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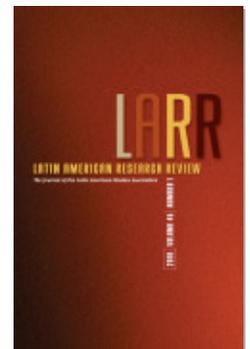
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LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES

Preferences for Democracy, System Support, and Political Participation in Bolivia

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Abstract: Many cross-national surveys examine the extent to which citizens of new democracies believe that democracy is always preferable to any other form of government. There is little evidence, however, regarding how such attitudes affect citizen behavior. This article examines the case of Bolivia, asking whether and how Bolivians' attitudes toward democracy affect participation, including contacts with public officials and involvement in political parties and social movements. Through analysis of nationwide survey data, I show that preferences for democracy have little effect on participation in party meetings or protests. Examining the relationship more carefully, I then show that, for Bolivians who favor institutional methods of representation, support for democracy increases attachment to the traditional political system and decreases protest; for citizens who favor popular methods of representation, it has the opposite impact. I conclude by discussing the implications for scholarship on democratization, which often conflates preferences for democracy with political stability.

With the proliferation of new democracies in the past two decades, researchers have set off on major cross-national endeavors to document over time and across countries the extent to which citizens believe that democracy is always preferable to any other form of government. Projects such as New Democracies Barometer, Afrobarometer, and Latinobarómetro have asked citizens about a great many political values and attitudes, but probably no other questions have drawn as much attention and concern as those regarding beliefs about democracy. But what does a belief that democracy is always preferable imply for politics? In 2008, for instance,

the Latinobarómetro reported that only 34 percent of Guatemalans and 43 percent of Mexicans always preferred democracy (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2008). So will the rest tend to participate less in democratic politics? Are they inclined to take some type of action to unseat their (at least formally) democratically elected governments? Do majoritarian voting rules require a preference for democracy—that is, a belief that democracy is the best form of government for one's country—on the part of a majority? In this article, I address these questions using the case of Bolivia, investigating the impact of preferences for democracy on three types of nonelectoral political participation: (1) making contact with public officials, (2) participation in party politics, and (3) involvement in protests that led to the resignation of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Bolivia is an important case for answering these questions, as dramatic popular unrest led to the fall of two democratic presidents and the disintegration of the traditional party system between 2003 and 2005. Given the low measured levels of support for democracy and the system during those years in Bolivia, it is reasonable to expect that these attitudes had some impact on political events.

Indeed, a premise of the study of democratization has been that "the consolidation of democracies rests on public support" (Payne, Zovatto, Flórez, and Zavala 2002, 25; see also Diamond and Linz 1989; Hagopian 2005; Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1978, 1996). Researchers have worried that low measured preference for democracy is a harbinger of a reverse wave bringing back authoritarianism. In an analysis of 2002 Latinobarómetro data, the UN Development Programme (2004, 131) argues that "authoritarian political forces [will] find in citizen attitudes fertile terrain for action." Similarly, the Inter-American Development Bank argues that data on "public attitudes towards democracy" predict "to what extent [the region's democracies can] be expected to withstand current and future pressures and threats" (Payne et al. 2002, 25). In a study of a single country, it is difficult to test rigorously whether citizens' aggregate level of support for democracy affects that country's political stability. Instead, I examine the impact of individual-level democratic preferences on individual-level behaviors that, when aggregated across masses in voting booths and street protests, affect democratic stability.

In this article, I lay out the argument that preference for democracy had little overall effect on participation in social movements that destabilized the traditional Bolivian party system. Instead, the impact was contingent on individuals' beliefs about the importance of participation in a democracy. Analysis supports both hypotheses. For Bolivians with participatory attitudes toward representation, preference for democracy increased participation in both conflictual and nonconflictual political activities. Among those with more conventional perceptions of representation, in contrast, preference for democracy decreased protest. Without

differentiating by participatory attitudes, however, I find that democratic preferences had little impact on either protest or conventional forms of participation; the only exception is that preference for democracy negatively affected the probability of contacting officials. System support, a key alternative conceptualization of legitimacy, was a stronger predictor of participation. Meanwhile, I find strong evidence that attitudes related to the political system are less important for participation than is connection to mobilizing community groups.

A brief comment about terminology is in order. Researchers have conceptualized the notion of legitimacy—including both popular support for democracy in the abstract as well as for particular democracies—in a great many ways.[1] Here I use the phrase "preference for democracy" to refer to expressed support for democracy as an abstract ideal.[2] In addition, I use "system support" to refer to the extent to which a person believes that the actual political system is basically just and deserves respect (Muller 1979; Muller, Jukam, and Seligson 1982).[3]

There are two competing arguments regarding how democratic preferences and system support should affect political behavior. First, some

1. Legitimacy has been operationalized as support for authoritarianism, satisfaction with (one's actual) democracy, trust in national representatives and institutions, and support for democratic values and norms such as tolerance. Factor analysis of attitudes toward the political system in Costa Rica found seven different dimensions (Booth and Seligson 2005). Although these concepts are closely related, there are important differences between them. A person might be convinced that democracy is the best form of government (i.e., have high preference for democracy) but believe that his or her nominally democratic country fails to uphold basic values (i.e., have low system support). Inglehart has argued that self-expression values such as subjective well-being, postmaterialism, interpersonal trust, and tolerance for diversity are better predictors of citizens' actual support for democracy than are responses to explicitly political questions (Inglehart 1988, 1990, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 2005).

2. Preference for democracy is most typically measured with two types of questions. In some cases, it is measured as the extent of agreement with the statement "Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government." In other cases respondents choose among three statements: "Democracy is preferable to any other form of government," "In some circumstances an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one," and "to people like me, there's no difference between an authoritarian and a democratic regime."

3. I adopt the definition and scale of system support developed by Muller (1979) and Muller and colleagues (1982) and used extensively in Seligson's work. The scale evaluates how well the political system and political institutions conform to a person's general sense of what is right and proper and how well the system and institutions uphold basic political values of importance to citizens. It is operationalized using a summated rating scale of responses regarding the extent to which a person agrees, from 0 to 7, that (1) the courts of his or her country guarantee a fair trial, (2) the political system protects citizens' basic rights, whether (3) "one ought to support the political system," and whether the respondent (4) has respect for his or her country's political institutions and (5) feels proud to live under his or her country's political system.

theory suggests that, in democracies, people with high preference for both democracy and system support are more likely to comply with authorities and support the political status quo. This line of theory begins with Weber (1958), who argued that citizen beliefs about leaders' legitimacy facilitated organized domination in modern, complex, bureaucratic states; it was further elaborated by postwar scholars concerned with system stability (Almond and Verba 1989; Dahl 1956; Easton 1965, 1975; Gamson 1968). Easton (1965, 273) argued that "diffuse support" or "legitimacy" constitutes a "reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate [government] outputs to which they are opposed" (see also Easton 1975). This "conviction on the part of the member that it is right and proper for him to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime" ensures that "within the limits set forth in the political system . . . , [authorities] can expect regularly to obtain compliance" (Easton 1965, 278–279). Similarly, Huntington (1991, 258) argues that, in periods of low political and economic performance, high legitimacy encourages citizens to channel their frustration through voting rather than cynical withdrawal or attacks on the democratic system. In political systems that are basically democratic, then, the first argument leads us to expect the same behavior from citizens who support democracy in the abstract (i.e., ones with high preference for democracy) and from citizens who believe their own system is just (i.e., ones with high system support). Both types of citizens should be more likely to behave in ways that support their own systems, expressing political opinions or grievances through voting and participating in organized party politics rather than antisystem protests.

A second line of thought regarding the impact of preferences for democracy on political participation runs counter to the first. Especially in situations where an ostensibly democratic government fails to meet citizens' expectations, the argument goes, preference for democracy can lead to behavior aiming to disrupt the government. Here, belief in democracy has more Lockean revolutionary potential and less of a Weberian legitimating function. A number of political theorists and sociologists argue that there is an intimate connection between democracy and social movements (Cohen and Arato 1992; Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Markoff 1996; Tilly 2004). Movements have been major forces in democratization, not only leading to the fall of authoritarian regimes (Gill 2000; Linz and Stepan 1996; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986), but also serving as a counterweight that exposes democratic states' abuses and holds them accountable (Foley and Edwards 1996). And social movements can push for opening democratic institutions to groups that were previously excluded (Calhoun 1995; Giugni 1999; Markoff 1996; McAdam 1988). Moreover, movements often legitimize their activities using democratic frames (Markoff 1996; Scott 1990; Snow and Benford 1992; Yashar 2005; Zald 1996). Thus, social move-

ments probably attract people with high preference for democracy (Norris, Walgrave, and Van Aelst 2005). Similarly, Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) research on self-expression values suggests a correlation between preferences for democracy and participation in social movements. Thus, democratic preferences might sometimes lead to behavior opposed to democratic governments; protestors in the street can destabilize democratic as well as nondemocratic regimes (Foley and Edwards 1996). Note that, contrary to the foregoing line of theory, this argument leads to divergent predictions for the effects of system support and preferences for democracy. Because system support measures the belief that the actual political system deserves respect, people with higher system support should still be more likely to participate through institutional channels and avoid protest. Only preference for democracy would lead to noninstitutional or antisystem behavior.

So which is it? Does preference for democracy lead to more or less protest? Does it lead to more or less participation through institutional channels? Should we expect that preference for democracy and system support have divergent effects or similar ones? I argue that the key to this puzzle lies in recognizing the ambiguity of the word *democracy* itself. Scholars have shown that an inherent sociological feature of the term is its continual appropriation by groups with different and even opposing interests (Markoff 1996; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998). The word has a chameleonlike tendency to adapt to political circumstances. Although people may agree that democracy entails each citizen's ability to express his or her own political opinions and interests, there is dramatic disagreement regarding legitimate means of expression; some democrats follow only institutional channels while others engage in popular mobilization. Thus, two people who express identical levels of support for democracy can believe it to be consistent with radically opposed behaviors.[4]

The controversy discussed previously can be reformulated in terms of a disagreement regarding the participatory or institutional foundations of democracy. The important theoretical debates between radical democrats, advocates of democracy as an ideal of full participation, and liberals, advocates of a procedurally and institutionally defined vision of democratic politics, can hardly be done justice here (for a good overview, see Cohen and Arato 1992). What matters here is that these differences exist not only in academic discourse. Although they may express arguments in different terms, even ordinary people in developing countries disagree on, for instance, whether parties or citizen groups better represent their interests. I thus hypothesize that the effect of democratic attitudes on participation

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4. Intriguingly, Gibson (1997) finds that pro-democratic values were positively associated with participation in protests both against and in support of the attempted Soviet coup of August 1991.

is conditional on attitudes toward representation. Among individuals who believe that their interests are best represented through noninstitutional channels, preference for democracy will lead to more protest and less involvement in the traditional party system. Among institutionalists, however, it will have the opposite effect. System support, by contrast, will have an unconditional positive impact on party system participation and a negative one on protest.

These hypotheses have a further implication for the relationship between preference for democracy and participation. If the population is split between people with institutional and noninstitutional visions of politics, the impact of democratic preferences on social movement and party participation in one segment of the population will more or less cancel out the opposite effects in the other segment. Thus, I hypothesize that preference for democracy will have no unconditional impact on either party system or social movement participation.

What empirical evidence exists regarding the impact of democratic preferences on participation? There is little research on this topic; rather, most scholars have simply assumed that legitimacy is intrinsically important for political systems. They have instead focused on describing cross-national distributions of preference for democracy or, to a lesser extent, on examining its individual- and state-level predictors in areas ranging from Africa (Mattes and Bratton 2007) to Eastern Europe (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Rose et al. 1998), East Asia (Rose, Shin, and Munro 1999), Latin America (Hagopian 2005; Moreno and Méndez 2002; Rivera, Mayorga, and Torrez 2001; Seligson 2002a, 2005), and the Middle East (Tessler 2002). In what I believe to be the only study to date of the impact of preferences for democracy on participation, Booth and Seligson (2005) found that, in Costa Rica, "support for regime principles" had a positive effect on contacting the president and a negative one on protest, but none on voting, contacting other political figures, or community activism. There is more evidence with respect to the impact of attitudes toward one's particular political system. Studies from Costa Rica (Seligson 2002b) to Germany (Finkel 1987) show that people with higher levels of system support are more likely to vote and to participate in campaign activities. Furthermore, scholars find that system support negatively predicts participation in both peaceful (Finkel 1987) and aggressive (Finkel 1987; Muller 1979; Muller et al. 1982) forms of protest in Germany, New York City, Mexico, and Guatemala. Norris similarly shows that institutional confidence, which is conceptually fairly close to system support, positively affects political participation and willingness to obey the law and negatively affects protest in forty-four countries examined through the World Values Survey (1999).

Until this point, I have discussed only one potential direction of causality: the impact of attitudes on behaviors. But might participation in politics, whether party meetings or organized protests, shape attitudes toward

the democratic regime? The question of causality has both theoretical and methodological dimensions. A long tradition in political science, much of it previously cited, postulates the causal power of attitudes toward the regime. However, one could also theorize that involvement in traditional or nontraditional politics teaches citizens about the political world, leading them to develop more democratic orientations. Furthermore, research in survey methods and political psychology suggests that respondents might infer their attitudes toward democracy from their own previous political activities (see, e.g., Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber 1984; Zaller 1992). This is especially a problem with cross-sectional data sets, as attitudinal measures are necessarily collected after the time of reported political participation. Indeed, other studies have found some evidence that the causation between participation and political orientations moves in both directions. Finkel (1987) showed in a panel study in Germany that participation and system support each had a positive impact on the other, producing a self-reinforcing cycle (see also Leighley 1991; Muller, Seligson, and Turan 1987).

The question of whether democratic preferences affect participation, or whether the causality is the reverse, is one that ultimately can be resolved only through empirical tests to tease out the direction of causality. There are several analytic routes one might pursue. Although experimental methods would establish causality rigorously, the treatment variable, democratic attitudes, is not amenable to experimental manipulation. As an alternative, longitudinal data with repeated measures of both democratic attitudes and participation would enable us to tease out more precisely what causes what (Finkel 1995). Yet another possibility would be to use an instrumental variables approach, finding a third variable or a set of variables that is strongly correlated with democratic attitudes but not endogenous to political participation. Such an instrumental variable would almost certainly need to be nonattitudinal. Unfortunately, neither longitudinal data nor an appropriate instrumental variable are available to address this research question. The analytical approach I take here is of necessity observational and cross-sectional. If I find a relationship between democratic attitudes and participation, I will have to leave definitive conclusions regarding the direction of causality to further research.

MANY FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN BOLIVIA

Throughout the 1990s, Bolivia was lauded as a success story of stability through institutional renovation and elite compromise. Under the 1967 constitution, in the event that no candidate received an absolute majority in the popular vote, the selection of the president fell to the legislature. Dramatic economic and political instability marked the country's transition to democracy in the early 1980s. During this period none of the three

major parties, the Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action, or ADN), the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, or MNR), or the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left, or MIR), was able to achieve majority electoral support. In the presidential election of 1985, MNR and ADN legislators formed a pact for democracy to elect Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who had come in second in popular voting. Thus evolved a system of "parliamentarized presidentialism" (Mayorga 1997, 145) in which "plurality winners . . . fared remarkably poorly" (Shugart and Carey 1992, 82). This system provided presidents with legislative majorities and encouraged parties to compromise and to form coalitions. Scholars attributed the country's depolarization and unprecedented degree of elite cooperation in the late 1980s and 1990s to this unique institutional structure (Linz 1994; Mayorga 1997, 2005; Shugart and Carey 1992).

Even during the first two decades of democracy, though, new civil society groups were coalescing, developing a nationalistic, pro-indigenous, antiglobalization frame. A major grievance were U.S.-backed coca eradication efforts, as groups claimed the right to grow coca for traditional medicinal and social purposes (Yashar 1998, 2005). Reforms such as decentralization and the creation of indigenous territories defused unrest in the 1990s, until the Cochabamba water revolt exploded in 2000 against municipal water supply privatization. In early 2002, protests began against President Jorge Quiroga's proposal to export natural gas through Chile. Some protestors demanded an export route avoiding Chile, to which the proposed route had been lost during the 1879–1883 War of the Pacific, and others advocated using gas for national industrial development. After Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada assumed the presidency, the gas war drew into nationwide demonstrations other social movements with partially overlapping and sometimes contrary demands, including opposition to neoliberal economic policies, labor and indigenous rights, regional autonomy for gas-rich departments, and a halt to coca eradication. In October 2003, protestors had brought national commerce and transit to a halt. After police killed fifty-nine demonstrators in the city of El Alto, top political leaders withdrew support for the government (fifty-nine is the most widely cited number, though estimates vary). On October 17, Sánchez de Lozada resigned and fled the country.

The former vice president Carlos Mesa assumed the presidency promising to eliminate state violence, to hold a national referendum regarding gas policy, and to convene a constituent assembly. Although the crisis eased for a time, the May 2005 passage of a new hydrocarbon law, stopping short of full nationalization, led to protests once again that paralyzed the country. In June 2005, with half a million people in the streets of La Paz, Mesa resigned. After the presidents of both the Senate and the House of Delegates declined the job, Supreme Court Chief Justice Eduardo

Rodríguez, last in the constitutional line of succession, was appointed to a caretaker presidency. New elections held in December marked a collapse of the traditional party structure. The Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), headed by social movement leader Evo Morales, an indigenous coca grower, was the first party since democratization to capture an absolute majority of the vote. The major opposition party emerging from the elections, Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos), was also new, though many of its members came from traditional parties. In January 2006, Evo, as he is known, took office.

This case is propitious for testing the impact of attitudes toward democracy on political participation for two reasons. First, recent Bolivian history has witnessed a great range of citizen-level political behaviors that have questioned the shape of the political system itself. It is reasonable to expect that system support and preferences for democracy affected the types of participation individuals chose. Second, as table 1 shows, though responses are somewhat left skewed, there is substantial variance in democratic preferences among Bolivians.[5] Bolivia—and indeed much of Latin America—thus provides an important counterpoint to the claim "At this point in history, democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the planet" (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 264; see also Klingemann 1999; Norris 1999).[6] Similarly, system support is quite evenly distributed among Bolivians, with about half of the sample falling below the midpoint. Both factors suggest that preferences for democracy and system support may have affected political participation. If, as I hypothesize, democratic preferences have no unconditional impact on participation but system support does, the finding will constitute an important challenge to research simply assuming that preference for democracy is critical for political systems' functioning.

5. The so-called Churchillian democracy question used here captures more variance than the three-value forced-choice, democracy versus indifference versus authoritarianism question. While about 70 percent of the sample chose democracy for the three-value question, about 60 percent chose one of the top three values on the seven-point scale, and only 13 percent chose the top category. It is difficult to develop a clear time trend of democratic preferences in Bolivia using the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) data series because of changes in question wording. However, on the basis of a forced-choice democracy versus authoritarianism question, it appears that democratic preferences remained fairly stable in the 1998–2008 period, with antidemocratic attitudes peaking in 2002–2004.

6. This optimistic declaration is based on a World Values Survey sample dominated by advanced industrial countries. Across Latin America, however, support for democracy appears to be much lower. Latinobarómetro reports that less than half the population in many countries, including Bolivia, always prefers democracy (2004, 2005). While fluctuations between Latinobarómetro administrations (Hagopian 2005) and discrepancies between results reported by the institute and other surveys such as LAPOP raise questions about the reliability of Latinobarómetro estimates, it is safe to conclude that the pronouncement of virtually universal support for democracy is optimistic.

Table 1 *Distribution of Preference for Democracy*

	Frequency	Percentage
0 = Minimum legitimacy	74	2.5
0.17	108	3.6
0.33	316	10.6
0.50	643	21.5
0.67	873	29.2
0.83	606	20.2
1 = Maximum legitimacy	375	12.5
Total	*2995*	*100.0*

I will test these hypotheses using data from more than three thousand Bolivians collected in September 2004 as part of a biannual nationwide initiative conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) of Vanderbilt University. Here, I will examine predictors of contacting public officials, engaging in party activities, and participating in protests against Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003. Because voting is compulsory in Bolivia, I do not test the impact of preference for democracy or system support on turnout. I hypothesize that among institutionalists—measured as people who believe that parties represent their interests better than citizen associations—preference for democracy increases contact with officials and involvement with parties while it decreases protest. Among those who identify with citizen associations, by contrast, I hypothesize that preference for democracy has the opposite impacts. Finally, I hypothesize that when we do not take into account attitudes toward representation, preference for democracy has no unconditional impact on participation while system support increases official contacts and party involvement and decreases protest.

MODELS OF PARTICIPATION

Because my hypotheses deal with both the conditional and the unconditional impacts of preference for democracy on political participation, I develop two models to predict each of three forms of participation: contacting public officials, participating in party meetings, and protesting (for the coding and distribution of all variables, see the appendix). I use multiple imputation techniques to correct for missing data (Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2006; King, Honaker, Joseph, and Scheve 2001; Rubin 1987). The first model for each dependent variable describes the unconditional impact of preference for democracy, system support, and a vector of covariates on participation. In the second model for each type of participation, I interact democratic preferences with attitudes toward institutional representation, measured by whether the respondent believes that a political party or a

citizen association can better represent his or her interests. Interestingly, almost a fifth of respondents said that neither parties nor citizen associations represented their interests. Preliminary analysis shows that such respondents were not simply neutral; rather, it appears that they represent a separate category of people who are disaffected by both participatory and institutional politics. As a result, I include a separate dummy variable for the neither group respondents, in part so that the citizen association variable measures difference only from political party supporters.

I test the impact of system support and preference for democracy relative to a number of other variables. First, in models for protest, I control for political ideology (on a left-right scale) and two measures of issue grievances, support for nationalizing gas and opposition to coca eradication, as these may be correlated with other political attitudes and undoubtedly impact protest activity. The impact of political attitudes is assessed relative to that of social capital measures of interpersonal trust, involvement in community groups, and involvement in church (Putnam 1993). Analyses of the World Values Survey have shown that across the globe, interpersonal trust positively predicts protest, in addition to more conventional activities (Benson and Rochon 2004; Norris 1999). Research suggests that church groups may work differently as mobilizing agents than do other groups (McDonough, Shin, and Moisés 1998). Finally, I include a number of structural factors known to affect participation. Age should have a negative effect on protest. Indigenous status is extremely important in Bolivia, where the indigenous have been highly mobilized (Yashar 1998, 2005). Education and income should have strong positive impacts on party involvement. I predict that income has a negative effect on protest, as income is a proxy for many aspects of social privilege against which protests mobilized. It is unclear what the impact on protest of education, controlling for income, will be, as education increases social privilege but also promotes tolerance and participatory attitudes. Last, women in Bolivia are much less involved in politics than men, so I expect a negative impact for being female on all types of participation.

RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 describe attitudinal, social capital, and structural predictors of contacting officials, party involvement, and protest. The cross-sectional, observational approach to analysis here limits the ability to make definitive pronouncements of impact. Still, I draw tentative conclusions based on the theorized direction of causality. Table 2, generally consistent with hypotheses, indicates that preference for democracy has little unconditional effect on participation. It has no relationship with attending party meetings or protest. The only unexpected finding is a negative association with contacting officials. This suggests that Bolivians may

Table 2 Predictors of Political Participation

	OLS: contacting	OLS: party meetings	Logit: protest
System attitudes			
Preference for democracy	−0.053**	−0.003	−0.098
	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.262)
System support	0.089***	0.149***	−0.547^
	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.325)
Ideology (right leaning)			−1.205***
			(0.275)
Social capital			
Community group participation	0.295***	0.377***	1.852***
	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.229)
Church attendance (frequency)	−0.008	0.017	0.401*
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.180)
Interpersonal trust	0.000	0.022	−0.341^
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.180)
Structural factors			
Income	0.016	−0.002	−1.153**
	(0.032)	(0.041)	(0.445)
Education	−0.035^	−0.026	0.666*
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.281)
Age	0.012	−0.049*	−0.266
	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.231)
Female	−0.026**	−0.043***	−0.461***
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.124)
Indigenous	0.016	−0.007	0.537***
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.147)
Issue attitudes			
Support nationalizing gas			0.564*
			(0.231)
Opposition to coca eradication			0.257*
			(0.126)
Constant		*0.035*	*−2.220****
		(0.030)	*(0.360)*

^*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001.

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Results are calculated based on ten data sets multiply imputed data sets using the program Amelia (Honaker et al. 2006; King et al. 2001). *N* = 2776.

tend to perceive contacting officials for help as an undemocratic and clientelistic strategy for problem solving. By contrast, system support has a strong unconditional association with participation, again consistently with hypotheses: it negatively predicts protest but positively predicts contacting officials and party activism.

Table 3 Predictors of Political Participation, Conditional on Attitudes Toward Representation

	OLS: contacting	OLS: party meetings	Logit: protest
System attitudes			
Preference for democracy	−0.057^	−0.082*	−1.324**
	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.490)
"Citizen association represents my interests better than a party"	−0.016	−0.227***	−0.817*
	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.404)
Legitimacy × Citizen association	0.006	0.111*	1.707**
	(0.040)	(0.052)	(0.577)
"Neither represents my interests"	−0.037*	−0.162***	−0.250
	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.248)
System support	0.081***	0.128***	−0.559^
	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.332)
Ideology (right leaning)			−1.283***
			(0.279)
Social capital			
Community group participation	0.291***	0.372***	1.805***
	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.232)
Church attendance (frequency)	−0.007	0.016	0.441*
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.182)
Interpersonal trust	−0.001	0.011	−0.320^
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.181)
Structural factors			
Income	0.018	0.006	−1.147**
	(0.032)	(0.041)	(0.446)
Education	−0.038^	−0.030	0.589*
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.284)
Age	0.014	−0.051*	−0.235
	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.232)
Female	−0.025**	−0.039***	−0.450***
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.125)
Indigenous	0.017	−0.005	0.551***
	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.148)
Issue attitudes			
Support nationalizing gas			0.587*
			(0.232)
Opposition to coca eradication			0.285*
			(0.126)
Constant	*0.064**	*0.236****	*−1.582****
	(0.031)	*(0.040)*	*(0.476)*

^*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001.

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Results are calculated based on ten data sets multiply imputed data sets using the program Amelia (Honaker et al. 2006; King et al. 2001). *N* = 2776.

But does preference for democracy affect participation once we distinguish between respondents with institutional and noninstitutional perceptions of representation? Table 3 shows the results of the same models, with an interaction between preference for democracy and attitudes toward representation. In addition to the pro-citizen association baseline for the interaction term, I add in the neither group responses for reasons outlined previously. The first finding from table 3 is that, again contrary to expectations, the negative relationship of preference for democracy to contacting officials is not conditional on attitudes toward citizens' associations versus parties. This once more suggests that Bolivians of all stripes may perceive contacting officials as undemocratic and clientelistic.[7] With respect to the models for both attending party meetings and participating in protest, however, the interaction terms are quite significant, as are both baseline terms. This indicates, as hypothesized, that the relationship of preference for democracy with these forms of participation is conditional on attitudes toward representation.

To aid in interpretation of the interaction terms, table 4 presents predicted frequencies and probabilities of attending party meetings and protesting at different levels of the two key independent variables. As is almost tautologically clear, those who prefer citizen associations are much less likely to attend party meetings than their institutionally oriented neighbors. Interestingly, however, preference for democracy is associated with a decrease in party meeting attendance among strong party supporters and has a small positive relationship with such attendance among supporters of citizen associations. It may be that people with low levels of preference for democracy who report preferring parties are motivated by instrumentalist, clientelistic links to those parties, which compel them to participate at higher rates than those who have greater levels of preference for democracy but fewer such links. Predicted probabilities of protesting at different levels of the two key independent variables are more in line with hypotheses. Among those who favor citizen associations, preference for democracy has a positive association with protesting, while it has the opposite association among those who favor political parties. The results suggest the importance of understanding attitudes toward representation when evaluating the implications of preference for democracy.

I turn now to other attitudinal variables. The contingency of the impact of preference for democracy on participation is in contrast to the effect of system support. Across every model, the latter has a significant unconditional effect. The weakest results, interestingly though, are found for protest. Once attitudes toward representation are taken into account, pref-

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7. The significance of this coefficient is also diminished, which seems to be a result of the coefficient remaining unchanged and its standard error rising as a result of multicollinearity with the interaction term.

Table 4 Predicted Probability of Political Participation, Based on Models in Table 3

	Predicted frequency of party meeting attendance	Predicted probability of protesting
Prefers parties		
Min. preference for democracy	0.380	0.191
	(0.031)	(0.051)
Max. preference for democracy	0.297	0.059
	(0.022)	(0.015)
Prefers citizens associations		
Min. preference for democracy	0.153	0.094
	(0.020)	(0.018)
Max. preference for democracy	0.182	0.130
	(0.013)	(0.015)
Prefers neither		
Min. preference for democracy	0.219	0.155
	(0.029)	(0.040)
Max. preference for democracy	0.136	0.047
	(0.021)	(0.012)

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. Frequency of party meeting attendance is on a 0 (never) to 1 (frequently) scale. Predicted probabilities and frequencies are calculated using CLARIFY (King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2001).

erence for democracy may be a more important predictor of protest than system support. Next, ideology and issue grievances are, as expected, strongly related to protest; it was important to control for them in assessing the impacts of system support and preference for democracy.

With respect to social capital—interpersonal trust as well as mobilization by church and community groups—there is a mixed pattern. Interpersonal trust has little association with participation, except for a weak, negative relationship with protest, contrary to the positive one that Benson and Rochon (2004) found. Churches appear not to have mobilized Bolivians to take part in the party system but, interestingly, to have done so when it came to protests against Sánchez de Lozada. Involvement in community groups, in contrast, had very strong, positive associations with all types of political participation. It is unclear from the results, however, whether the mechanism is some participatory orientation that also causes community participation or whether the effect actually derives from mobilization by community groups (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

Finally, predictions with respect to structural factors were largely confirmed, with some intriguing exceptions. After controlling for income, education is negatively associated with contacting officials, positively associ-

ated with protest, and not at all associated with attending party meetings. (Without the control for income, it is unassociated with protest.) Neither income nor indigenous identity has any effect on conventional political activities. As hypothesized, though, income negatively predicts protest and indigenous identity positively predicts it. Women, as expected, were much less likely to participate across the board. Last, and unexpectedly, age is negatively associated with attending party meetings and has no impact on contacting officials or protest (a squared term for age was attempted in all models but was not significant). This is contrary to the demographic model of protest that Marsh and Kaase (1979) established.

DISCUSSION

Students of democratization postulate that citizens' belief in the legitimacy of democracy buffers democratically elected governments from instability in hard times (Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1978, 1996). Conversely, low democratic legitimacy should spell trouble for many Latin American governments (Payne et al. 2002; United Nations Development Programme 2004). However, there are reasons to doubt whether the consequences of low reported support for democracy in Latin America are as dire as is often assumed. Munck (2001, 123) argues that researchers have conflated democratic attitudes with consolidation, simply assuming that "whether a regime is legitimate" indicates "whether it is stable." There is little actual evidence on preference for democracy as a predictor of stability. In cross-national time-series analysis, Inglehart and Welzel (2003, 2005) find that aggregate levels of preference for democracy have a small impact on the change in a country's level of democracy. As Norris and her coauthors (1999) have shown, though, many types of support for the system and regime have declined across the world, including in advanced industrial democracies, while those countries show no signs of breakdown.

The analysis presented here has clear implications for this question. If attitudes toward democracy indeed matter for democratic consolidation, the mechanism probably involves a two-step causal chain: the impact of those attitudes on individual behaviors and the impact of behaviors on the stability of governments or regimes (of course, these behaviors might consist only of passivity in the face of elite encroachments on democracy). Recent Bolivian history provides a likely case in which this mechanism may have played out. With respect to the first link in the chain, relatively low levels of preference for democracy and high levels of political unrest suggest that preference for democracy might have affected how people chose to participate. With respect to the second link in the causal chain, it is hard to think of where the impact of citizen behaviors on political systems would be more apparent in the new century than in Bolivia, where popular unrest toppled two presidents and the traditional party system.

Protestors were not simply a fringe group of the most discontented and politically resourceful in the hot spots of La Paz and El Alto. Rather, the data analyzed here suggest that perhaps one in ten citizens across many provinces in this sparsely populated country of 9 million people took part in protests at some point. Thus, the Bolivian case provides a fairly clear example of the connections among individual participation, mass movements, and government stability.

As it turns out, though, preference for democracy apparently had little impact on aggregate levels of protest and mobilization in Bolivia. The proportion of people who preferred democracy among the protestors was approximately the same as among nonprotestors. This is not to say that preferences for democracy had no impact on the behavior of some individuals. For people with participatory attitudes toward representation, democratic legitimacy is associated with protest; among those who favored traditional means of representation, it is associated with the opposite.[8] The associations among the two groups largely canceled out. This concords with my own interviews with politicians, leaders of social movements, and ordinary citizens, which indicate a fundamental conflict among Bolivians regarding how conflicts and interests should be channeled in their new democracy. Some prefer institutional politics in which citizens' chief method of control over their representatives is voting; others envision a democracy that responds to and depends on continual citizen input, often expressed through protest.

Rose and colleagues (1998, 93) have argued that, "in any language, the word [*democracy*] prompts a variety of responses—and most are positive." For some people and in some circumstances, the word refers to institutions and elections; more often, though, most Latin Americans use it to refer to personal freedoms or equality or popular participation. The fact that, in recent years, Venezuelans have expressed some of the highest levels in Latin America of support for democracy and satisfaction with its progress suggests that many Venezuelans define democracy in terms of features other than republican institutions (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2005, 2008). The 2004 LAPOP survey in Bolivia did not ask how respondents defined democracy, and so it is impossible to know exactly what respondents meant by the term when they reported their democratic preferences.[9] However, there are data on attitudes toward representation, a

8. The appearance of widespread protests against Evo Morales's government and the new constitution since 2006 raises interesting questions and suggests that support for the traditional party system is in some circumstances compatible with participation in protests. If the theory developed here holds, supporters of the traditional party system with higher levels of support for democracy in the abstract should be less likely to protest.

9. However, in 2008 the LAPOP survey of Bolivia solicited open-ended definitions of democracy, coded into forty-eight categories. By far the greatest proportion of respondents defined democracy in terms of personal freedom, particularly freedom of expression; the
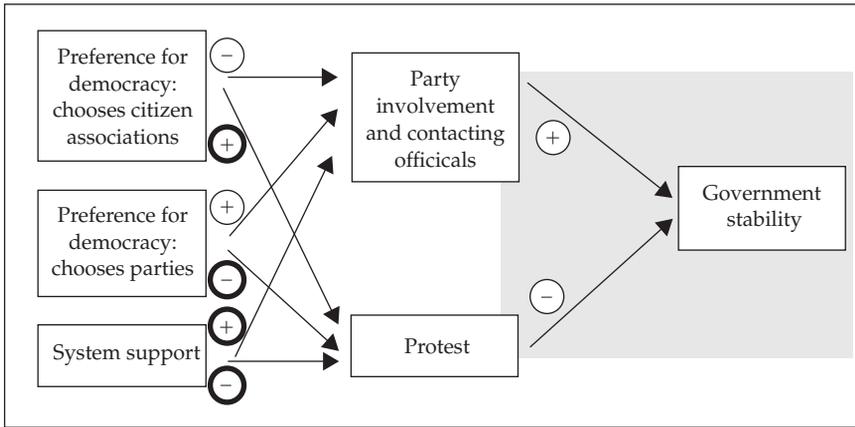
Figure 1 Relationships among legitimacy, political participation, and government stability.

Notes: Circled signs represent the directions of theorized relationships. Bold circles are relationships for which tests confirmed hypotheses. The shaded region represents relationships not tested.

major component of almost any conception of democracy. Based in part on those responses, we can surmise that when Bolivians reported ambivalence toward democracy in 2004, they had in mind many different and often contradictory notions of what the term meant. To assess the impact of preferences for democracy on political behaviors, we need to understand something about those conceptions.

Figure 1 describes the theorized relationships among legitimacy, including preferences for democracy and system support, political participation, and government stability. Circles in bold represent hypotheses that the analyses here confirmed. The shaded region shows the second link in the causal chain: the theorized impact of political participation on government stability. This relationship is impossible to test rigorously with this data set limited to a single country. However, in this particular case, the face validity of the link between individuals' (self-reported) participation in protests in October 2003 and President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's resignation as a result of mass protests should be relatively uncontroversial.

Bolivia is, of course, just one case, and a fairly unusual one at that. Still, it is tempting to try to extrapolate from the foregoing findings to answer the initial question: do new democracies need their citizens to believe in

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second-largest category of responses related to equality. Only a tenth of responses referred to elections or elected governments, while a tenth referred to popular participation. Just 4 percent of responses were obviously negative.

democracy? There are several ways to respond. Normatively, one might argue that democracy loses its purpose if citizens do not desire it. More practically, it does not appear, at least in Bolivia, that preference for democracy has recently had much overall effect on participation. To the extent that scholars and policy experts wish to use cross-national surveys such as regional barometers to gauge the stability of new democracies, the results suggest that preference for democracy may not, in itself, be as telling an indicator as commonly thought. Such efforts might instead focus on constructs such as system support or, alternatively, on assessing attitudes toward representation. Much more important than any attitude, however, is the mobilizing role of community organizations, the effects of which dwarf those of either system support or preference for democracy. Bolivians are encouraged to go to both party meetings and the streets more by their location within community groups than by their own attitudes toward government.

Reflecting on recent Bolivian history, the obvious bears mentioning: despite problems, democracy survived. In the face of tremendous instability, executive power was transferred constitutionally several times. This fact can be interpreted in two ways in light of the preceding question. On the one hand, it might suggest doubt about whether popular Bolivian attitudes and behaviors ultimately had any impact on democratic longevity at all. We might believe that, in the end, elite commitment to constitutional procedures saved the day. On the other hand, to the extent that social movement leaders might have been able to claim control of the state at the height of protests (as many later claimed), basic commitment to democracy among a critical portion of the masses may have also been essential to the final outcome. It is likely that there is some truth to both arguments, and that elites and movement participants unknowingly worked together to rescue the democratic regime. In either case, this line of reasoning suggests that democratic rule is more consolidated in Bolivia than is often thought. Given the substantial measured ambivalence toward democracy in the abstract, this has troubling implications for the effectiveness of democratic barometers in measuring consolidation.

APPENDIX: VARIABLE CODING

Dependent Variables

Contacting is a five-value summated rating scale (alpha = 0.70) in which respondents received one point each for having requested "help or cooperation" from a senator or representative, a mayor or councilperson, an indigenous community authority, or the prefecture. As with all other variables, this was rescaled to run from 0 to 1. The mean value for this variable is 0.125. Attending party meetings, next, is a four-value variable

comprising answers to a single question about the frequency with which a person attends party meetings, from never (70 percent) to almost never (11 percent), occasionally (14 percent), and frequently (6 percent). Finally, protest is a binary variable for individuals who reported that they participated in the protests of October 2003 against the government of Sánchez de Lozada. About 12 percent are coded 1. Missing values were multiply imputed using ten data sets (Honaker et al. 2006; King et al. 2001). For protest, multiply imputed cells were constrained to integer values, thereby enabling the use of logit. For contacting and party meeting variables, multiply imputed cells were allowed to take on noninteger values, consistent with the assumption of continuous distribution inherent in ordinary least squares models.

Independent Variables

Preference for democracy is measured as the extent to which individuals agree, on a seven-point scale, with the statement "Democracy may have problems, but it's preferable to any other form of government." The coding of the citizen association and neither group dummy variables is described in the text. The baseline category for the two dummy variables is those who reported that they preferred parties (about 12 percent of the sample). System support is measured following Seligson, Moreno, and Schwarz's (2005) official report on the survey data employed here. The variable is a summated rating scale (alpha = 0.77) of responses regarding the extent to which a person agrees, on a seven-point scale, that (1) the courts of his or her country guarantee a fair trial, (2) the political system protects citizens' basic rights, (3) "one ought to support the political system," (4) whether the respondent has respect for her country's political institutions, and (5) whether the respondent feels proud to live under her country's political system. This variable shows a close-to-normal distribution, with about 52 percent having values less than 0.5. Ideology is an index based on answers to the question, "Where you would place yourself politically" on a ten-point scale, where 0 = "extreme left" and 10 = "extreme right." The sample is approximately symmetrically distributed, with 35 percent in the modal category of 5, 30 percent locating themselves between 1 and 4, and 35 percent locating themselves between 6 and 10. Support for nationalizing gas is a summated rating scale (alpha = 0.85) based on the extent, from 1 to 10, to which a person approves of the state oil company "managing oil-related activity in the country once again," and of "the government nationalizing oil companies." Only 18 percent scored less than 0.5. Opposition to coca eradication is a binary variable coded 1 for people who chose the statement "Drug trafficking is *not* a Bolivian problem, but rather one of the [United States] and other countries" versus "Drug trafficking is a problem for Bolivia." Here, opinion is evenly split; 48 percent are coded 1.

Community group participation is a summated rating scale (alpha = 0.73, mean = 0.34) based on reported frequency of attendance in parents' groups at school, committees to improve the community, professional or workers' groups, neighborhood associations, and territorial base organizations. Church attendance is a four-value scale (mean = 0.55) based on reported frequency of attending "church groups or committees." Interpersonal trust is an index (alpha = 0.49, mean = 0.27) based on answers to two questions about whether most people "think only about themselves" and "would take advantage of you if they had the opportunity."

Income, education, and age are all based on self-reports, and the scales have nine, nineteen, and six values, respectively. Finally, indigenous is a dummy variable coded 1 for people who chose "indigenous" or "*originario*" in response to a question about race; and female is likewise a dummy variable.

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