a result, CONAIE leaders might have been content with forcing the government to the table, gain credibility in the eyes of popular sectors, while also avoiding early elections with a possible return of Correa. Particularistic organizational interests might have prevailed over the interests of the popular sectors at large.

On the other hand, *Correísmo* had to struggle to not lose inscription in the electoral registry and continue to compete electorally. The *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE) first

supported Moreno in the infighting to control AP, then blocked two attempts on the part of *Correismo* to register its own party, forcing it to form provisional alliances with registered parties to be able to participate in elections (Ramírez 2021). Moreover, Correa himself – self-exiled in Belgium – was prevented from running (and even appearing on campaign material) as he was convicted for corruption in an express trial with little respect for due process. Similarly, several Correa allies – including Pichincha governor Paola Pabón – were arrested on dubious sedition charges after the CONAIE-led protests of October 2019 (Al-Jazeera 2020). Despite all these threats to the political survival of *Correismo*, the movement was utterly incapable of mobilizing in the associational sphere to defend itself from these attacks. As a matter of fact, *Correismo* even played a very marginal role (if any) in the protests of October 2019 or in any other popular sector mobilization for that matter. Its actions remained confined to the legislature, where the 2017 split within AP left them with only about 20 seats, certainly not enough to single-handedly stop Moreno’s roll back attempts.

COVID-19. If the outlook seemed bleak, it turned catastrophic with the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic downturn that accompanied it. In terms of the economy, on 9 March oil prices dropped precipitously from the mid-US\$ 50 p/b to US\$ 31 p/b shredding the already shaky budget by leaving a \$2.9 bn. hole. The government announced it would undertake measures to generate additional savings and revenue. Proposals included additional taxes of 4-8 percent on public employees and 0.75 percent on businesses in addition to austerity cuts of \$1.38 bn. on reduced public services and redoubling efforts to eliminate government subsidies (El Universo 2020). To make matters even more dire, the bottom fell out the

Ecuadorian economy with the precipitous drop of oil prices to US\$ 21 p/b on 18 March and even lower after that.

The government packaged those emergency economic measures in two reform bills that it sent to the National Assembly: the Humanitarian Support Law and the Public Finances Law. The Humanitarian Support bill was set to contain most of the measures mentioned above. In particular, it included a \$1.3 bn. plan to protect the health and finances of Ecuadorians during the coronavirus pandemic. However, given widespread social and political opposition, the government refrained from raising taxes to individuals and companies. Therefore, it was now unclear how the plan would be financed. The Public Finances bill put strict limits on increases to public spending, capping yearly increases to 5 percent (down from 15 percent). It also created a stabilization fund to mitigate risk with a yearly allocation of up to 32 percent of the government budget. To overcome opposition to the bill though, the government had to exempt local government and social security spending from these strictures. So, once again, the law's effectiveness was questionable.

Taken at face value this development could have been construed as a move toward contestatory intermediation. However, under cover of these two laws – which Moreno had yet to promulgate or send back to the legislature with observations – on 19 May he announced a package of fiscal reforms to reduce public spending by US\$ 4bn to meet IMF conditionality (El Comercio 2020). The measures exceeded all previous proposals. Economies would come from several sources. First, from public sector salaries by cutting the work day from 8 to six hours, saving nearly US\$ 1bn. Second, 7 money-losing state firms would be dissolved along with 10 public ministries and 5 foreign embassies. Third, external debt would be restructured with expected savings of US\$ 1.3bn by delaying interest payments to 2021. Fourth, fuel subsidy

reform based on international oil prices. This would result in lower prices currently with subsidies incrementally lagging increases in international prices. Moreno also announced *increased* spending to US\$ 750m for health and social protection and US\$ 1bn. for economic reactivation primarily financed by loans totaling US\$ 1.4bn from multilateral lending institutions.⁷

Bolivia

In Bolivia, conservative pro-market political forces came back to power in November 2019, right after the ousting of Evo Morales and the establishment of an interim government presided over by far-right senator Jeanine Áñez. Morales was forced to resign by the military after the October 2019 presidential elections were mired in controversy. Morales' candidacy was disputed from the outset, as he was allowed to pursue a third term in office only thanks to a verdict of the Supreme Constitutional Tribunal overruling the result of a narrowly lost referendum on the elimination of term limits in 2016. Adding fuel to the fire, on election day the unofficial public vote count was interrupted at around 80 percent when Morales was just shy of the 10 percent lead he needed for a first-round victory. The public count resumed at 90 percent with Morales just above the victory threshold. Violent protests erupted on election night and after three weeks of civil strife – fueled by OAS's claims of electoral manipulation – on November 10 the military high command and police pointedly suggested that Morales resign, stressing that they would not suppress violent protests against him and the MAS if he did not. With Morales resigning along with vice-president García Linera and Senate and Deputies presidents, the succession dispute was resolved

⁷ Note that the cash transfer program pillar of state managerial interest intermediation was protected.

in favor of Áñez – second vice-president of the Senate – who was quickly confirmed president of the Senate and pronounced herself president.

An evangelical conservative from the *Movimiento Demócrata Social* – a right-wing party created in 2013 supporting autonomy for the lowland departments – Áñez stacked her cabinet with prominent far-right figures from Santa Cruz and Beni and prominent advocates of neoliberal socioeconomic policies. Although it vowed to act merely as a provisional government, from the very beginning the Áñez cabinet sought to pursue a clear two-pronged political strategy: it combined efforts to roll back popular-sector incorporation mechanisms and social policies with attempts to undermine the MAS and prevent its return to power.

Given the fundamentally de facto nature of the government and the willingness it showed since the very beginning to resort to blatant repression to remain in power, together with its avowed support for market economics, it is surprising how little it actually altered social and economic policy. Popular-sector incorporation mechanisms were scaled back to different degrees but were not dismantled across the board as one might have expected based on the level of repression the government engaged in.

State managerialism. To begin with, state managerialism was not significantly rolled back as the government would have wished to, as social programs and other subsidies were not cut back or eliminated. If anything, due to the coronavirus pandemic they were expanded with a raft of measures. These were the Family Bonus (*bono familiar*) for students of public schools (US\$70 per child reaching 1.5 million households); Family Basket (*canasta familiar*) with a cash payment of US\$50 per low income household (projected to cover 1 million households); a three-month suspension of electricity and potable water to low income households, covering 7.8 million

households. The de facto government followed up with a Bono Universal – a one-time cash distribution of Bs500 to Bolivians over 18 years old who were unemployed, had no income, and were not beneficiaries of other social assistance programs (Supreme Decree 4210).

To be sure, it is not so surprising that pro-poor social transfer programs – one main pillar of state managerialism – remained standing, as they are supported (and often funded through complimentary loans) even by multilateral lending institutions that impose conditionalities requiring cuts in general social spending. What is more instructive is the lack of cutbacks in other social programs and subsidies that are not supported by international financial institutions. Coordinated action across the associational and political spheres played a crucial role in detaining roll back. The government held simultaneous negotiations with the MAS, the Unity Pact,⁸ and the COB (*Central Obrera Boliviana*) – the so-called Pacification Dialogues – where the government acknowledged its transitory nature and committed to hold new presidential elections in a timely manner (Infobae 2019). At the same time, the COB explicitly refrained from mobilizing in exchange for the interim government’s commitment not to alter social policy. Following meetings in the framework of the Pacification Dialogue, Minister of the Presidency Justiniano explained that the principal concerns of the opposition, in addition to governability, were the continuity of social policy and of development projects already under way. He then stated, “This is a transition government ... there will not be significant changes in economic policy. The government is absolutely not going to cut anything.” The agreement also included respect for union rights (Los Tiempos 2019a).

⁸ The ensemble of social movements that founded the MAS and constitute its inner organizational core.

Adaptive corporatism. Adaptive corporatism for citizens representative of once marginalized social groups was severely weakened. Many MAS-connected officials from social movement organizations were replaced with dominant “European” culture political operatives. For example, Morales’ minister of agriculture, César Cocarico, was arrested and Eliane Capobianco, who took over in January 2020, was a lawyer from the low land conservative *Unidad Democrática* party. Vice ministers of agriculture were professionals linked to ranchers and producers, two from Beni and one from Cochabamba. They were strong supporters of a supreme decree issued in May 2020 that greatly expanded the use of genetically modified cultivations to include corn, wheat, sugar cane, and cotton in addition to soy that had already been authorized by Morales to appease lowland agribusiness (Supreme Decree 4232).

This trend notwithstanding, small pockets of adapted corporatism involving citizens connected to popular sectors survived. The officials involved were connected only with small, disgruntled factions of the major indigenous peoples or urban union organizations. This was the case of the minister of culture and tourism, Martha Yurja Apaza. The only indigenous minister in Áñez’s cabinet, Yujra had some union experience and was a candidate for deputy in the October 2019 general election running for the anti-Morales *Bolivia Dice No* coalition (Guardian 2019). She then replaced MAS and Unity Pact organization non-career civil servant functionaries with ones more pliable to the interim government. This has also been the case with Áñez’s appointment to the director of the Indigenous Development Fund. Rafael Quispe was affiliated with CONAMAQ – an organization that had fallen out with Morales over the TIPNIS dispute (Los Tiempos 2019b).

Contestatory intermediation. Unlike corporatism, *contestatory intermediation* survived, although in a more limited form, mostly to contest the nature of political authority, and to a lesser extent to safeguard socioeconomic policies. The implication was that securing democratic elections was necessary to protect favorable socioeconomic policies. In this sense, the conflicts between the de facto government and popular sector organizations over convening timely elections cannot be considered clear-cut manifestations of contestatory interest intermediation. However, popular sector mobilization in the streets in coordination with MAS activity in the legislature constantly threatened governability and forced the de facto government to maintain a minimum of responsiveness to their demands for prompt elections. As a result, contention did produce positive outcomes for the popular sectors and the advancement of their interests.

After the protests and violent repression that led to the Pacification Dialogues in November 2019, protests erupted again in January 2020 to ensure that Áñez followed constitutional procedure for the extension of her mandate past 22 January, the official end of Morales' term (Los Tiempos 2020a). Protests broke out again in May and June after Áñez postponed the 3 May presidential election due to the coronavirus pandemic (France24 2020). The MAS, the Unity Pact, and the COB, once again acting in coordination, pressured the government to set a new date, settling on 6 September 2020 (NODAL 2020a; ALAINET 2020).⁹ However, in July the government and its supporters (municipal civic committees in particular) backpedaled on the date. This triggered a new round of protests to pressure Áñez into complying with the electoral schedule. A new date for the elections – 18 October – was negotiated. Throughout the

⁹ Áñez was under more pressure than just widespread movement protest. Carlos Mesa, the center-right runner-up to Morales in the annulled election was also calling for setting a date for as early as possible and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (whose members were all elected after she came to power and thus had great legitimacy) agreed.

whole process, joint mobilization of the MAS party and popular sector organizations was also able to repel attempts to outlaw the MAS altogether (NODAL 2020b; Molina 2021)

In the midst of these political struggles, contestatory interest intermediation endured in the absence of institutionalized channels of popular interest intermediation for socioeconomic policy. A prominent example was the annual negotiation of minimum wage and salary increases that customarily ended by 1 May. They were evolving normally with COB proposals and supporting demonstrations in the early months of 2020 followed by business chamber and government counters. Unfortunately, as the economy became paralyzed due to the COVID-19 pandemic the government suspended negotiation until the health and economic crises subsided, a result that coincided with private sector propositions (Los Tiempos 2020b).

Another example was the question of privatizations. Finance Minister Parada and Minister of Productive Development Wilfredo Rojo were publicly in favor of privatization of public enterprises and advocates of privatization were appointed to head public companies (e.g., airline and hydrocarbons) (Opinión 2020). Áñez's government floated privatization of companies, such as *Boliviana de Aviación*, and opening investment opportunities to foreign companies for lithium mining. In response, the May-June-July demonstrations pushing for prompt presidential elections included demands against privatization and foreign ownership of lithium (Página12 2020). These demands were also defended by MAS representatives in the political arena (Luis Arce 2020). Ultimately, the interim government did not act on privatization. This is probably because the political cost of such a conflictive policy initiative was considered too high, especially since the MAS was still an electorally powerful party and its presidential candidate led by a significant margin in the polls.

Overlap Between Party and Popular Sector Organizations. In general, despite the strong pro-market preferences of the Añez government and its willingness to resort to repression, the various forms of interest intermediation of Bolivia's segmented IIR and socioeconomic policies favoring the popular sectors were largely preserved. This outcome was the result of the pressure that the MAS and social movements were able to exert in a coordinated fashion to prevent roll back and force the government to convene elections. This stands in stark contrast with the case of Ecuador, where the major reformist party and popular sector organizations were completely incapable of coordinating political action.

However, this capacity to coordinate political action was not a given, as the MAS was coming out of Morales' third mandate facing increasing fragmentation between party and social organizations. As a matter of fact, the ouster of Morales itself was made possible (at least in part) by the lack of mobilization of many social organizations that had progressively distanced themselves from the government. The first steps to overcome this partial disconnect between party and social movements were taken in the aftermath of Morales' forced resignation. On December 7, 2019 a meeting between MAS party elites and popular sector organizations was held in Cochabamba. During the meeting, it was decided that the Unity Pact was going to act as the sole steering committee of the alliance of popular sector organizations, and that the CONALCAM – a broader, more diluted version of the Unity Pact that took a leading role during the Morales presidency – should cease to exist. The Unity Pact was formed by indigenous and peasant organizations who were decisive actors throughout the 2000s and in the struggle for a new constitution. Its return to a leading role signaled some sort of return of the MAS to its origins as the “political instrument” of popular sector organizations (Mayorga 2020), hence a growing overlap between the political and associational spheres. To confirm the increasing

coordination between party and popular sector organizations, on December 8 a meeting between the Unity Pact and MAS deputies and senators took place. The goal of the meeting was to coordinate political action and overcome rifts between the legislative delegation and social movement leadership (Mayorga 2020). The Unity Pact also played a key role in the decision over the presidential ticket for the 2020 elections (Mayorga 2020).

COVID-19. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the arena for contestatory interest intermediation shifted to policies dealing with the effects of the twin health and economic crises on the popular sectors and indigenous. Contention surged around programs to deal with unemployment, health care, micro-credits, hunger, and education. However, rigorous government enforcement of quarantine controls to slow the spread of Covid-19 beginning restricted public protest.¹⁰ Consequently, the nature of contentious action shifted from street demonstrations to threats to governability, made credible by occasional real mobilization in defiance of quarantine. When they occurred, demonstrations were generally electorally driven but they included a raft of demands related to pandemic-induced hardships. The threat of mobilization carried weight because the Áñez government was campaigning to win the presidency in upcoming elections. To court public opinion it prioritized governability and made a show of devising policies to combat the health and economic effects of the pandemic.

To alleviate the social and economic repercussions of the strict lockdown imposed in March 2020, the interim government responded with a battery of temporary targeted cash

¹⁰ Supreme Decree 4200, 25 March 2020, criminalized noncompliance with lockdown and passing disinformation. In practice any information not approved by the government was grounds for prosecution. Sentences are up to 10 years. By mid-April 67 people had been convicted for sowing destabilization and disinformation. Supreme Decree 4231 of 7 May 2020 extended penalties. It outlawed disinformation in print and *through artistic media*. After IACHR protested on grounds of that the decree violated fundamental human rights some of the more egregious measures were rescinded by 14 May.

transfer programs in April. These were the aforementioned Family Bonus and Family Basket plus a three-month suspension of electricity and potable water bills to low-income households, covering 7.8 million households. The projected budget was US\$244m for all three programs; plus US\$497m for health spending (import respiratory equipment and increasing ICU capacity). Additionally, payment of corporate income tax was deferred and independent workers could claim tax deductions against their expenses on health, schooling, food and related expenditures (IMF 2021).

Alternative explanations

There are at least two other possible explanations for variation in the durability of incorporation projects. First, it is plausible that the percentage of seats that the major reformist party occupies in the legislature is likely to affect the capacity of the conservative government to roll back segmented IIRs and socioeconomic policies benefitting popular sectors: a stronger legislative presence of the major reformist party is likely to make roll back more difficult. However, in Latin American presidential systems the executive has numerous lawmaking tools at its disposal to circumvent an unfavorable balance of forces in the legislative branch (e.g., urgency decrees, decrees with the force of law, etc.).

Second, it might be argued that the degree of roll back is a function of fiscal solvency issues: a state's inability to meet its financial obligations might call for drastic austerity measures like cutbacks in public spending, which drastically reduce state capacity to attend to popular sectors' needs and demands. While this is certainly plausible, there is usually space for maneuvering: governments have a range of options going from prioritizing fiscal cuts to pay

creditors to attempting to restructure debt and protect public employment, wages, and social programs.

Conclusion

During the so-called Pink Tide, reformist governments sought to promote a second wave of popular sector incorporation. The ebbing of the tide, with the return of conservative governments to power, put these incorporation projects at risk. In this paper, we investigated variation in the durability of Pink Tide-era incorporation projects. We argued that the success of conservative roll back attempts depended on the cohesion of the popular sector coalition, understood as the alliance between the more electorally relevant reformist party and popular sector organizations. The more their political goals align, the higher their capacity for coordinated political action. This capacity for coordinated political action is what we called overlap between popular sector representation in the political sphere and popular sector organization in the associational sphere.

We have illustrated how this logic played out in the cases of Ecuador and Bolivia. In Ecuador, the major reformist parties (first AP and then *Correismo*) always entertained a quite conflicting relationship with popular sector organizations, particularly with the politically relevant ones like CONAIE and FUT. This estrangement prevented coordinated political action and enabled Moreno government's attempts to roll back elements of the segmented IIR, and attendant social policies, from the Correa era. On the contrary, the tighter (though not completely harmonious) relationship between the MAS and indigenous and labor organizations facilitated coordinated political action within and outside representative institutions. This allowed the popular sector coalition to limit IIRs and social policy roll back, ensure the continuity of elections, and prevent a ban on its major political party.

This paper has showed how the connections between reformist parties (operating in the political sphere) and social movements (operating in the associational sphere) are crucial to ensure a positive configuration of state-society relations for the popular sectors. While these connections are not necessary to *change* those relations (as the Ecuadorian case showed), this paper has suggested that they can be fundamental to *maintain* those changes in the face of conservative offensives.

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