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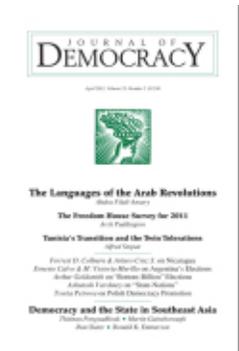
## The Crisis of Representation in the Andes

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# THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION IN THE ANDES

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Over the past decade and a half, disaffection with democracy, political parties, and legislatures has spread to an alarming degree in the five countries of the Andean region—Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Between 1992 and 2005, popular and elite discontent cut short the terms of democratically elected presidents in all but Colombia. In Peru, a 1992 palace coup led to the collapse of the country's democracy, and in 2000 President Alberto Fujimori was forced to flee the country. In Ecuador three successive democratically elected presidents were forced out of office in 1997, 2000, and 2005. In Venezuela, President Carlos Andrés Pérez resigned under pressure in 1992, and a 2002 failed coup attempt briefly unseated President Hugo Chávez. In Bolivia, both the president who was democratically elected in 2002 and his constitutionally installed successor resigned under pressure. In the 1990s, massive discontent with existing parties caused wholesale collapses of the party systems in Peru and Venezuela. Traditionally strong parties have eroded or even disappeared throughout the Andean region, allowing for the rise of political outsiders and a surge of popular mobilization against the political establishment. In Bolivia in 2005, Evo Morales, a former leader of the country's coca farmers, won a landslide electoral victory running on a ticket (MAS, the Movement to Socialism) that did not even exist in the 1990s. He, too, railed against the

established parties and promised a different, supposedly more participatory kind of democracy.

The widespread dissatisfaction with the quality and vehicles of democratic representation is a core ingredient in the political crisis that afflicts the Andean region today and threatens to spread throughout Latin America and beyond. A careful examination of this crisis challenges many assumptions that are common in studies of political representation. Scholars have mostly analyzed how representation works in the advanced industrial democracies, and they have generally assumed that patterns of representation remain fairly stable over time. Analyzing the Andean cases allows us to examine why in many countries representation sometimes *fails* to work and why patterns of representation are sometimes beset by instability. In the Andes, the failures of democratic representation are profound and widespread. Moreover, whereas most of the established literature assumes that democratic representation is based on programmatic linkages between voters and parties,<sup>1</sup> in the Andes representation is often based on clientelistic and personalistic bonds.

The five Andean countries have very divergent histories. During the 1960s and 1970s, Venezuela and Colombia were among the most democratic countries in Latin America. They enjoyed relatively stable and legitimate democratic representation, while Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador remained largely mired in dictatorship. But Venezuela's once-solid democracy began to face serious challenges as early as 1989, with the outbreak of massive popular protests against President Carlos Andrés Pérez. In 1992, future president Chávez attempted a military coup, which despite its failure signaled the growing disenchantment with the existing political system. A deepening repudiation of the establishment parties then led to Chávez's election as president in 1998. Similarly, Colombia's democracy began to erode in the early 1990s, the victim of an armed conflict between drug lords, paramilitary forces, and left-wing guerrillas, and of deteriorating government control in the rural areas.

The political convergence among the Andean countries has not been entirely in a negative direction. As the Third Wave of democratization reached Latin America in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia emerged from authoritarian rule. Discounting Peru's brief foray into dictatorship in 1992, all five Andean countries have been ruled by democratic or semidemocratic regimes since the Bolivian transition to democracy in 1982. For the first time in history, all five countries have simultaneously enjoyed an extended period of representative democracy.

While coming from very different starting points, today the Andean countries all face severe challenges to the legitimacy, stability, and efficacy of democratic representation. In all five countries, party outsiders or political independents burst onto the scene and challenged for

the presidency—winning that office in Bolivia (2005), Colombia (2002), Ecuador (2002), Peru (1990, 1995, 2000, 2001), and Venezuela (1993, 1998). Since the 1990s, electoral volatility has escalated, reflecting citizen discontent with existing party options. In all these countries except for Venezuela, public-opinion surveys indicate poor evaluations of parties and Congress, the two main pillars of democratic representation, and support for democracy itself is fairly low. Thus today the Andean countries have come to share a crisis of democratic representation that sets them apart as a distinctive subregion within Latin America.

## Signs of Crisis

Democratic representation denotes a specific type of principal-agent relationship, one in which voters (the principals) choose politicians or parties (the agents) to represent their interests in a democratic regime. The core of democratic representation lies in the relationship between citizens, on the one hand, and elected politicians, parties, and assemblies, on the other. While in a democracy there exist other vehicles through which citizens pursue their interests—such as nongovernmental organizations, interest groups, and social movements—democratic representation in the strict sense refers only to the relationship between voters and their elected agents.

Among the agents of representation, political parties have long held a privileged place in democratic theory and practice. Parties establish an institutional linkage between voters and their representatives. They help to aggregate and to synthesize bundles of issues and to provide information shortcuts for voters. For these reasons, parties are central both to the study of democratic representation and to democracy itself.

The legitimacy and stability of a country's democratic representation are continuous variables. A crisis of democratic representation refers to one end of this continuum, where patterns of representation are unstable and citizens believe that they are not well represented. Such a crisis can be gauged by both attitudinal and behavioral indicators. The attitudinal indicators involve citizen perceptions: Large numbers of citizens are dissatisfied with the way in which they are represented, or they do not feel represented at all. The behavioral indicators are actions by citizens rejecting existing mechanisms of democratic representation—for example, withdrawing from electoral participation, voting for new parties (especially antiestablishment ones), voting for political outsiders, turning to antisystem popular mobilization efforts, or joining revolutionary struggles. In the Andes, both the attitudinal and behavioral indicators today show widespread disenchantment with and rejection of parties and legislatures.

Survey data consistently show a profound lack of trust in representative institutions in the Andean countries, except for Venezuela. Trust in

parties and legislative bodies has increased in Venezuela since Hugo Chávez's election in 1998, but in the other four countries it has remained chronically low. In the 2003 Latinobarómetro survey, very few respondents expressed "some or a lot of confidence" in political parties: 5 percent in Ecuador (down from 18 percent in 1996), 6 percent in Bolivia (16 percent in 1996), 8 percent in Peru (18 percent in 1996), and 9 percent in Colombia (11 percent in 1996). The percentage was only slightly higher, 14 percent, in Venezuela (up from 11 percent in 1996).<sup>2</sup> These figures are low not only compared to other countries but also compared to the confidence expressed in other institutions in the Andean countries.

A crisis of democratic representation also manifests itself in measurable kinds of behavior. One indicator of voter dissatisfaction with parties is electoral volatility—the net share of votes that shifts from one party to any other party from one election to the next. High electoral volatility persisting over two or more consecutive electoral periods suggests that many voters are seeking alternative representative vehicles because they are dissatisfied with the way in which they are represented. Hence it is a likely sign of a crisis of democratic representation.

Electoral volatility has been high in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru since the restoration of democracy in the late 1970s and 1980s, and in the 1990s it rose sharply in Colombia and Venezuela. Since 1978, mean volatility in lower-chamber elections has been 22.1 percent in Colombia, 31.3 percent in Venezuela, 36.4 percent in Ecuador, 39.8 percent in Bolivia, and 51.9 percent in Peru—one of the highest levels of electoral volatility in the world. (This compares to an average volatility of 3.2 percent in the United States for 1978–2002.)

High electoral volatility in the Andes reflects not just shifts in electoral preferences for established parties, but the rapid rise of new parties and the decline of longstanding ones. In Peruvian elections since 1985, on average 60 percent of the lower-chamber vote went to parties less than a decade old. Over the past 15 years, all five Andean countries have elected at least one president from a party that had existed for no longer than one previous election. These new parties typically differ from the traditional ones; they have weak organizations and rely more on personalistic connections to voters, established primarily through the media. Political outsiders have also displaced established political parties at the subnational level. In Peru in 2004, independent regional movements controlled 13 of the 25 regional governments and 1,634 of the 2,281 jurisdictions.<sup>3</sup> Independents have also flourished at the local level in Colombia.

The dramatic rise of new parties has resulted in the withering or disappearance of some traditionally important parties. Today, Venezuela's Democratic Action (AD) is a shadow of the party that won five out of seven presidential elections between 1958 and 1988, and COPEI, which won the remaining two, no longer exists. These two par-

ties were the main pillars of Venezuelan democracy between 1958 and 1993. Of the four parties that occupied Peru's political center stage during the 1980s, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) surprisingly resurrected itself in the 2001 election, but the other three—the United Left, Popular Action, and the Popular Christian Party—are gone for good. In Bolivia, Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN), one of the three main electoral contenders from 1982 until 2002, has been reduced to irrelevance. The other two—the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR)—suffered withering electoral setbacks in 2005, and their survival prospects are unclear.

The traditional parties that have managed to survive bear faint resemblance to what they once were. During their heydays, Venezuela's AD, Bolivia's MNR, and Peru's APRA integrated the masses politically and forged strong party loyalties and identities; today, little if any of that fervor remains. Similarly, Colombia's Conservative Party, one of two parties dominating electoral competition from 1886 until the mid-1990s, experienced serious electoral erosion in the 1990s and did not field a presidential candidate in the 2002 election. In the 2006 congressional and presidential elections, the Liberals suffered their worst setback since the restoration of democracy in 1958.

The inability of parties to adequately represent their voters has been most profound in the two cases of party-system collapse, Peru and Venezuela. In both countries, the party systems of the 1980s disintegrated in the 1990s. The collapse of a party system is a dramatic and unusual expression of a crisis of democratic representation; it is the result of the electorate's repudiation not only of individual parties but of *most* existing parties. Citizens prefer to risk the unknown rather than to stick with the existing options.

### The Rise of Outsiders

As the traditional parties have crumbled, antiestablishment political outsiders have flourished especially in Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia, where they now thoroughly dominate politics.<sup>4</sup> Some observers might initially be inclined to applaud the demise of old parties and the rise of new competitors and of outsiders. If these newcomers rise to power because of voter dissatisfaction with traditional parties, is that not simply the result of a fair democratic process? The answer requires a closer look at the political outsiders and new parties that have taken over Andean politics in the past decade and a half.

By the time of their demise, Venezuela's AD and COPEI were widely viewed as the pillars of an old, failed order. Similarly in Bolivia, Evo Morales won a landslide victory in 2005 by presenting himself as an alternative to the old elite-dominated system. Peruvian presidents

Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) and Alejandro Toledo (2001–6) presented themselves in much the same way. Ollanta Humala, the populist leftist who won the first round of the 2006 presidential election in Peru, appears to be of the same ilk as Chávez and Morales. So, why not allow for “new blood” to reinvigorate these countries’ political systems?

My purpose here is not to exalt the party systems of the 1980s. Among the five Andean countries, only Venezuela had a relatively vibrant democracy for any length of time—and even there, democratic success coexisted with poor economic performance from the late 1970s on. The traditional Colombian party system, which provided democratic stability from 1958 to 1991, rested on a conservative, relatively exclusionary pact. Yet for all their flaws, these party systems provided structure to democratic politics in all five countries.

The decline of traditional parties and the rise of political outsiders occur in a weakened institutional landscape. Newcomers present themselves as champions of fresh ideas and efficient and ethical government (and in most cases, of popular causes). They claim to be more democratic than the old system. But as they delegitimize party systems and discredit legislative assemblies, these self-proclaimed “democrats” pave the way for plebiscitarian forms of representation in which populist presidents displace parties as the primary vehicles for expressing the popular will.<sup>5</sup> Plebiscitarian representation chips away at democratic institutions, and sometimes paves the way to authoritarian or semiauthoritarian regimes, as occurred with Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez after 1998.

Fujimori was elected as an outsider in 1990, capitalizing on the public’s profound disenchantment with outgoing president Alan García and the traditional parties. Fujimori portrayed Congress as ineffective and out of touch with Peruvian realities, and in April 1992 he mounted a coup, shutting down the Congress altogether. Initially, he won tremendous popular approval for this *autogolpe*, but it soon became clear that Fujimori was far from a democratic reformer. The remainder of his tenure revealed the ugly side of populist political outsiders, as he attacked institutional checks and balances and tolerated widespread corruption. His ignominious downfall in 2000 left Peru with greatly weakened political institutions. In a similar vein, Chávez has railed against the old establishment and won considerable popular support but has persistently undermined democratic checks and balances. Notwithstanding his claims to the contrary, Venezuela is less democratic today than before 1998.

These two examples suggest a broader point. Leaders who are elected on the basis of direct populist appeals, sometimes aided by demagogic claims and often with the express intention of weakening parties, usually end up undermining democratic institutions. What starts out as plebiscitary representation easily slides into nondemocratic or even antidemo-

cratic representation. Thus, far from compensating for a crisis of democratic representation, the rise of plebiscitarianism usually exacerbates it.

### What Lies Behind the Crisis?

What lies behind the crisis of representation that is endangering Andean democracy? A common view is that the crisis arises from the exclusion of many citizens from the political process, the lack of popular or direct democracy, or the inadequacy of existing mechanisms of representation. Believing that such deficiencies were largely to blame for citizen disaffection with parties and representation, political reformers in the Andean countries in the 1980s and 1990s carried out major constitutional reforms intended to open up their political systems and promote greater participation (Venezuela in the 1980s, Colombia in 1991, Bolivia in 1993, and Ecuador in 1996). This diagnosis may have been accurate at the time of these reforms, but it is doubtful today.

In fact, there has been a dramatic expansion of democratic representation since 1978 in all five countries, especially in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. In the past few decades, all five countries have seen democratic representation enhanced in four different respects: the massive incorporation of new citizens, qualitative changes in citizenship, political reforms such as the introduction of direct elections for governors and mayors, and new political openings for indigenous peoples.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s, regimes across the region broadened citizenship to include larger parts of their countries' populations. The numerical expansion of the electorate was particularly remarkable in Ecuador and Peru, primarily due to the enfranchisement of the illiterate in 1978–79. In Ecuador, election participation jumped from 12.1 percent of the population in the 1958 legislative election to 41.7 percent in 2002. In Peru, 45.3 percent of the population voted in the 2001 presidential election, compared to 14.9 percent in 1956. In Bolivia, the increase was also pronounced, from 27.4 percent of the population in the 1960 presidential election to 35.4 percent in 2002.

Accompanying this numerical expansion in the ranks of the represented were profound qualitative changes in citizenship. The percentage of those living in urban areas increased sharply in all five countries, with a significant impact on the makeup of the electorate. In the 1950s, poor rural residents—constituting majorities in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—faced limited choices in the “electoral market,” which in rural regions was dominated by clientelist exchanges. Because local patrons controlled the peasant vote, there was limited real competition. By the 1990s, urbanization and expanded enfranchisement meant that the share of voters subjected to direct personalistic manipulation had fallen sharply.<sup>6</sup>

Levels of education have also risen dramatically in all five countries

since the 1950s, further improving the odds for high-quality representation. Secondary-school enrollment has increased at a stunning rate in Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. In Colombia, secondary-school enrollment went up from 12 percent in 1960 to 67 percent in 1996; in Peru, it increased from 18 to 73 percent in the same time period; and in Ecuador, it grew from 12 to 50 percent between 1960 and 1994.<sup>7</sup> In Bolivia and Venezuela, the percentage of secondary-school age students who were enrolled tripled and doubled, respectively. Better-educated voters have more knowledge and information about the electoral market, which in principle should serve to improve the quality of representation.

Another enhancement of democratic representation occurred as a result of political decentralization. Prior to the 1980s, all five countries were centrally governed, and mechanisms of representation were concentrated at the national level. Governors and most mayors were appointed rather than elected. In Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela, decentralization created local arenas of democratic representation during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>8</sup> During the same time period, the Andean region's indigenous peoples—historically marginalized both socially and politically—were formally incorporated into the political system and won special recognition and rights, especially in Bolivia.<sup>9</sup>

These sweeping changes in the nature of citizenship and democratic representation do not imply that citizenship has been extended evenly to all individuals. The exercise of rights in the Andes is still far from equal across different classes, races, and genders. Despite persistent inequalities in the exercise of citizenship, however, the expansion of citizenship in the Andean region is impressive.

If limited access to representation—what we might call truncated representation—were primarily responsible for the present crisis, then the individuals with the least access would express the least confidence in representative institutions. This proves false, however. The poor and the less educated are most subjected to truncated representation; yet education and socioeconomic status have a weak impact on confidence in parties and legislatures in the Andean region. Dissatisfaction with the agents of representation is widespread across all levels of income and education.

## State Deficiencies

If the Andean crisis is not due to “truncated representation,” where can its source be found? In my view, the primary cause of the crisis is what might be called “state deficiencies.” The concept of state deficiencies implies something more than merely poor government performance—it means that the state fails to fulfill some of its basic governance, legal, and security functions. The state includes a vast and complex array of institutions; most important for the present analysis

are the national executive branch, the judiciary, the police, and the armed forces. These four state institutions have long been deficient in the five Andean countries, though with differences from one country to the next and from one administration to the next.

The economic and social performance of the Andean countries has been poor since the early 1980s. Venezuela's per-capita income has declined over a long period, beginning in the late 1970s. High unemployment (ranging in 2005 from 9 percent in Bolivia to 14 percent in Colombia in urban areas) and underemployment afflict the economies of all five countries. States by themselves cannot resolve these economic problems, but state policies have a large impact on economic performance.

Hand in hand with poor economic performance goes rampant corruption. Elites and citizens perceive corruption to be very extensive in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, and fairly extensive in Colombia and Peru. On Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index—where 10 designates the lowest-possible level of perceived corruption and 1 the highest—Colombia's score was 4.0, Peru's 3.5, Bolivia's and Ecuador's 2.5, and Venezuela's 2.3.<sup>10</sup>

These numbers are not surprising. Since the early 1990s, all five Andean countries have experienced corruption scandals involving public officials. Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez's 1992 impeachment was triggered by a corruption scandal. Colombian president Ernesto Samper (1994–98) was blemished by the widely known fact that he had accepted millions of dollars in campaign funds from a drug cartel. Ecuadorian president Jamil Mahuad (1998–2000) was forced to resign after widespread demonstrations against his allegedly corrupt government. In Peru, ex-president Alan García (1985–90) was widely believed to have been involved in corruption and was forced into exile for much of the 1990s. His successor, Alberto Fujimori, became implicated in massive corruption scandals after resigning in 2000. In public-opinion surveys, a large majority of citizens in all five countries agrees that corruption has increased greatly in recent years.

A widespread perception of official corruption erodes voters' confidence in representative institutions. Simply put, citizens do not trust politicians who plunder the public coffers. While citizens might understand that politicians sometimes fail to deliver economic goods as a result of difficult circumstances, citizens cannot accept corruption among public officials, especially in times of economic hardship.

All five Andean states have also fallen short in two other key areas that are direct state responsibilities: ensuring personal security and protecting the legal rights of citizens. The police forces and judiciaries of the region have failed with respect to these tasks. High crime rates adversely affect the quality of life. In Peru, an estimated 69,000 people died as a result of political violence during the armed conflict of 1980–

93. In Colombia, guerrillas and paramilitary forces hold sway over large swaths of the countryside. Throughout the region, judiciaries have been deficient in carrying out their responsibility for upholding citizen rights.

The Andean states have made little or no progress in addressing such issues as poverty, corruption, crime, and education. Poor state performance has negatively affected citizens' trust in their representative institutions. Citizens need and expect the state to devise policies that address their key concerns—jobs, income, housing, education, and personal security—and that enforce their rights. When states fail to perform these tasks adequately, citizens understandably become disenchanted with representative institutions.

Poor state performance can affect citizen confidence in representative institutions in two ways. First, there is evidence that *objective* macro-level performance directly affects confidence in institutions. According to the 1995–97 World Values Surveys, in 23 countries worldwide that had a certain level of democracy (a combined Freedom House score of 8 or less), confidence in parties and legislatures was higher where 1) per-capita income was higher, 2) economic growth was higher over the preceding decade, 3) inflation was lower, 4) more students of secondary-school age were enrolled, 5) unemployment was lower, 6) the Transparency International score was higher, and 7) the homicide rate was lower.

Second, citizens' *subjective* perceptions of poor state performance can erode their confidence in representative institutions. If disgruntlement with democratic representation stems from state deficiencies, this should be reflected in survey data. Individuals with the most negative perception of the state's performance should also express the least confidence in the institutions of democratic representation. Statistical results based on the 1998 Latinobarómetro survey confirm that in the Andean region, those respondents who regarded state performance as substandard also expressed low confidence in parties and legislatures. In all five countries, individuals who held the poorest opinion of national economic performance had the least confidence in parties and congress. Individuals with a more favorable assessment of the national economic situation were much more likely to express confidence in parties and legislatures.

According to these surveys, citizen assessments of crime and corruption also powerfully influence their confidence in parties and legislatures. In Bolivia and Ecuador, individuals who believed that corruption had worsened in recent years expressed a low level of trust in parties. In Colombia, citizens who believed that both crime and corruption had worsened expressed little confidence in parties and legislatures. And in Peru and Venezuela, respondents who believed that crime rates had increased also voiced a notable distrust in parties and legislatures.

Confidence in parties and legislatures was hardly affected by gender,

level of education, or socioeconomic status in all five countries. In societies marked by egregious inequalities, the less privileged had reason to be more skeptical about democratic institutions, yet the effect of education, gender, and socioeconomic status on confidence in parties and assemblies was weak. In fact, in Bolivia and Venezuela, better-educated citizens expressed lower confidence in parties than did the less educated. Whereas the social marginalization of respondents had little impact on their trust in parties, their subjective assessments of state performance had a profound effect.<sup>11</sup>

These survey data suggest that state deficiencies are at the core of the Andean crisis of democratic representation. If states were more effective, citizens would have more favorable evaluations of the situation in their country, and their confidence in the core institutions of democratic representation would improve. If this analysis is correct, political reforms should focus first and foremost on making states more effective and only secondarily on making systems of representation more open. The formal systems of representation in these countries are already open. The truly grave deficiency is in state capacity.

Other survey evidence further corroborates the hypothesis that the main cause of the Andean crisis is poor state performance rather than the extent of democratic representation. Many survey respondents state that they would welcome abolishing legislatures and would accept a “strong” leader if state capacity improved. Many were even ambivalent about the value of democratic government itself. Both in the Andean countries and elsewhere in Latin America, large numbers of respondents agree that “in certain situations, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one,” or that “it doesn’t matter whether we have a democratic or nondemocratic government.” In the 2005 *Latinobarómetro* survey, Venezuela was the only Andean country where a majority agreed that “democracy is always the best form of government.” A lot of people in the Andean countries are unsure of the benefits of representative democracy, and might under some circumstances even be willing to forgo it.

In the Andean countries, state deficiencies extend well beyond presidential administrations—the state’s “high command”—to include other important state agencies, most notably the justice system and the police. In Colombia, the armed forces have failed for an extended period in defeating nonstate armed combatants. Even during good democratic administrations, such as that of Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada’s first term (1993–97), other parts of the state continued to have serious deficiencies. A good administration can achieve significant change in some policy areas during its tenure, but it is unlikely to manage far-reaching reform of other state institutions in the same time frame.

Just as the concept of state deficiencies differs from the notion of poor governmental performance, it also differs from the concept of state

collapse (or a failed state).<sup>12</sup> State deficiencies involve problems that, while of greater scope and longer duration than those merely reflecting poor performance of a particular government, are still less profound than a state collapse. A failed state is one that loses its ability to govern, to provide physical security for its citizens, and to control its territory. A polity that suffers state deficiencies fails to provide citizens with an important array of public goods, but nonetheless it still functions.

Nowhere in the Andes in recent decades has there been a state collapse. State failure in the Andean region has been partial and limited to specific subregions: the areas in Colombia controlled by guerilla groups and, to a lesser degree, those controlled by paramilitary forces (because they are less destructive of the state and cooperate with it more); and the areas of Peru where Sendero Luminoso had a pervasive presence between 1980 and 1993. Otherwise, problems of “stateness” in the Andes have been far less acute than those that have plagued such countries as Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Bosnia, Sudan, and Afghanistan over the past two decades.

### **The Paradox of Democratic Representation**

According to many indicators, the last few decades saw a boom in democratic representation in the Andes. The policies that excluded people from formal citizenship and the practices that produced truncated representation became less pervasive. More people became citizens in a formal sense, and fewer were subjected to traditional forms of personalistic domination. A greater number and diversity of parties emerged. Yet along with greater democratic representation came a growing disenchantment with the institutions of representation. How do we explain this apparent paradox?

In principle, the expansion of representation might have satisfied citizens, creating a perception that the political system was open and legitimate even if other aspects of the polity were not working well. In practice, however, it has probably had the opposite effect, reinforcing among citizens the subjective sense of a crisis of representation.

The incorporation and empowerment of new citizens, even in countries with staggering social inequalities, has bred heightened political expectations and an awareness of the right to demand from government certain collective and particularistic goods. More people have more opportunities to express disappointment with the political system and to place demands upon it. Citizens understandably direct their frustration against the suppliers of representation—that is, parties and politicians—when their policies fail to produce results. Although the police, the judiciary, bureaucrats, and other public-sector agencies share responsibility for poor state performance, elected officials are the most visible representatives of the state and are ultimately supposed to control it.

Elections provide an easy way in which citizens can register their displeasure with state performance—by voting against parties and politicians who seem to fail them. They cannot easily take action against other state actors that contribute to state deficiencies, except through such unusual means as legal action or filing a complaint with the ombudsman. From this perspective, a crisis of representation may occur not despite an increase in representation, but rather partly because of it.

In the past few decades, the region has seen an increase in poverty, income inequalities, and crime; job generation has been poor; economic growth has been sluggish; and there is a widespread perception that governmental corruption is rampant. States have failed to adequately address the needs of their populations, causing citizens to lose trust in parties and legislatures. The real problem is the failure to achieve effective results, not deficiencies in the formal mechanisms of representation.

This distinction has important consequences not only for understanding the crisis of representation, but also for responding to it. If the core problem were truncated representation, a lack of diversity in the competing parties, or a lack of accountability of elected politicians to voters, electoral reforms might have remedied the situation. Since the root of the crisis is state deficiencies, however, efforts to enhance democratic representation are unlikely to solve the problem. Indeed, some institutional reforms intended to enhance representation might exacerbate state deficiencies, thereby deepening the crisis. In particular, reforms that foster participation at the expense of state capacity threaten to do more harm than good.

These remarks raise the difficult question of *why* state performance has generally been so poor in the Andean countries. Unfortunately, there is little empirical research on state deficiencies, whether in or beyond contemporary Latin America. One can nonetheless consider various potential explanations. To some degree, the answer is a long-term historical one. Compared to Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, the Andean countries have suffered from a history of patrimonialism, social and political exclusion, and dependence on extractive industries—a legacy that has not fostered successful state-building.

But if long-term historical factors were all-determining, analysts and policy makers might throw up their hands and proclaim the task of state-building hopeless. Besides, such factors cannot explain why state performance has worsened over the last quarter-century in many important arenas—job creation, economic growth, citizen security, and, in Colombia and Peru, control of the national territory. Some more historically proximate causes also merit attention. One important contemporary factor is the debt crisis of the 1980s, which bankrupted most Latin American states and spurred inflation throughout the region. In the face of spiraling inflation and stagnant economies, most countries undertook far-reaching economic reforms, many of which were necessary to restore stability. While some neoliberal reforms were needed to stave off state

bankruptcy, others weakened the state. In the 1990s, state-bashing was fashionable in some circles, and some reformers disregarded the essential role of the state in regulating certain aspects of the economy, formulating policies, correcting market deficiencies, providing and enforcing a legal framework, protecting property rights, combating crime, providing education, and ensuring individual rights. The state cannot resolve all problems, but without an effective state, society and the market do not function well. Some policy makers were so eager to shrink the state that they failed to appreciate how important its proper working is for democracy and economic performance. Dismantling the state, rather than striving to make it more efficient, sometimes became the goal.

Andean states have a weak tax base, which leaves them with limited resources to perform their functions and meet citizen demands. Some states have been further weakened by patrimonial practices on the part of parties and politicians. Other important factors that have hampered state performance in the Andean region are idiosyncratic. In Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, the growth of the cocaine industry fueled criminality and weakened the justice system. In Peru and Colombia, revolutionary guerrilla movements (and in Colombia, paramilitary forces as well) sowed widespread destruction that debilitated the state.

Improving state performance is the key to promoting greater citizen confidence in the institutions of representative democracy—and satisfaction with democracy in general. The Andean states today are unable to generate enough jobs, to provide adequate opportunities for education and advancement, and to ensure the personal security of their citizens. When democratic governments fail to meet the basic needs of their people for an extended period, citizens will become dissatisfied with the institutions of representative democracy. Therefore, building a state that can satisfy reasonable citizen demands is essential.

Effective state-building must be at the core of the contemporary policy agenda. This is easier said than done, but posing the issue in this way suggests some broad alternatives and rejects other paths. Reducing the size of the state without thinking about how to build a more effective state is misguided. Neither resorting to the state-led development of the past nor to a market with a feeble state is viable. Trying to expand participation or to decentralize without building state capacity is equally problematic. The critical need is to build a state that protects its citizens and guarantees their rights, that is efficient, and that interacts effectively with markets and with civil society to meet the challenges facing democracy in the twenty-first century.<sup>13</sup>

## NOTES

1. For a classic example, see Philip Converse and Roy Pierce, *Political Representation in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

2. See [www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org) for Latinobarómetro surveys cited here and later in this article.

3. Data from Carlos Meléndez, personal communication.

4. On the dominance of political outsiders in Peru, see Catherine M. Conaghan, "The Irrelevant Right: Alberto Fujimori and the New Politics of Pragmatic Politics," in Kevin J. Middlebrook, ed., *Conservative Parties, the Right, and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

5. On the rise of political outsiders and the potential danger they represent for democracy, see René Antonio Mayorga, "Outsiders and Neopopulism: The Road to Plebiscitary Democracy," in Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejarano, and Eduardo Pizarro, eds., *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming 2006); Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy?" *The Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994): 55–69; Martín Tanaka, "From Crisis to Collapse of the Party Systems and Dilemmas of Democratic Representation: Peru and Venezuela," in Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejarano, and Eduardo Pizarro, eds., *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes*.

6. On the expansion of citizenship in Peru and its ongoing limitations, see Sinesio López Jiménez, *Ciudadanos Reales e Imaginarios: Concepciones, desarrollo y mapas de la ciudadanía en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Diálogo y Propuestas, 1997).

7. World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 1998. [www.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr98/contents.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr98/contents.htm).

8. On decentralization, see Kent Eaton, *Politics Beyond the Capital: The Design of Subnational Institutions in South America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Kathleen O'Neill, *Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

9. On the development of indigenous people's movements and political parties, see Donna Lee Van Cott, *From Movement to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

10. Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2005, available at [ww1.transparency.org/cpi/2005/cpi2005\\_infocus.htm](http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2005/cpi2005_infocus.htm).

11. For theoretical analysis of the state's importance for democracy, see Guillermo O'Donnell. "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Post-Communist Countries," *World Development* 21 (August 1993): 1345–69; Guillermo O'Donnell, "Democracia, desarrollo humano y derechos humanos," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Osvaldo Iazzeta, and Jorge Vargas Cullell, eds., *Democracia, desarrollo humano y ciudadanía* (Rosario, Argentina: Homo Sapiens, 2003), 25–147; and Juan J. Linz and Alfred C. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 16–37.

12. On state collapse or failed states, see Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

13. On the importance of building a state that interacts effectively with markets to promote development, see Alejandro Foxley, "Más Mercado o más estado para América Latina?" Paper for the InterAmerican Development Bank seminar, Lima, Peru, March 2004.