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**Democracy that Matters:  
The Search for Authenticity, Legitimacy, and Civic Competence in the Andes**

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been no sharper challenge to our thinking about the future of Andean democracy than that contained in the auto-coup staged by President Alberto Fujimori on April 5, 1992. As tanks rolled through the streets of Lima and troops surrounded Peru's Congress, popular reaction ranged from acceptance to disinterest. In the weeks that followed, opinion polls registered approval ratings for the coup in the 70 to 80 percent range.

The quiescence of most Peruvians in the face of Fujimori's open breach of the constitutional order was both a reflection of the disheartened and debilitated state of civil society and a testimony to the resonance of Fujimori's justification of the measures. In the weeks that followed the coup, Fujimori mounted an explanation for domestic and international consumption that portrayed the coup as 'democratic' exercise and the foundational act of an ambitious project of 're-engineering Peru'—a complete constitutional restructuring accompanied by a concerted pursuit of neoliberal economic reforms. To complete the image of a technocratic make-over of the political system via the coup, Fujimori and his cabinet took to portraying themselves as 'general managers' of the firm called Peru.<sup>1</sup>

Fujimori's apologia of the coup identified parties as the culprits of Peru's crisis of governability. The party system was depicted as a dictatorship of encrusted elites, corrupt and insensitive to demands of citizens. This *partidocracia* perverted the operation of Congress and the judiciary, turning those institutions into sites of corruption and obstructionism. Fujimori argued that, by breaking with this system, the coup created the conditions for a real democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Fujimori's denunciation of parties and extant institutions was hardly path-breaking as an analysis of the ills of Latin democracy. More than a few social scientists and politicians had already reached the glum conclusion that democratic institutions were marred by crises of representation and accountability. The unhappy state of affairs was certainly not confined to Peru. Over the last decade, evidence of acute institutional stress and mass political alienation surfaced (albeit in varying degrees and in different forms) throughout the Andean region. Next to Peru, the most shocking manifestations occurred in Venezuela. The massive 1989 civil disorders followed by the coup attempts in February and November 1992 called into question the stability of Venezuelan

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<sup>1</sup> See Fujimori's reference in *New York Times*, 25 November 1993. Jaime Yoshiyama, president of the current Congress, refers to himself as part of the "management team" of the firm called Peru. See his remarks in "La reingeniería del Perú" *Boletín Extraordinario CCD*, 17 November 1993 (Lima: Oficina de Prensa del Congreso Constituyente Democrático), 2–5.

<sup>2</sup> For Fujimori's explanation of the coup, see the text of his televised address, "Manifiesto a la nación del 5 de abril 1992," and his speech to the OAS, "Discurso del Presidente Alberto Fujimori en la Asamblea de Cancilleres ante la OEA en Bahamas, 18 de mayo de 1992." The texts are reproduced in *Proceso de retorno a la institucionalidad democrática en el Perú*, ed. Eduardo Ferrero Costa (Lima: Centro Peruano de Estudios Internacionales, 1992), 129–35, 191–202.

democracy and its claims to 'exceptionalism' in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Colombia continued to be wracked by the seeming inability of its long-standing institutions to stem the tide of political and criminal violence. Serious executive-legislative conflicts also took their toll on the fabric of Bolivian and Ecuadoran democracy, engendering constitutional crises and keeping episodic 'coup fear' alive.<sup>4</sup> In all five countries of the North and Central Andes, public opinion polls showed declining faith in parties and institutions. Major political corruption scandals (in some instances involving connections to narco-trafficking) played a part in this erosion of public trust in government officials and institutions throughout the region.

Fujimori's analysis of the malaise in Peruvian democracy was not, in and of itself, especially novel; it rehearsed many of the anxieties that were already being voiced in the region. What is controversial, of course, is Fujimori's remedy and its dubious implications for democratic development. Fujimori's closure of Congress, dismissal of the judiciary and suspension of the 1979 constitution was the opening volley in a process that further aggrandized the presidency and completely eclipsed parties. So far, there is no evidence that the Fujimori project involves any serious attempt to create new linkages between the public and government to compensate for the defenestration of parties and the legislature.

Fujimori's experiment has not yet devolved into a full-blown traditional dictatorship. Three electoral exercises have taken place since the coup; press freedom has not been restricted in a systematic form; and dissident leaders have been free to protest and organize opposition. A pastiche of informal and formal political practices, culled in part from previous presidencies and grounded in Peru's authoritarian past, forms part of the basis of the Fujimori experiment. New forms of political control (e.g., the growing influence of the intelligence service) were blended with the old ways of doing politics and superimposed on a fragmented and dispirited civil society.<sup>5</sup> The result is a hyper-executive form of government which permits dissent—but one in which there are no reliable mechanisms or institutions through which citizens can hold the executive and the military accountable for their exercise of power.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of how recent events have undermined 'exceptionalism' as an interpretation of Venezuelan politics, see Steve Ellner, "Organized Labor and the Venezuelan Exceptionalism Thesis," paper delivered to XVII Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, 25 September 1992, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>4</sup> J. Samuel Valenzuela discusses the persistence of 'coup fear' as one dimension of the perverse institutional reality that impedes the consolidation of democracy in Latin America. See his "Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings" in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*, ed. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 57–104.

<sup>5</sup> One of the most astute analysts of the Fujimori regime is Fernando Rospigliosi. See his "Las débiles perspectivas de la democracia en el Perú," paper delivered to the Conference on Peru in Crisis, The Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, 1–2 June 1993, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> The case that dramatically illustrates the lack of accountability of the government was the handling of the 'disappearances' at La Cantuta University. In July 1992, security forces abducted

The Fujimori experiment would not be so troubling if it could be written off simply as an isolated and transitory Peruvian aberration. What is so unsettling about Peru is that it stands as an example *in extremis* of the dangerous tendencies and uneven political development unfolding throughout the region. Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia confront many of the same barriers to deepening democratic political development that stand out so starkly in the Peruvian case—the hypertrophy of executive power, the denigration of the legislature, the entrenchment of non-consultative policy-making by technocratic elites. As in Peru, these developments take place against the backdrop of a civil society increasingly frustrated in its bid to ‘talk back’ to the state through institutional channels. In many instances, ‘talking back’ assumes the form of political violence.

Too often, perhaps, social scientists and policymakers have looked on the emergence of these ‘muscled’ presidencies as a natural side effect of efforts to deal with chronic economic crisis or political violence. Some of this intellectual resignation may have also been fed by the nonstop neoconservative barrage of the 1980s, which demonized society as a haven of rent-seeking groups, hell-bent on subverting the rational economic policy being put forth by presidents and apolitical technocrats in the ‘national interest.’<sup>7</sup> What is particularly dangerous about a resignation to the current state of affairs (a resignation embodied in the uneven international reaction to Fujimori’s auto-golpe) is that it accedes to a significant erosion in democratic ideals. In short, the definition of democracy becomes progressively reduced to that of holding periodic elections (which have little or no connection to actual policy-making processes) and ostensible opportunities for opposition (which do not translate into real accountability or oversight). This kind of 1990s-style downsizing of the concept of democracy conveniently shunts aside what theorists from Tocqueville to Dahl have told us about democracy—namely, that democracy in its fullest sense is a process built around ongoing *deliberations* among citizens engaged in making *meaningful* choices about the course of public policy and the conduct of public officials.

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and murdered 10 members of the La Cantuta community outside of Lima. The government procrastinated persistently in the investigations and prosecutions. After many official machinations in the case, the prosecution of the 10 low-ranking soldiers was transferred out of the civilian court and into a military court. The 10 were convicted, but the official inquiry concluded that they acted alone without instructions from higher levels in the chain of command. For further discussion of the case, see *New York Times*, 12 January 1994; and Americas Watch, “Peru: Anatomy of a Cover-up, The Disappearances at La Cantuta,” vol. 5, no. 9 (27 September 1993). Also, see the discussion of the case by Mario Vargas Llosa, “Unmasking the Killers in Peru Won’t Bring Democracy Back to Life,” *New York Times*, 27 March 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Recent work on the role of ‘technopols’ portrays them as agents of the ‘general good.’ See, for example, John Williamson, “In Search of a Manual for Technopols,” paper delivered at the Conference on the Political Economy of Policy Reform,” Institute for International Economics, 14–16 January 1993, Washington, DC. One of the most influential works attacking rent-seekers in society was provided by Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). The depiction of society as predatory was picked up and disseminated by Hernando de Soto, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, trans. June Abbott (New York: Harper & Row, 1989).

The remainder of the paper focuses on the web of institutional, political, and social obstacles that are hindering the full progress of democratic political development in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. The analysis is especially concerned with how the unhealthy brew of imperial executives, foundering legislatures, corroded parties, growing technocratic power, and severe inequalities in the distribution of political resources diminishes the opportunities for citizens to engage in informed deliberation and meaningful participation in public life. As the recent experiences of Peru and Venezuela suggest, the legitimacy and stability of democratic regimes is closely tied to mass perceptions about the authenticity of democratic institutions as sites that respect citizens' rights and reflect their choices.

How can meaningful democracy be constructed in the Andes? What can be done to insure some minimal level of authenticity in democratic institutions so that they are regarded as more than mere façades? In the conclusion to this paper, I offer some suggestions that focus on strengthening and democratizing civil society. This emphasis on civil society is grounded in the substantial evidence found in empirical democratic theory that links the development of effective democratic institutions to the existence of a robust associational life in society.<sup>8</sup> As Robert Putnam recently argued, a strong civil society nourishes democracy both from the demand and the supply side. From the demand side, a dense and democratic civil society acts as a check on state power and as an exacting overseer of public officials. On the supply side, organizations in civil society are important venues for learning democratic 'habits of the heart.' Customs of tolerance, mutual respect, deliberation, and compromise are part of the social infrastructure that comes with the development of civic communities.<sup>9</sup> Rather than viewing society as a menace to effective governance or as an actor to be contained by 'correct' institutional design, it may be time to redirect our attention to the foundational role of civil society in constructing and sustaining democracy.

My emphasis on the shared problems in the Andean region does not imply that the countries under discussion are completely comparable; they do not experience these problems in exactly the same way, nor will they necessarily process these problems in an identical manner. Peru's neighbors are by no means destined to mechanically repeat the *Fujimorazo*. No scholar of

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<sup>8</sup> The classic treatment on the relationship between civil society and democracy is that of Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969). For a brief overview of the findings in recent empirical democratic theory, see Larry Diamond, "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered" in *Reexamining Democracy: Essays in Honor of Seymour Martin Lipset*, ed. Gary Marks and Larry Diamond (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992), 123–25. For a comparative historical analysis of the centrality of civil society to democratization, see Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Robert D. Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 182.

the region would deny the enormous historical diversity among the five countries. Indeed, that diversity may point each country toward different resolutions of the problems outlined here. A second caveat is also in order. While the emphasis here is on the continuing obstacles in the path of democratic political development, a number of institutional reform initiatives aimed at improving the quality of democracy are on the table (or in some cases, being implemented—e.g., Colombian constitutional reforms) throughout the region. Thus, there are reasons for optimism as well as pessimism. This is why it is an especially propitious time for all of us interested in democratization to ‘strategize’ on the question of civil society. Without publics capable of demanding and overseeing the full realization of the reform efforts, the reforms may simply wither or be manipulated by elites to reproduce the status quo.

Before examining the challenges to further democratic development in the Andean region, a brief evaluation of the recent democratic performance of these political systems is a useful starting point for understanding what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

### **Democracy as Procedural Minimum: The Andean Scorecard**

Free and fair elections, universal adult suffrage, party competition, civil liberties, government accountability—all of these elements are identified as the procedural minimum requisite for the constitution of a democratic regime.<sup>10</sup> To what extent have the countries of the Andean region erected this minimal architecture of democracy?

Without question, all of the five countries under consideration here made considerable progress over the last decade in developing or consolidating electoral systems that are free, fair, and based on universal adult suffrage. Ecuador and Peru were the last countries to remove literacy restrictions on the vote in the constitutional reforms that accompanied their transitions to civilian rule in 1979 and 1980 respectively. Electoral fraud has not been a widespread problem over the last decade, but there have been a few notable challenges to election results. One of the most important took place in Bolivia in 1989; the losing presidential candidate, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, charged the electoral courts with manipulation and demanded an annulment of the election by the Supreme Court. The outcome was not overturned, but the challenge led to a significant overhaul of the electoral court system in Bolivia.

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of this minimum definition, see Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 8. Robert Dahl specifies eight institutional guarantees as the criteria which can be used to compare the democratic performance of regimes; see his *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 3.

Serious questions as to fairness were also raised in regard to the post-coup elections in Peru. Both the 1992 constituent assembly election and the 1993 referendum on the new constitution were scheduled hastily by the Fujimori government, leaving little time for the opposition to prepare its campaign. Furthermore, government access to media and public funds gave pro-government parties an enormous advantage over the opposition.

In addition to the elections at the national level, all five countries also moved to extend elections to local offices. Ecuador led the process in 1980 with municipal elections. Bolivia initiated its municipal elections in 1986. Colombia scheduled its first mayoral races in 1988 as part of a political reform package. In 1989, Venezuela staged elections for municipal offices and gubernatorial posts. Provisions for plebiscites also exist. Ecuador's 1978 constitution allows the president to call plebiscites. In 1988 a political reform in Colombia created an option for local plebiscites, and the 1991 constitution contained a provision for national plebiscites.

Partisan competition in elections is intense and spans the ideological spectrum. Since their respective returns to civilian rule, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru developed as multiparty systems. In the 1980s, partisan competition in Colombia intensified as new political parties and electoral fronts began to contest the traditional domination of the Liberal and Conservative parties. The former guerrilla movement turned political party, M-19, emerged as a significant electoral contender in the 1990 presidential race and the 1991 constituent assembly election. The hegemony of Venezuela's two dominant parties—Acción Democrática and COPEI—was eclipsed by the emergence of new rivals. In the late 1980s, the reformist 'Causa R' won important regional contests. The most recent presidential election in December 1993 brought an electoral victory to Rafael Caldera, the former president and *copeyano* who bolted his party to form an independent electoral front.

For the most part, the outcome of elections and the authority of elected officials have not been openly challenged by fellow officials and the military. Yet, coup fear still hangs over these polities and is sometimes acute in a pre-election environment. For example, strong rumors circulated in Ecuador that the military would intervene if the populist candidate Abdala Bucaram were to win the presidential election in 1988. Similar rumors circulated around the 1993 candidacies of Max Fernández in Bolivia and Andrés Velásquez in Venezuela.<sup>11</sup> In the most recent round of executive-legislative conflict in Ecuador, coup rumors resurfaced. This prompted the Economist Intelligence Unit to place Ecuador on its 1994 'coup watch' list along with Brazil.

The most notable breach of an election result was Fujimori's unconstitutional decision to dismiss the Peruvian Congress elected in 1990 prior to the conclusion of its term in 1995 and replace it with a constituent assembly elected in November 1993. President César Gaviria also

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<sup>11</sup> The Venezuelan rumors were reported by United Press International, 17 November 1993.

dismissed the Colombian legislature for the purpose of calling a constituent assembly in 1991. Gaviria did so on the basis of a nonbinding plebiscite (held simultaneously with the 1990 presidential election) in which 86.6 percent of the electorate voted in favor of constitutional reform. While the Colombian Congress initially resisted the dissolution, Gaviria's move was backed by a favorable Supreme Court decision. Thus, it was not widely interpreted as a breach of democratic institutionalism.<sup>12</sup>

Outright defiance of the authority of elected officials by the military has occurred episodically throughout the region over the last decade. Two aborted uprisings by dissidents in the Air Force led by General Frank Vargas Pazzos took place in Ecuador in 1986; the dissidents staged another one-day rebellion in 1987, which involved the taking of President León Febres-Cordero as a hostage. The most serious military interventions occurred in Venezuela in February and November 1992. These attempted coups against President Carlos Andrés Pérez were undertaken by the 'Bolivarian movement' of junior army officers.<sup>13</sup> An ostensibly pro-democratic coup attempt aimed at removing Fujimori after his auto-golpe was staged unsuccessfully in November 1992. The Peruvian army demonstrated its contempt for civilian authority in April 1993 by staging an ominous tank parade through the streets of Lima; the parade came in response to calls by opposition deputies in the elected constituent assembly for an investigation into possible army involvement in the 'disappearances' at La Cantuta.

Part of the minimal definition of democracy assumes some congruence between election outcomes and the conduct of public policy by elected officials. On this score, the Andean track record is problematic. Even the most advanced democracies experience disjunctures between the structure of the public's policy preferences as expressed in elections and what politicians are actually able to achieve in office. But, in several recent instances in the Andes, the disjoining of elections and policies has been so profound that it calls into question the integrity of elections as an instrument for expressing policy preferences.

Peru provided the most striking example of the problem in 1990. Alberto Fujimori campaigned against the neoliberal shock-treatment economic program put forth unambiguously by his rival, Mario Vargas Llosa. Immediately upon assuming office, however, Fujimori proceeded

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the political process surrounding the Colombian constitutional reform, see John Dugas, "La Constitución Política de 1991: Un pacto político posible?" in *La Constitución Política de 1991: Un pacto político posible?*, ed. John Dugas (Bogotá: Departamento de Ciencia Política, Universidad de los Andes), 15–44. Also see Ronald P. Archer, "Party Strength and Weakness in Colombia's Besieged Democracy" in *Building Democratic Institutions*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming 1995).

<sup>13</sup> For further analysis of the coup attempts, see George Philip, "Venezuelan Democracy and the Coup Attempt of February 1992," *Government and Opposition* 27, no. 4 (autumn 1992): 455–69; Winfield J. Burggraaff and Richard Millet, "More than a Failed Coup: The Crisis of Venezuelan Civil-Military Relations," paper presented at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington, DC, October 1992.



to implement the draconian shock treatment he had opposed in the campaign. Venezuelan voters were subjected to a similar kind of manipulation in the 1989 presidential election. Candidate Carlos Andrés Pérez remained studiously vague on economic problems throughout the campaign. His previous association with populist policies left the public unprepared for the abrupt turn to neoliberal policies (*El gran viraje*) after his election.<sup>14</sup> One can argue that the ferocity of the economic crisis in both Venezuela and Peru left these presidents with no choice but to reverse themselves. Yet, given that the economic crisis in both countries was already underway during the respective presidential campaigns, it is difficult to believe that the candidates did not anticipate the necessity of adjustment policies during the campaign. The public's sense of betrayal by politicians is understandable. In Venezuela, the cost of political cynicism was high; hundreds died in the civil violence that followed the enactment of *El gran viraje*.

Infringements on civil liberties and human rights violations constitute the most alarming deviation from the procedural minimum of democracy in the Andean region. The worst records are those of Peru and Colombia, where internal wars raged during the 1980s and into the 1990s. In Peru, the central confrontation took place between government security forces and the guerrilla movement, Sendero Luminoso.<sup>15</sup> In Colombia, political violence became a complicated web involving government security forces, guerrilla movements, narco-trafficking mafias, and private paramilitary organizations. The wars took a ghastly toll in human life. They also had a profound impact on the conduct of the executive, the legal system, and civil-military relations. Security measures enacted as part of counterinsurgency programs circumvented constitutionally prescribed protections of individual rights and gave birth to legal practices which seriously compromised the principles of due process. Both Colombian and Peruvian presidents made extensive use of their constitutionally prescribed 'state of exception' powers. The armed forces assumed greater autonomy from civilian authority. An ethos of impunity took hold in the Colombian and Peruvian armed forces, paving the way for the practice of widespread human rights abuses by security forces.

A complete assessment of the effects of Peru's war against Sendero will not be attempted here. Suffice it to say that the war disrupted the institutionalization of democratic

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the gap between popular expectations and government performance in Venezuela, see John Martz, "Protests and Frustrations: The Challenge to Venezuelan Democracy," paper delivered at the Southern Political Science Association Meeting, Memphis, Tenn., 4 November 1989. Also by Martz, see "Policies, Politics and Democracy in Venezuela: From Deepening to Decomposition and Beyond" in *Deepening Democracy and Representation in Latin America*, ed. James M. Malloy and Kurt von Mettenheim (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> Other combatants in Peru included the leftist guerrilla movement, Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, and the right-wing paramilitary group, the Comando Rodrigo Franco. In the battle against Sendero, the government also encouraged the organization of peasant self-defense militias, *rondas campesinas*.

freedoms and broke down the most basic norms of civilized conduct in Peru. By 1991, 40 percent of Peru's territory and 55 percent of its population was subject to direct government by the military by virtue of the declaration of 'emergency zones.' In these areas, basic civil liberties were suspended and the military enjoyed unchecked power to pursue Sendero, using any means it deemed necessary. From 1988 through 1991, Peru was the world leader in 'disappearances'—illegal detainments and abductions. Most of these were carried out by government forces, especially the army.<sup>16</sup>

New antissubversive measures enacted after the 'Fuji-coup' of 1992 added to the legal edifice circumscribing the protection of individual rights. Suspects charged with terrorism can be charged with treason; this allows for the adjudication of cases in military courts manned by 'faceless judges.' These measures allow for incommunicado detention of suspects by authorities, the suspension of rights to habeas corpus and *amparo*. These measures produced an enormous increase in convictions for terrorism; of the 443 terrorist suspects tried by military courts in 1993, 420 were convicted. Human rights groups criticize the summary nature of the decisions rendered by military courts.<sup>17</sup> Colombia suffered the same syndrome of political violence and regression in civil liberties as a result of the conflicts with guerrilla movements and narco-trafficking rings, most notably the Medellín cartel. Investigations by human rights organizations and entities within the Colombian government confirmed official involvement in a 'dirty war,' in which government security forces participated in disappearances, massacres, and torture.<sup>18</sup>

As in Peru, government-authored political violence has for the most part gone unpunished in Colombia. Military courts have been allowed to retain complete jurisdiction over crimes committed by military personnel. A 'due obedience' clause exempts military personnel from responsibility in human rights violations, if the act occurred in response to an instruction by superiors. These arrangements hamper successful prosecutions of these cases. Civilians charged with drug-related crimes or terrorism are tried in special courts, governed by procedures disadvantageous to defendants. As in Peru, 'faceless judges' conduct the proceedings. While the Gaviria administration has acted to end some of the worst practices used in the special court

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<sup>16</sup> See Americas Watch, *Peru under Fire: Human Rights since the Return to Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.) The violence committed by Sendero and security forces included rape; see Americas Watch, *Untold Terror: Violence Against Women in Peru's Armed Conflict* (New York: Americas Watch, Human Rights Watch, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> The figures were published in *Caretas*, 30 December 1993, 86. For an analysis of the human rights situation, see Carlos Iván Degregori, "Perú: Desafíos en el ámbito de la seguridad," *Análisis Internacional* 3 (July-September 1993), 74–75. Also see Americas Watch, *Human Rights in Peru: One Year After Fujimori's Coup* (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 1993).

<sup>18</sup> For recent updates on human rights issues in Colombia, see Human Rights Watch/Americas Watch, *State of War: Political Violence and Counterinsurgency in Colombia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993); Human Rights Watch, *Political Murder and Reform in Colombia: The Violence Continues* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992).

system (e.g., the use of incommunicado detention), other questionable practices (e.g., no cross-examination of 'secret witnesses') persist.<sup>19</sup>

In short, the institutionalization of basic guarantees of individual rights and freedoms has been and continues to be seriously compromised in Peru and Colombia. Both countries experienced widespread and chronic disruptions of civil liberties as presidents made frequent use of their 'state of exception' powers in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, the de facto and de jure adjustments in the legal systems made during the conduct of these internal wars gave rise to enormous inequities in the administration of justice, especially in regard to the treatment of civilians versus the military. The accountability of officials and the transparency of legal proceedings dissipated as legal systems were restructured to facilitate prosecution and impair the rights of defendants.

Quantitative measures of political and civil rights confirm the deterioration in freedoms just described in the cases of Peru and Colombia. As seen in Table 1, the Freedom House rankings of political and civil liberties registered Peru's and Colombia's declining performance in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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**TABLE 1**

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**Composite Freedom House Rankings  
Political and Civil Liberties (2 = best score)**

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	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
<b>Bolivia</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>Colombia</b>	5	5	5	5	7	7	6	6
<b>Ecuador</b>	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5
<b>Peru</b>	5	5	5	5	6	7	8	11
<b>Venezuela</b>	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	6

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The performance of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador has been consistently better than that of Peru and Colombia; this reflects the absence of sustained guerrilla insurgencies in those countries. Since its return to civilian rule in 1982, Bolivia's performance has been stable, showing no deterioration but no substantial improvement. Scores of Ecuador and Venezuela in the Freedom House rankings have varied; a marked deterioration in Venezuela's scores coincides with the heightened civilian and military unrest of the 1990s.

Given the methodological difficulties involved in the quantitative assessment of civil liberties and freedom, such figures should be regarded only as rough indicators of the relative

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<sup>19</sup> See *State of War*, op. cit. (n. 18), 35-43.

performance of the countries.<sup>20</sup> As seen in Table 2, all five countries have been subject to suspensions in civil liberties through the declaration of 'states of exception' by presidents over the last decade. That presidents invoked extraordinary powers in the context of internal wars or massive civil disorders is not terribly surprising. But executives have also sometimes used these powers to preempt or repress nonviolent protest. In Bolivia, for example, President Víctor Paz Estenssoro declared a 'state of emergency' to preempt labor opposition to his 1985 shock treatment program. A state of emergency was reinvoked in August 1986 to prevent the *Marcha por la vida*, a miners' march protesting the neoliberal program, from entering the city of La Paz. The Paz government also used periodic threats of the reimposition of the state of siege to dampen public criticism of the neoliberal program.<sup>21</sup> In Ecuador, President León Febres-Cordero used special powers to suppress labor demonstrations. While impossible to quantify, it does not seem unreasonable to believe that recourse to state-of-exception powers followed by the recurrent threat of the reimposition of such powers produces a chilly environment for freedom of expression.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, it is also important to recognize that the breaches in civil liberties are not experienced uniformly by all citizens. As one might expect, the poor are more likely to have their civil rights violated and to become subjects of abuse by authorities. For example, police raids in lower-class neighborhoods in Venezuela result in a disproportionate number of arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings.<sup>23</sup> In Colombia, peasants and workers in the informal sector have been the primary victims of human rights violations.<sup>24</sup> Indigenous groups in Ecuador's countryside are subjected to violence by private paramilitary forces, with the implicit permission of local

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<sup>20</sup> For a useful collection of essays concerning the methodological difficulties involved in quantitative assessments of rights and liberties, see Thomas B. Jabine and Richard P. Claude, eds., *Human Rights and Statistics: Getting the Record Straight* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> The political tactics used by the Paz government in administering its structural adjustment program are described at greater length in Catherine M. Conaghan and James M. Malloy, *Unsettling Statecraft: Democracy and Neoliberalism in the Central Andes* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming 1994). For a fascinating first-hand account of the events surrounding the *Marcha por la vida*, see June Nash, "Interpreting Social Movements: Bolivian Resistance to Economic Conditions Imposed by the IMF," *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 2 (May 1992): 275–93.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of how the effect of previous repression may exert a continuing effect on the operation of political systems and complicate the quantitative measurement of civil liberties, see George Lopez and Michael Stohl, "Problems of Concept and Measurement in the Study of Human Rights" in *Human Rights and Statistics*, 218.

<sup>23</sup> "Venezuela," US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 506; "Venezuela Human Rights Practices, 1993," US Department of State (Photocopy, 31 January, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> "Colombia," US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 537; "Colombia Human Rights Practices, 1993" US Department of State (Photocopy, 31 January, 1994).

TABLE 2

State of Emergency Declarations/Suspensions of Civil Liberties (1985-1993)

Venezuela

Year	Bolivia	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru
Relevant Pre-1985 State of Siege Decrees (i.e., with continuing impact in 1985 and beyond).		Regional state of siege declared on March 14, 1984 in Caquetá, Huila, Meta, and Cauca in response to guerrilla activities. Nationwide powers invoked on May following the April 1984 murder of Sr. Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, the Minister of Justice. Not revoked until the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution.		Regional state of siege declared in December 1982 in response to Sendero violence in Ayacucho, Apurimac, and Huancavelica. The emergency regulations were repeatedly renewed every 60 days. By April 1984, four more provinces were under military control.
1985	Sept. 19 to Dec. 17: State of emergency declared in response to labor strikes over the introduction of harsh economic reforms.	35-day state of emergency declared on Nov. 24 in response to rebel takeover of the presidential palace.		Aug. 1985 to Feb. 1986: state of emergency acts with 60-day renewable terms declared in response to Sendero violence.
1986	Nationwide state of emergency declared on Aug. 28 for a duration of 90 days in response to labor unrest at austerity measures.			Repeated extension of the state of emergency.
1987			Oct. 27-29: state of emergency declared in response to a planned one-day strike by the FUT.	Repeated extension of the state of emergency.
1988		April: state of emergency declared in the region of Uraba in response to the murder of 80 peasants by paramilitary groups.	May 31 to June 1: state of emergency declared in response to a planned one-day strike by the FUT (use of tear-gas by the police to break up protesters; censorship of the press).	Extension of emergency act from January to May in 37 of Peru's 172 provinces (in response to Sendero activities). Routine extension of emergency powers throughout the year.
1989	National stage of siege declared on Nov. 15 for a period of 90 days in the face of escalating industrial action by teachers (incl. the banning of strikes, public meetings, and expanded police arrest powers).	New measures for combating drug cartels declared on Aug. 19 (incl. the imposition of a curfew in Bogotá, property seizures, and the increased protection of judges). 11,000-15,000 suspects in custody by August 23. Sept. 14: the military curfew in Bogotá is lifted.	State of national emergency declared on Sept. 29 in response to indefinite strike by oil workers demanding compensation following the Sept. 5 creation of a new state oil company (PETRO-ECUADOR) to overtake control of oil production on Oct. 1. Troops and police ordered to seize the oil installations occupied by workers.	Repeated extension of the state of emergency.
1990	State of emergency ends Feb. 14, 1990.			The state of emergency, now covering two-thirds of the country

**1990  
(Cont.)**

and 50 percent of the population, is extended to Lima for 30 days on March 23 to provide protection to congressional candidates in an upcoming election.

Aug. 7: state of emergency declared in 11 provinces in response to protests over austerity measures; constitutional guarantees suspended.

April 18: state of emergency expanded to include 8 more provinces (Azangaro, Lampa, Melga, San Antonio de Putina and Huancane, Caraveli, La Union, and Cayoma); Constitutional guarantees suspended.

June 18: Congress grants Fujimori 150-day emergency legislative power to draft "national peace policy" to combat drug barons and Sendero, and foster economic recovery; an estimated 55 percent of the population lives under a state of emergency covering 44 percent of the national territory.

April 5: Presidential auto-coup by Fujimori.

February: Constitutional clauses suspended and press/television censorship imposed for the first time in over 30 years to exclude media coverage of attempted coup.

Nov. 27-29: confrontations between pro and anticoup forces; curfew imposed; news broadcasts by largest radio station suspended. Curfew lifted on Dec. 1; further constitutional rights restored by Dec. 19.

State of emergency declared on May 15 in anticipation of protests over Perez's suspension.

Aug. 11: Congress grants interim President special economic and financial powers.

Feb. 6: strike by FUT results in clash with police following decree suspending public activities "so that internal order should be preserved."

July 5: new constitution lifts state of siege in place since 1984.

July 10-16: "State of internal disturbance" declared to prevent release of suspected members of the Medellin cocaine cartel from custody.

Nov. 8: 90-day state of emergency declared in response to increasing violence of left-wing guerrillas and drug-traffickers.

State of emergency extended on Feb. 5 and May 5 for 90-day durations.

**1992**

**1991**

**1993**

authorities.<sup>25</sup> Such inequalities in access to normal rights and protections prescribed in the democratic constitutions of each country produce what Guillermo O'Donnell has referred to as 'low intensity citizenship.'<sup>26</sup>

Important deviations from democracy defined as a procedural minimum still exist to varying degrees across the Andean region. Great progress has been made in institutionalizing free and fairly run elections as the vehicle by which governments are constituted. The subordination of military to civilian authority remains incomplete, and governmental commitment to the vigorous protection of civil liberties is ambiguous and uneven at best.

So far, this analysis has touched only on the most visible deficiencies in Andean democracies. To appreciate fully the problematic nature of democracy in the Andes, we need to examine the connections and disconnections that emerged in state-society relations during the crisis-ridden 1980s and 1990s. The following sections examine disruptions and distortions in political linkage—the failure of institutions and political elites to reach out to civil society and to join citizens' demands to the process of governmental decision making.<sup>27</sup> The capacity of civil society to constitute competent 'publics' capable of demanding responsive and accountable government has been, and continues to be, severely constrained by adverse socio-economic conditions and inequalities in the distribution of political resources. Taken together, these lapses in adhering to the procedural minimum *and* failures in political linkage have produced a politics lacking in democratic authenticity.<sup>28</sup>

This deficit in democratic authenticity has not gone unrecognized; Fujimori's auto-coup was predicated on it. But the *Fujimorazo* was only one of several Andean responses. As the following discussion indicates, other types of reforms (Colombia's constitutional reform, the COPRE initiatives in Venezuela, the decentralization program in Bolivia) have been launched in an effort to revitalize links between citizens and government. These reforms are still in their early

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<sup>25</sup> "Ecuador" in previously cited *Country Reports*, 1992, 392; "Ecuador Human Rights Practices, 1993," US Department of State (Photocopy, 31 January, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> O'Donnell develops his discussion of 'low intensity' citizenship in relation to his argument regarding the emergence of a new regime type in Latin America, 'delegative democracy.' See his "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries," *World Development* 21, no. 8 (August 1993): 1355–69.

<sup>27</sup> For further discussion of the notion of political linkage, see Kay Lawson, "Political Parties and Linkage" in *Political Parties and Linkage: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Kay Lawson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980): 3–24.

<sup>28</sup> The notion of democratic authenticity is taken from Juan Linz. Linz describes the erosion of democratic authenticity as a situation in which there is a "denaturation and loss of substance of the democratic process." This takes place when substantial decision making becomes detached from electoral controls. See Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 69–71.

phases; it remains to be seen whether these will be able to establish the foundations of a democracy with meaning and merit.

## DISCONNECTIONS AND DISCONTINUITIES IN ANDEAN DEMOCRACY

### Institutional Blues: Uneasy Relations, Unequal Access

Among the most striking features of Fujimori's auto-coup was the breadth of popular support for the forced closing of Peru's national Congress. In the weeks just prior to the coup, public opinion polls measured confidence in Congress at an all-time low of just 17 percent. Approval ratings for the shutdown of congress were in the 70 to 80 percent range. Weeks after the coup, opinion polls showed that 54 percent of the public still regarded the post-coup political system as a democracy. When asked what they viewed as the fundamental characteristics of democracy, respondents most frequently cited 'civil liberties' and having an 'elected president.' In the minds of many Peruvians, the absence of an elected congress was not deemed of sufficient importance to disqualify Peru as a democracy.<sup>29</sup>

Widespread disdain for congress as an institution is not confined to Peru. Poll results for Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia also show low levels of public confidence in congress. As shown in Table 3, there is a high level of distrust of congress, with Ecuador and Venezuela registering the highest levels. The distrust of congress coincides with the high levels of distrust in political parties.

**Table 3**

**Trust in Institutions  
(Percentage of respondents reporting lack of trust)**

	<b>Bolivia</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Peru</b>	<b>Venezuela</b>	<b>Latin America</b>
Congress	68	69	76	49	71	61
Political Parties	82	84	85	74	88	78
Justice System	76	61	64	59	74	64

Source: Segundo barómetric iberoamericano, May 1993

<sup>29</sup> Public opinion data provided by Apoyo S.A., Lima. For further discussion of Peruvian public opinion since the coup, see Julio F. Carrión, "The 'Support Gap' for Democracy in Peru: Mass Public Attitudes Towards Fujimori's Auto-Coup," paper delivered at the XVIII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Atlanta, Georgia, 10-12 March 1994.



As the poll results suggest, Andean legislatures have not had much success in establishing themselves as important deliberative bodies with a clear role in the policy-making process. The contribution of legislatures to national debates on policy and the capacity of legislatures to affect the course of policy is far from evident to many citizens. Frequently, legislatures have appeared to be completely irrelevant to key decisions on policy, particularly on economic policy. Not only have legislatures sometimes seemed epiphenomenal to decision making, but they also are arenas for some of the least appealing practices of politicians—demagoguery, personal feuding, clientelism, conflict-mongering. Rather than appearing as a central mechanism for linking citizens to the democratic state, legislatures are perceived as elite bodies, out of touch with the needs of ordinary people and obstacles to effective governance.

The contours of the legitimacy crisis facing legislatures vary from country to country. Many of the limitations on the development of Andean legislatures can be ascribed to constitutional design. In these presidential systems, Andean presidents are generously endowed with a broad array of constitutionally prescribed powers that make it tempting for presidents to ignore or try to govern around legislatures, even in the presence of government majorities.<sup>30</sup> Of special importance is the power that all Andean presidents enjoy to enact economic policy through special emergency decrees. In the 1980s and 1990s, Andean executives used that power not only for the purposes of issuing short-term economic stabilization measures (e.g., gas price hikes, wage freezes, currency devaluation) but also to lay down the legal frameworks for ambitious programs of structural adjustment. Both the Paz Estenssoro and the Paz Zamora governments in Bolivia used economic decrees to set forth comprehensive packages of neoliberal reform, thus circumventing any serious congressional debate on major issues such as privatization.<sup>31</sup> In Ecuador, President León Febres-Cordero mounted the entire edifice of his economic reforms through a string of economic emergency decrees in 1985–86.

On a number of occasions, legislatures facilitated presidential domination of policy making by ceding special powers to the executive that allowed executives to govern without consultations for prolonged periods of time. The Venezuelan Congress ceded such powers to President Jaime Lusinchi in 1984–85 and to President Ramón Velásquez in 1993. Similarly, the Peruvian Congress relinquished its legislative prerogatives to presidents through the use of Article 188 of the 1979 constitution. Every Peruvian president since 1980—Belaúnde, García, and Fujimori—enjoyed special powers via Article 188. As Enrique Bernales notes, while Article

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<sup>30</sup> For a valuable overview of scholarship on this topic, see Scott Mainwaring, “Presidentialism in Latin America,” *Latin American Research Review* 25, no. 1 (1990): 157–79.

<sup>31</sup> This is discussed in Eduardo Gamarra, “Market Oriented Reforms and Democratization in Bolivia” in *The Precarious Balance: Democratic Consolidation and Economic Reform in Latin America and Eastern Europe*, ed. Joan Nelson and Marcelo Cavarozzi (Washington, DC: International Center for Economic Growth, forthcoming).

188 was intended originally for use in exceptional circumstances, it evolved into a provision routinely used by Peruvian congresses.<sup>32</sup>

The power disequilibrium between Andean presidents and legislatures is exacerbated further by the underdeveloped state of legislatures. For the most part, Andean legislatures have not had the resources to support the development of a permanent professional staff capable of undertaking sophisticated research and policy analysis. The lack of resources and expertise severely constrains the ability of legislators to design credible alternatives to those proposed by the executive branch.

The result is that legislatures are thrust into a largely reactive role vis-à-vis the executive branch. That reactive role sometimes assumes the form of passivity, from rubber-stamping presidential initiatives to ceding legislative powers to the executive altogether. In Venezuela, the tight party discipline exercised by Acción Democrática and COPEI over their delegations rendered the congress so supine that legislative officers sometimes dispensed with tallying and recording votes.<sup>33</sup>

Elsewhere in the Andes, the reactive role of congress took on a more negative tone as legislatures attempted to use the limited mechanisms at their disposal to dissent and obstruct the progress of executive-designed legislation. Ecuadoran legislators made use of their powers to interpellate cabinet ministers as a vehicle to criticize administrations, especially in regard to corruption and unpopular economic measures. This practice proved to be especially annoying to presidents who view the process as debilitating and disruptive of cabinet cohesion. Other kinds of tactics, such as footdragging on legislation in commissions and failing to produce quorums for votes, are also used by legislators to obstruct progress on government initiatives. Such tactics frustrate presidents and often provoke countermeasures by presidents to govern without such congressional obstruction. In Colombia, the absence of party discipline produced chronic executive-legislative impasses in the 1970s and 1980s; this encouraged Colombian presidents to bypass congress by using powers provided for in the state of siege provisions of the 1968 constitution.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Enrique Bernalles Ballesteros, *Parlamento y democracia* (Lima: Constitución y Sociedad, 1990), 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Coppedge, "Venezuela," *Economic Reform Today* 3, no. 1 (winter 1993), 33. For a more extensive analysis by Coppedge of executive-legislative relations, see his "Venezuela: Democratic Despite Presidentialism" in *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: The Case of Latin America*, ed. Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 322–48.

<sup>34</sup> For an analysis of executive-legislative relations in the 1980s, see Ronald P. Archer and Marc Chernik, "El Presidente frente a las instituciones nacionales" in *La democracia en blanco y negro: Colombia en los años ochenta*, ed. Patricia Vásquez de Urrutia (Bogotá: CEREC, 1989): 31–79. For the 1970s, see Gary Hoskin, "The Impact of the National Front on Congressional Behavior: The Attempted Restoration of El País Político" in *Politics of Compromise: Coalition Government in Colombia*, ed. R. Albert Berry et al. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1980), 105–35. Also see

Executives also looked to the creation of new bureaucracies as a way to remove areas of public policy from congressional interference. This bureaucratic preempting of congress has been especially pronounced in Venezuela, but also occurs to varying degrees in the rest of the region.

Recent work by Brian Crisp carefully documents the growth of executive-mandated advisory commissions in Venezuela.<sup>35</sup> Between 1959 and 1989, 330 such commissions were created. The commissions play a critical role in shaping economic policies and are charged with an array of duties including the design of legislation. Representatives to the commissions are appointed; the appointees are drawn typically from the executive branch or from the ranks of organized interest groups. While organized labor is represented, government officials and business group representatives are the numerically dominant participants on the boards. Only 6 percent of all board members were drawn from 'non-economically defined' groups.

The operation of this elaborate commission system clearly undercuts the representativeness and accessibility that is supposed to be associated with democracy. The commissions perform quasi-legislative functions, but cannot be held accountable for their actions through elections. The system is designed to insure a selective penetration of decision-making processes by a small number of organized interest groups. Interest group politics in any democracy always produces winners and losers—but the Venezuelan commission system institutionalizes the inequalities in access to the system.

This kind of privileged access to the executive branch takes place in the rest of the Andes, although the structures are not as elaborate and extensive as those which evolved in Venezuela. In Colombia, the coffee producers association (FEDERACAFE) was allowed to assume quasi-public functions and exercises extensive influence over all policies relating to coffee exports.<sup>36</sup> But this is an exceptional case. Business representatives found their way onto the boards of public entities throughout the Andes, but they do not necessarily dominate the deliberations or dictate the decisions on these boards. The access and influence that these structures provide to business elites is fragmented and incomplete. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this type of representation is supplemented by recourse to informal practices (e.g., 'behind-the-scenes' lobbying of policymakers, sometimes facilitated by friendship or other social ties) that substantially enhance the overall political clout of business elites.

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Jonathan Hartlyn, "Presidentialism and Colombian Politics" in Linz and Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure*, 220–53.

<sup>35</sup> Brian Crisp, "Limitations to Democracy in Developing Capitalist Societies: The Case of Venezuela" (Unpublished paper, Department of Politics, Wake Forest University, 1994). Also see Brian Crisp, "Tyranny by Minority: Institutional Control of Participation in Venezuelan Democracy," PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1992.

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Hartlyn, "Producer Associations, The Political Regime and Political Processes in Contemporary Colombia," *Latin American Research Review* 20, no. 3 (1985): 111–38.

In his classic work, *Politics and Markets*, Charles Lindblom convincingly argues that business elites are always likely to occupy a 'privileged position' in capitalist democracies. Not only do superior financial resources allow business elites to mount better lobbies, but their strategic position within the economy allows them to veto policies through market behavior. Since the electoral fate of politicians is tied to good economic performance, politicians have little choice but to be responsive to business concerns.<sup>37</sup> As outlined by Lindblom, the 'privileged position' of business is a problematic element in the operation of every capitalist democracy. In the Andes, the relative weakness of legislatures and the selective access of business interest groups to the executive branch exacerbates the problem. Legislatures can (and frequently do) fall under the sway of business lobbies. Yet, by virtue of the institutional rules and electoral imperatives that structure legislatures, they are also more likely to be open and fluid bodies—at least more so than the executive-appointed commissions. Legislatures have a greater potential to act as conduits for non-elite interests and concerns. Moreover, unlike elite commissions, legislatures are not locked into a deliberative process in which interests are exclusively defined by traditional economic categories and channeled through the peak associations of business and labor.

The democratic potential of legislatures remains largely unrealized in the Andes. The 1991 constitutional reform in Colombia did provide for new curbs on the use of presidential decree powers and enhanced the oversight functions of congress. In contrast, Peru's 1993 constitution has further debilitated congress. For the most part, presidents continue to seek ways to govern around congress and shift decisions to non-elected bodies under executive control. By working to deprive congress of its deliberative and decision-making functions, presidents assiduously strip congress of its *meaningfulness* as a democratic institution. Congress, however, is not the only institution plagued by widespread skepticism as to its usefulness and legitimacy. Across the region, political parties are also under fire. Like congress, parties are dogged by serious questions concerning their failure to genuinely link citizens to the governing process.

### **Parties: Real Failures and the Discourse of Failure**

In a post-coup speech to the Organization of American States (OAS) foreign ministers, President Alberto Fujimori reiterated his justification of the events of April 5. As he had done since the beginning of his presidency, Fujimori laid the blame for Peru's governability problems squarely on the shoulders of political parties. According to Fujimori, the dysfunctional behavior of parties induced Peru's crisis. He charged party elites with obstructing the passage of legislation that was critical to economic modernization and the campaign against Sendero; he accused

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<sup>37</sup> For the full discussion, see Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 170–213.

parties of politicizing and corrupting the judicial process. Along with these ills, Fujimori pointed to the lack of internal democracy within parties and their domination by inbred *cúpulas* (cliques) of elites. Fujimori identified the pre-April 5 political system as a *partidocracia*—a façade of democratic institutions manipulated by party elites to serve their own interests.<sup>38</sup>

Whether parties were really guilty of obstructing progress on Fujimori's legislative program is a question open to debate.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of the accuracy of the charge, Fujimori's critique of parties was deemed credible by a majority of the Peruvian public and by many party elites themselves. Fujimori had every reason to expect that his assault on parties would be popular. Public opinion polls and electoral behavior provided substantial evidence of the collapse of belief in parties. Indeed, Fujimori's own surprising victory was interpreted by him (and virtually everyone else) as a signal of mass disaffection and dealignment.<sup>40</sup> As shown in Table 4, public opinion polls showed the popularity of parties nose-diving, along with that of congress. On the eve of the auto-coup, polls reported that 84 percent of respondents refused to identify with any party, preferring to characterize themselves as 'independents.'<sup>41</sup>

Deep dissatisfaction with parties is also evident in public opinion polls and voting behavior in the rest of the Andes. Bolivian polls rate parties and congress as the least trusted national institutions.<sup>42</sup> Like Peruvians, Ecuadorians are also overwhelmingly disparaging in their evaluation of parties, and over 70 percent identify themselves as independents.<sup>43</sup> The lack of strong partisan attachment has been reflected in the tendency of voters in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador to switch parties from election to election. As calculated by Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia registered among the highest rates of electoral volatility in Latin America in the 1980s.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See the previously cited speech in Ferrero Costa, *Proceso de retorno*, 191–202.

<sup>39</sup> Many of the leaders of the congressional opposition with whom I conducted interviews in August 1993 stressed that legislative cooperation had been forthcoming throughout Fujimori's tenure in office and that an agreement had been struck between the executive and legislature on a number of contentious issues just prior to the April 5 coup. Analysts of congressional behavior have noted that, compared to previous presidents, Fujimori had been relatively successful in making progress on his program. See Cynthia McClintock, "Presidents, Messiahs, and Constitutional Breakdowns in Peru" in Linz and Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure*, 310–11; Henry Pease García, "La democracia colapsada," paper delivered to the XVII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, 24–27 September 1992, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of Fujimori's campaign, see the essays by Carlos Iván Degregori and Romeo Grompeone, *Elecciones 1990: Demonios y redentores en el nuevo Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1991). For Mario Vargas Llosa's interpretation of the campaign, see his memoirs, *El pez en el agua* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> Data taken from Apoyo S.A., "The Fujicoup: Some Relevant Questions of Previous Polls," Photocopy, Lima, n.d.

<sup>42</sup> Poll data cited in Gamarra, op. cit. (n. 31), 38.

<sup>43</sup> Polling data cited by Anita Isaacs, *Military Rule and Transition in Ecuador, 1972–1992* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 133–34.

<sup>44</sup> See the introductory essay in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming 1995).

Table 4

**Confidence in National Institutions, Peru**  
(Percentage of informants reporting confidence in institutions)

	Sept. 1990	March 1991	Sept. 1991	March 1992	Sept. 1992
Central Bank	44	35	27	40	39
Cabinet	52	25	24	27	37
Public Schools	38	33	—	30	5
Armed Forces	58	53	47	54	57
Public Hospital	23	23	—	21	38
Church	81	83	85	80	81
Social Security	23	23	32	30	37
Mass Media	60	48	55	57	58
Parties	21	13	13	12	13
Courts	23	16	22	14	28
Police	47	31	33	20	48
Presidency	57	29	26	42	54
Congress	45	19	19	17	—

Source: Data courtesy of Apoyo S.A., September 1992.

In Colombia and Venezuela, where dominant parties were more firmly entrenched than in the Central Andean countries, decreases in voter turnout were interpreted as indicators of voter dissatisfaction with the established parties. Increasing competition from upstart reformist parties like the Causa R in Venezuela and the M-19 in Colombia was also indicative of the discontent with the choice between the two traditional parties in those systems.<sup>45</sup>

Fujimori was not the first nor the only Andean leader to recognize the political potential in articulating antiparty sentiments. An elite flight from parties took place as many of the politically ambitious sought to differentiate themselves from established parties by launching new organizations or independent fronts. Jorge Lazarte argues that by the end of the 1980s the Bolivian party system was undergoing an informalization—a process marked by the emergence of new political leaders who organize their electoral bids around loosely structured populist movements and clientele networks, such as those constructed by television personality, Carlos Palenque (Conciencia de Patria), and beer baron, Max Fernández (Unión Cívica Solidaridad).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of recent trends in electoral behavior in Colombia, see Gary Hoskin, "Urban Electoral Behavior in Colombia" in *Urban Elections in Democratic Latin America*, ed. Henry Dietz and Gil Shidlo (forthcoming).

<sup>46</sup> Jorge Lazarte, "Partidos, democracia, problemas de representación e informalización de la política (El caso de Bolivia)," *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, no. 74 (October-December, 1991):

The Peruvian counterparts of this phenomenon are found in Fujimori's own Cambio-90 and OBRAS, the electoral vehicle of Lima mayor and television station owner, Ricardo Belmont.

Even among traditional politicians, the impulse to separate oneself from an established party apparatus is pronounced. Party bashing became de rigueur for even the most establishment politicians. The political ascent of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in Bolivia was due, at least in part, to his ability to project himself as a 'new' leader, separate from the mainstream Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario.<sup>47</sup> In Ecuador, the successful 1992 presidential bid of Sixto Durán Ballén owed a great deal to the popularity of his highly public split with the old Partido Social Cristiano, of which he was a founder in the 1950s. In the same mode, Rafael Caldera's split with COPEI paved the way for the creation of an independent front of parties to support him in the 1993 Venezuelan presidential election.

Why did established parties become the objects of such derision? Why has the disappointment with parties become so pronounced and profound? A complete answer to the questions lies well beyond the scope of this paper; but Fujimori's critique of parties certainly contains at least part of the explanation. Throughout the Andes, parties came to be perceived as entities that did not clearly represent the interests of constituents and as bodies that routinely violated democratic norms in their own internal governance. This sense of disjuncture—the gap between parties and the society they were supposed to represent—was reflected in the Andean political lexicon. In Venezuela, critics pointed to the *defase* (lack of fit) between parties and civil society.<sup>48</sup> In Colombia, the contrast was defined as that between *el país nacional* and *el país político*. In the vocabulary of the Fujimori administration, the contrast was that between *Perú legal* (the world of formal institutional structures of which parties are a part) and *Perú real* (the real world experienced by *el pueblo*).

Well before Fujimori was on the scene in Peru, Venezuelans were already engaged in debates over the evils of *partidocracia*. Long considered by many analysts to be one of Latin America's success stories, Venezuela's two-party system came under increasing criticism by the

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579–614. For a fascinating study of the extraordinarily clientelistic (and nonprogrammatic) party headed by Max Fernández, see Fernando Mayorga, *Max Fernández: La política del silencio* (La Paz: ILDIS, 1991). Also see Hugo San Martín Arzabe, *El Palenquismo: Movimiento social, populismo, informalidad política* (La Paz: Editorial Los Amigos del Libro, 1991).

<sup>47</sup> Sánchez de Lozada's ability to project himself as a new type of politician was enhanced by his cultural distinctiveness. As the son of an exiled MNR politician, Sánchez de Lozada was raised and educated in the United States. His 'gringo accent' and his relaxed sense of humor made him stylistically distinct from most established politicians. For an analysis of *gonismo*, see Carlos F. Toranzo Roca, "Los rasgos de la nueva derecha boliviana" in *Nueva derecha y desproletarización en Bolivia*, ed. Carlos F. Toranzo Roca and Mario Arrieta Abdalla (La Paz: UNITAS-ILDIS, 1989), 58–75.

<sup>48</sup> Brian Crisp, Daniel Levine, and Juan Carlos Rey, "The Legitimacy Problem" in *Democracy under Pressure: Politics and Markets in Venezuela*, ed. Jennifer McCoy et al. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1993).

early 1980s. Both major parties, the social democratic AD and the Christian democratic COPEI, had evolved into highly institutionalized, tightly disciplined bureaucracies. The reach of these parties extended across Venezuelan society, structuring the internal politics of a broad spectrum of organizations from unions to professional associations.

Yet, for all their sophistication and influence in Venezuelan society, the dominant parties were not functioning as vehicles encouraging popular participation in political life or as effective interest aggregators by the early 1980s. Instead, party structures had ossified. Decision-making powers were monopolized by a select group of leaders at the apex of each party organization (*cogollos*) who tolerated little in the way of dissent or contestation. The organizations associated with the parties (e.g., unions, etc.) were also subject to the dictates of party leadership. The demands of groups in civil society that were organized outside of party structures were usually ignored. The closed character of the system was further exacerbated by the cozy relationship between AD and COPEI and their policy of *concertación*, which minimized policy conflicts and dampened policy debates at the national level. The insulation of the top party leadership and the absence of mechanisms to force accountability helped to create a 'hothouse' environment for political corruption.<sup>49</sup>

Acceptance of *partidocracia* began to erode significantly with the onset of the economic crisis in Venezuela in the 1980s. As the windfall profits from petroleum export dried up, the AD-COPEI establishment could no longer reproduce the economic growth and security to which Venezuelans had become accustomed; nor did the establishment have the capacity to channel the ensuing discontent through its stultified party bureaucracies. Moreover, the spectacular corruption that had become an entrenched part of public life became especially repugnant in the face of government calls for austerity and belt tightening.<sup>50</sup> The consequences of the growing representation and legitimacy crisis in the Venezuelan party system were played out on the streets. Explosive protests rocked Venezuela throughout the Andrés Pérez presidency. From 1989 to 1992, 5,000 street protests took place, with over 2,000 ending in violence.<sup>51</sup>

Like Venezuela, Colombia's two dominant parties faltered in adapting to an altered social reality. While Colombia's Liberal and Conservative parties are among the oldest parties in Latin America, neither party ever achieved the sophisticated organization or tight discipline which

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<sup>49</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Venezuelan party system, see Michael Coppedge, *Strong Parties and Lame Ducks: Presidential Partyarchy and Factionalism in Venezuela* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the corruption scandals that brought down the presidency of Carlos Andrés Pérez, see Steve Ellner, "A Tolerance Worn Thin: Corruption in the Age of Austerity," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 27, no. 3 (November-December 1993): 13–16.

<sup>51</sup> The figure is taken from Venezuelan sources and cited in Americas Watch/Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights in Venezuela* (New York: Human Rights Watch, October 1993), 5.



evolved in the Venezuelan case.<sup>52</sup> Instead, the parties evolved as nonideologically driven, loosely structured organizations based on complicated clientele networks that tied regional and local bosses to a small and inbred national political elite (*los jefes naturales*). Rapid urbanization and economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s rearranged Colombia's social landscape and undermined the bases of this traditional politics. The traditional authority of the political bosses and the 'natural leaders' gave way to a 'broker clientelism' in which the mobilization of political support became highly contingent upon the direct delivery of material payoffs to clienteles.<sup>53</sup> Broker clientelism was not only a fiscal drain on the state, but was exclusionary since many social groups were left out of the patronage loops. The ensuing legitimacy crisis affected not only parties, but the entire Colombian state as the disaffected turned to antisystem guerrilla movements.<sup>54</sup>

Popular frustration and alienation from the established parties did not go unnoticed by party leaders in Venezuela and Colombia. A package of electoral reforms was enacted in 1988–89 in Venezuela, at the urging of the Presidential Commission on the Reform of the State (COPRE). The goal of the electoral reforms was to strengthen direct links between public officials and voters, so as to enhance accountability and responsiveness in the system. The Venezuelan reforms included the creation of the direct popular elections for local officials, the adoption of a 'free list' system for municipal council races and a revamping of congressional election rules creating single-member districts. Reforms aimed at opening up the system for popular participation and enhanced interparty competition also were enacted in Colombia and include the direct election of mayors, a presidential primary within the Liberal Party and provisions for the public financing of political campaigns.<sup>55</sup> Given the relatively recent implementation of the reforms, it is too early to tell what the long-term effects on the respective party systems will be and whether such institutional reforms will redress the severe citizen-government linkage problems in both countries.

Peru's disastrous experience of APRA in power ranks as the most spectacular case of party failure in the contemporary Andes, and perhaps Latin America. Alan García's landslide

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52 For a comparison of the two systems, see John D. Martz, "Party Elites and Leadership in Colombia and Venezuela," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 1992): 87–121.

53 This argument is developed in the work of Ronald P. Archer, "The Transition from Traditional to Broker Clientelism in Colombia: Political Stability and Social Unrest," The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Working Paper no. 140 (July 1990).

54 For further analysis of the evolution of Colombian politics, see Francisco Leal Buitrago, "Modernización del estado y crisis política," Conference Paper no. 39 presented at the Research Conference on Violence and Democracy in Colombia and Peru, Columbia University, New York, NY, 30 November 1990.

55 For a comparison of the reforms, see Matthew Soberg Shugart, "Leaders, Rank and File, and Constituents: Electoral Reform in Colombia and Venezuela," *Electoral Studies* 11, no. 1 (1992): 21–45.

victory in the 1985 presidential race was based on a broad electoral coalition that reached beyond APRA's traditional supporters to include peasants, the urban working and middle classes, and even segments of the business elite. But García's offer of a 'new beginning' quickly dissolved into a political practice marked by personalism and patrimonialism of the worst sort. Rather than building on his electoral victory and using APRA to forge solid links to civil society, García chose to completely marginalize his party from governing and eschewed contacts with preexisting organizations in civil society.<sup>56</sup> Clientelism, as practiced by García, bypassed not only APRA but almost all other organizations. For example, welfare and social assistance programs funded by executive were designed to exclude the participation of municipal government and grassroots organizations. Instead, García's political style focused on creating *unmediated* links between himself and *el pueblo*. Rather than building *aprimo*, García seemed more bent on establishing *alanismo*.

García's experiment came to an ignominious end in 1990. His exclusionary and arrogant governing style alienated many of his original supporters. Incompetent economic management by García and his ministers produced hyperinflation and the worst economic crisis in Peru's history. Peruvian voters roundly rejected APRA in the 1990 elections. Public opinion polls continue to register a profound antagonism toward APRA and García in the Peruvian public.<sup>57</sup> Much of the appeal of Fujimori's attack on parties can be understood as part of the wildly anti-Aprista mood in Peruvian society in the aftermath of the García presidency.

APRA was not the only Peruvian party to experience a significant reversal of fortune in this period. Latin America's largest left-wing front of the 1980s, Izquierda Unida (IU), also collapsed at the end of the decade. Some of IU's problems were rooted in its own electoral success. As careerism and professionalization took hold among IU leaders, pragmatism replaced the party's identity and sense of mission. IU leaders found themselves practicing the old-fashioned clientelism that many constituents had come to expect from political elites.<sup>58</sup> Like most

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<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of these points, see Carlos Monge Salgado, "La práctica política Aprista como respuesta a la crisis de los 80" in *El Apra de la ideología a la praxis*, ed. Heraclio Bonilla and Paul W. Drake (Lima: Editorial y Productora Gráfica 'Nuevo Mundo,' 1989), 127–51. For further discussion of the García presidency, see John Crabtree, *Peru under García: An Opportunity Lost* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Carol Graham, *Peru's APRA: Parties, Politics and the Elusive Quest for Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992).

<sup>57</sup> APRA still rates as the single most unpopular party in Peru, according to a May 1993 poll taken by Apoyo S.A. García, who now resides in Colombia, resigned from APRA in 1994 amidst charges that he engaged in corrupt business dealings while serving as president.

<sup>58</sup> For a discussion of the problems affecting IU, see Romeo Grompeone, *El velero en el viento: Política y sociedad en Lima* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1991), 166–88. Also see Jorge Parodi's insightful discussion of the left, "Entre la utopía y la tradición: Izquierda y democracia en los municipios de los pobladores" in *Los pobres, la ciudad y la política*, ed. Jorge Parodi (Lima: Centro de Estudios de Democracia y Sociedad, 1993), 121–303.

other parties, IU never developed internally democratic modes of governance. In short, the IU was plagued by many of the same problems found in the traditional parties.

The lack of internal democracy and the inability of parties to project themselves as genuine representatives of social interests is also in evidence in Bolivia and Ecuador. In both countries, the newfound pragmatism of the left and social democratic parties (which translates into support or at least acquiescence to neoliberal economic programs) has stripped away much of the credibility of these parties as defenders of *las clases populares*. In Ecuador, the 1988 electoral sweep of the social democratic Izquierda Democrática raised hopes of reform and social change; those hopes were dashed as President Rodrigo Borja shied away from reformist policies and opted for economic stabilization. In Bolivia, extraordinary party pacts (e.g., the alliance of the social democratic MIR and the rightist ADN in 1990, the current alliance of the MNR with the Movimiento Bolivia Libre) have sealed neoliberal policies in place, leaving popular opposition with almost no voice within the party system. From the perspective of the electorate, most parties look like elite-run, electoral vehicles that act alike once in power. It is no wonder that the public's choice is a psychological exit—an unwillingness to attach oneself or even believe in the leaders and organizations that have so routinely failed to live up to their campaign promises.

### **The Ascent of Economists and the Difficulties of 'Talking Back'**

There was probably no realm in which Andean parties and legislatures appeared to be more ineffectual or irrelevant than that of economic policy making. As each country made its journey through crisis, economic stabilization, and neoliberal restructuring, parties and legislatures stood mostly on the sidelines, unable to inform or exert much influence over the policy choices of governments. Occupying centerstage in the economic dramas were presidents and their teams of technocrats. They dictated economic measures by decree and by setting the terms of the discussion on economic matters.

Stories detailing the decidedly nondemocratic style of economic policy making in the 1980s and 1990s are well-known and will not be recounted here.<sup>59</sup> President Paz Estenssoro established a prototype for how to pursue neoliberal reform in Bolivia in 1985; Alberto Fujimori and Carlos Andrés Pérez replicated much of the approach.<sup>60</sup> The *modus operandi* employed by

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<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of this in reference to the cases of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, see Conaghan and Malloy, *Unsettling Statecraft*. A discussion of the conditions that facilitate this style of policy making can also be found in the essays collected in Joan Nelson, ed., *Economic Crisis and Policy Choice: The Politics of Adjustment in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of the policy-making process in Venezuela, see Moisés Naím, "The Launching of Radical Policy Changes, 1989–1991" in *Venezuela in the Wake of Radical Reform*, ed. Joseph S. Tulchin with Gary Bland (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 31–96.

these presidents involved the unilateral imposition of a comprehensive set of neoliberal economic reforms, enacted via an executive *paquetazo*. The packages were designed by a small group of professional economists, many of whom were political 'independents.' The hallmark of this decision making was its conscious organization as a nonconsultative process; neither parties, groups in civil society, nor the electorate were consulted in advance of the decision to go forth with the reforms.

Because the management of the economy came to be defined as *the* pivotal problem for Andean governments, economic teams emerged as the most privileged and powerful subunit of cabinets. Backed by extraordinary presidential power and cognizant of the international pressures to proceed with radical restructuring, economic teams enjoyed unprecedented opportunities for realizing their visions of market-oriented reforms.

The new hegemony of economists was not solely institutional in nature. Government ministers and economists assumed a striking new presence in all facets of public life; they became, effectively, the 'stars' of the crisis.<sup>61</sup> The celebrity status of economists afforded a heightened visibility to the entire profession. Economists had the opportunity to popularize their views, reaching wider audiences through television and radio. In addition to disseminating ideas, the new exposure of the profession also meant a further opportunity for economists to advance their claims as possessing a special authority to speak and to act (by designing policy) on economic matters. Like every profession, economists sought to delineate themselves from non-experts and as such, disqualify the opinions of those not schooled in the requisite scientific knowledge. In Foucauldian terms, economists increasingly occupied the 'core regions' of the discursive field (public policy).<sup>62</sup>

The ascent of the economics profession and the professional efforts to monopolize 'talking about' the economy did not bode well for parties and legislatures. Especially in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador, parties and legislatures were woefully ill-equipped and unprepared to compete in the discursive field dominated by economists. None of the Andean legislatures have institutionally based expertise in economics. There are no permanent professional staffs to advise legislators on economics; there is no functional equivalent in Andean legislatures of institutions like the US Congressional Budget Office. The lack of institutional expertise is

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61 I am developing these observations at greater length in a work in progress on Peru entitled "Stars of the Crisis: The Ascent of Economists in Peruvian Public Life" (Unpublished essay).

62 For a useful overview of recent thinking on the sociology of professions and the contributions of the work of Michel Foucault, see Magali Sarfatti Larson, "In the Matter of Experts and Professionals, or How It is Impossible to Leave Nothing Unsaid" in *The Formation of Professions: Knowledge, State, Strategy*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Michael Burrage (London: Sage, 1990), 24–50. For further discussion of the role of technocrats in Latin American politics, see James M. Malloy, "Policy Analysts, Public Policy and Regime Structure in Latin America," *Governance* 2 (spring 1989).

compounded further by an absence of individual expertise among legislators themselves. Studies of the professional backgrounds of Ecuadoran and Peruvian legislators reveal that only 2.6 and 2.4 percent of all deputies were economists.<sup>63</sup>

The lack of professional expertise in economics is replicated within most political parties and organizations in civil society. Parties in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru have not made much progress in developing affiliated think tanks to generate ideas and strategies on economic matters. The only organizations that did make substantial progress toward developing such in-house expertise were business interest groups. In Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador, business organizations improved their lobbying capabilities in the 1980s by hiring economists to frame business interests within the language of universal economic rationality. Hiring economists helped business organizations 'talk back' to economic teams.

The real losers in the battles on this discursive field were all those groups unable to muster sufficient technical expertise to make themselves heard—i.e., lower classes and popular movements which did not have the resources to compete in a debate in which issues became progressively defined as technical matters to be resolved by experts. Some economists, of course, did try to talk back to governments on behalf of those groups adversely affected by the restructuring. But domestic and international status hierarchies within the profession frequently worked to the disadvantage of these dissident economists. In addition to their usual associations with the political left, the dissidents did not always have the 'elite' credentials (e.g., doctoral work in the US, job experience with the World Bank, IMF, etc.) deemed essential to being a major player in economic debates. As such, their critiques were often dismissed as ill-informed or as the archaic vestiges of an intellectually exhausted left.

Without a prestigious cadre of professionals working on behalf of their interests, lower-class groups were frequently reduced to sloganeering on economic issues or acts of defiance that were immediately disqualified by politicians and experts as irrelevant. Such was the fate, for example, of Bolivia's *consulta popular*, the mock referendum organized by the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) in 1986. Over a million people participated in the event, and over half cast votes protesting the direction of government economic policy. The government responded by dismissing the exercise and warned that any further 'subversive' acts would be met with a reimposition of a state of siege.

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<sup>63</sup> The data on Ecuador are for the period 1978–88 and are taken from Simón Pachano, *Los diputados: Una élite política* (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional, 1991), 114. The Peruvian data are for 1980–88 and were calculated from the work by Bernal, op. cit. (n. 32), 303.

### **'Missing Publics': The Continuing Obstacles to Civic Competence**

As the preceding analysis indicates, common citizens confront a variety of difficulties in their attempts to talk back to the state.<sup>64</sup> Representative institutions that are supposed to function as conduits for citizens' concerns frequently fail to link the public to the governing process. When linkage does occur, it is often structured to allow access and influence to only a select segment (business organizations, select professionals) or is manifested as sheer clientelism.

Ill-functioning institutions and unresponsive political elites are not, however, the only or the most decisive impediments to deepening democratization. For representative institutions to work, people must *demand* that they work and develop the capacity to hold elites accountable when they do not. This requires a citizenry that has the skills to acquire and process politically relevant information, form reasoned opinions on the basis of that information, and act on those opinions. As Robert Dahl argues, while it is unrealistic to expect people to live up to the virtuous ideals of citizenship found in classical democratic theory, democracy still requires the presence of 'good-enough' citizens—ordinary people, armed with some modicum of political knowledge, involved in the process of making judgments and taking actions.<sup>65</sup> Such civic competence is crucial to the operation of democracy everywhere; its relative absence in the Andes stands as the central challenge to the making of meaningful democracy.

The formation of a good-enough citizenry in the Andes continues to be obstructed greatly by the persistence of mass poverty. Large segments of the population in every country are immersed in exhausting day-to-day struggles for economic survival. This leaves individuals with few of the political resources (time, energy, money, information) that are necessary for participation in public life.<sup>66</sup> With the notable exception of Colombia, recent evidence on income distribution indicates that the longstanding problem of poverty in the Andes has become even more acute during the course of the economic crisis and structural adjustment policies. The most dramatic decline in living standards took place in Venezuela. The number of households living in

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<sup>64</sup> The notion of 'talking back' to the state is taken from C. Wright Mills' discussion of the defining characteristics of a democratic public. In the absence of such expression, citizens are reduced to 'masses.' See his classic discussion in *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 298–324. The notion of 'missing publics' was derived from a discussion of the problem of the missing public in the United States by Todd Gitlin. See "The Politics of Communication and the Communication of Politics" in *Mass Media and Society*, ed. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), 329–41.

<sup>65</sup> Robert A. Dahl, "The Problem of Civic Competence," *Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 4 (October 1992): 45–59.

<sup>66</sup> This notion of political resources is taken from the classic work by Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 223–28.

'critical poverty' more than doubled from 1988 through 1991, increasing from 12.5 percent to 30.6 percent. The 1990 census estimated that nearly 45 percent of the Venezuelan population qualified as poor.<sup>67</sup> A 1993 World Bank study of Peru classified 39 percent of the population as poor.<sup>68</sup> Recent estimates of urban poverty in Bolivia pointed to an increase in the number of households affected from 74 percent to over 80 percent.<sup>69</sup> Massive layoffs in the public sector and the privatization or closure of public enterprises extended the economic stress to working- and middle-class groups, long accustomed to the job security previously assured by the state.<sup>70</sup>

That poverty throws an immediate set of obstacles in the way of people's capacity to participate in public life is only one dimension of the problem of constituting democratic publics in the Andes. Civic competence requires that people be equipped with the skills to acquire and process politically relevant information throughout their lifetime; education is always central to the functioning of democracy.<sup>71</sup> Serious cutbacks in education expenditures in the 1980s had a catastrophic effect on the quality of public education in the region. Declining per capita expenditures translated into a variety of ills—poorly trained, poorly paid (and often striking) teachers, deteriorated physical plants, a shortage (or sometimes complete absence) of even the most basic school supplies like textbooks. High rates of course failures and low test scores attest to the poor quality of public education.<sup>72</sup> High dropout rates are attributed to the poor quality of education as well as the imperatives of economic stress. In Peru, for example, thousands of students dropped out of school in the early 1990s to help support their families.

Andean educational systems have evolved in ways which strongly reinforce class inequalities and deny lower-class groups access to the minimum skills necessary for civic competency. Upper- and middle-class groups avoid the problem in part through flight into private

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<sup>67</sup> Figure cited in Americas Watch, *Human Rights In Venezuela* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993), 5. As this document indicates, other organizations cite higher estimates of poverty.

<sup>68</sup> Data cited in Drago Kusic, "Apuntes sobre la situación económica del Perú a junio de 1993," *Análisis Internacional*, no. 3 (July-September 1993), 91.

<sup>69</sup> Figures are from a study by the Center of Studies for Labor and Agricultural Development (CEDLA), cited in *Foreign Broadcast Information Services—Latin America*, 1 March 1994, 21.

<sup>70</sup> For a general discussion of this point, see Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach* (Santiago: United Nations, 1992), 37–44. It is difficult to assess systematically the question of how structural adjustment programs have affected the distribution of income in the Andes due to the gaps in the empirical data. For a discussion of the data problems involved, see Joan Nelson, "Poverty, Equity, and the Politics of Adjustment" in *The Politics of Economic Adjustment*, ed. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 221–26.

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between education and democracy, see Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>72</sup> For an alarming description of the state of Latin American education, see ECLAC/UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Education and Knowledge: Basic Pillars of Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity* (Santiago: United Nations, 1992), 37–59.

education. According to a recent ECLAC study, the class-based division of labor between public and private schools produces “segmented educational circuits,” in which poor students become entrapped in low quality institutions.<sup>73</sup> As ECLAC notes, such segmentation means that large parts of the population are systematically denied access to the basic ‘cultural codes’ of modern society, and as such are disadvantaged in their ability to participate in public life to any meaningful degree.<sup>74</sup> The ‘lost decade’ of the 1980s and the continuing economic stress is at least partially responsible for a lost generation of citizens.

The inadequacies of the educational system as a site for building civic competence are not simply confined to the way in which they operate to exclude the poor. Serious questions can be raised regarding the extent to which even the elite educational circuits (especially universities) are providing students with skills and values congruent with their role as citizens in a democracy. In recent years, private universities and other post-secondary institutes have proliferated; these institutions typically offer students the opportunity to avoid ‘massified’ (and deteriorated) public education and to train for technical careers. In Bolivia, for example, the Universidad Privada de Santa Cruz (UPSA) was founded under the auspices of Santa Cruz’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The founding was motivated by the desire of businessmen to train a local pool of business employees that would not be contaminated by exposure to left-wing politics in the public university. The original majors at UPSA were confined to systems analysis, computer science, and social communication (public relations). Following this lead, the Cochabamba business federation also created its own Universidad Técnica with the same aims. Business groups have also taken the lead in creating new private educational institutions in Ecuador and Peru. The creation of these entities was a part of a broader effort by business interest groups to extend their ideological reach to wider segments of the public.<sup>75</sup>

The problem with this new type of privatized technical education, however, is that it abdicates any role in the development of ‘deliberative character’ among citizens. In addition to equipping students with skills to enter the labor market, education in a democratic society should also build the capacity of citizens to engage in rational-critical argument and learn democratic modes of conflict resolution. Little systematic attention has been given to organizing the curricula of higher education to building such deliberative character. Indeed, course offerings in areas that

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<sup>73</sup> ECLAC/UNESCO, *Social Equity*, op. cit. (n. 70), 199.

<sup>74</sup> The ECLAC study identifies the following as the minimal skills necessary for full participation in modern society: 1) basic arithmetic skills; 2) to read and understand written text; 3) to engage in written communication; 4) to be able to observe, describe, and analyze one’s environment; 5) to receive and interpret information from mass media; 6) to engage in teamwork. See ECLAC/UNESCO, *Education and Knowledge*, op. cit. (n. 72), 149.

<sup>75</sup> I have discussed the Bolivian efforts at greater length in “The Private Sector and the Public Transcript: The Political Mobilization of Business in Bolivia” in *Business Elites and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Ernest Bartell and Leigh Payne (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming).



might be pertinent to developing deliberative skills—social sciences and the humanities—have been consciously organized out of the curricula (with the important exceptions of economics and administrative sciences).

As currently organized, Andean educational structures do not work to provide a 'mutuality of experience' among citizens or stock a common culture of democracy.<sup>76</sup> Instead, education promotes further social differentiation and fragmentation. The fragmentation of experience and knowledge extends through the ranks of students with access to higher education as they are tracked into technical specialties with almost no exposure to liberal arts.

Schools are not the only venues for acquiring civic skills and political knowledge; other organizations can also act as training grounds for democratic citizenship. As elsewhere in Latin America, grassroots movements in the Andes attract a great deal of attention from scholars, policymakers, and activists because of their enormous potential to contribute to democratization. Yet, recent studies of grassroots movements underscore the heterogeneity found in these organizations and important differences in the extent to which organizations foster deliberative skills and act as a nexus between citizens and the political system.

By articulating new demands from previously excluded social groups, some new movements are having a significant impact on the political agenda. Among the most notable of these new grassroots movements is Ecuador's Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), which has brought indigenous claims for self-government to national attention.<sup>77</sup> In Venezuela, new organizations such as those found in the neighborhood movement proliferated as disillusion with the parties grew in the 1980s.<sup>78</sup>

Such groups make heroic contributions to strengthening civil society in the Andes, but they are not altogether indicative of developments within civil society. Many grassroots organizations remain as more narrowly constructed self-help groups, whose appeal to members is based more on the 'excludable' goods they provide members.<sup>79</sup> A recent study of Peruvian grassroots organizations reveals that many self-help groups are organized around dependency relations with external agencies (e.g., national or international nongovernmental organizations),

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<sup>76</sup> In his study of American politics, William Greider refers to the decline of 'mutuality of experience' in the United States; see *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

<sup>77</sup> For a collection of essays analyzing the origins and impact of Ecuador's indigenous mobilization in 1990, see Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales, *Indios: Una reflexión sobre el levantamiento indígena del 1990* (Quito: ILDIS, 1991).

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of the neighborhood movement, see Daniel H. Levine and Brian F. Crisp, "Legitimacy, Governability, and Reform in Venezuela" in *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience*, ed. Joseph Tulchin et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of grassroots organizations which stresses their provision of private goods to members, see Jeffrey Franks, "Public Goods, Grassroots Organization and the Informal Sector: The Case of La Paz, Bolivia" (Paper, Political Economy and Government Program, The Kennedy School, Harvard University, October 1993).

such that participants are socialized more as welfare clients than as citizens.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the existence of grassroots organizations is not necessarily indicative of a robust civil society per se; their effects on civic competence and political linkage are uneven. In many instances, grassroots groups reproduce nondemocratic forms of behavior and the traditionally clientelistic ways of relating to authorities.<sup>81</sup>

The problem of constituting competent democratic publics in the Andes is complex and cannot be addressed in its entirety here. The mass media figure into the problem in several ways. First, the media are sometimes constrained in their ability to act as watchdogs on government and provide citizens with the uncensored information they need to make reasoned choices. Second, the fragmentation of media markets means that large chunks of the citizenry remain outside of the circuits of relevant political information. Third, the media also play a role (in conjunction with the growing public opinion industry) in processes that effectively shut down rather than open up debate and dissent.

### **The Troubled Fourth Estate and the Trouble with Public Opinion**

There are no outright restrictions on press freedom in any of the five countries under consideration here. Public access to nonofficial news, information, and critical opinion is significantly affected, however, by the commercial concerns of the media and the character of press-government relations.

In Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia, governments play a direct role in the production of news through the ownership and management of media outlets (television, radio, or newspapers). In Ecuador and Colombia, there are no government-run television stations, but regulatory practices allow for significant government influence in the programming and news practices of stations. Private television stations in Ecuador are obligated to provide free broadcast time to the government. In Colombia, state-of-emergency powers allow the government to censor news. In each country, a variety of privately owned media serve up nonofficially sanctioned news. But this pluralism in the structure of the mass media does not always produce the free flow of information and dissenting opinion that one might expect in a competitive industry. Business concerns and the tenor of the relationships between journalists and politicians sometimes run counter to the ideals of an uncompromised free press.

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<sup>80</sup> See Luis Pásara and Alonso Zarzar, "Ambigüedades, contradicciones e incertidumbres" in *La otra cara de la luna: Nuevos actores sociales en el Perú* (Lima: Centro de Estudios de Democracia y Sociedad, 1991): 174–203.

<sup>81</sup> In her study of Lima shantytowns, Susan Stokes points to the coexistence of clientelist styles of political leadership with more radical approaches; see "Politics and Latin America's Urban Poor: Reflections from a Lima Shantytown," *Latin American Research Review* 26, no. 2 (1991): 75–152.

*Auto-censura* (self-censorship) is still thought to be practiced, at least on an intermittent basis, by some journalists, editors, and media owners.<sup>82</sup> The practice is driven by realistic fears of official reprisals by governments for negative news coverage. Threats of tax audits, licensing difficulties, a withdrawal of government advertising, and litigation via libel laws are cited as the devices through which official sources seek to influence news coverage and editorial decisions. Because media outlets are frequently part of larger conglomerates ('economic groups'), fear of government reprisals may extend to other business activities. Corruption also plays into the dynamic of *auto-censura*, with journalists sometimes enjoying payoffs for either burying stories or planting ones favorable to government officials.<sup>83</sup>

If the practices described above have a constricting effect on the character of the political information made available to citizens by the press, even more distortions in the flows of political information are produced by the fragmentation of media markets. As a variety of research shows, media-consumption habits are strongly influenced by income and education. The market for newspapers and newsmagazines in all five countries is small; fragmentary evidence suggests that the already small market may have even shrunk during the course of the economic crisis of the 1980s. Low-income consumers are less likely to use the print media and are more frequently exposed to television or radio.

There was an explosive growth in access to television throughout the Andes in the 1980s, but the effects of television access on the distribution of political knowledge remain unclear.<sup>84</sup> Evidence from Peru indicates that the audience for news and public affairs programming is significantly lower than that for entertainment and sports.<sup>85</sup> News and public affairs programming generally accounts for much less of the broadcast schedule than other sorts of programming. One study of Bolivian television showed that over 80 percent of broadcast schedules were devoted to foreign imports, mostly *telenovelas* or American-made television series.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Michael B. Salwen and Bruce Garrison, *Latin American Journalism* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990).

<sup>83</sup> This is cited as a problem in the Bolivian press; see "Bolivia," US Department of State, *Country Reports 1992*. My interviews with Peruvian journalists in August 1993 confirm that such practices also take place in Peru.

<sup>84</sup> Research from the US casts serious doubt on television's effectiveness as a communicator of political information. People who lack background knowledge or processing skills find it difficult to interpret television news—and frequently evidence no better grasp of issues even when exposed to news. See John P. Robinson and Dennis K. Davis, "Television News and the Informed Public," *Journal of Communication* 40, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 106–19.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussion of media use in Peru in the 1980s, see Cynthia McClintock, "The Media and Re-democratization in Peru," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 6 (1987): 115–34.

<sup>86</sup> Raúl Rivadeneira Prada, "Bolivian Television: When Reality Surpasses Fiction" in *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy*, ed. Elizabeth Fox (London: Sage Publications, 1988), 166.

Research on media consumption and media effects in Latin America is still in its infancy, and it is difficult to reach any definitive conclusions regarding its impact on political attitudes and information. The available evidence confirms that media consumption is related to differences in income and education and that political information (especially in print form) is more likely to be consumed by more upscale, educated citizens.<sup>87</sup> The introduction of cable television throughout Latin America creates further fragmentation and inequalities in the distribution of information, giving high income television viewers access to a alternative news sources, most notably CNN. Affluent consumers also enjoy access to the new computer-based information technology. Thus, differentials in media use are reproducing, if not aggravating, the already substantial inequalities in the distribution of political resources (i.e., information) across social groups.

Finally, as in the United States, the impact of the media on the operation of democracy must also be assessed in light of its capacity to frame citizens' understandings of political events and of *themselves*. Along with politicians and the public opinion industry, the media is an active participant in a process that 'creates' the public, by virtue of the images of the public that it projects back for consumption. As in the advanced democracies, mass survey research has become a potent tool in the hands of elites as they seek to frame citizens' conceptions of their own preferences. Survey research is represented as a definitive 'scientific' assessment (best interpreted by experts) of what the public believes and wants. Thus, polls can become powerful devices for closing off public discussions and justifying nondemocratic behavior by elites. This point was not lost on President Alberto Fujimori, who made deft political use of survey results in the days following the auto-coup.<sup>88</sup>

The emergence of public opinion as a commercial commodity, whose production is monopolized by a small number of private firms and sold to elite customers, further exacerbates the problem of inequalities in access to political information. Individual elites or institutions can afford to purchase the information they need on public opinion; they utilize that information to influence the political process. Meanwhile, average citizens and grassroots organizations are left without much access to this kind of information. Just as the lack of economic expertise puts

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<sup>87</sup> See Fausto Izcaray and John T. McNelly, "Selective Media Use by Venezuelans: The Passing of the Passive Audience in a Rapidly Developing Society," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 6 (1987): 27-42. For one of the few attempts to assess the impact of television on Latin American politics, see the essays in *Television, Politics and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Thomas Skidmore (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

<sup>88</sup> I have analyzed this process at greater length in my recent essay, "Polls, Political Discourse, and the Public Sphere: The Spin on Peru's Fuji-golpe" in *Latin America in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Peter Smith (Boulder: Westview Press, forthcoming 1994). For a consideration of how polls play into the shutdown of debate in the US, see Susan Herbst, *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

ordinary people at a disadvantage in 'talking back' to the state on economic issues, the lack of access to information on public opinion weakens the lobbying capabilities of citizens' groups.

## REIMAGINING THE ANDES

### The Andes in American Perspective

This analysis has only scratched the surface of the labyrinthine problems affecting democratic development in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Without denying the peculiarities in the political trajectory of each country, my argument has focused on a common ill found in all five cases—the pervasive sense of disconnection and distrust that citizens feel in relation to their own governments.

That sense of disconnection and distrust is not confined to the Andes, or even Latin America. Political alienation in the Andes resembles much of the malaise found in the advanced democracies, particularly the United States. Recent critiques of the state of American democracy are replete with references to many of the same kinds of problems that have occupied us here—the disappearing attachment of citizens to parties, the declining support for legislatures, the domination of policy discussion by 'experts,' the presence of politically and culturally disenfranchised underclasses and passive mass publics.<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Barber coined the term 'thin democracy' to describe the American system as one which affords citizens few opportunities to participate meaningfully in public life.<sup>90</sup>

The recent critiques of US democracy have produced a creative collection of new policy prescriptions aimed at reconstructing the participatory dimension of American politics and enhancing civic competence.<sup>91</sup> This body of work may provide a useful point of departure for

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<sup>89</sup> For recent analyses of American politics which focus on these problems, see, for example, Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter, *Politics by Other Means: The Decline of Elections in American Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Robert Entman, *Democracy without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). More recent popular treatments can be found in the previously cited work by Greider, *Who Will Tell the People* and E.J. Dionne, *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).

<sup>90</sup> Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>91</sup> Along with Barber's work, James Fishkin has proposed a number of innovations to create greater opportunity for citizen participation in political parties, see *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Democratic Reform* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). For a discussion of the importance of citizens' groups, see Harry C. Boyte, "The Pragmatic Ends of Popular Politics" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 340–58. Also by Boyte, see *Commonwealth: A Return to Citizen Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989). Developing civic skills among citizens has been the focus of a number of projects at the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota. For a discussion of one of their civic education projects, see Boyte, "Civic Education as Public Leadership Development," *PS* 26, no. 4 (December 1993): 763–68.

thinking about new initiatives to strengthen civil society and Latin American democracy. The following proposals draw heavily on the American critical literature and are offered as a modest starting point for reimagining Andean democracy as a system that offers genuine opportunities for citizens to engage in democratic 'talk' and civic action.

### **Developing Good-Enough Citizens: Some Proposals**

Citizens in the Andes are alienated from institutions and elected officials because they believe them to be remote, unresponsive, and driven by self-interest. Part of the blame for this alienation lies with many Andean politicians themselves, who have lived up to the stereotype of politicians as greedy, insensitive, and untrustworthy. But bad politicians are only part of the problem; bad politicians are situated in a structural setting that invites abuse and misbehavior. Andean and American democracy may be suffering from something of the same ills of institutional design—namely, the problems inherent in *representative* democracy. In representative democracy, the role of the public is largely confined by design to the periodic selection of leaders among rotating elites, who in turn are consigned the responsibilities for determining public policy. Multiple mediations between citizen and government are assumed as part of the model of representative democracy. In Latin America, where mediating institutions such as parties are so weak, representation quickly gives way to 'delegation.'<sup>92</sup>

In contrast to the body of democratic theory that focuses on representation, participatory theorists reject the citizen passivity engendered by representative forms and pose the creation of more direct modes of citizen involvement.<sup>93</sup> In this approach, democracy is more than an electoral exercise; it is about creating communities in which citizens come together to exchange information, generate ideas, take action, and assume responsibility for the conduct of public business. As Benjamin Barber suggests, continuous self-government by people may be impossible, but it is possible to imagine democracy as a more vibrant system in which citizens govern themselves *at least some* of the time.

How can the Andes move from its current situation to a new democracy authenticated and made legitimate by citizen engagement? Clearly, this query brings us back to the issue of civic

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<sup>92</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell has been especially concerned with the logic animating the emergence of 'delegative democracy;' see his work, "On the State," *op. cit.* (n. 26).

<sup>93</sup> Among the contemporary participatory theorists are Dahl and Barber. Feminist theorists have also played an important role in arguing in favor of extending democratic principles to various arenas in social life. For an overview of recent democratic theory, see Russell L. Hanson and George E. Marcus, "Introduction: The Practice of Democratic Theory" in *Reconsidering the Democratic Public*, ed. Russell L. Hanson and George E. Marcus (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 1–34.

competence and how to constitute a citizenry capable of taking an active and meaningful role in self-government.

An obvious place to start building competent citizens is in the arenas that can immediately provide people with the opportunities to engage in deliberation and democratic decision-making—i.e., voluntary associations. As Sara Evans and Harry Boyte argue in their study of American citizens' movements, these groups open up 'free spaces' in society.<sup>94</sup> Free spaces contribute to democratic development in a variety of ways; the free spaces created within groups help individuals learn the skills associated with self-government and help people bridge the gulf between personal and public life. As previously noted, such free spaces are already in existence in Andean society by virtue of the growth of grassroots movements; the challenge is to extend the reach of free spaces to more arenas of social life and to enhance the quality of those free spaces already in existence. As such, a thorough internal democratization of social organization—neighborhood associations, unions, clubs, professional associations—must be a top priority. The democratization inside organizations, however, must go beyond simple improvements in the procedures governing the selection of leaders; it must include the development of mechanisms to encourage discussions and debates among members, that are then connected to what the organization actually does. In other words, deliberation must be understood by members as a process that is connected to action and outcomes. Open assemblies, surveys, internal referenda could be creatively combined in this process of democratizing organizations. Efforts to consolidate free spaces in society would promote and reinforce efforts aimed at a similar democratization of political parties.

The proliferation of free spaces in society would also complement and facilitate reform efforts aimed at governmental decentralization. To varying degrees, all five countries have experienced political debates over issues related to decentralization and the role of local governments over the past decade. Certainly, some progress has been made as evidenced in the move to mayoral elections in Colombia and Venezuela, but comprehensive programs of decentralization are yet to be realized. Any meaningful decentralization will have to involve not only the devolution of *real* power to localities, but will also have to entail the democratization of local decision-making processes of the kind envisaged for social organizations—i.e., the use of town meetings, neighborhood assemblies, and community organizations.

Improvements in education are absolutely critical for heightening civic competence and participation. In the Andean context, this would entail ambitious programs of educational reforms. Such reform would have to begin with insuring real universal access to primary and secondary education and establishing reasonable standards assuring the quality of education in all public

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<sup>94</sup> Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).

schools. Educational change would also have to entail a serious commitment to teacher training and acceptable pay scales, along with a curriculum restructuring that would expose all students to common cultural codes. Explicit attention to civic education in the curriculum would also have to be combined with pedagogical and organizational reforms aimed at developing deliberative skills among all students.<sup>95</sup> Public and private universities as well as vocational institutes should also be part of the effort to promote the development of citizenship skills.

Civic education need not be confined to traditional classrooms. In the debate about how to raise the level of civic competence in the United States, many analysts proposed the idea of a universal national service that would train and deploy citizens in public-service activities within communities.<sup>96</sup> Supporters of universal service argue that it not only produces direct benefits for individual communities served, but that such a system serves as a training ground for learning the civic virtues associated with democratic citizenship. Moreover, it provides a 'mutuality of experience' among citizens—a common ground of shared education, work, and collective memory.

The arguments in favor of some kind of compulsory national service may be even more compelling in the Andes. Neoliberal 'state shrinking' has left enormous gaps in the provision of education, welfare, and health services that such an experiment could help bridge. Engagement in public service and community activity would help students sharpen their skills for acting in public life. This service could also be a starting point for breaking down the barriers of class and racial segregation that exist in all five countries. Upper- and middle-class students might develop broader insights and a more empathetic approach to national and community problems. University and high school students could constitute the initial pool for a national service experiment, with course credits attached to the service. In the case of low-income participants, some financial compensation could be attached to the service.

There are precedents for such an experiment. Under the Borja administration in Ecuador, a nationwide literacy campaign in 1989–90 drafted high school students as literacy trainers. The training materials used in the program were designed to evoke discussions among trainers and students about rights, citizenship, and problems in Ecuadoran society. Despite initial resistance, the program was considered to be a great success as a vehicle for eradicating literacy *and* as a national consciousness-raising event for young citizens.

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<sup>95</sup> There are interesting experimental prototypes of such reforms throughout the region. In Colombia, the *Escuela Nueva* project brought curriculum reorganization to rural schools by replacing traditional rote memorization methods with new team-based work among students. Students work together in groups on projects that develop their reasoning and research skills. The program is described in ECLAC/UNESCO, *op. cit.* (n. 72), 153.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Morris Janowitz, *The Reconstruction of Patriotism: Education for a Civil Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). The argument is also in the previously cited work by Barber, *Strong Democracy*, 298–303.



Changes in journalistic practices and public information policies could also make important contributions to the process of strengthening civil society. A reorientation of state-owned television (and other outlets) away from its traditional role as government press agent and toward a 'public service' model of operation is one reform worth contemplating.<sup>97</sup> The idea behind the public-service model is that it creates electronic 'free spaces'—sites for the discussion of a wide range of opinion drawn from diverse groups in society, especially those that are not represented routinely by commercial mass media.<sup>98</sup> Such an experiment would have to entail a transfer of editorial and creative decisions from the hands of government officials to a more representative citizens' board.

Investigative journalism would also benefit from the enactment of comprehensive 'freedom of information' laws to allow the press to exercise its rightful watchdog functions with considerable more accuracy and alacrity. In this regard, the refinement of libel laws should also be considered to insure that they are not wielded against the press as an informal censorship device.

Another important contribution to democratizing access to information could be made through the development of new noncommercial centers of public-opinion research housed in universities or in other open-to-the-public institutions. The mission of such centers would be to provide broader access to survey research for use by citizens' groups and perhaps even facilitate 'advocacy polling' by groups themselves.<sup>99</sup> Such centers would help break down the monopoly on information about public opinion that elites now exclusively enjoy. Furthermore, such centers could play a part in promoting a more reflective and educational use of public-opinion data by groups and parties. As Daniel Yankelovich suggests, public-opinion surveys can be used creatively to initiate discussions of issues among citizens, rather than ending them.<sup>100</sup>

### **Fujimori's Challenge and the Search for Democratic Conversation**

Several months before the coup, President Fujimori expressed his growing impatience with democratic politics, suggesting that it was time to '*hacer, y luego hablar*' (act, talk later). Since April 5, 1992, the Fujimori administration has been bent on reorganizing the Peruvian political system around that sentiment. A hastily scheduled election for a constituent assembly in

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<sup>97</sup> For a consideration of the role of public television and its potential contributions to democracy, see James Curran, "Mass Media and Democracy: A Reappraisal" in *Mass Media and Society*, ed. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), 82–117.

<sup>98</sup> Radio has come to play an increasingly important role as a popular 'oppositional' medium. See, for example, Alan O'Connor, "The Miners' Radio Stations in Bolivia: A Culture of Resistance," *Journal of Communication* 40, no. 1 (winter 1990): 102–10.

<sup>99</sup> For a practical guide to advocacy polling, see Celinda Lake, *Public Opinion Polling: A Handbook for Public Interest and Citizen Advocacy Groups* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1987).

<sup>100</sup> Daniel Yankelovich, *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

November 1992 left the opposition with little time to strategize or mount campaigns. In the constituent assembly that followed, there was also little time devoted to debates on the government-designed constitution; the government majority simply rubber-stamped the executive's proposals, which included the provision for presidential reelection. That was followed by another hastily scheduled electoral exercise, in which the constitution was approved by a thin margin.

Peru's recent constitutional process and the final product of that process reflect Fujimori's vision of the future of democracy as ritualized managerialism. In that future, the power of the executive is enormous and unchecked by other branches of government. Politics is occasionally punctuated by electoral exercises, but the weakness of the party system and legislature is such that the results of elections are always muted or easily reversed by the executive. It is a political system where dissent is permissible, largely because it is irrelevant. It is a politics without democratic talk.<sup>101</sup>

Fujimori's technocratized interpretation of democracy is but one of many contending visions of the future in the Andes. Alternative visions of democracy, built around aspirations for improved participation and real governmental responsiveness, are also alive across the Andes. They are found in a variety of pockets within civil society—in Ecuador's indigenous movement, in Colombian human rights organizations, in Bolivia's *comités cívicos*, and in Venezuela's press, which shook off *auto-censura* to pursue the corruption case against Carlos Andrés Pérez. Even in Peru, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with Fujimori's version of democracy. The government's well-heeled campaign did not produce a broad mandate for the new constitution. In the October 1993 referendum the noes accounted for 47.7 percent of the vote. If absenteeism and null/blank votes are taken into account, Fujimori's victory vanishes; far less than a majority of the Peruvian electorate actually endorsed the new constitution.

As Russell Hanson's work on United States reminds us, our conceptions of democracy are born in acts of imagination and clothed in rhetoric.<sup>102</sup> By eschewing narrow and impoverished definitions of democracy and keeping the ideal of participatory democracy alive, social scientists can contribute to the audacious search of citizens across the Americas for a democracy that matters—a democracy of the future where citizens might join together to *hablar... hacer y luego hablar*.

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<sup>101</sup> For further analyses of the features of the new constitution, see Enrique Ballesteros, "La Constitución autoritaria de 1993," *Análisis Internacional*, no. 4 (October-December 1993): 15–28.

<sup>102</sup> Russell L. Hanson, *The Democratic Imagination in America: Conversations with Our Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).