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From Social Networks to Political Parties: Indigenous Party-Building in Bolivia

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While existing scholarship recognizes the centrality of social organizations for party-building efforts, how network structures condition party-building remains underexamined. This article argues that a core property of the network environments within which proto-parties emerge—structural resilience—shapes opportunities for proto-parties' expansion and consolidation. More resilient network structures—those with multiple pathways available for expansion—decrease proto-parties' vulnerability to structural threats and allow them to circumvent competition. To evaluate this theory, I examine the organizational networks of three comparable indigenous party-building efforts in Bolivia. Using original network data and a mixed-methods approach, I demonstrate that MAS-IPSP succeeded in establishing itself as the indigenous party because of the structural resilience of the network environment within which it originated. By contrast, its counterparts failed when targeted network attacks undermined their access to organizational spaces critical to their expansion strategies. The findings reveal often-overlooked variation in the relationship between social organizations and political parties.

INTRODUCTION

Social organizations—whether originating from social movements, neighborhood associations, labor unions, insurgent groups, or authoritarian networks—have been found to provide nascent political parties with critical mobilization and communication infrastructure (Anria 2018; Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck 2016; Loxton 2015; 2016) along with social cohesion and committed partisans (Samuels 2006; Samuels and Zucco 2015). Their endorsements, moreover, provide legitimacy and facilitate parties' electoral growth through the mobilization of extended networks (Poertner 2021). This has led scholars to conclude that successful party-building often results from an "organizational inheritance" that proto-parties build on to extend their reach and gather partisans (Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck 2016).

Yet, while organizations' value for party-building is widely recognized, we nonetheless lack insight into the mechanisms through which organizations become effective conduits for party-building purposes. Established theories are limited in their ability to account for why parties emerging from the same social fractures and even organizations often meet different fates.[1] Systematic analyses of how network properties condition party-building experiences, and the processes through which proto-parties establish themselves and grow through established networks, may account for critical variation in party-building outcomes.[2]

This article introduces a network-centric theory to examine the relationship between social organizations and party-building efforts.[3] Its central argument is that the structural resilience of the network environments within which proto-parties emerge conditions their growth and opportunities for consolidation. Structural resilience refers to organizations' level of dependence on particular nodes and ties for their network connectivity. Resilience is a central characteristic of network environments, which are the networks that new parties' origin organizations are connected into through both intra- and inter-organizational ties. Although similar parties may share organizational communities, their network environments will often vary in important

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[1] Labor unions, for instance, often produced multiple parties that, despite compatible ideologies, competed aggressively for primacy (Bartolini and Mair 1990). Even cohesive insurgent movements have regularly generated competing projects (Allison 2016).

[2] Recognizing this gap, scholars have explored how organizational resources condition party-building outcomes and demonstrated that parties with organizational resources—mainly, members, local branches, and professional committees (Cyr 2017)—fare better during early formation stages and when challenged by crises (Cyr 2017; Hale 2005; Tavits 2013; Van Dyck 2014; 2016). While effective at placing the focus on organizations, this approach has not problematized sufficiently organizational resources' origins and how new parties successfully gain access to, and grow through, desired organizational spaces. The present study goes one step back to examine how parties capture those spaces, an outcome that is far from certain even when parties have ties to organizations and recognize their value.

[3] I define party-building success as an effort to construct a political organization that effectively establishes party system roots, competing in democratic elections and achieving electoral significance and durability (Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck 2016). A successful party competes regularly and obtains a sufficient vote share consistently enough to be recognized as an institutionalized political alternative, even if its odds of winning are low. Conversely, party-building failures involve parties that become unreliable political alternatives. This includes parties that form but do not compete in elections regularly or that emerge and compete in one or two elections but disappear thereafter ("flash parties").

ways and have different ties and nodes connecting them into the network. In this study, I argue that variation in the structural resilience of the network environments within which proto-parties emerge has important implications for party-building outcomes. Specifically, I propose that more resilient network structures—those with multiple pathways available for expansion—decrease proto-parties' vulnerability to structural threats and increase their likelihood of consolidation.

I evaluate this argument through an analysis of the three most similar cases of indigenous party-building in Bolivia, all born within the structure of the country's most powerful indigenous peasant organization (CSUTCB)—gathering around four million members country-wide—and led by influential leaders with comparable political agendas. Despite these similarities, only one of these proto-parties, the Movement Toward Socialism-Political Instrument for the Peoples' Sovereignty (MAS-IPSP), consolidated and now represents a rare example of successful party-building in Latin America (Anria 2018; Anria and Cyr 2017).

I employ a mixed-methods approach that integrates process tracing with network analysis of an original network dataset—using newspaper data to trace ties within and between social organizations—to investigate why similar party-building efforts met drastically different fates. The mixed-methods approach enables me to evaluate how network structures shaped indigenous parties' expansion opportunities, patterns of competition, and consolidation outcomes.

The analyses highlight the centrality of organizational networks for party-building outcomes. I show that Bolivia's proto-parties had access to a seemingly ideal indigenous organization (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005; Rivera Cusicanqui 1984). Yet, competition between them ultimately overwhelmed this organization. Variation in the network environments of the regional organizations that the three indigenous parties emerged from conditioned who survived and who collapsed. Whereas access to a resilient network enabled MAS-IPSP to sidestep competition and continue expanding, the limited resilience of the network environments that its political rivals used to grow ultimately drove their demise.

The study makes several contributions to scholarship on political parties. It incorporates insights from social networks literature to deepen our understanding of party-building processes. The notion that organizational access shapes parties' behavior is intuitive and reflects an underlying assumption in established literature. Whether examining party-building through the lens of elite decision-making (Aldrich 1995), institutional conditions (Van Cott 2005), social processes (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Lipset and Rokkan 1967), or resources (Anria and Cyr 2017; Samuels and Zucco 2015; Tavits 2013; Van Dyck 2014) the literature broadly recognizes the centrality of organizations for party-building. Numerous studies, moreover, have identified access to preexisting organizations as a strong determinant of party-building success (Kalyvas 1996; Keck 1992; Loxton 2015; Van Dyck 2016). Where the present study makes its central contribution, however, is in examining organizational network structures—their shapes, nodes, and ties—systematically, and theorizing and evaluating how a currently overlooked mechanism, network environments' structural resilience, shapes party-building outcomes.[4] In so doing, the study takes us beyond the current agreement that access to organizations matters and places the focus on organizational *ties* to identify structural properties that make organizational network environments more or less effective as party-building pathways.

Proto-parties generally lack resources to build organizations from scratch and rely instead on pre-existing organizations and networks to expand. This dependence makes new parties uniquely vulnerable to structural weaknesses in their network environments. I demonstrate that structural resilience can make or break proto-parties even where they emerge within a well-resourced organization with high mobilization capacity. This finding reveals the value in zooming into network structures and looking beyond commonly highlighted organizational properties (e.g., size or cohesion) to understand party-building through a new lens and elucidate currently underappreciated dynamics shaping representational outcomes.

The study also reveals how competition from similar proto-parties shapes party-building experiences. I show that competition between similar proto-parties—those seeking to capture the support of the same organizational spaces with similar agendas—threatens party growth by altering network environments. Competing parties can be uniquely effective at canceling other proto-parties' paths to critical organizational nodes and ties. And they can do this more suddenly than other threat sources, which significantly undermines competing parties' adaptation capacity. This finding suggests the need to examine party-building efforts through a relational lens, rather than in isolation, particularly where multiple proto-parties compete to fill the same void. Who survives or loses out in that competition may be a function of the networks where they emerge and compete.

The findings also contribute to scholarship on comparative race and ethnic politics. This scholarship has traditionally explained patterns of ethnic voting and party building as the product of salient cleavages and top-down ethnic appeals (Chandra 2004; Elischer 2013; Ferree, Gibson, and Long 2021; Posner 2004). How ethnic networks and organizational characteristics shape the political expression and mobilization of these identities remains underexamined. This study addresses this gap and reveals the utility of examining ethnic politics through a network lens. The findings suggest that network ties mediate when and how

[4] Proto-parties typically emerge within organizations embedded in distinct organizational network environments and rely on available network ties to expand into new organizational nodes. The focus of this study is on those intra- and inter-organizational ties that shape party growth. Whether parties successfully move through those ties into new organizational spaces influences their access to resources and geographical reach.

ethnic identities achieve political expression and may also condition the reach and effectiveness of ethnic appeals.

Finally, the study contributes a new dataset and a promising methodology for examining variation in party-building outcomes. Despite the evident relevance of network methods for studying party-building processes, its use and application remain sparse. The present work introduces a viable strategy for applying these methodological tools to party studies, particularly in instances when they have organizational foundations. The data employed here allow me to offer an unusually detailed look at how networks shape party-building experiences. The findings offer key insights into party politics and open avenues for research on networks, party behavior, and representational outcomes.

A THEORY OF NETWORKED PARTY-BUILDING

Organizational network structures are essential to party-building processes. Such structures are a precondition for effective collective action, partisan recruitment, and coordination (Diani 1995; Diani and McAdam 2003; Passy and Monsch 2014). They facilitate cooperation and trust (Zuckerman 2005) and increase participants' willingness to engage in high-risk activism (McAdam 1990). Network structures also delineate paths for movement, shaping information flows and conditioning how citizens interpret information traveling through them (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987; 1995; McClurg 2006; Mutz 2006). Organizational network structures can serve as "islands of meanings" that "shape both stable aspects such as values and identities and more volatile aspects such as perceptions and preferences" (Passy 2003, 23). In this way, network structures provide a primary site for gathering and socializing partisans (Mische 2009), a central goal of proto-parties that is fundamental to their short-term prospects and long-term success. For parties, networks' nodes also provide organizational resources—members, territorial reach, and professional bureaucracy (Tavits 2013)—that shape parties' likelihood of expansion (Samuels and Zucco 2015; Van Dyck 2014), consolidation (Van Dyck 2016), and survival when faced with crises (Cyr 2017).

Social networks, therefore, offer proto-parties essential foundations. Where organizational networks exist and proto-parties successfully establish ties to these, networks open new spaces that facilitate the socialization, mobilization, and coordination of societal sectors. And because proto-parties require so much in terms of resources, mobilization capacity, and partisan commitment, their survival is strongly conditioned by their access to such networks.

Yet, not all networks are made alike. The literature offers vast insights into the many ways in which network structures vary.[5] As it pertains to party-building, I focus on variation in the structure of the pre-existing organizational networks proto-parties rely on to expand. Proto-parties are constrained in their ability to construct an ideal network structure. Especially early on, proto-parties must work with the pre-established network environments they can access. These environments may provide many or few, strong or weak, far-reaching or very localized paths to expansion. Proto-parties must necessarily design party-building strategies that adapt to these network properties.

My central argument is that variation in the *structural resilience* of the pre-existing network environments that parties have access to ultimately conditions their prospects for successful consolidation. *Resilience* refers to a network's level of reliance on ties that offer critical connections to other parts of the larger network structure. Networks lacking resilience are overly reliant on few ties that are critical for connecting the organization to other parts of the network and, without which, such connections would collapse (Bothner, Smith, and White 2010). By contrast, more resilient network structures are characterized by a multiplicity of nodes and ties that provide connectivity to the larger network. They have reduced dependency on particular nodes and, consequently, provide access to alternative paths to growth should a given connection fail.

For proto-parties, access to resilient networks increases their likelihood of growth and consolidation. First, by providing proto-parties with multiple connections to their network environment, resilient structures enable parties to scale up, down, or across new organizational spaces through multiple entry points. Second, access to resilient networks decreases proto-parties' dependence on a small set of organizational nodes. Put succinctly, resilient network structures shield proto-parties from network deficiencies—fractured, weakened, or canceled nodes and ties—that could otherwise severely threaten growth efforts and cut access to other sectors, regional spaces, or political levels.

The potential threats to network resilience, and by extension, party growth and consolidation, vary. Organizational nodes and ties may be weakened or fractured by factors including policies, organizational exhaustion, and polarization.[6] These threats qualitatively alter the network environment within which proto-parties emerge, opening doors for growth where ties remain accessible and closing them where ties weaken or fracture.

[5] Network analysis literature points to structural properties that are consequential for political behavior. For an overview of this literature's applicability to political science questions, see Lazer (2011), Siegel (2009), and Ward, Stovel, and Sacks (2011).

[6] Although polarization can generate conflicts that facilitate party-building by increasing social cohesion (Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck 2016), it can also undermine pre-existing ties between organizations. As organizational actors choose camps (or fracture), network transforms, altering pathways available and increasing parties' reliance on fewer ties.

One of the greatest and most common roadblocks to party growth that proto-parties encounter when they first emerge is competition from similar political projects. Competition is core to politics. But whereas established parties are generally concerned with competition from ideological rivals, proto-parties generally grapple more with competition from analogous political counterparts. This is particularly so during the early stages of party-building, when multiple parties emerge to fill the same representational void. The significant similarities between proto-parties competing for access to, and control of, the same organizational spaces and the potential partisans and resources they offer, increase the difficulties of consolidating support. As proto-parties look to assert their control and emerge as legitimate representatives for the same organizations, they will work to undermine and block each other's expansion. And because they are familiar with these spaces and recognize their value, they will likely be effective at undermining their counterparts' growth. Political competition, then, can quickly make network ties and nodes—even those most critical for parties' expansion strategies—obsolete. As competition ensues within organizational spaces, these spaces are likely to splinter into political camps and limit proto-parties' avenues for growth.

Resilient network environments decrease proto-parties' vulnerability to structural weaknesses. They allow new parties to navigate unexpected changes when organizational nodes considered central to their growth strategy collapse. As such, structural resilience increases proto-parties' prospects for survival and consolidation. By contrast, when network environments lack resilience, they constrain proto-parties' ability to respond and adapt by making them heavily reliant on a few critical ties. In such instances, structural threats within a single organizational space can negate proto-parties' access to important sectors and significantly narrow paths to expansion. Unable to establish themselves as the legitimate political force in their core organizational spaces, proto-parties' growth gets stunted, and prospects for consolidation decline.

To summarize, I propose that the network environment within which proto-parties emerge define their paths to expansion, providing the roadmap through which parties are likely to grow, particularly early on. I argue that network environments' structural resilience conditions proto-parties' prospects for consolidation. Access to resilient network environments decreases vulnerability to network threats by providing proto-parties with alternative paths to expansion. One particularly threatening structural challenge proto-parties are likely to encounter is competition from similar proto-parties in their network. When competition arises within organizational nodes, I expect these nodes to fracture and collapse as pathways to growth. Access to resilient network structures enables proto-parties to circumvent these threats. Where proto-parties lack access to resilient network structures, by contrast, the collapse of critical nodes will significantly narrow proto-parties' expansion pathways, likely leading them to a dead-end road.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine this argument, I evaluate three comparable party-building efforts in Bolivia. This section describes the case selection strategy. It then presents the data collection strategy and research methodology.

Case Selection

Bolivia offers an ideal setting for evaluating the proposed argument. The country has a permissive institutional environment that facilitates party-building and electoral engagement (Albó 2002; Komadina and Geffroy 2007; Van Cott 2005; Zuazo 2009). It transitioned to democracy during the 1980s and, in the 1990s, implemented policies decreasing barriers to new party entry and increasing indigenous movements' opportunities for electoral participation. During this period, Bolivia's party system fragmented and collapsed, resulting in the erosion of traditional partisan attachments (Madrid 2012; 2005). As traditional parties disappeared, the open institutional environment interacted with the representational void to enable the emergence of multiple proto-parties (Van Cott 2005). Established literature on new party entry suggests that parties seeking to fill ideological openings should be more successful than those attempting to enter already crowded ideological positions (Lago and Martínez 2011; Laroze 2017; Tavits 2006). In Bolivia, the representational arena was wide open during this period and opportunities for growth were relatively even across parties.

Focusing on Bolivia also allows me to control for the role of conflict in party-building processes. Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck (2016) found the presence of explosive social conflict to be a critical factor explaining successful party-building in Latin America since democratization. Bolivia fits this story: it is characterized by a salient ethnic cleavage that has systematically structured political behavior (Madrid 2012; Van Cott 2007; Yashar 2005). Coupled with the institutional environment, the well-established salience of this cleavage allows me to set aside the question of "were conditions favorable?" to evaluate how network structures shape party-building outcomes.

In this context of institutional openings, party system collapse, and increased conflict, multiple proto-parties emerged to compete for votes from Bolivia's indigenous populations. The three most significant projects were the Assembly for Peoples' Sovereignty (ASP), MAS-IPSP, and Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP) (do Alto and Stefanoni 2010).[7] These parties were similar in important ways. They emerged during the same period and responded to the same

[7] There have been other indigenous peasant political projects. Van Cott (2005) differentiates between those constructed prior to electoral reforms—MITKA, MITKA-1, MRTK, MRTKL, FULKA, and Eje Pachakuti—and those that benefited from institutional openings (MAS-IPSP, MIP, ASP). She sees institutional reforms and increased mobilization as factors that enabled indigenous party-building but does not differentiate between party-building outcomes within the new generation.

representational void. The three proto-parties originated from indigenous peasant organizations with strong regional bases and extensive mobilization capacity. Their origin organizations were either regional or subregional branches of CSUTCB, Bolivia's most important rural organization, and their organizational resources were ideal for establishing a movement-based party with extensive appeal (Anria 2018; García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014; Van Dyck 2014).

The three proto-parties were also led by influential leaders. Felipe "Mallku" Quispe (MIP), Evo Morales (MAS-IPSP), and Alejandro "Alejo" Véliz (ASP) were at the forefront of a historical cycle of indigenous protests. Notably, both Quispe (MIP) and Véliz (ASP) were elected to CSUTCB's top positions during this period, serving as executive secretary and first secretary, respectively. Morales (MAS-IPSP) led the powerful coca growers' movement (*Coordinadora*), a much smaller but highly mobilized and politically influential organization. These leaders therefore enjoyed enormous legitimacy and mobilization capacity among Bolivia's indigenous peasantry (García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; Patzi 1999).

The three proto-parties also had comparable programmatic positions that found their inspiration in a wave of national indigenous mobilizations. They advocated and mobilized for issues including gas nationalization, rejection of free trade agreements (and neoliberal policies broadly), new communal land rights, and elimination of coca eradication policies, all central issues during the protest cycles (Albó 2009). They also demanded a Constitutional Assembly, increased indigenous political participation, and proposed other reforms considered radical by traditional parties. Their agendas and discourse incorporated demands articulated during protests and shared by indigenous and left-leaning sectors. The similarities across the parties were such that ASP and MAS-IPSP are typically treated as the same in literature, with ASP seen as the precursor to MAS-IPSP (García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; Van Cott 2005). Morales himself argued that "the emergence of MAS-IPSP is simply the continuity of ASP, which has already met its function" (Burgoa Moya 2016, 78). While MAS-IPSP is better conceived as an off-shoot of ASP—the division between them generated two distinct proto-parties that participated in elections separately and competed for control of indigenous peasant support bases—the prevalent view highlights the similarities between these proto-parties which, along with Quispe's MIP, are part of the same wave of indigenous party-building.

Finally, the parties also pursued comparable party-building strategies. They identified the need to make inroads with urban and labor movements and sought to compensate for their limited appeal in various ways. Their strategies toward this end included: the enhancement of alliances with the national workers' confederation (COB), efforts at attracting support from working-class leaders and intellectuals by inviting them to run on party lists (Anria 2013; 2018; Madrid 2012), a broadening of parties' agendas to include issues of interest to urban and working-class sectors (Albó 2009), and the adoption of party rhetoric that heavily emphasized unity among indigenous and working classes. Altogether, the various similarities—in timing, resources, leadership legitimacy and influence, programmatic views, and party-building strategies—serve as crucial controls for examining how the proto-parties emerged from indigenous organizations and used their network environments to expand and compete.

The final condition that makes Bolivia ideal for evaluating the proposed theory turns to differences between these party-building projects. As I show, despite having strong roots in Bolivia's indigenous peasant movement, the structural resilience of proto-parties' network environments nonetheless varied significantly. Controlling for various factors enables me, to the extent that a nonexperimental setting allows, to isolate the variable of interest—network environments' structural resilience—and trace its relationship to party-building outcomes.

Before proceeding, there are potential confounding factors to consider. Particularly, despite the significant similarities across these proto-parties, there are nonetheless notable differences in leadership styles and party-building strategies that could account for MAS-IPSP success. Madrid (2012) highlights Quispe's exclusionary ethnopopulism and argues that Morales' inclusionary approach contributed to MAS-IPSP's success. Anria (2018), for his part, attributes MAS-IPSP's organizational expansion into noncore constituencies to a party strategy involving the "negotiation of spaces of power and influence within the government" with organizational leaders (88). Undoubtedly, Morales' charisma, organizational skills, and inclusive populist discourse, along with MAS-IPSP's political linkage strategies, are important factors contributing to MAS-IPSP's success. These explanations are not incompatible with the proposed argument. However, as I will show, variation among them cannot effectively account for the major differences in proto-parties' network environments. Indeed, this study's findings suggest that these alternative explanations may be doing much of their work *through* proto-parties' organizational networks. The opportunities and constraints that network structures offer proto-parties may condition the design and effectiveness of organizational efforts, linkage tactics, and appeal strategies.

Data Collection and Methodology

The analyses that follow adopt a mixed-methods strategy, using process tracing and network analysis to assess the association between network structures and party-building outcomes. I employ data gathered through extensive fieldwork in Bolivia between 2013 and 2015, including newspaper and electoral data, organizational documents, and secondary sources. I use process tracing to identify the origins and central features of variation in network environments, trace

how parties grow through networks, and assess how competition alters pathways to expansion.

For the network analysis, I constructed an original organizational network dataset using newspaper articles gathered through Bolivia's Center for Documentation and Information's *10 Years of History, 30 days of news (2002–2011)* newspaper database (CEDIB 2012).[8] The network dataset traces positive intra- and inter-organizational interactions in 2003 (Giusti-Rodríguez 2023). Positive interactions are those that reveal productive collaboration among organizations. It includes coparticipation in meetings, public statements, negotiations, or protests where the outcome was a joint effort, agreement, or alliance. Positive interactions contrast with negative ones, which are those interactions where the outcomes signal an organizational break within or between organizations. Examples include internal disagreements or splits, failed negotiations, and statements negating mobilization support to organizations requesting it. In this study, I focus on positive interactions. The resulting organizational network has 51 organizational nodes and 255 ties (positive interactions) between these.[9] The network has a mean degree centrality of 10 and median degree of 5. I use network analysis to evaluate each organization's tie density, centrality, and connectivity, and assess networks' structural vulnerabilities.

The network dataset focuses on the 2003 protest cycles. In addition to this being the first year for which full newspaper articles are available, it also offers an effective context for evaluating structural resilience. The 2003 Gas Wars involved persistent protests and inter- and intra-organizational interactions that spanned the Bolivian territory, paralyzed the country on multiple occasions, and resulted in a presidential resignation. Most organizations associated with the ideological left and indigenous communities participated. Because of its intensity and reach, the 2003 protest cycle revealed extensive organizational activity and made visible numerous network ties and organizational actors that would otherwise be difficult to capture in newspaper data during periods of limited organizational activity.

The 2003 focus nonetheless raises several challenges. One concern is that, by this point, MAS-IPSP may have already been too far ahead of its counterparts. Both MAS-IPSP and MIP performed well in the 2002 elections, but MAS-IPSP obtained a significantly larger vote share. In that same election, ASP participated in an alliance with *Nueva Fuerza Republicana* (NFR), running its own candidates in regional elections (Véliz was elected to the legislative assembly for Cochabamba) and supporting the NFR candidate for president. Thus, the potential risk here is that 2003 is inadequate for comparing these network environments because, by then, MIP and ASP had fallen too far behind.[10] From a leadership and organizational standpoint, however, the mobilization dynamics of the 2003 protest cycle suggest that these remained viable political projects. The three party leaders and their organizations had prominent roles throughout the protests and displayed persistent mobilizational power. Quispe, for instance, carried out the hunger strike that sparked the Gas War protest cycle and remained a core leader throughout. Writing about Quispe and Morales in the aftermath of these protests, (Van Cott 2005, 98) states that "the leaders of the two new ethnic parties, while maintaining their identity as outsiders, were firmly established as central political figures. In a conjuncture where political parties had been rendered almost meaningless […] all eyes were on Morales and Quispe."[11] The 2003 protest cycle, therefore, may well have been an equalizing moment, particularly for MIP and MAS-IPSP, giving them greater influence and political momentum. Beyond this, however, there is no evidence to suggest that network environments were altered significantly with the decline of these proto-parties.

Another concern centers on whether historical differences between organizations provided MAS-IPSP with a stronger and more cohesive organization and, in turn, shaped party-building outcomes. Existing evidence, however, indicates that the three organizations were equipped with impressive resources. During the period of analysis, CSUTCB was Bolivia's most organizationally powerful and densely interconnected organization. Within CSUTCB, too, the La Paz and Cochabamba federations—the origin organizations of MIP and ASP, respectively—were the most powerful, cohesive, and mobilized branches. As top executives of CSUTCB, and leaders of their departmental federations, both Quispe and Véliz were arguably better positioned than Morales to access and mobilize a vast network structure. Morales himself led a powerful but drastically smaller, geographically concentrated organization that was located on a lower rung of CSUTCB's organizational chart within Veliz's FSUTCC. These dynamics highlight that the challenge for MIP and ASP did not stem from their organizational weakness or increasing irrelevance relative to MAS-IPSP, nor from their leaders' lack of mobilization capacity.

[8] CEDIB has collected newspaper articles from Bolivia's main national and regional newspapers (11 daily newspapers total) daily since 1992. This database includes more than 90,000 articles from the 2002–2011 period. Articles are a selection of the most significant news and are organized by theme, year, and month.

[9] The network has 55 nodes and 273 ties, but I exclude four nodes from the analyses. For details on this decision and robustness checks using the full network, see Appendix C of the Supplementary Material (Giusti-Rodríguez 2023).

[10] It is important to be cautious about using electoral results to arrive at conclusions about party-building outcomes. Electoral performance in a single election is a weak measure of party-building success or failure, particularly in contexts of volatile party systems where electoral vehicles often experience fleeting electoral success and politicians rise and fall across election cycles. When analyzing party-building success in such contexts, stability across elections—regardless of whether the party wins office or not—reveals more information about the outcome of interest.

[11] Van Cott (2005) treated ASP as a precursor to MAS-IPSP and did not examine ASP's continued efforts at expansion and consolidation.

Rather, the challenge was in their inability to translate significant organizational strengths and resources into political support.

A final concern centers on endogeneity issues, specifically, on whether the network ties observed in 2003 were bolstered in the aftermath of MAS-IPSP's 2002 electoral performance. While available data do not allow network analysis of earlier years, the mixed-methods approach enables me to examine various empirical expectations associated with this argument and related concerns. I structure the analyses and discussion to address these potential issues.

First, I use process tracing to identify the origins of network environments. This allows me to demonstrate that the most critical ties—and the main differences across network environments—were present well before proto-parties' emergence. I show that this variation was unintentional and originated from formal organizational structures and established patterns of alliance development, rather than from transformations following the 2002 election. I also employ process tracing to examine how *Coordinadora's* ties shaped MAS-IPSP's expansion opportunities and leadership structures throughout the party's early years. I find a strong association between historically institutionalized ties and patterns of party growth, consistent with the idea that proto-parties grew through pre-existing network ties. Third, I combine network analysis and process tracing to assess how competition shapes networks. I find significant and varied evidence in support of expectations both in pre-2003 patterns of organizational fractures and 2003 measures of networks' structural vulnerabilities.

Finally, I also find important evidence consistent with the idea that inter-organizational cooperation was common throughout protest cycles and that political rivalries did not significantly decrease the likelihood of inter-organizational cooperation. Notably, Morales' *Coordinadora* and CSUTCB, with Quispe and Véliz at its helm, cooperated—as did their leaders—consistently throughout the 2003 protests. Along with COB, *Coordinadora* and CSUTCB were the most important organizational nodes in the network and were strongly interconnected, both through direct and indirect ties. These varied insights demonstrate that Bolivia's proto-parties did not generate their social networks, nor drastically altered patterns of inter-organizational cooperation. Instead, proto-parties sought to adapt to, and grow through, their pre-established network ties.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

In this section, I describe proto-parties' network environments, trace their historical roots, and examine variation in structural resilience. I demonstrate that there was significant variation in the structural resilience of the network environments proto-parties had access to and that this generated differentiated levels of vulnerability to the failure of critical ties. I also show that the variation in network environments has historical roots that predate proto-parties' formation.

I then trace how competition between proto-parties (1) impacted the matrix organization they sought to grow through and (2) hindered further party-building through CSUTCB for the three proto-parties. Finally, I examine MAS-IPSP's networked party-building strategy to reveal how it used its resilient network environment to grow and consolidate.

Resilience of Network Environments

The three political projects I examine—ASP, MAS-IPSP, and MIP—emerged from regional organizations embedded in CSUTCB. ASP was founded in 1995 and had its roots in FSUTCC, Cochabamba's departmental indigenous peasants' federation. Its leader was Alejo Véliz, then FSUTCC executive secretary. MAS-IPSP was based in Cochabamba's Chapare and used the coca growers' *Coordinadora*—of which Evo Morales was executive secretary—as its organizational base (Komadina and Geffroy 2007). Finally, MIP was founded by Felipe Quispe in 2000 and traced its origins to FDUTC-LP "TK," La Paz's indigenous peasant federation, which Quispe led. Table 1 summarizes the three parties' organizational roots, founding years, and leaders.

Each of these organizations was embedded in a network environment—with distinct nodes and ties—that provided the landscape of opportunities for proto-parties' expansion and consolidation. These network environments shared important similarities. The three parties emerged from regional or subregional branches of Bolivia's powerful indigenous peasant organization, CSUTCB. Their ties to CSUTCB provided a critical pathway for expansion; they connected each organization into a vast organizational network that included institutionalized ties to local, subregional, and departmental CSUTCB nodes spread across Bolivian territory, along with national and subnational ties, resulting from conjunctural or stable alliances to organizations outside CSUTCB's structure. Through CSUTCB, they

TABLE 1. Indigenous Political Projects in Bolivia

Political party	Leader	Origin organization	Year
ASP	Alejo Véliz	Cochabamba Peasants' Federation (FSUTCC)	1995
MAS-IPSP	Evo Morales	Coordinator for the Six Coca Growers' Federation (*Coordinadora*)	1999
MIP	Felipe Quispe	La Paz Peasants' Federation (FDUTC-LP "TK")	2000

were also connected into Bolivia's workers' confederation, COB, which provided proto-parties with a pathway into urban and working-class sectors.

Their network environments, however, also differed in important ways. One difference was that each organization was connected into the larger network from different departmental and subdepartmental levels. CSUTCB's La Paz and Cochabamba federations have historically been the most important departmental CSUTCB branches. They have displayed consistent and extensive organizational capacity and made important intellectual contributions to the indigenous peasant movement (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005; Rivera Cusicanqui 1984). MAS-IPSP's *Coordinadora*, for its part, was a subdepartmental organization embedded *within* CSUTCB's Cochabamba federation. The *Coordinadora* was much smaller and lower down in the organizational hierarchy than its counterparts. It was also newer (it consolidated in 1992). Nonetheless, it represented one of the most militantly organized sectors in Bolivia at the time. Figure 1 visualizes each organization's position within CSUTCB's structure.

A second key difference in network environments centers on origin organizations' connectivity to other organizations. As regional CSUTCB branches, FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK" relied heavily on CSUTCB to organize and mobilize. While both organizations had significant autonomy and strength to participate in events and join causes, as formal regional branches, their autonomous mobilizational efforts were generally limited to their particular regions. Ties to their network environment, and particularly to those organizations outside their own regions (even other CSUTCB regional branches), ran through CSUTCB. They were therefore both deeply connected into and strongly dependent on CSUTCB's organizational structure. When new political parties emerged within these regional organizations, CSUTCB represented their main pathway to expansion.

Coordinadora's network environment was different. Much like FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK," *Coordinadora* had an expansion pathway through CSUTCB by way of Cochabamba's FSUTCC. Yet, in contrast to its counterparts, *Coordinadora's* network environment was characterized by numerous ties that ran both through and outside CSUTCB and connected it to national and regional organizations in and outside Cochabamba.

The differences between *Coordinadora's* and other organizations' network environments were produced by two dynamics: *Coordinadora's* historical development and its organizational culture of alliances. *Coordinadora* was founded in 1992 as an effort to bring together six different and independent coca growers' federations that emerged throughout Chapare since the 1960s to organize the exponential growth in coca producers. These federations remained fragmented through the 1980s (Spedding 2005) and during this period, each one established organizational affiliations and institutional ties that embedded them into the indigenous peasant organizational landscape (see Appendix A). In the process, each federation became affiliated with a different regional and national indigenous peasant organization (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 188). Two of the six local federations became affiliated with Cochabamba's FSUTCC and, through this, with CSUTCB. The other four coca federations affiliated themselves to FSCC, Cochabamba's *interculturales*

FIGURE 1. CSUTCB Organizational Structure

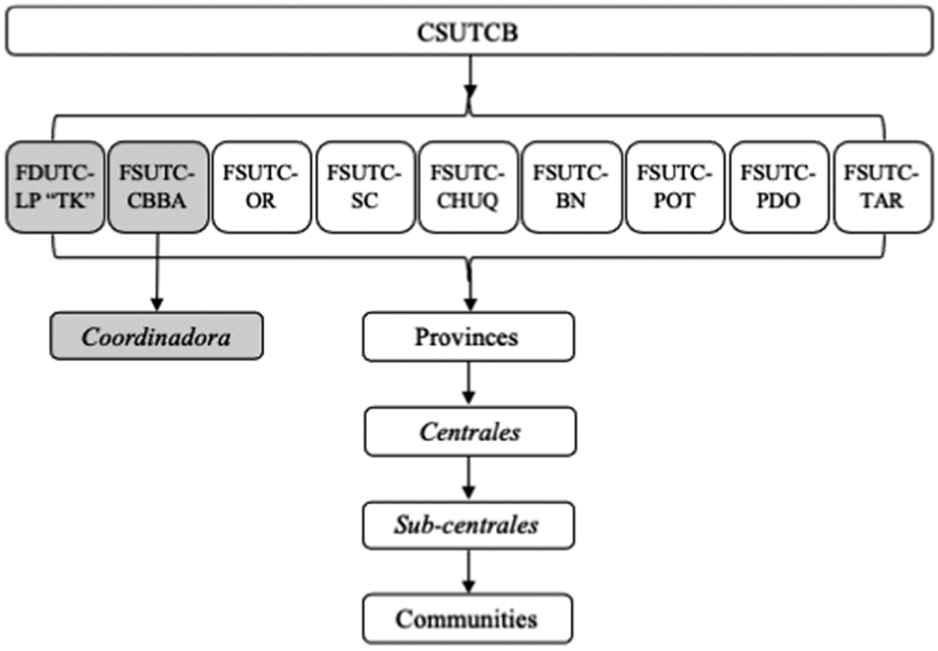
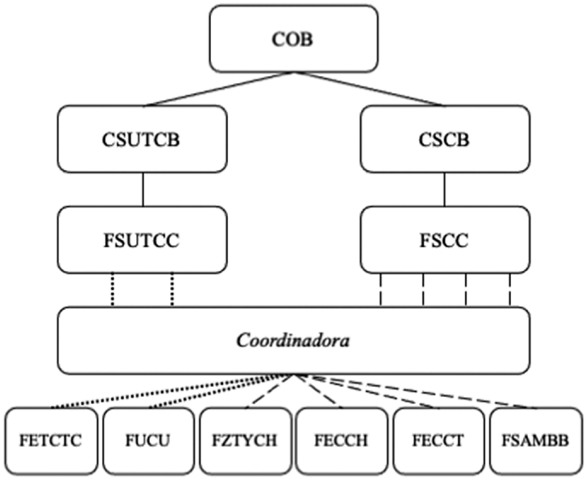


FIGURE 2. *Coordinadora*'s Network Environment



federation, and departmental branch of the national *interculturales*' confederation (CSCB) (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005; Spedding 2005).[12]

Coordinadora thus emerged in 1992 as an umbrella organization for six previously independent federations to facilitate a more coordinated response to harmful state policies. Critically, however, when it formed, rather than canceling its member federations' prior affiliations and establishing its own institutional ties, it maintained the institutional status quo and remained integrated into both FSUTCC and FSCC in Cochabamba and, through them, to CSUTCB and CSCB structures (Appendix A). These two national indigenous peasant organizations were also independently connected to COB (see Figure 2).

Thus, in marked contrast to FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK," *Coordinadora's* network environment had multiple institutional ties connecting it to regional and national indigenous peasant organizations and the workers' confederation. This historical development reduced *Coordinadora's* dependence on any given organizational node, provided it with multiple pathways to the national arena, and afforded it with a more resilient network environment.

Critically, the key elements of this network environment became defined with the consolidation of *Coordinadora* in 1992 and predated the formation of MAS-IPSP in 1999. They were also an unintentional byproduct of fractured processes of organizational development. Indeed, this unusual structure was perceived as "very problematic" by Morales, then *Coordinadora's* Executive Secretary (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005, 391). Yet, it was this precise structure that provided *Coordinadora* with a more resilient network environment than its counterparts. The fact that CSUTCB and CSCB had different geographical strengths and weaknesses also meant MAS-IPSP could rely on different regional ties to grow into different regions.

The second factor that contributed to *Coordinadora's* different network environment was the organization's pattern of engagement with other organizational nodes outside its institutional structure. Both *Coordinadora* and CSCB have been particularly apt historically at establishing stable ties with other organizations. They achieved this by collaborating closely with, and often mobilizing for, other organizations. CSCB, for instance, had a strong and stable collaboration with CONAMAQ and worked consistently with powerful region-level organizations such as Santa Cruz Ethnic Communities' CPESC (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005). *Coordinadora*, for its part, often engaged in protests supporting other organizations and policy demands outside their realm and region (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008); through this, they grew and solidified connections in their network environment. Examples of this include their participation in the 2000 Water Wars, where *Coordinadora* developed a strong and durable alliance with Cochabamba's Water Coordinator and the irrigators' federation—the "main mobilizational force of the Cochabamba valley region"—among others (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005). Ties with working-class sectors were established through alliances with workers' departmental CODES, six departmental federations within COB (*La Voz* 2003; *Opinión* 2003). In 2001, *Coordinadora* also integrated COMUNAL (which became *Estado Mayor*), an alliance originally established with other Cochabamba sectors.

Between 2003 and 2005, *Coordinadora* also mobilized to support protests organized by FDUTC-LP "TK," CSUTCB, FEJUVE-El Alto, COR-El Alto, Huanuni miners, and the Gas Coordinator. Because of its tremendous mobilizational capacity, *Coordinadora*'s participation in protests enabled movements—often based in La Paz—to gain national interconnectivity and visibility. Significantly, however, these were instances of *Coordinadora* actively throwing its mobilization capacity behind other actors, often outside Cochabamba, in a manner consistent with its organizational culture.[13]

Coordinadora and CSCB's tie-building culture contrasts somewhat with FDUTC-LP "TK" and FSUTCC's. Partly due to their structural position within CSUTCB, both organizations tended to invest less in the establishment of stable inter-organizational alliances outside their core structure and, especially, outside their region. Their independent ties as departmental federations were generally with other intra-departmental organizations and focused on departmental issues. When they supported causes outside their regions, they tended to do so through the national CSUTCB. CSUTCB, for

[12] *Interculturales* describes peasants who migrated and occupied new lands independently or as part of government-led land distribution projects.

[13] Gutiérrez Aguilar (2008) notes that this alliance culture was "not merely about solidarity. [Coca growers] established ties and reinforced struggles calculating their time and possibilities of advancing and negotiating their own cause, the defense of coca" (198).

its part, while powerful and deeply interconnected has nonetheless had challenges establishing stable ties outside its own core network environment (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005, 211). Its significant organizational strength may have limited its need to invest in establishing stable alliances with organizational counterparts.

In sum, despite important similarities in their societal and organizational foundations, the three proto-parties nonetheless became embedded in distinct organizational network environments that shaped their dependency on CSUTCB's structure and connectivity to other organizations. These differences were rooted in historical processes and organizational cultures that ultimately limited the pathways connecting FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK" to their organizational networks while also providing the *Coordinadora* with greater interconnectivity and structural resilience.

The analysis of these organizations' network environments in 2003 is consistent with these historical and structural dynamics. Figure 3 uses network data to explore variation in network environments across these organizations. It visualizes the network environments of (a) *Coordinadora*, (b) FDUTC-LP "TK," and (c) FSUTCC, highlighting their direct ties to organizational nodes in the network. The figure shows that the three organizations are connected into the same organizational community, but their positions and connectivity within this network vary substantially. Whereas *Coordinadora* is strongly interconnected, FDUTCP-LP "TK" and FSUTCC have connections with important nodes but have fewer ties to the organizational network.

Furthermore, while during the period of analysis, all three organizations were deeply engaged in mobilizations, meetings, and negotiations, *Coordinadora* did so *directly*—without having to go through CSUTCB—and with a more diverse set of actors. During this year, its densest ties (with multiple lines) were established with national organizations such as CSUTCB, COB, MST (Landless Peasants), and *Estado Mayor*, and with regional ones like COFECAY and COR (El Alto regional workers), both in La Paz. Other ties with major national organizations such as CSCB, rural and urban teachers' unions, and regional organizations including FSUTCC and the Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz departmental workers' federations were also evident. This robust network environment connected *Coordinadora* to organizations with national and regional presence that extended well beyond Cochabamba and into other departments, reaching diverse social sectors.

In marked contrast, FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK"'s network environments were limited and more regionally grounded. During the period of analysis, FSUTCC established direct ties with six organizations, including *Coordinadora*, CSUTCB, and *Estado Mayor*, and La Paz and Cochabamba's departmental workers' federations. FDUTC-LP "TK" engaged with seven organizations including CSUTCB, COB, the rural teachers' union, El Alto university teachers' union, COR-El Alto, transportation carriers, and Warisata community. While these ties embedded both FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK" in a remarkable organizational landscape, the analyses reveal significant differences across network environments, with *Coordinadora*'s being significantly more interconnected than its counterparts, being less dependent on particular connecting nodes, and having more diverse pathways to expansion. Notably, the variation in connectivity level did not imply significant differences in organizational activity. As the most important regional branches of CSUTCB, both FSUTCC and FDUTC-LP "TK" were highly mobilized throughout this period. But, because of their institutional ties and structures, their mobilization activity was generated within and through CSUTCB. These dynamics are consistent with the three organizations' structural position and historical patterns of development.

Various measures of node centrality confirm *Coordinadora's* greater interconnectedness. Node centrality measures reveal the importance of organizational nodes within the network structure. There are three main node centrality measures: degree, eigenvector, and betweenness.[14] Degree centrality captures the number of edges adjacent to a node; by counting how many direct ties nodes have to the network, the measure reveals information about node connectivity and importance. Eigenvector centrality incorporates data about other nodes' importance and calculates centrality by weighing more important nodes more heavily than more marginal ones (Bonacich 1987). The more connected a node is to other important nodes, the higher its eigenvector score. The final measure, betweenness, captures the number of times a node lies in the shortest path between other nodes. It reflects other nodes' dependence on a node for communication (Ward, Stovel, and Sacks 2011).

Table 2 presents the results of the centrality analyses. Across measures, *Coordinadora* stands out as a more interconnected and central organizational node. It has significantly more network ties (degree centrality); *Coordinadora's* 43 ties contrast with FDUTC-LP "TK"'s nine and FSUTCC's six ties. When weighted for connectivity to central nodes (Eigenvector), it is approximately five times more central to the network than FDUTC-LP "TK" and eight times more so than FSUTCC. And when we consider the extent to which each organization serves to connect other organizations (Betweenness), *Coordinadora* again stands out for having a substantially higher betweenness value than its counterparts, meaning that other organizations regularly relied on *Coordinadora* to reach other nodes. This is consistent with *Coordinadora's* alliance culture, which often drove it to mobilize behind other groups and bring actors together through sustained coordination (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005; Komadina and Geffroy 2007).

By contrast, FDUTC-LP "TK" and FSUTCC had fewer direct ties to other organizations in the network

[14] I calculate network measures using igraph (Csárdi et al. 2023), NetSwan (Lhomme 2015), and networktools (Payton 2023) packages in R (R Core Team 2023).

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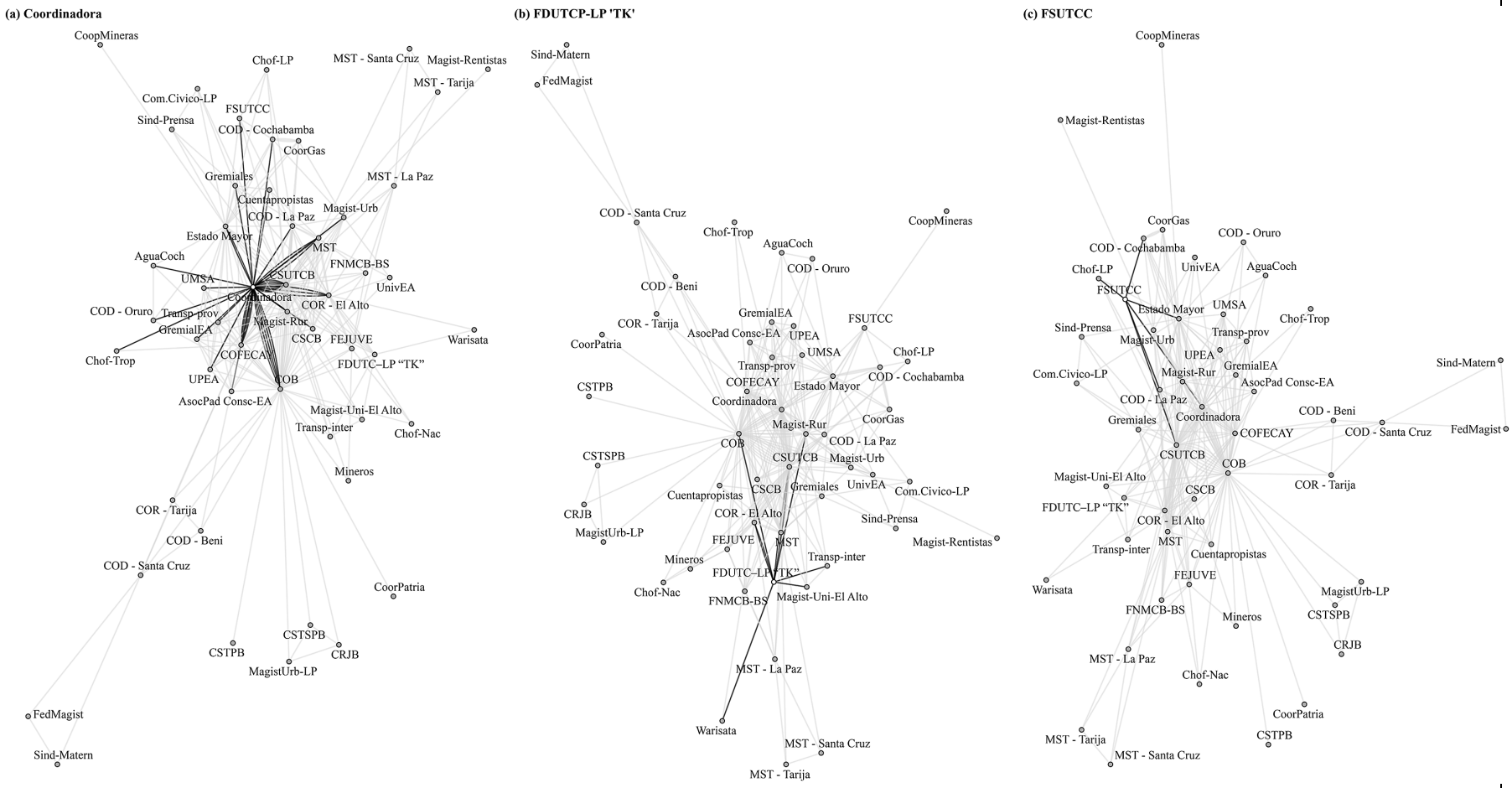
FIGURE 3. Network Environment of Indigenous Parties' Origin Organization



Note: Figure plots (A) *Coordinadora*, (B) FDUTCP-LP "TK," and (C) FSUTCC's network environments. Small circles represent organizational nodes. The gray lines indicate organizational ties, capturing positive interactions. Dark lines highlight direct ties connecting each proto-parties' origin organization to larger organizational community.

TABLE 2. Proto-Parties' Origin Organizations' Centrality Measures

	Coordinadora	FDUTC-LP "TK"	FSUTCC
Degree	43	9	6
Eigenvector	0.876	0.175	0.110
Betweenness	110.149	13.958	0.856

and most connections were with regional actors. These ties maintained the two organizations in a marginal position within the network, despite being the two most powerful regional CSUTCB branches. This highlights the difference between organizational capacity and structural resilience. The two departmental federations were critical mobilizational forces—arguably CSUTCB's muscles—during the 2003 protest cycle. And yet, they remained weakly connected and marginal within the network, relying heavily on CSUTCB to access other organizations. *Coordinadora* would have shared a similar structural vulnerability had it relied on its FSUTCC ties to connect to the national arena. But, because of its history and culture of alliances, it had greater network connectivity, both through and outside CSUTCB's structure.

Collectively, these outcomes reveal critical and, thus far, overlooked differences in the three organizations' network environments. Specifically, they reveal *Coordinadora*'s significant structural resilience and FDUTC-LP "TK" and FSUTCC's contrasting weaknesses and structural vulnerabilities. Because CSUTCB represented their only feasible pathway to their network environment, any threat to this tie meant these organizations could become isolated, undermining their value as channels for party-building. In the next section, I evaluate how the emergence of the three projects within CSUTCB undermined this pathway's utility and impacted proto-parties' expansion prospects.

Fracturing CSUTCB: Political Parties Competing for Control

As an organization gathering Bolivia's indigenous peasantry with enormous mobilization capacity and significant community-level presence, CSUTCB offered an ideal network for the growth and establishment of an indigenous party (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005). The powerful organization offered proto-parties born within its structure potential access to extensive resources, mobilization capacity, and strong partisan foundations (Anria 2018; Poertner 2021). It also offered an institutionalized pathway to COB, which would enable proto-parties to expand beyond indigenous rural areas and into urban and working-class sectors.

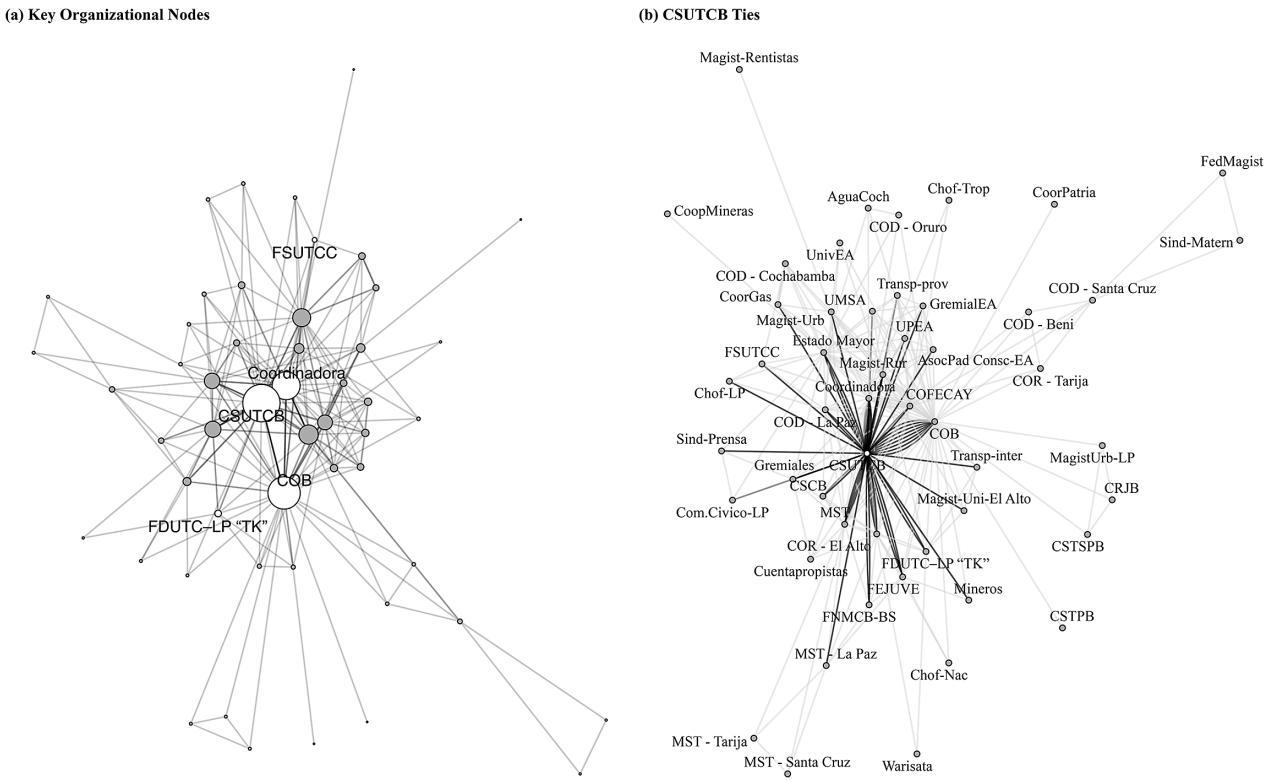
Figure 4 illustrates CSUTCB's critical position in the network environment. Figure 4a visualizes the network environment using degree centrality—which counts the number of edges that are node-adjacent—to determine node size (larger nodes have higher values). Relevant nodes—CSUTCB, COB, *Coordinadora*, FSUTCC, and FDUTC-LP "TK"—are in white (others are in gray). The figure shows that CSTUCB has the greatest number of direct ties to other organizational nodes, surpassing even COB and *Coordinadora*, the two other nodes with distinctly high degree centrality. Figure 4b plots CSUTCB's direct ties (black) and underscores CSUTCB's value by displaying its interconnectivity to other important nodes. Collectively, the figures highlight that CSUTCB was the most important node in the organizational network.

I further evaluate CSUTCB's position within the network using bridge centrality metrics, which are community-centric measures that assess how important nodes are to the communication between different organizational communities. The greater a node's bridge centrality value, the greater its role connecting node communities to each other and enabling communication across them. Bridge centrality arguably offers proto-parties distinctly valuable interconnectivity because it provides access into different organizational communities.

Figure 5 plots three bridge centrality measures. These capture the number of ties connecting each node to nodes outside its community (Strength), the number of times each node connects nodes in different communities (Betweenness), and the distance between a node and every node outside its organizational community (Closeness) (Payton 2023). The results further evidence CSUTCB's value, demonstrating that it serves as a critical organizational bridge. CSUTCB has 31 ties connecting it to nodes in other organizational communities (strength), 6 more than COB, and substantially more than all other organizations. CSUTCB also stands out as the node with the highest bridge betweenness; it is on the shortest path between nodes in different communities 630 times, again outperforming COB (577) and drastically surpassing others (all below 200). Bridge closeness measures are consistent with this assessment: CSUTCB has the lowest average distance connecting it to all nodes outside its community (closeness measure reflects inverse). Having access to CSUTCB and, through it, to COB should have therefore been a strong predictor of party-building success, precisely because, through CSUTCB, proto-parties could reach most corners of the network environment.

All three proto-parties recognized CSUTCB's value for party-building and had access to it through their origin organizations and key leaders (Burgoa Moya 2016; Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005). But, precisely because they recognized CSUTCB's value, proto-parties also fought fiercely for control of this organizational space (Burgoa Moya 2016; Quispe 2003). Leaders' deep knowledge of CSUTCB meant they were all effective, at least, at attacking and canceling this critical node within the organizational network. Ultimately, rather than serving as a direct path to expansion and consolidation, CSUTCB instead became internally fractured.

FIGURE 4. Organizational Network and CSUTCB Connections



Note: Figure (A) represents the complete organizational network, with important nodes in white circles and node size determined by degree centrality. Figure (B) plots this network, highlighting (in black) CSUTCB's direct ties.

The first fracture appeared within FSUTCC in 1997 and resulted from a split between Véliz—then FSUTCC executive secretary and ASP president—and Morales (García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014; Komadina and Geffroy 2007; Quispe 2003). The fracture boiled to the national CSTUCB when Véliz and Morales' supporters engaged in physical confrontations at the 1998 CSUTCB Congress (Quispe 2003). Two competing parties, both from Cochabamba, emerged from this fracture. Véliz kept the ASP name while Morales founded MAS-IPSP. This split created an intense division within FSUTCC *and* CSUTCB—which had a former FSUTCC executive secretary at its helm (Rasguido 2006)—as the two proto-parties sought to assert their influence at the regional and national levels (Albó 2009).

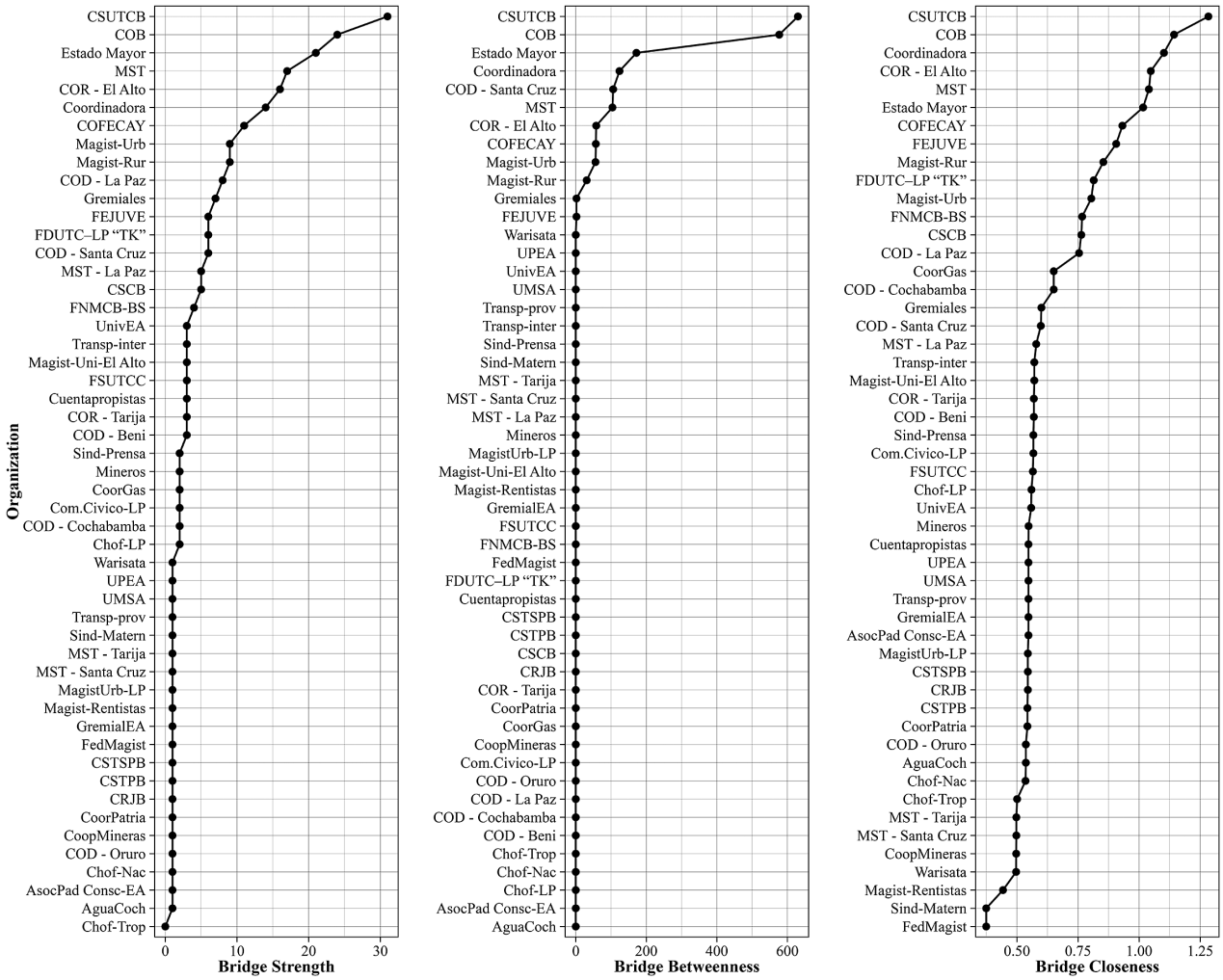
After the 1998 CSUTCB Congress confrontation, COB intervened as mediator, calling for a CSUTCB Unity Congress. Quispe was elected to lead CSUTCB as the compromise candidate between the two political factions (García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008). Quispe, however, while not siding with ASP (and initially showing some support for Morales' project), quickly began to challenge MAS-IPSP's expansion within CSUTCB.

Network attacks by the different projects took various forms. In 1999, for instance, MAS-IPSP supporters convinced nongovernmental organizations that assisted CSUTCB financially to suspend their aid; as a result, CSUTCB had to stop paying its employees and had its electricity and phone lines cut (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008).[15] That same year, MAS-IPSP supporters attempted to force Quispe's resignation from CSUTCB and the installation of a Morales ally as executive secretary. The following year, during an explosive social conflict—which the *Coordinadora* and FDUTC-LP "TK" spearheaded—Quispe negotiated with the government and then "left Morales alone with his blockades, even though [Morales] had acted in solidarity with CSUTCB's leader. This forced [Morales] to negotiate with the government alone and from a weak position. Soon after, Morales disavowed Quispe's leadership and organized a parallel organizational direction" (Komadina and Geffroy 2007, 47).

This generated the second fracture, which led to the formation of parallel CSUTCB organizational structures, both claiming legitimacy. One bloc brought Quispe and Véliz together in a hostile alliance motivated by their interest in limiting MAS-IPSP influence

[15] See Gutiérrez Aguilar (2008, 123) for a timeline including key events leading to CSUTCB fracture and the organizational attacks both blocs engaged in.

FIGURE 5. Bridge Centrality of Organizational Nodes



Note: Bridge strength is calculated as the absolute value of edges between a node and all nodes outside of that node's community. Bridge betweenness considers the number of times a particular node is in the shortest path between two nodes in different communities. Bridge closeness is calculated as the inverse of the average distance from a particular node to all nodes outside its own community. Organizational communities are defined through random walks.

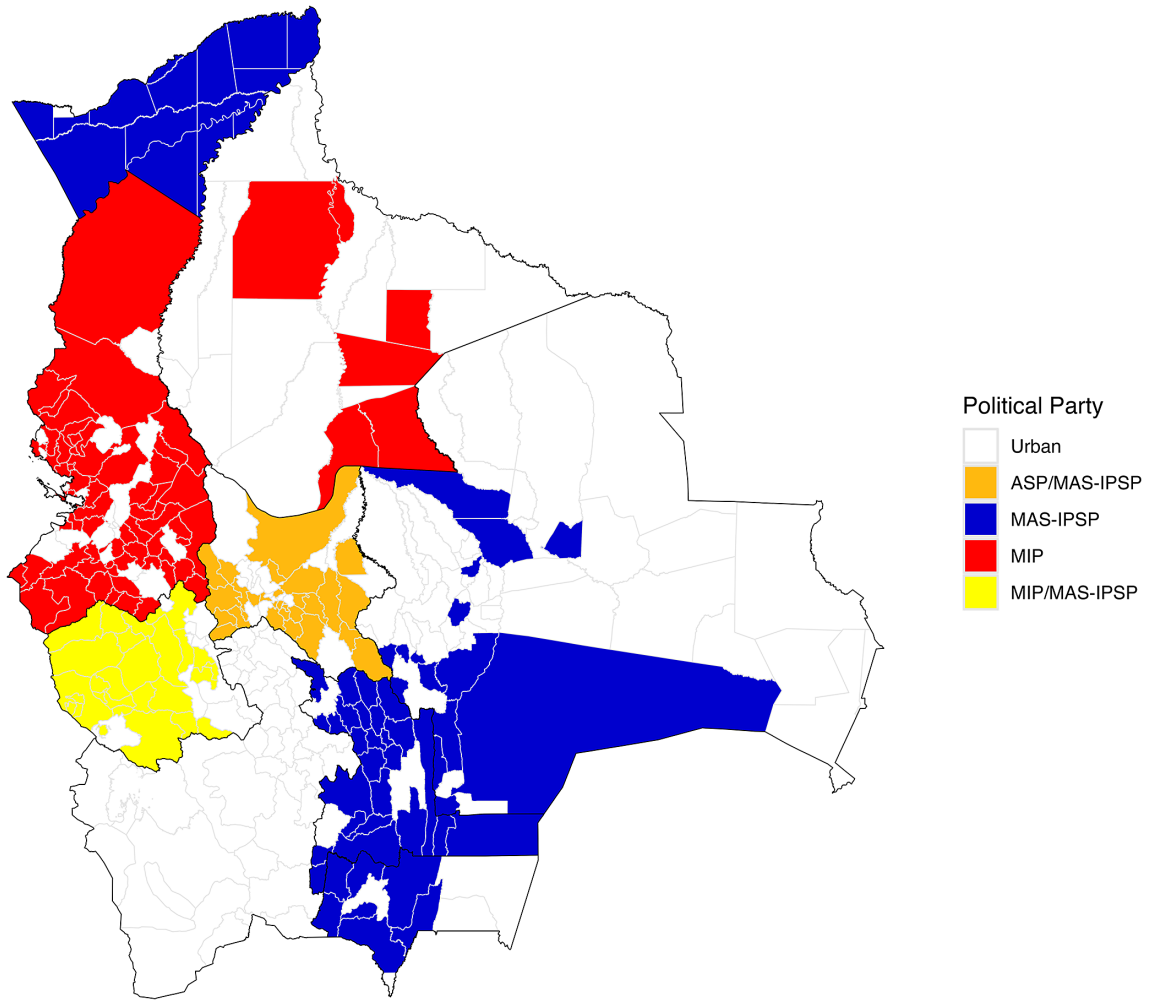
within CSUTCB and advancing alternative political projects (*ANF* 2001). The other bloc was controlled by MAS-IPSP supporters, who were also looking to assert control of the organizational space and deny access to their counterparts. CSUTCB had splintered along political lines and, while the three proto-parties competed fiercely, even physically, for its control, none of them could successfully achieve full control of the organization. By the time Quispe founded MIP in November 2000, he was leading an internally fractured CSUTCB which, in 2001, split into two factions that would continue operating separately for some time (*Correo Del Sur* 2003).

The CSUTCB factions that emerged placed a cap on proto-parties' capacity for expansion. The resulting parallel organizations reflected proto-parties' spheres of influence, but also delineated the limits of their expansion opportunities through CSUTCB. The Morales-allied CSUTCB bloc included Santa Cruz, Chuquisaca, Tarija, Pando, Potosi, and *parts of* Cochabamba and Oruro's departmental federations. Quispe and Véliz's projects had control over the La Paz and Beni federations, *parts of* the Cochabamba and Oruro ones, and several provincial federations (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005, 124). These alliances are represented in Figure 6, which maps the geographical distribution of proto-parties' CSUTCB control.

Consistent with expectations, then, the competition that ensued for control of CSUTCB led it to fracture internally along political lines and canceled it as a feasible pathway for party expansion and consolidation.

How did the collapse of the CSUTCB pathway impact proto-parties' network environments? To answer this, I first evaluate the network environment's vulnerability to the removal of particular nodes. Figure 7 examines

FIGURE 6. CSUTCB Departmental Federations' Political Alliances

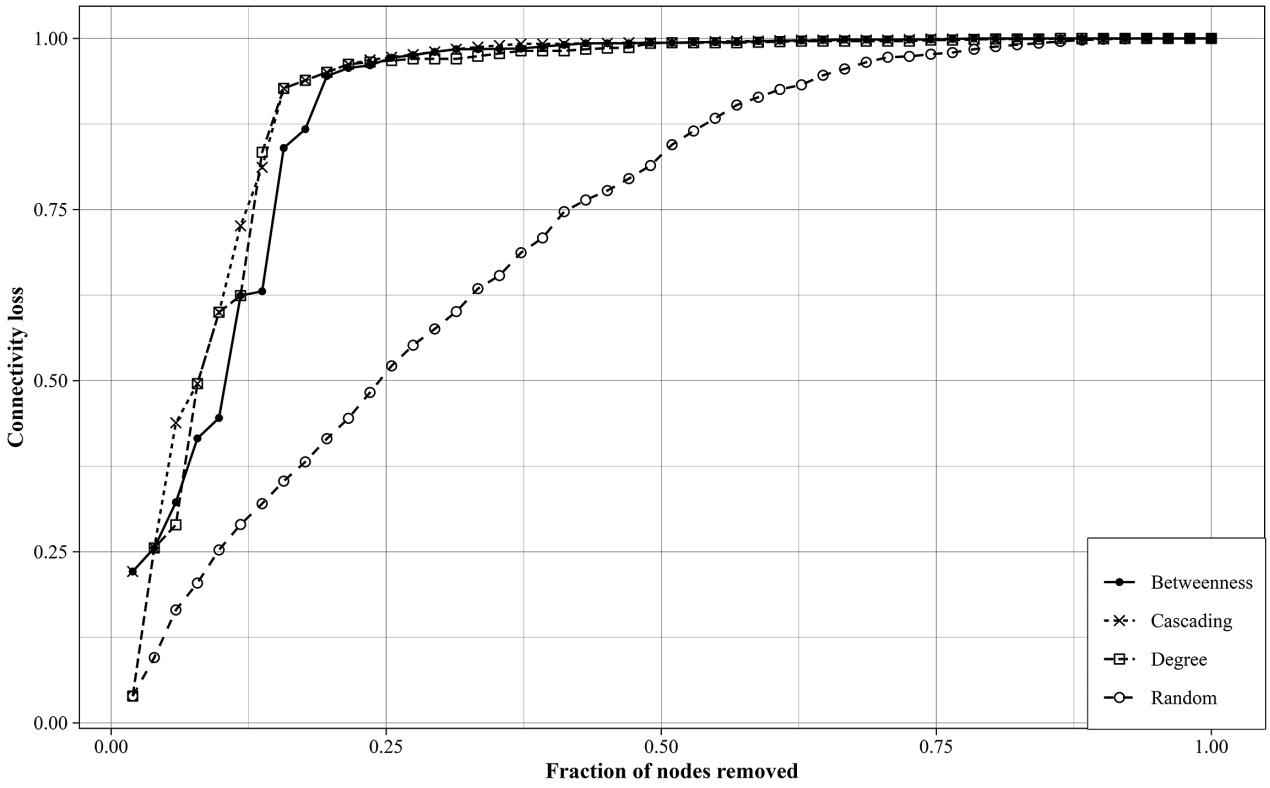


Note: Figure uses 2001 Bolivian census data (INE 2001) to map proto-party political control in rural municipalities by identifying municipalities that are over 75% rural—a proxy for CSUTCB reach—and assigning political control to each party based on known power coalitions among department federations.

the implications of intentional network attacks and random breakdowns and reveals what happens to the network when an increasing number of organizational nodes are canceled out (Lhomme 2015). I am particularly interested in the betweenness, degree, and cascading measures included in the plot because these capture what happens to networks when competing projects emerge within critical nodes. Note that all three proto-parties recognize the value of CSUTCB and COB as essential pathways to consolidation. As such, they are not only looking to grow through these organizational spaces, but also to impede other parties' access to, and control of, them. Efforts at undermining other proto-parties' access to CSUTCB's structure represent instances of intentional network attacks. The betweenness, degree, and cascading measures reveal how "attacks" on critical nodes impact networks. They collectively illustrate how quickly the network loses connectivity when we remove the most important nodes within it. Results show that, despite the network's many organizational actors, it is highly reliant on the connectivity provided by a small number of nodes. Targeted attacks aimed at these nodes can quickly undermine network connectivity.

The removal of critical nodes, however, has drastically different consequences for the various proto-parties. For MIP and ASP, the implications of attacks that canceled access to CSUTCB and COB were severe: not only did they lose access to the most important organization, but the network that remained was now dominated by *Coordinadora* and its *Estado Mayor* inter-alliance network, MAS-IPSP's foundational platforms. The organizations' few remaining ties provided poor conduits for party-building. In the case of FDUTCP-LP "TK," three of its five remaining ties were to La Paz-based organizations. FSUTCC was left even more weakly positioned, with two of its five remaining ties being to *Coordinadora* and *Estado Mayor.*

FIGURE 7. Attack Tolerance of Organizational Network



Note: Plot assesses network vulnerability to intentional or random attacks. Each line captures connectivity loss resulting from the removal of individual nodes randomly (Random) or according to levels of degree centrality (Degree), degree betweenness (Betweenness), and recalculated degree betweenness after node removal (Cascading).

With CSUTCB fractured, FSUTCC and FDUTCP-LP "TK" lost connectivity to their organizational network environment and this undermined ASP and MIP's expansion prospects. The lack of pathways constrained these projects to their bases. For ASP, this was particularly challenging; unable to establish full control of Cochabamba's peasant federation, ASP failed to grow beyond that partial base. It obtained significant electoral support in rural Cochabamba in the 1997 presidential and 1999 municipal elections but failed to grow beyond this area and eventually collapsed.[16] MIP, for its part, successfully established political control of FDUTCP-LP "TK." Geographically, this gave the party a strong base in rural La Paz, where it obtained over 60% in some municipalities in 2002 (Molina 2010; Romero Ballivián 2003, 309). After a promising electoral showing, however, the proto-party proved unable to grow beyond La Paz. In the 2005 presidential election, it obtained 2.15% and, soon thereafter, collapsed.

MIP's collapse was not for lack of strategy. MIP actively sought to build alliances that would provide it with pathways into other organizational and societal sectors. For instance, in the 2002 election, Quispe sought to run on the same ticket, first with Morales and then with Domitila Chungara, a powerful symbol of Bolivia's workers' movement. When neither of those alliances consolidated, he chose an intellectual Quechua woman: "[Quispe] was very interested in finding an electoral partner in Cochabamba for two reasons: first, that is the territory of Evo Morales and Alejo Véliz […]; second, because of the Quechua population" (*La Prensa* 2002). Each of these vice-presidential candidate choices reveal what Quispe recognized as his representational gaps and organizational paths (coca growers, urban working classes, and Quechua populations [Quispe being Aymara], respectively). In the 2005 election, we would see a similar logic drive Quispe's attempts, first, at establishing an electoral ticket with Morales (*La Voz* 2005); when this failed, at having the COB executive secretary as his running mate (*La Razón* 2005a); and when that strategy, too, failed, running with an indigenous woman from El Alto that

[16] In 1997, Véliz received 3.4% of the national vote; he obtained over 60% in some rural Cochabamba municipalities. See Romero-Ballivián (2003). In the 1999 municipal elections, ASP—now under Véliz and competing against MAS-IPSP—again won predominantly in rural Cochabamba. But it was unable to grow further, despite efforts. Véliz was elected to the legislature in 2002 and ran for president in 2009 under a different party label (*Los Tiempos* 2009). In 2013, he tried relaunching ASP without success (*Los Tiempos* 2013).

had founded the indigenous peasant women's confederation. MIP's structural environment helped define both the strategic alliances it pursued—*Coordinadora* and COB—and the outcome of these efforts. Ultimately, despite Quispe having played a leading role during the 2003 protest cycles as CSUTCB's executive secretary, he lacked the organizational ties necessary to convert popular support in the streets into electoral votes, much less committed partisans. After the 2005 election, unable to escape the boundaries of rural La Paz and nationalize its reach, MIP collapsed.

By contrast, absent access to CSUTCB as a bridge to expansion, *Coordinadora* remained remarkably well-positioned to facilitate MAS-IPSP's growth and consolidation. *Coordinadora* sustained ties to the powerful CSCB—which had its strongest presence in La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz—and, through CSCB, to COB. *Coordinadora* also sustained ties to regional organizations within Cochabamba (e.g., the influential factory workers' union and other major working-class organizations), La Paz (e.g., COFECAY), and other departments (e.g., Santa Cruz's CPESC). Crucially, many of these ties were institutionalized—whether formally (CSCB, for instance) or informally through a long and stable relationship of mutual support (e.g., COFECAY). The structural resilience of *Coordinadora's* network environment enabled MAS-IPSP to overcome the attacks from competing parties and continue its expansion through alternative pathways.

A Networked MAS-IPSP Expansion

MAS-IPSP relied on *Coordinadora's* network environment to expand and consolidate. Its network-driven expansion logic sought to grow the party through available ties and deny alternative proto-parties control of important organizational spaces. Most critical to the party's growth was its pathway through CSCB, which provided MAS-IPSP with an uncontested channel to national growth. The party's leadership structure evidences recognition of this pathway's significance: the "main directive and conduction positions of [MAS-IPSP's] political organization are under the control of [CSCB]." While the party presidency has traditionally belonged to *Coordinadora*, the vice-presidency has generally "been led by [CSCB] leaders, such as Sergio Loayza and Gerardo Garcia, both of whom were CSCB executive secretaries" (García Yapur, García Orellana, and Soliz Romero 2014, 270). *Coordinadora's* other critical ties are reflected in "[t]he rest of the directorate [which] includes a representative from each national organization—CSUTCB, CSCB, *Bartolinas*—and some [departmental] and regional peasant federations" (Alejandro Almaraz interview in Komadina and Geffroy 2007, 104–5). The organizational composition of the party's leadership closely mirrors the most important institutional ties MAS-IPSP used to establish itself as a viable political force.

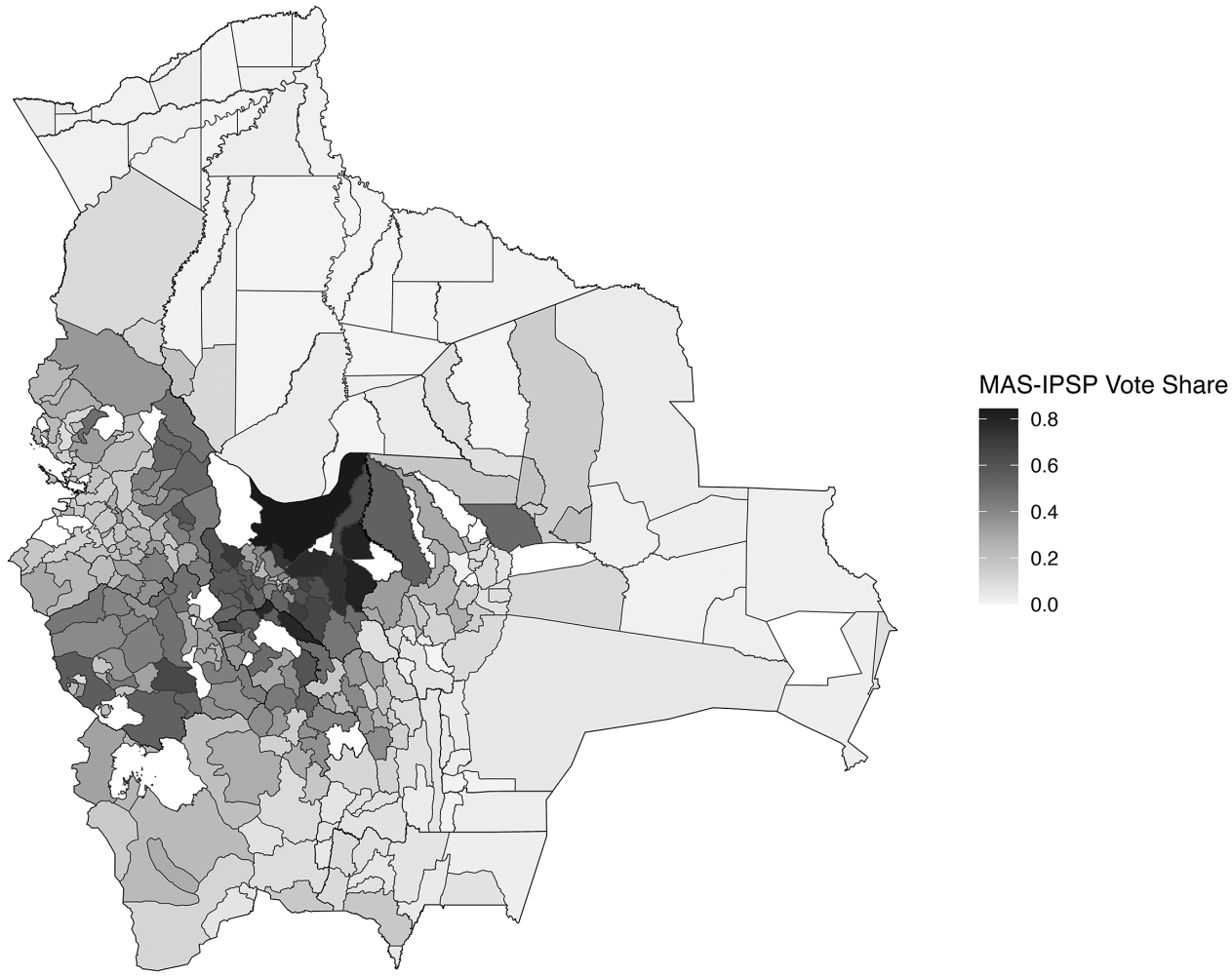
As part of its expansion strategy, MAS-IPSP brought organizations into the party by giving them participation within the project and offering positions in committees, candidate lists, and, once in government, ministries. In 2005, "MAS organized its campaign team like one organizes a confederation and created a team of twenty movement leaders to direct the political process. This body […] has a representative of each social sector allied with the party [and] includes representatives of the peasant workers' confederation, colonizers, retirees, coca growers, Bartolina Sisa women, and other organizations such as the National Confederation of Mining Cooperatives" (*La Razón* 2005c), all sectors with which *Coordinadora* had strong ties with.

MAS-IPSP's party lists similarly reflected *Coordinadora's* network. In 2005, MAS-IPSP established political alliances with more than 50 sectors (*La Razón* 2005b). The candidate list included leaders from Yungas' COFECAY, Cochabamba's Water Coordinator, urban teachers' union, indigenous peasant federations, Fejuve-El Alto, and MST, among others. Both the party's strategy for incorporating these sectors, and these sectors' willingness to join MAS-IPSP, evidence the party's effectiveness at growing through its network environment and translating *Coordinadora's* organizational ties into electoral support and partisans.

Finally, MAS-IPSP's networked expansion strategy also included organizational attacks and breaks that consistently denied opponents the organizational space needed to launch an opposition party. It did this by questioning the legitimacy of organizational leaders that resisted MAS-IPSP influence and, more strategically, by ensuring that allies occupied top organizational seats (Anria 2013). To achieve the latter, at times, MAS-IPSP created parallel organizational structures that placed allies in (and removed critics from) positions of power. This is why MAS-IPSP created a parallel CSUTCB leadership structure, an attack that effectively blocked MIP and ASP growth through CSUTCB while, simultaneously, allowing MAS-IPSP to establish influence in the top layers of the (fractured) organization. It was evident, too, in the creation of a parallel MST leadership structure in 2004 (Chávez León and Costas Monje 2005) and divisions fomented within regional labor federations to bring party allies to leadership positions. Once in government, MAS-IPSP would continue using this strategy to ensure political control of—and block resistance within—powerful organizations such as CIDOB and CONAMAQ (*Correo Del Sur* 2022).

Using available ties and network attacks, MAS-IPSP successfully expanded beyond its rural Cochabamba origins, nationalizing its reach, and crossing the rural–urban divide. Electoral outcomes reflect its networked trajectory. The party first participated in the 1999 municipal elections, where it won 3.3% of the national vote and obtained 79 seats in municipal councils, 40 of these in Cochabamba (Van Cott 2003), an electoral outcome akin to that of its counterparts in early party-building stages. Yet, the party continued its expansion. In 2002, it ran with Morales as its presidential candidate, obtaining 20% of the vote. Its support in this election still concentrated predominantly in provinces

FIGURE 8. MAS-IPSP Electoral Geography (2002)



Note: The figure maps MAS-IPSP's electoral support density in 2002 elections using *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE 2012) data.

"on the proximities of its political heart, Cochabamba" (Romero Ballivián 2003, 253), yet the electoral map reveals the party proved capable of breaking outside departmental borders and spreading, particularly, into the Yungas region of La Paz, indigenous regions of Oruro, and indigenous and *interculturales*' regions of Santa Cruz (see Figure 8). *Coordinadora's* most stable ties had paved the road for MAS-IPSP expansion. After 2005, MAS-IPSP consolidated as *the* indigenous party in Bolivia.

To summarize, CSUTCB's collapse as a viable pathway for expansion and the political deadlock that ensued within this organization collectively dealt a fatal blow to MIP and ASP, leaving them as regional parties with no alternative ties beyond their original regions. MAS-IPSP, in contrast, had access to a more resilient network environment that enabled it to remain connected into national, regional, and inter-sectoral organizations. These ties allowed MAS-IPSP to survive and overcome CSUTCB fractures. As the party expanded, it relied heavily on available ties to mobilize support and establish a partisan base among *Coordinadora's* organizational partners.

CONCLUSION

This article shows how social network structures condition party-building outcomes. Drawing on novel data on organizational ties, I demonstrate that network environments delineate proto-parties' pathways to expansion and their structural resilience conditions proto-parties likelihood of consolidation. As parties grow through network environments, their expansion efforts both look to assert influence within nodes and block competing projects' access. I find evidence that structural attacks on organizational nodes cancel proto-parties' access to these ties. Significantly, I show that when proto-parties have access to structurally resilient network environments, they are better able to overcome these challenges and continue their expansion through alternative pathways. Contrastingly, when

proto-parties have access to network environments with limited resilience, their expansion efforts become vulnerable to structural challenges. Attacks on one or two key nodes in these networks can be remarkably effective at canceling proto-parties' opportunities for growth and driving their collapse.

The proposed theory should provide a valuable lens for examining party-building outcomes in democracies with unstable party systems. Emerging parties share similar needs across political contexts: early on, they lack resources and are better off relying on pre-existing network structures to grow and consolidate. A network-centric approach can make sense of proto-parties' growth opportunities and reveal information about their structural capacity to overcome threats and consolidate. In Latin America, variation in network environment structures may help shed light on varied cases of party-building success such as Brazil's PT, Ecuador's Pachakutik, or El Salvador's FMLN and ARENA, all of which have roots in pre-existing organizations with significant inter-organizational connectivity. The argument could also explain persistent party-building failures elsewhere. In Peru, for example, party-building has proven highly elusive. A networked approach may help account for this outcome: structurally vulnerable network environments—eroded by Shining Path legacies and decentralization initiatives—may be undermining party-building by limiting pathways to expansion. The emergence of many local and regional political projects that, despite significant early successes and leaders with social organizational backgrounds, have failed to grow beyond their organizational origins (often meeting, competing, and collapsing at the regional level) is consistent with the expectations of the proposed argument. While the nature and intensity of network threats may vary across contexts, as the crucial roadmap for early party growth, a focus on network structures and resilience should have far-reaching utility.

The experiences of MIP and ASP in Bolivia suggest that structurally resilient network environments may indeed be hard to come-by; these require both organizational capacity *and* sufficient inter-connectivity to successfully grow around and away from competition. The most successful parties are likely to be those that can compete in critical shared organizational spaces but that can also reach other spaces rival projects cannot.

The findings also suggest that network structures can condition party-building strategies and leadership-based appeals. Structural opportunities and constraints operate whether leaders recognize and pursue alliances strategically (as Quispe did) or minimize the advantages of their networks (as with Morales). As the MIP case shows, these constraints also place crucial limits on the design and effectiveness of party-building strategies.

This network-centric theory offers promising avenues for future research. An extension of this argument is that variation in types of ties may indeed be producing differences in parties' ability to gather committed partisans (vs. strategic supporters). It may also be associated with distinct representation possibilities, linkage mechanisms, and accountability practices. A focus on network structures provides important tools to evaluate within-party variation in the strategies adopted to engage with varied constituencies.

Finally, these findings have important implications for representation policies. Increasing attention to network structures and developing policies that strengthen and diversify network ties—by fomenting dense inter-organizational cooperation—could set stronger foundations for future party-building initiatives. Moreover, the results also suggest that decentralization policies aimed at increasing political participation opportunities may have unintentional consequences: as more political projects have organizing opportunities, the resulting competition may decrease the likelihood of party consolidation. Policy strategies that reduce competition between proto-parties, and foment cooperation, could aid in the consolidation of more representative political organizations.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423001272.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data supporting the findings of this study are openly available in the American Political Science Dataverse: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Y0B0RH.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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