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Unfinished States

Historical Perspectives on the Andes

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ANDEAN STATES ARE, MORE THAN MOST COUNTRIES, works in progress. Formed states are a species of political system in which subjects accept and are able to live by some set of basic ground rules and norms governing public affairs. Being finished need not imply an end to politics or history, but simply that a significant majority of a country's population acknowledges the legitimacy of ruling systems and especially the rules that determine how rules are supposed to change.

For historical reasons, this is not the case in the Andes. In Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela (the countries analyzed in this chapter), important swaths of societies either do not accept some underlying rules or could not live by them even if they did accept them. This is not a recent problem. Indeed, one of the principal difficulties facing Colombians, Peruvians, and Venezuelans is that they cannot easily turn to a golden (and often mythic) age of stateness. Each Andean republic bears the imprint of earlier struggles involving the definition of statehood from the nineteenth century, conflicts that have expressed themselves in different but still

unsettled outcomes to the present. This long-term historical process distinguishes the Andes from other regions in Latin America, from Mexico to the Southern Cone, where consolidated models of order and development (punctuated, to be sure, by moments of upheaval) prevailed for enough time to remap the human landscape within each country and to furnish these countries with the means to cope with the manifold pressures of globalization, yawning inequities, or the misfortunes wrought by lousy leadership.

The distinction between finished and unfinished states is partly heuristic, partly real. Like so many analytic parsing acts, it is also in immediate need of qualifications. First, the main argument is not to say that there has been no change in the Andes. Far from it. Rather, change has not been the by-product of any forced or consensual enduring model of development guided by an integrated ruling bloc capable of using public levers legitimately for its purposes. Notwithstanding the oil boom decades in Venezuela and the “guano” age in Peru, when elites forged some “constructed” order with more or less support from popular sectors, moments of order and development did not refashion Andean societies; they appear much less consolidated and legitimate with the benefit of hindsight and did not therefore resolve many of the basic problems they inherited. This historical perspective contrasts with the idea of a crisis wrought by globalization and the denouement of populism, which cripples Latin American nation-states at a time when they are trying to build the foundations of a new civic order. This combination is certainly part of the drama of contemporary Latin American societies. But the sense of contemporary crisis should not imply that it follows on the heels of peaceable modernization or national-popular integration. In a sense, one might speak of a long transgenerational crisis. But this vocabulary is only useful for describing specific moments of breakdown in institutional orders, because the notion of a genetic crisis may obscure some of the opportunities for and expressions of creative alternatives that are equally part of this historical perspective—and, one might hope, the future.

While Andean societies share some features that contrast with other regions in Latin America, there are significant differences among them as well. In some senses, Colombians acknowledge the legitimacy of their constitutional framework—what they bemoan is its inability to territorialize itself. Neighboring Venezuela, by contrast, has a state with much more scope but far less legitimacy. Peru has neither territoriality nor legitimacy. All three are unfinished in different ways and for different reasons.

Accenting the unfinished condition of Andean states stresses the

ongoing business of formation, which in the Andean cases remains an open-ended process—and deliberately contrasts with an approach that analyzes the idiographic features of each country and in some cases singles them out as instances of state failure. This is seen in the way some North American social scientists have dealt with Colombia's recent travails, which—deliberately or not—has served to justify a particular brand of foreign policy in Washington. Cast in comparative light, however, Colombia's political economy seems less exceptional, in need of a broader template of understanding that admits that the long-term history of state formation is a process that adapts to local circumstances and social forces while sharing some common structural features.¹

Republican Legacies

Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela have obvious structural similarities: they were all once Spanish colonies with affine Iberian institutions, they were largely agrarian, and they were polyethnic communities of indigenous, African, European, and blended descents. But in this regard they were not so very different from other Iberian-American societies. Alone, these features do not explain the differences between this region and others, although they obviously established an important backcloth to post-colonial developments.

One important intrusion in the *longue durée* was the breakdown of Spanish rule and the ensuing struggles to fashion new systems of sovereign legality. The events beginning in 1810 wrought a conjunctural crisis with important structural consequences. The central and northern Andes, the Latin American region swept by the most violent struggle for independence in Latin America, led by the armies of Simón Bolívar, copes with some unresolved nineteenth-century struggles for republican statehood. Not everything that came to haunt the belt from Venezuela to Peru in the 1980s can be attributed to his unfinished efforts. But the great trials of state formation and the emergence of postcolonial elites set the stage for future possibilities for, as well as limitations to, the scope of democracy and the rule of law.

No ruling bloc—no matter how loose the coalition—took power after Spain's empire collapsed in the Andes. This, of course, was not unique to the Andes. In the power vacuum that opened up, colonists found it easier to agree on what they disliked—a restoration of the old order. But what was distinctive in the Andes was the depth of the polarization over independence. Unlike in Mexico, where Creole and peninsular potentates

remained fairly loyal to the crown until the liberal revolt in Spain in 1820, and unlike in the River Plate, where Creoles were more uniformly disposed to part with the ancient regime, colonists from Caracas to La Paz were split—if not evenly, then enough to paralyze any effort for one side to call the shots. State formation in Mexico and Argentina faced difficulties, but Andean elites had a harder time making a new order cauterized to some shared mythic national project.²

With each battle, the victors tried to cobble together ruling systems to fill the vacuum opened up in the metropole. To Bolívar's constant chagrin, freeing the colonies meant liberating them to debate—and in turn fight over—the new republics. His effort to create a confederation stretching across the Andean regions freed by his armies threatened the latent centrifugal energies that made his army so potent against Spain. Nueva Granada was supposed to become the analogue of the United States in South America. But instead, provincial assemblies repudiated the confederation with almost the same ferocity and anticentralist sentiment as they had brought to their struggle against Bourbon restorationism. Instead of a unitary vision, what triumphed were constitutional charters drafted in the name of new peoples, Venezuelans, Peruvians, and finally Colombians. Nor was there much more agreement about what each of these new, imagined identities might mean for anyone living in Maracaibo, Arequipa, or Pasto, where provincialism locked horns with early nationalism.

By the end of the wars against Spain, soldiers were turning their guns away from Spanish regulars and toward each other. Civil wars replaced wars of liberation. Peru heaved up five constitutions in its first sixteen years of independence. Bolivia countered with ten of its own before the century was out. In this setting, there was not much room for optimism. Writing from Quito in 1829, shortly before his death, Bolívar reflected on some of his handiwork. The Liberator shifted the blame for the catastrophic results of independence to the neophyte citizenry: "the passions of a people who, although they had broken their chains, were devoid of the concepts of right and duty, and could only avoid enslavement (to Spain) by becoming tyrannical themselves" (Bolívar 1951, 742).

The difficulty in creating republican amalgamations had several legacies for the twentieth century. The wars created *sui generis* military politics that did not create unifying forces along the lines of the Brazilian, Chilean, Paraguayan, or even more ambitiously, Prussian molds. Armies were, rather, decentralized, and casual fighting forces were dragged into battle to fight not foreign enemies but neighboring war machines. What became called caudillismo in Spanish America was especially acute in the

Andes: rule by provincial warlords whose main appeal to subject populations was protection from marauders and tax collectors from anemic central states. This meant that chronic war mobilized the region's people into new political formations, especially local militias with vertical ties to caudillos, without aggregating into a constitutional synthesis. Bolívar's young collaborator and founder of Colombian historiography, José Manuel Restrepo, bemoaned the fate of republican war machines. Rather than harmonize a new national sovereignty, warlords nurtured loyalties to political leaders who defined themselves against the capitals of republics while trumpeting the language of political citizenship, relying on elections and plebiscites to legitimate the ties between local rulers and ruled (Restrepo 1970).³

Fractured militaries and fragmented sovereignties might not have shaped politics so decisively had a social bloc occupied the space vacated by Spanish mercantilist merchants and the colonial epigones. But ending three centuries of Spanish rule opened up a scramble for resources. In large measure, British capital moved in to serve as mediators with the Atlantic markets for capital and commodities. Across the nineteenth century, the Andean elites and markets were therefore internationalized before they could consolidate a base of national capital operating in national markets and as a core for a ruling bloc. Aggravating social tensions was the scramble for land, especially where definitions of property rights folded into broader issues of membership in political communities—local, provincial, and national.

State builders struggled not just to create viable public authorities to govern a new citizenry, but also to promote possessive individualists, especially in the communalist hinterlands. New property laws aimed to enclose commons and disrupt what were often seen as hermetic self-sufficient communities of Indian and black peasantries, who were themselves still mobilized from the independence wars. Resistance to enclosure and proletarianization of peasantries often reinforced the struggle against central authorities. Whatever the district or mode of production, weak states and fractured elites enhanced the scope of plebeian sectors to manipulate the process of commodification to their advantage.

One recent study of the Peruvian community of Tarma shows how inter-elite feuds, split along national, provincial, and local lines, weakened efforts to enforce a new labor code to restore or create a servile order. Villagers and their leaders learned to manipulate rival claimants for their labor power and thus blunt the formation of a stable, modernizing economic system. There were, of course, limits to popular power and divide-

and-rule tactics. Planters and merchants had access to financial instruments and to state authorities that could be marshaled in the last instance to drive hard bargains. Until very late in the nineteenth century, the Andes did not give way to a monolithic capitalist transformation and the emergence of a social class able to rule nation-states. Rather, there was an extended stalemate punctuated by frequent spasms of violence over local social and political control (Wilson 2003, Mallon 1983).

By the end of the nineteenth century, some semblance of stability crept across the Andes. It helped that world markets for South American staples grew; foreign capital, especially British investment, moved into the region; and something like an oligarchy emerged. In reality, the term highly exaggerated the unanimity of social vision and purpose of the region's elites, whose cracks were papered over with layers of foreign rents and revenues. Ascendant elites forged pacts among provinces and between local and central governments. While never quite fused together, ruling coalitions emerged and agreed to play by some common ground rules. Colombian Conservatives, for instance, installed a regime called the *Regeneración*, which lasted, albeit not without some bloody interruptions, until 1930. Its architects, Rafael Nuñez and Miguel Antonio Caro, tried to pacify the country with a new constitution (1886) and language manuals to project a philology and a historiography that construed Colombia as a uniform, continuous entity tied to its Hispanic and Catholic origins. The myth of a shared, deep-rooted past was supposed to be a balm for a strife-ridden republic.

Venezuela's Cipriano Castro ushered in decades of dictatorial stability in 1899, and passed the torch to a dynasty of generals from the border province of Táchira, beginning with Juan Vicente Gómez in 1908. All this stability was highly contingent, but less on the appeal of Belle Epoque tastes than on the nitty-gritty business of amalgamating politicians and parliaments in the capitals with caudillos and their clients in the provinces (Deas 1992).

Rather than providing an integrated model of social, political, and economic change along the lines of the Mexican *porfiriato*, Argentina's *orden conservador* (to use Natalio Botana's *bons mots*), or Brazil's Belle Epoque (as these visions radiated out to the hinterlands they lost a certain amount of gas), the Andean constitutions operated more as patinas of national synthesis over a substrate that was still churning with unresolved conflicts over property and politics. José Carlos Mariátegui captured the hybrid nature of Andean capitalism, which blended the coercion of colonial extractive traditions with unfettered markets and a republican consti-

tutional fabric wrapped around personal clientelist networks. Time made it harder, not easier, to uncouple feudalism and provincialism from successor modes of production and models of statehood (Mariátegui 1971).

The weaknesses of the ruling arrangements revealed themselves in chronic subnational levels of collective violence that occasionally bubbled to the national surface when clientelist pacts broke down. Colombia's conservative hegemony was wracked by deep violent clashes, and in many provinces did not integrate Liberals into the civic, parliamentary fold. Peruvian leaders never transcended the coastal-highland divide, and even President Augusto B. Leguía's long regime (the *oncenio*), while making room for a broader spectrum with the game of making social pacts, still fell far short of his centralizing aspirations. Venezuela's durable dictatorship was predicated on the military-civic alliance's ability to share spoils more than to share loyalties beyond a *gamonal* (bandit) clique. Each conformed to its own logic and bore the hallmarks of local circumstances and structure. But what they shared was the incompleteness of the state-building projects unfurled with the end of Spanish rule.

As a result, Andean republics faced bouts of upheaval, especially at moments of presidential succession (a useful litmus test for any regime's consolidation), when the ground rules fell apart and coalition fragments jostled for an edge within the next administration. As Andean republics turned the corner into the twentieth century, they had ruling alliances but not particularly strong states capable of administering (or enforcing) school systems, taxes, or conscription laws. Andean regimes were too weak to portray themselves as suprapartisan entities capable of legitimately upholding the rights of citizens above the particularisms of region, class, or ethnicity. If the national idyll existed at all, it could not be said to have been the brainchild of state elites or of *letrados* (intellectuals) with access to the capillaries of public institutions to project their imagined communities on the ground.

Breakdown or Breakup?

The persistence of partially integrated states with incomplete powers to deliver public goods might imply that they were especially brittle and vulnerable to major overhaul. However, just because constitutional systems were not fully institutionalized does not necessarily mean that they were prone to *bouleversement*. State weakness, as Theda Skocpol (1994) notes, is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for revolution. Indeed, in many ways, revolutions have transpired where strong states

are conjuncturally crippled.⁴ The incompleteness of the state-building project and the unresolved disputes over property relations in the countryside actually gave these arrangements some powers to endure through a sequence of crises—especially those wrought by the Great Depression and the populist upheavals that swept through much of Latin America in the 1930s. What is inherited, even the obstacles to progress (following Albert Hirschman's classic observation),⁵ is not necessarily doomed, but can acquire strength, and be revitalized, by new developments. Rather than dismissing legacies as retardants to change, our stories emphasize their ability to shape development in unintended ways. Specifically, cast in an Andean context, the loosely integrated states contended with compound problems that added up to a breakdown in the 1930s. But in part because they were so elastic and relatively unfinished, they adapted, so that the breakdown did not lead their breakup in favor of something else. In the skein of older institutions, there emerged something new. Newness, however, did not resolve old dilemmas.

It is common among Latin American historians to argue that the 1920s shook, and the 1930s shattered, the oligarchic regimes of the nineteenth century and opened up a new phase in the region's history. Of late, some have probed at the alleged discontinuities. But few reject the notion that some fundamentals broke down and something new emerged in their wake: the collapse of the old orders and the pressure to integrate popular sectors into the constitutional fabric gave rise to what has loosely been described as the populist era in Latin American history, better known for some of its leading figures, for whom a charismatic appeal served as a solvent for a vertical realignment of mobilized workers, peasants, and disenfranchised members of the elites and middle classes.

In the Andes, the prospects for a different model of social and political integration surfaced, culminating in a pivotal juncture after the Second World War. However, just as the nineteenth century did not see fully consolidated liberal states, in the Andes, pressures to devise new principles and practices of citizenship to resolve a deepening problem of legitimacy did not end in populist states either. They remained syncretic structures, part liberal, part populist, and still very much unformed and unable to universalize the rule of law within their territorial limits, not least because they were still held together by the solvent of clientelism. How they integrated these disparate features varied according to underlying social and economic structures and the contingencies of the conflicts of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Whatever can be said of the important variations of Andean politics, what Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia

shared was the persistence of unresolved tension over the principles of statehood and not a shift to a new institutional model of settling collective distributional conflict.

Petroleum Politics

In Venezuela, a rentier regime emerged from the entrails of dictatorship but never fully resolved the tensions of incomplete statehood. Juan Vicente Gómez ruled Venezuela for almost three decades with an iron fist and a patronage network that dispensed rents to clients in all corners of the republic. Such longevity and persistence might have created a new order, but when a hand-chosen successor tried to depersonalize the regime in 1929, it quickly unraveled and Gómez stepped back in to keep the country from cascading into nineteenth-century-style instability. Gómez, at 76 years old, finally died in office in 1935. A sequence of generals from Gómez's home province of Táchira muddled through the rest of the 1930s, adopting some piecemeal reforms and refining the use of the radio as a means to create a national movement behind the regime. General Isaias Medina Angarita—another *tachirense* (from the province of Tachira) officer—came to power in 1941 and began the process of opening the political game and bargaining within the ruling clique to new civilian actors. He even created an ephemeral official party, and in its wake legalized the Venezuelan Communist Party (which complied with Comintern orders to Latin American satellites and rallied behind the official coalition). Medina also allowed the formation of several other parties, such as Democratic Action (AD), and the conservative Catholic Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI).

What might have appeared as a conjuncture with enough fluidity to break up older structures of rulership and reliance on patronage pacts among fractions of elites and their clientele, did not, however, give way to a Venezuelan version of the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) or of Argentina's Peronism—a party system organized around a dominant integrative movement. Venezuelan electoral mobilization quickly filled the space once dominated by caudillos, but in the main it adopted similar patron-client habits and folded them into civilian movements. Moreover, the parties did not dispense with personalized styles of conduct: two leaders, AD's Rómulo Betancourt and COPEI's Rafael Caldera, would shape Venezuela's modern democracy. In a contingency that laid the groundwork for a political structure that finally collapsed in 1998, a military coup unseated the reformist Medina in October 1945. It

featured an unholy alliance of falangists, young officers led by Marcos Pérez Jiménez who trumpeted the argot of anticommunism and hemispheric security, and AD, which feared Medina's rival appeal.

The coup, as chance would have it, came a day after October 17, 1945, when Argentine trade unionists forced the military to release its former secretary of labor, Colonel Juan Perón. But the Venezuelan coup could not have been more different: it toppled one of the most progressive and open governments in Venezuelan history. While AD took the reins of power (monitored by its erstwhile military co-plotters) from 1945 to 1948, it could not scrub away the stains of its complicity. Nor could the Communist Left or the trade union movement provide the laborist ballast for the regime; instead each entered a period of factionalism and internal dispute. This brief and chaotic three-year spell of civilian rule soon imploded in another coup, this one masterminded by the bonapartist General Jiménez, who decided to do things his way until he himself was overthrown in 1957 (Ellner 1980).

If civilians could not dismantle Venezuela's caudillo state, they embraced the mild nationalism that governed oil policy and the system of rents that the elites used to lubricate their party machinery. By 1930, Venezuela was the world's largest oil exporter, and 98 percent of the business was in the hands of three firms: Royal Dutch Shell, Gulf, and Standard Oil. The latter in particular would play a decisive role in the next half century—Nelson Rockefeller personally shared his pan-American dreams with democratic and military regimes alike. As oil rents grew at a steady pace, they buoyed a treasury that ploughed the returns into public works and contracts. But they also had a malign effect: rents drove up an exchange rate that in turn made consumer imports easier and exports of commodities other than oil harder, infecting Venezuela with a "Dutch disease."

Whereas much of Latin America shifted to an import substitution industrialization strategy, Venezuela's model of development folded the impetus to promote manufacturing within a persistent reliance on export rents. This in turn had two consequences. First, as before, Venezuela's ruling bloc was highly internationalized. Second, aside from the oil workers (whose leadership locked arms with AD), the trade union movement did not have a strong industrial base with which to swell rank-and-file members and thus did not have the muscle to pose a laborist threat to the post-war alignments. Without either actor, efforts to create a new regime could not succeed.

The stresses of continuity soon became clear. While Pérez Jiménez

expanded the public works program and tried to gather foreign firms, the state, and national capitalists into a coherent alliance, the logic of the oil boom diminished the importance of the private sector—and thus the role of autonomous social class or civic movements. The result was a paradox: oil created resources that could be poured into urban works (such as the modernization of Caracas) and the beginnings of a welfare system, but it made the country even more dependent on a single staple. So when oil prices dipped in the 1957 recession, and the middle classes and poor in the Caracas barrios began to ventilate their disenchantment, the Pérez Jiménez regime began to falter.

By January 1958, the barrios were in full revolt and the military, led by Admiral Wolfgang Larrázabal, forced Pérez Jiménez out and promised elections by the end of the year. The mainstream civilian parties, fearing an unpredictable transition, decided to apply a lesson learned from the failed transition of 1945. Before the elections were held, Betancourt and Caldera devised a plan, called the Punto Fijo Pact. Punto Fijo had many important nuances, but in essence it aimed to keep democratic participation within bounds, make it difficult for minor parties (although some had signed the deal, not including the Communist Party) to participate in power, and practically to ensure that AD or COPEI would triumph in elections—thereby also obviating a role for the military as ballast for the status quo.

The events of January 1958 were ripe with apparent possibilities, but the model of rentier capitalism and the weakness of organized opposition to the regime obstructed the type of mobilization that might have led to a more integrated state with deep taproots of legitimacy. To some extent the problems reflected fissures in the opposition. The Communist Party was especially important in the barrio cells that stoked the unrest. But when the dictator fell, the party leadership swung behind the military clique responsible for his ouster and backed Larrázabal's ticket—feeling that Betancourt's AD would sweep to power and consolidate a grip on popular constituencies. As it turned out, in part because the party was stuck with a military ally while Venezuelans were calling for a more dramatic change in regime, AD romped to victory and used its political appeal through the 1960s to make life hell for the Left.

It did not help that the example of the Cuban Revolution compelled many radicals into adopting guerrilla tactics. Convinced that there was no ousting Betancourt at the voting booths, they made easy eventual prey for the Venezuelan military. In particular, after a guerrilla uprising in May 1962, Betancourt ordered that the very Communist cells in the barrios that

helped him in 1958 be smashed. Militants were rounded up and the Communist Party was banned. The trade union and peasant movements, wracked by internal discord, were purged of radicals, and Betancourt cronies rose to unrivaled prominence. Thus, what was a possibility in 1958, a popular-based radical movement able to organize in the absence of trade unions, vanished from the political scene just as the Punto Fijo regime congealed.

To some extent, ferment persisted, especially on university campuses—the Universidad Central de Venezuela was a chronic source of opposition to the regime—but bereft of popular allies mobilized into militant cells such as the Peronist resistance or the Socialist miners in Chile, student demonstrations were mainly episodic. When the Communist Party was finally legalized again in 1969, it had lost much of its base. Undaunted, inspired by the electoral example of Salvador Allende, Venezuela's radical shards tried to form a common front and posted some impressive results. But the Left could not overcome its internal divisions, nor could it dislodge the patronage system that bound the mainstream trade union movement uneasily to the dominant party (Ellner 1993, 5–24).

What this created, even though AD would start swapping power with COPEI in 1969 (until 1998), was an active electoral system that had great trouble accommodating reforms that did not reinforce the power of the ruling parties. To make matters worse, the oil-based economy created massive rents, especially when petroleum prices soared sevenfold from 1970 to 1974, that bathed the treasury in spoils and financed projects that altered the face of Venezuelan capitalism but not its fundamental structure. When AD reclaimed the presidency in 1974 under the Betancourt protégé Carlos Andrés Pérez, wastage and corruption were widespread but mystified in the bookkeeping of the new national oil holding company Petroven (later renamed PDVSA) and Pérez's florid style and Third Worldist bromides.

For a time, the government tried to promote domestic demand and local industries, with the endorsement of a clutch of capitalists called the Twelve Apostles whose public sector contracts swelled as the oil money poured in. But cozying up to one group of insiders alienated others. A coterie of Maracaibo financiers, advocates of open markets and exports, disliked Pérez's interventionist convictions and promises to workers. When the export proceeds were not enough to embolden the loyalty of elites, Pérez went hunting for foreign loans from commercial banks. It would only become apparent several years later that while the oil money and bank loans flowed in, Venezuelan capitalists were leaking their capi-

tal out to offshore banks recycling oil rents into capital flight (Karl 1997, 130–33, 150–53).

The shriveling alliance behind the Punto Fijo regime became more and more dependent on oil rents and thus more and more contingent on world oil prices. When deep recession hit the Atlantic economies in the late 1970s and oil prices plunged, the Venezuelan treasury ran dry. To make matters worse, international interest rates spiked under the anti-inflationary policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. By the early 1980s, sagging oil prices and soaring interest rates squeezed the capacity for populist largesse. Trade unionists launched strike waves, capital fled, until eventually, the government let the currency float on Black Friday, February 18, 1983. For the rest of the decade, COPEI and AD governments alike tried to run the following gauntlet: opening the Punto Fijo arrangement to greater civic participation and partners while imposing austerity policies that simply emboldened the opposition to the regime as a whole.

When Carlos Andrés Pérez returned to power in early 1989 on a wave of populist promises, he promptly declared severe austerity measures. The accumulation of grievances and the depletion of popular legitimacy of the regime unleashed a spasm of violence. There ensued weeks of rioting and looting, leaving hundreds dead and entire neighborhoods in ruins (López Maya 2003). Shorn of oil rents, Pérez's *paquetazos* (austerity packages) stripped the final vestments of legitimacy from the Punto Fijo regime. The inability to develop an alternative program or to apply International Monetary Fund (IMF) neuralgia meant that Pérez got no support from any segment of an increasingly polarized society.

To make matters worse, the whole party system disappeared into the same ether as the economy. The once-mighty AD was now fracturing, and the legislature was in perpetual gridlock. Opposition festered in the military and finally erupted in several coup attempts in early 1992, led by young army officers. They were easily crushed, and the marginality of the leaders led many to dismiss this military unrest as a recidivist holdover. This was an overconfident and premature appraisal, born of post-Cold War faith in the ineluctable triumph of democratic liberalism, with fatal consequences for the regime. It certainly did not dissuade the IMF from prescribing more of its medicine, and in mid-1992 it urged the besieged Pérez to implement a second, more severe phase of structural adjustment. Desperate for some relief, and thinking that the IMF would reward good faith efforts, he complied again.

This time, the whole political system heaved—his party and the oppo-

sition launched impeachment proceedings and forced Pérez from power in May 1993.⁶ By then, corruption talk had evolved into the tag word for stigmatizing public authorities for doing what they had been doing for decades. In the name of cleansing the state, corruption talk began destroying it altogether. The seventy-eight-year old Rafael Caldera returned to power in 1994 and tried to rekindle the Punto Fijo state with a coalition of seventeen feuding parties—now with an impenetrable Congress, historically low oil prices, and a quarter of the country's foreign exchange earnings earmarked for debt-service payments. Five weeks after taking office, Venezuela's financial system collapsed, and Caldera's economy minister, Julio Sosa Rodríguez, did what came increasingly naturally for Latin American leaders whose domestic economies were imploding: he flew to New York for help. In the end, the government recirculated funds raised from foreign loans, privatization, and tax revenues to bail out domestic banks: in one staggering year, \$5.6 billion, fully 12 percent of the country's gross domestic product, was spent to prop up ten "intervened" banks. Caldera served out his term as the last president of the expended Punto Fijo regime.⁷

As the regime sank, the vacuum created opportunities for political dark horses and oddball discourses. As it turned out, the 1992 coup attempt was fateful. Its leaders, among them Lieutenant Hugo Chávez, accused the system as a whole of corruption and called for special tribunals for the malfeasants. They also upbraided the government's economic policies for betraying a sacred contract with the people. After the surrender in 1992, the government allowed Chávez to address the country by television to explain the defeat—thinking that this would rein in his followers. While the wily Chávez certainly told his fellow soldiers that it was time to rub the camouflage from their faces, he used the occasion to speak for the first time directly to rapt television viewers. Matters worsened when former (and soon to be again) President Caldera televised his own speech to the Senate, explaining that the actions of the plotters were the result of years of frustration and while not excusable were certainly understandable. Meanwhile, the new U.S. government of Bill Clinton, desperate to establish credentials as a defender of democracy, warned that the Venezuelan military would face severe sanctions if it tried to take power again. This finger wagging did not go down well among Venezuelan nationalists in the military and made many rulers in Caracas wince. What was remarkable in retrospect was how the rhetoric of national populism evolved into a discourse that announced the demise of the postwar regime (Gott 2000, Trinkunas 2002).

In the name of rekindling a Bolivarian mission, Chávez promised to build a national state that he claimed had never existed. If Chávez could not take the system by force, in 1998 he did by consent. That year, 56 percent of voters cast their ballots for him, while the previously hegemonic AD and COPEI scraped only a handful. Chávez called for deep and radical reform, starting with a new constitution, approved in 1999 by an assembly stacked with his followers. In 2000, an even bulkier majority (59 percent) reelected Chávez for a new six-year term to govern with a more centralized and presidentialist constitution. This charter made military involvements in civilian affairs easier (dispensing with the 1961 charter's prohibition on the military's deliberative role), consistent with the view that saving the nation requires a heroic bond between the army and the people.

Within two years of his election, Chávez cleansed the Venezuelan polity of political parties and redesigned it to be governed by a movement that transcends partisanship with little mediation between rulers and ruled. The challenge of the former was to incarnate and express the popular will and of the latter to articulate it through plebiscites and honor it by submitting particular aspirations to the will of whole. Such lofty ideas, squeezed from choice passages of Simón Bolívar, ran roughshod over those who wanted to contest the martial Chávez's *sui generis* notions of a homogeneous national folk—and soon had Chávez at odds with detractors in all quarters. Venezuelan society polarized over Chávez and the state he prophetically aimed to deliver into existence.

Mariátegui's Ghosts

Unlike Venezuela, Peru inherited a tradition of mass mobilization before the Great Depression shattered the financial and trading nexus of the export economies. In the cities, anarchist and syndicalist leaders planted seeds of labor radicalism, and some factions of the middle class became a bulwark for President Leguía. But more importantly, the highlands never ceased to be the basis of peasant resistance to spreading capitalist relations in the countryside and centralization of Lima's authority in the provinces. The persistence of opposition in the highlands limited the power of dictators and democrats alike. Such opposition was strong enough, ironically, to motivate elites to thwart any populist synthesis. So, while the levels of partisan activity were higher in Peru, the country remained deadlocked over the principles of political and social integration. The nineteenth-century structures of *gamonalismo* (bossism), which

braided extralegal systems of extraction from rural folk with quasi-legal systems of boss rule, persisted, with the common-enough phenomenon of the local capitalist doubling as caudillo, which is why the Peruvian thinker Mariátegui insisted that the conventional sequence or stages (from feudalism to capitalism or tradition to modernity) of history did not apply to Peru's syncretic amalgam (Manrique 1991).

The struggles for a different institutional system punched through some changes that distinguish Peru from Venezuela. Urban middle classes succeeded in winning legislation and decrees for white-collar employees, and by the late 1930s such benefits were spread to blue-collar workers (Parker 1998, Drinot 2003). But the idea that national laws would govern the principles of social relations stopped at city limits. Unlike in Mexico, where rural mobilization pushed a revolutionary regime to accommodate some degree of popular citizenship, Peru's indigenous highlanders never aggregated into a force majeure. While Mexico's revolution inspired Peru's populist movement led by Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) never made deep rural inroads and could never forge the alliance with native capitalists that populists in Argentina, Brazil, or Mexico did. If anything, the combination of APRA on the coast and the menace of peasant opposition in the highlands drove the fragments of a conservative bourgeoisie in cahoots with provincial caudillos to rally behind regimes that promised to keep revolution at bay. Thus, like Venezuela, Peru never saw a full-blown populist movement take power. But unlike in Venezuela, the sources of contention pushed the republic closer to the edge of insurgency—and its nemesis, a counter-revolution.

Peru and Venezuela, in spite of their differences, moved in uncanny lockstep to quite different positions. In the 1930s, as in Venezuela, an old guard hung on to power while the economic order collapsed and the new one slowed in emerging. After a massacre of *apristas* (followers of APRA) near Trujillo in 1932, a succession of generals occupied the presidency, vowing to maintain stability at all costs. And, as in Venezuela, the absence of a thriving industrial base meant that manufacturing did not generate social classes, manufacturers, or industrial workers interested in or capable of becoming the core of a new social alignment. When the aristocratic banker Manuel Prado won the elections of 1939, he vowed to keep the country on its track. Luckily for him, World War II revived the prices of Peru's old export staples, and the Peruvian Communist Party rallied to his side as Peru's savior from fascism (and as an ally in keeping the

party's main rival for rank-and-file support, APRA, from power). The Left, therefore, split deeply, and lost its democratizing potential.

The conjunctural crisis of the war and its aftermath could not shake the structural underpinnings of the Peruvian political economy. But there was a brief moment of potential discontinuity, cut short by a defensive reaction. The old guard tried to live by voting conventions—but could not honor them beyond the breach. In 1945 Peruvian elections, as elsewhere in much of Latin America, gave way to a new electoral coalition. The victory of an alliance of parties around APRA (temporarily renamed the People's Party) appeared to poise Peru for a transformation. But the structural impediments would not give way so easily. The flirtation with open elections and pluralist politics was short-lived.

The APRA coalition promised political cleanliness, but it did not advocate the formation of autonomous workers' and peasants' associations and could not rely on the backing of a capitalist fraction that saw nationalism as its passport to a new economic order. What was more, the rhetoric was brazen enough to horrify the ancient elites. In the end, APRA seceded from the coalition to become a spoiler, mounting a succession of insurrections against the government. *Apristas*, instead of inscribing popular power, weakened a civilian administration and set the stage for coup plotters. Thus, without a viable social bloc to support it, the regime wobbled until the military stepped in and toppled it in 1948 (Bertram 1991, 426–32).

The basic deadlock endured through a sequence of regime changes. The new ruler, General Manuel Odría, like Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela, tried to modify the structure of Peruvian society while stanching political unrest. Populists were banished. Haya de la Torre spent six isolated years encased in the Colombian embassy. Odría's package aimed to prevent Peru from sliding into APRA hands, promote exports (which grew by 7 percent annually from 1950 to 1967), and cobble together a social alliance of domestic capital and increasingly prominent international investors with middling sectors who shared the mining rents. This model aggravated a latent disparity between the coast, which consumed the rents, and the interior, which produced them. It was especially the neglected agrarian sector of the sierra that suffered. Farmers who could not make it flocked to cities and filled the swelling shantytowns. Others revived an old tradition of land invasions and emboldened local leaders to make the case for the countryside in the capital.

When it became clear that General Odría was incapable of containing

trouble, and as his style irritated the sensibilities of a ruling bloc that saw itself as part of a broader hemispheric modernizing and democratizing movement, he was dumped. Peru entered the 1960s, like Venezuela, grappling with the challenge of how to prevent disenchanted sectors from flocking to *fidelistas* by creating institutional mechanisms to resolve collective conflicts—but bereft of the legitimacy or resources (Venezuela's oil rents were far greater) to make their rhetorical commitments to change at all credible. Even APRA waned as the prospective movement for deeper and more inclusionary social change. While the party survived the repressive years, its leader, Haya de la Torre, toned down much of the radical nationalist rhetoric so that APRA could become a keystone of a viable coalition.

Coalition politics meant that the civilian alignments were chronically unstable, with incessant jockeying among partners. It also meant that, while APRA joined the constitutional fabric in power, it gradually lost touch with its original bases, especially among the working classes, that wanted to change the structure of power. Moreover, though APRA had filed down its sharp edges, it was still unacceptable to conservative elites. So when Haya de la Torre appeared to have edged out his competitors in elections in 1962, the military intervened again and staged elections a year later, and this time Fernando Belaúnde took power by a narrow margin. APRA, burned by its inability to constitute itself as the national party, decided to make life miserable for any other party that might eclipse it at the polls, even if this meant joining up with archenemies, the military and the conservative right.

While elites and their clienteles and partners hung on to power and oversaw incremental changes, much of the country slid into informal participation in market life and partial affiliation with politics. The Belaúnde years exemplified many of the difficulties facing civilian Andean governments in the 1960s: promoting exports and trying to address underlying structural problems while keeping more radical alternatives—and movements—in check. But the underlying weakness of the domestic sector, and agriculture above all, worsened, sending more rural migrants to cities, where they joined the rank and file of what would soon be called the informal sector. Unrest that had begun in the 1950s in the valley of La Convención, near Cuzco, seeped into the central sierra.

On Belaúnde's inauguration day (July 23, 1963) thirty-five hundred *comuneros* (rural workers) seized an estate in Junín, sparking a wave of invasions and pitched battles between peasants and hacendados, attracting the attention of left-wing splinter movements inspired by the example

of the Sierra Maestra in Cuba. The Peruvian Rangers wiped out the insurgency. But they could not solve Belaúnde's more fundamental problems. Deep reforms stalled, export returns began to run out of steam, and the expensive public works schemes drained the treasury. So, beholden to the interests of foreign and domestic capital and bereft of any support in Congress, Belaúnde could not get any serious tax reform, perhaps the single biggest obstacle to financing a greater role for the public sector in Peru, on the books. Inflation soon took off and aggravated the distributive tensions between social classes.⁸

If Venezuela appeared to have settled on a working constitutional system with a little help from oil rents, Peru backslid into a social and political crisis. No faction was powerful enough to rule, but each was powerful enough to deprive any alternative alliance of legitimacy. By 1968, civilian rulers were incapable of handling Peru's mounting problems, while the military and conservative elites refused to accommodate the only sort of reforms that would rekindle the relations between civilian rulers and the ruled. In the countryside, armed farmers seized estates, and the prospect of an imminent, if inorganic, revolution began to spread. The military stepped in once more. Under General Juan Velasco Alvarado, the military regime tried to channel reform under the slogan of Peru's Second Independence (suggesting that the first round did not resolve underlying strivings for sovereignty).

Within days, the generals seized the vast possessions of the International Petroleum Corporation, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey. Then they turned on the mining companies. In part, the idea was to assert symbolically the autonomy of the regime from foreign capital. Another motive was to take over the ground rents directly and plough them into the costs of social change. By far the most aggressive and important of social reforms was the redistribution of land, seen at the time as a synonym for agrarian reform. In what was dubbed by its authors Plan Inca, officers and agronomists fanned out across the sierra to reshuffle the land tenure system, with amazing results in some pockets in a very short time. Many observers felt that the crisis had culminated in a regime that forced a national synthesis on recalcitrants.

This model had to rely on too few, and ultimately weak, institutions to realize its aspirations. It relied upon an exaggerated estimate of the rents that had been drained from the republic. What is more, agrarian reform created more enemies to the regime than loyalists. Solving the national question through an authoritarian model only deferred the inevitable problem of how to include all Peruvian citizens in the country's political

life while upholding the rule of law. Fundamentally, the military never gave up its mistrust of autonomous mobilized civic activity and was hostile to the formation of peasant leagues. For their part, rural activists were almost genetically allergic to occupants of state power. Thus for all the change that occurred between 1969 and 1975, Velasco never forged anything resembling the *agrarista* (agrarian) base that gave Mexico's PRI such command over the corporatist regime. But if his successors backed off reform and began negotiations for a return to civilian rule, they closed their fiscal books by embarking on systematic, large-scale borrowing from international banks. By the time Belaúnde returned to the presidency in 1980, Peru was up to its neck in debt. By the time his administration slumped to defeat in 1985, debt-service payments (what borrowers pay simply to cover interest and service costs) exceeded the country's total exports.

An economic catastrophe was not the only mess that the military and Belaúnde bequeathed to the *aprista* Alan García. The atrophy of the state across much of the central and southern highlands meant that essential security vanished, making room for a guerrilla movement, called Shining Path (named after a student movement inspired by the Sendero Luminoso de José Carlos Mariátegui, the founder of the Peruvian Communist Party). What is important to note about the guerrilla insurgency, and the narcotic economy that emerged simultaneously, is how marginal they were. Whatever importance or strength they enjoyed reflected the state's inability to enforce its own basic rules on the ruled. The atrophy of the Peruvian state enabled Shining Path to expand beyond Ayacucho and Huancavelica to coastal cities, eventually moving into the coca frontier of the Amazon watershed. Universities, trade unions, barrio associations, and peasant leagues—the very civic fiber that García would have needed to build his national-popular cause and pull Peru from its vortex—were becoming battlegrounds in a civil war (Gorriti 1999). As violence escalated, the economy went into a tailspin. Led by the famous writer Mario Vargas Llosa, the only viable alternative to García and his hyperinflationary platform began to coalesce into a new alliance called Movimiento Libertad. Mass rallies, pot clanging, and a virulent press campaign hounded García to his final days. When APRA finished its term in 1990, it was a shadow of its former self. García fled into exile, pursued by charges of corruption and malfeasance.

At this point Peru appeared to be, as political scientists would say, ungovernable. This did not dissuade the famed novelist, who could not resist the temptation to transform his loose civic alliance into a political

movement to carry him to power. Telling Peruvian voters that they had to get in touch with market realities, Vargas Llosa crusaded across the country. Most voters wondered what country Vargas Llosa lived in after a decade of economic austerity and export promotion that only yielded more inflation and fewer jobs and sucked the remaining resources from the state. Out of nowhere emerged a political novice best known for his television program for farmers, Alberto Fujimori, with rather vague promises of jobs and political probity. His party, called *Cambio 90*, leaped past Peru's traditional parties and eventually eclipsed Vargas Llosa's alliance. Vargas Llosa, genuinely shocked that Peruvians could not see the world his way, renounced his citizenship and left the country (Guillermo-prieto 2001, 155–77).

To say that Fujimori was something of a mystery would be banal. He seized upon the weakness of the state not to build a new legitimate order but to take what remained of state institutions—especially the military and intelligence structures—and refashion them into a mafioso state (to use Julio Cotler's term). The sheer scale of the economic problems, the guerrilla war, and the utter collapse of faith in public authority gave Fujimori a degree of autonomy that he used to his own advantage as well as the advantage of a small group of magnates who recognized the conjunctural promise of turning the construction of a new order into their order.

Paradoxically, when Fujimori came to power, many wondered whether he would be able to rule at all, especially as his movement did not carry significant loyalists in Congress. For almost two years, he was locked in a battle with surviving APRA representatives, as well as Vargas Llosa's followers. In a shocking move, Fujimori mounted a self-coup d'état in April 1992, closing down Congress and the Supreme Court, demolishing the checks and balances of the constitutional system, ruling by decree, and then promising Peruvians that he would revise the constitution to fit Peruvians' desire for more "effective" government. The only way to rule Peru, claimed Fujimori, was to act, not deliberate, and thus rule technocratically with a minimum of checks and balances. He in effect installed a governable undemocratic regime, only to use his unfettered access to public resources to hollow them out to his—and his cronies'—personal advantage (Cotler 2000).

What appeared to give Fujimori so much power to restructure the Peruvian political economy—a propensity to autocratic rule and preference for clientelist systems of representation—proved to be conditions for his dramatic and lurid demise. Televised spectacles of videotaped corruption kicked the legs out from under his clients' support for Fujimori and

his henchmen; he eventually fled to Japan in disgrace. The vacuum that ensued resembled in many ways the one that had brought him to power. With older systems of political representation in shambles and the economy reeling, the stage was set for newcomers from the margins with only threadbare constituencies.

The heir to Fujimori was the little-known Alejandro Toledo, a former shoeshine boy turned economist. Toledo promised to scrub clean the political system and nurture “capitalism with a human face.” But he assumed power at a time in which the Peruvian state had been stripped of much of its capacity to manage the crisis. His cabinet became a revolving door of ministers, and the countryside still seethed with unrest, discontent, and occasional violent eruptions. To be sure, there were valiant efforts to dismantle the vestiges of Fujimori’s rule, a campaign to round up the most corrupt officials, and a vaunted Truth and Reconciliation Commission—which issued a detailed catalogue of about twenty years of human rights atrocities accompanied by a clarion call to the country to reconsider the very social and political conditions that gave rise to violence in the first place. But Toledo’s government never resolved the underlying conditions that depleted its capacity to deliver on its many promises, in large part because it was the product of a long crisis of the state itself.

Violence and Politics in Colombia

If Peru and Venezuela cannot boast of much continuity in their political regimes, Colombia can. It can also boast one of Latin America’s oldest constitutional traditions with some legitimate taproots. Paradoxically, however, it has been wracked by spasms of violence and civil warfare that have kept legions of social scientists toiling away in the vibrant, if gruesome, subfield of *violentología*. The combination of constitutional continuity and political turbulence makes Colombia more similar to its neighbors than is often appreciated. The inability to create public institutions capable of universalizing the rule of law within the state’s territorial limits was, like the country’s constitutional system itself, a holdover of incomplete efforts at state building in the nineteenth century. So, while *violentólogos* have tended to dwell on Colombia’s idiographic features, it does share some important legacies with its neighbors.

A shared legacy is not the same as a shared destiny; unfinished states are, like their “finished” counterparts, not all alike. Colombia is struggling with two entwined issues. The first is the way state leaders handled the incompleteness of their institutions. As elsewhere, central authorities struck

deals with local caudillos to paint a semblance of national authority. The difference in Colombia was that local bosses belonged to political parties that enjoyed more or less regional preeminence. Negotiations between national and subnational authorities got caught up in the partisan bickering and bargaining between Conservative and Liberal parties whose genesis dated back to the mid-nineteenth century.

The second issue is the way in which agrarian tensions were resolved. Colombia's open frontier, scattered throughout the republic, provided a constant safety valve for peasant producers looking for an escape from the power of landlords and tax collectors. When the peasants were militarized, their defiance of authorities could cut several ways. They could be defenders of squatters, like the guards of the *Colonia Agrícola de Sumapaz*, or they could be the agents of a stateless plantocracy, like the desperados of the *Magdalena del Medio* throughout the twentieth century. Either way, the battle for land titles on Colombia's multiple frontiers revealed how little the state could cope with rural conflict, so rather than frontiers operating as the democratic hearth (as in North America), they checked the territorialization of the nation-state. At worst, the struggle for land and the struggle for local political control entwined to yield a Colombian version of *gamonalismo*, which made violence the means to sort out social and political alignments (LeGrand 1984).

The 1930s brought an end to a long cycle of coffee expansion and Conservative rule. The Depression opened the way for a more integrationist moment in Colombian history, not unlike those in Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. Peasants on and within the frontier went on the offensive. In 1936, railway and port workers led the formation of the first labor federation, sometimes with the support of the Communist Party and sometimes in cahoots with more radical Liberals who took President Alfonso López Pumarejo's 1934 declaration of a Revolution on the March too literally for his own tastes. Either way, the battle to expand social citizenship and agrarian transformation heated up. From 1945 to 1947, River Transport Workers struck repeatedly for higher wages and rejected the government's law validating only enterprise unions. In late 1946, oil workers in Barrancabermeja walked out of Standard Oil's refineries. This was the largest strike in Colombian history and prompted a declaration of a state of emergency. Finally, in May 1947, Colombia got its first general strike. The countryside also teemed with estate occupations and squatters. For a moment, splintered unions and scattered agrarian movements appeared poised to transcend the cities and valleys of their inception to aggregate into the makings of a national-popular alliance (Urrutia 1969, 191-95).

If a high degree of mobilization in Colombia seemed to prepare the

country for a major turn, partisan struggles fractured the drive for a populist synthesis. Instead of implementing a new model, Colombia plunged into civil war. Like Peru and Venezuela, Colombia entered the decisive juncture from 1945 to 1948 and came close to a populist transformation. And like Peru and Venezuela, the turn faltered. Colombia too eventually saw its sequence of coups d'état try to put the country back on an institutional track, but unlike in the other Andean republics, partisan carnage left two hundred thousand people dead.

The details of how the prospective populist turn was not made are fairly well known. The party that might have transmogrified into an agrarian-laborist flag carrier, the Liberals, splintered; in 1946, the Conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez took power on a slender plurality of votes, and, in the wake of massive demonstrations, the firebrand Liberal leader who might have institutionalized a new order, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, was gunned down in the streets of Bogotá on April 9, 1948. What ensued was a *sui generis* war baptized simply *La Violencia*, until even Conservatives were appalled enough at the recursive bloodletting and conspired with Liberals to ask the military to take over directly. Rather than a populist republican like Gaitán, Colombia got a dictator like Odría and Jiménez—which is to say a martial leader whose ability to don the presidential sash depended on the support of established civic-political forces. The new president of Colombia was General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, and he embarked on a triadic policy of negotiating with Liberal guerrilla leaders, combating recalcitrants, and modernizing the economy (Palacios 1995, 199–211).⁹

Strikingly, neither the mobilization of the 1940s nor the violence of the 1950s nor the dictatorship that was supposed to restore order created institutional mechanisms to transcend the underlying source of fragmentation and fratricide. This was not for lack of effort. Indeed, Rojas Pinilla himself began to maneuver around the traditional parties, their traditional leaders, and their social supporters, who were justifiably worried that the general was crafting himself into a Perón. Accordingly, the two parties that had once lunged at each other's throats agreed to a plan. The Liberal leader, Alberto Lleras Restrepo, hammered out a deal with Laureano Gómez, the mastodonic Conservative, to restore civilian rule—and the hegemony of the old biarchy—under the banner of a National Front. In this sense there were important resemblances to Venezuela's Punto Fijo agreement.

There was one important nuance: instead of a bipolar system, the National Front created a bipartisan one. The accord did the following: the

presidency alternated between the two ancient parties until 1974, after which the executive would be thrown open to real elections; “millimetric” parity applied to positions for both parties throughout the bureaucracy; and a two-thirds vote in Congress, not a simple majority, was necessary for legislation to pass. Like the Punto Fijo in Venezuela, here was an arrangement to fix not just a government but a regime, through power sharing and exclusion of outliers. The regime not only succeeded in patching up—if not erasing—the differences between the parties but also crippled oppositional civic movements. The labor movement remained as divided and weak as ever, and the peasantry had to channel its demands to the official Agrarian Reform Institute. In this context, the two-party regime earned the confidence of Colombia’s elites, who plowed capital into farms, mines, and factories. Indeed, Colombia was not immune to some of the foreign exchange and inflation problems that crippled the rest of Latin America, but growth and the emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie, especially in Medellín, was impressive. Under the National Front, new and old fragments of Colombia’s elites reconstituted into something that Colombia had long lacked: a unified dominant bloc.

The National Front regime tamed electoral life without taming political life. Making the system work at the national level required redoubling local-level clientelist networks of party bosses who organized the local electorates into voting blocs for the two mainstream parties. In return for casting the right ballots, clients got modest patronage payments in the form of housing, irrigation, and protection services. Clientelism may have stabilized a national order, but the scramble among bosses for spoils and support at the local level was frequently unruly if not savage.

The legacy of violence also shifted in another way. As the 1960s unfolded, partisan vertical cleavages gave way to a more horizontal form of conflict. In the words of Gonzalo Sánchez, the strategy of demilitarizing bipartisan politics led to a militarization of social polarization. Some Communist survivors went to the hills and folded into the remaining guerrilla units that were not vanquished or demilitarized by the dictatorship. Indeed, from 1958 to 1966, La Violencia persisted, though differently. Some of the opposition blurred the line between banditry and political insurgency. Pedro Antonio Marín, so-called Tiro Fijo (Sure Shot), carved his Independent Republic of Marquetalia out of the highlands above Bogotá. Tiro Fijo and other guerrilla leaders also picked up Maoists from the ranks of the disenchanting Communist Party, as well as neophyte *guevaristas*. Together, they formed the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1966. The *cuadrillas* (protagonists) of the 1960s insur-

rection enlisted discontented peasants, fleeing communists, and social bandits (who were encouraged by state weakness) and were thus thorny reminders that pacted transitions are not sufficient conditions for institutionalizing relations between citizens and the state (Sánchez 1991, 55; 1983).

In the end, the final blow to the National Front came from its own success. While defusing old partisan friction, it did little to legitimate elections as civic rituals for citizens to choose their representatives freely. Ironically, it was the former dictator, Rojas Pinilla, a born-again democrat, who exposed the charade of the alternating elections—and who unintentionally opened the way for a new round of militarized politics. His party, the National Popular Alliance, posted some impressive—and therefore uncomfortable—results at the polls. The more the party succeeded, the more it illustrated the pointlessness of political citizenship. The 1970 elections registered the party's high-water mark. A mere 40 percent of voters cast ballots for the National Front ticket, and radios announced the imminent victory of Rojas Pinilla. But the next morning official tallies gave the victory to the Conservative Misael Pastrana. Many followers of Rojas Pinilla denounced the National Front regime and picked up guns—becoming in a few years the main guerrilla force, the *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19, named after the date in which their victory was overturned). It announced its presence in 1974 by stealing Simón Bolívar's sword from the National Museum, decrying the elites' betrayal of the Liberator's aspirations, not unlike Hugo Chávez's subsequent claim to historic legitimacy. The guerrillas, by the 1980s, went from the political margins to being crucial political actors, even if they refused to play by official rules (Chernick and Jiménez 1993).

By the 1980s, political violence was so widespread that the remnants of the National Front parties all agreed that the system had to be more inclusive. A sharp turning point came in November 1985, when 35 M-19 assailants stormed the Judicial Palace in Bogotá and took the Supreme Court hostage. Embarrassed by the security lapse, the army attacked the building. Their overconfidence and overkill led to a firefight, leaving twelve justices and hundreds of employees dead. The awful carnage prompted politicians and the guerrillas to change their tack. The Conservative Belisario Betancur (1982–1986), Liberal Virgilio Barco (1986–1990), and Liberal César Gaviria (1990–1994) confronted the political mess with peace overtures. The three differed politically, but all hoped, through delicate negotiations, to demilitarize not just elections but politics as a whole.

In 1985, the FARC and the *Ejército para la Liberación Nacional* (National

Liberation Army) sponsored civilian branches, the Unión Patriótica (UP) and A Luchar (To Struggle), respectively. After some tough negotiations, the members of the M-19 laid down their arms just before Barco completed his term. In a matter of months, these guerrillas reassumed the civilian mantle they had discarded after the 1970 elections and became an immediately potent force in Colombian electoral politics. In 1986, the UP won fourteen congressional seats. Two years later, when Colombia had its first direct elections for municipal offices (in an effort to curb the power of local political bosses), the UP took many town councils and mayoralties. To boot, the Colombian trade union movement cohered in 1986 to create a Unitary Workers' Central (CUT) to bring some unity to reverse decades of fractures and frailty. Gaviria followed with his own initiatives, integrating several other smaller groups into the electoral spectrum and finally repudiating the remnants of the National Front order by convoking a constitutional assembly. The Left got more than a quarter of the votes cast for the assembly and played a major role in redesigning the structure of the Colombian state (Villamizar 1997).

Peace did not put an end to war—it simply changed its nature. First, peace rested on political reinsertion with whichever party was willing to strike a deal. This was not a broad social model of insertion with several—or all—groups simultaneously. The result was that many agents, particularly those with the least vested interest in acknowledging the legitimacy of the regime they were entering, were left in the field as potential spoilers. Second, the constitutional blueprint was in many ways a remarkable document with enormous promise, but in decentralizing the Colombian state even more, it gave the local-level patronage networks greater autonomy. And as political violence evolved, local bosses forged ties with armed agents who offered more than just protection services; they operated as outright militias contracted to wipe out dissenters, especially on the Left and in the incipient CUT.

From local-level gamonal systems emerged parastatal actors inhabiting the nebulous frontier of legality to become death squads mowing down civic movements. Hundreds of CUT activists were wiped out. The electoral Left also got chopped down. Assassins killed three UP presidential candidates and proceeded to execute fifteen hundred UP militants, all of them elected officeholders, including senators, congressmen, and congresswomen. The guerrilla stragglers remained in the hills and eventually made arrangements with coca producers to generate the rents to sustain their struggles. So too did the parastatal death squads. By the late 1980s, the booming cocaine trade was fueling the escalating political economy of

violence. In a confusing *mélange*, drug traffickers and right-wing paramilitary units reinforced each other, relying on drug money to fund counterrevolution, while deploying private militias to protect the drug economy from law enforcers. By the end of the decade, the democratic Left was in ruins. Violence therefore forced the legal political spectrum back into the bipartisan shell from which it had been struggling to evolve (Sánchez 2001, 26–27).

This kind of retrogression made it even more difficult to break the political and social stalemate—even though civic leaders, intellectuals, and politicians of all stripes agreed that a fundamental overhaul was necessary. Indeed, in the face of demands for political change (possibly even because there was so much need for reform), coca capitalism not only co-opted left and right militarized spoilers, it seeped into the formal political arena as well. Given the nexus of local clientelism and local capitalists, this was not at all surprising. In the trade-off between political loyalty for pork barrel contracts, caudillos redoubled their strength by sheltering new circuits of capital from drugs. It was a matter of time before coca capital filtered up through the system to the top echelons of the state.

In June 1994, days after his defeat by the Liberal Ernesto Samper, Conservative Andrés Pastrana accused the president-elect of taking campaign contributions from coca capitalists in Cali. A member of the police intelligence service released an audiocassette of conversations between Samper's campaign brass and donors. It was not a very clear recording, but subsequent testimony revealed that the Cali traffickers had funneled around \$6 million into Samper's campaign coffers starting in April 1994. The contribution was probably decisive, because at the time Samper and Pastrana were running neck and neck in opinion polls. Twice, in 1995 and 1996, the House of Representatives voted on motions to launch impeachment proceedings against Samper but did not muster the necessary majority.

Paradoxically, it was the Samper administration that finally managed to bust up the Cali consortia and put several prominent traffickers behind bars. But this did not deter the Clinton administration from picking out Samper as a target for Washington's own war on drugs. The foiled impeachment proceedings justified Washington's decision to slap sanctions on Colombia for failing to cooperate with the war on drugs. While many Colombians wanted Samper impeached, the last thing they wanted was for Colombia as a whole to pay a price for someone else's war. Yet punitive measures spurred capital flight and a deep recession, possibly the worst economic malaise of the century. Samper hobbled through the rest of his term as a pariah. The Colombian government therefore sur-

vived, but it could scarcely govern.¹⁰

Pastrana may have gotten his revenge against Samper when he came to power in 1998. But he had to negotiate with right-wing squads, guerrillas, and coca capitalists, who were all stronger than ever, from the weakest possible bargaining position. In retrospect, his own peace efforts, and eventually the vaunted Plan Colombia, appear to have had the odds stacked against them, since they required wielding state powers that he did not have. By the time Pastrana launched his initiative, indeed in reaction to previous peace overtures, several right-wing militia groups formed a national network called the Self-Defense Units of Colombia, decrying concessions to guerrillas, fighting those (and other subversives) that the official army could not. Eventually network leaders claimed the same rights to participate in peace talks as the guerrillas. With the rents from the coca trade, therefore, the spoilers could mow down bystanders with impunity while talking about peace.

On the night of September 29, 2001, a night patrol of Colombia's Special Forces spotted guerrilla movements along the hillside of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, near the Caribbean coast. It turned out to be one of the fronts of the FARC escaping to higher ground with twenty hostages. Among the captives was Consuelo Araujonoguera (known as La Cacica), the popular former minister of culture and personal friend to President Pastrana. Commanders gave orders to engage the FARC. In the ensuing battle, several hostages escaped and the surviving guerrillas withdrew into darkness, leaving behind a forest scattered with cadavers, including La Cacica's, whose face was obliterated by bullets. The next day, Colombians began to grieve over the loss of another beloved citizen, gave up hopes for peace, and wondered whether anyone ruled at all. As the president joined the funeral wake, the crowd of thirty thousand mourners waved white handkerchiefs, chanting to the stricken Pastrana, "There is no government!" (*Cambio* 2001).

Andean societies carried their nineteenth-century legacies into the twentieth in various ways, and states that relied on shifting clientelist systems to embolden elite fealty to national rule had to cope with the rising demands for political and social citizenship from popular sectors. When the terms of citizenship began to broaden and deepen, the institutions that were called upon to envelop these new (and sometimes not so new) vindications were still unfinished. Ironically, the old regimes had to be strong and integrated enough to found the institutional networks of their own successor systems. Long-term continuities reflected less the underlying strength of older systems than the great difficulties in creating new ones.

If this was the common challenge of Andean societies, the contingent ways in which these conflicts evolved created different permutations. The opportunities to create new integrative orders once the Great Depression shook the pillars of the old regimes were clearly seized, but not in ways that enabled successor regimes to transcend inherited problems. Thus the civilian regimes, Punto Fijo in Venezuela, National Front in Colombia, and the long Belaúnde shadow in Peru, aimed less to dismantle the inherited legacies of the past than to recalibrate them for a new phase of export-led growth. These new orders rested on active parties but constricted participation. The forces of perseverance endured not so much because of their intrinsic legitimacy, although they could claim undeniable conjunctural appeal compared to the military governments or guerrillas, but because they appeared at the time to be so effective in combining electoral mobilization and incremental reform while leaving the fundamentals of peripheral capitalism largely intact.

What ensued was therefore the exhaustion of systems that could neither shoulder the burdens of social, cultural, and political changes nor give way to something new. By the 1990s, Andean societies were contending with a variant of political development that is quite different from the rest of Latin America. If transitions to democracy—or latterly consolidations of democracy—were the order of the day in the Southern Cone, Brazil, and even Mexico, what was in doubt in the Andes was less democracy than the underlying institutional girders that enable it to exist at all.

Notes

1. The literature on state formation is now vast and complex, if relentlessly Eurocentric. See Tilly (1990) and Brewer (1989) for examples. Of course these authors have not been arguing that the historic sequelae are normative. But the recent outpouring of work on failed states has implied, sometimes explicitly, that the missing preconditions involved a consolidated fiscal-military order at a foundational stage to transcend warlords, sheikhs, or absolutists. On failed states, see Stohl (2000) and Rotberg (2002). For alarm about Andean contagion, see McLean (2002).

2. The origins of this contrast are the theme of Adelman (forthcoming).

3. On the nexus of caudillos and war, see Dunkerley (1992, 155–58). A suggestive treatment of the notion of citizens in arms is Sabato (2001, 1312–13).

4. The debate about revolutions remains lively. See Skocpol's overview (1994, 3–22). In the end I am quite skeptical about the prospects for some general theory of revolution, though I admit that comparative patterns and typologies can be developed. In this respect I am sympathetic with Alan Knight's recent contrast of the Mexican and Bolivian revolutions (2003, 54–90).

5. The insight goes through much of Hirschman's work, though it was first crystallized in *The Strategy of Economic Development* (1958, 9).

6. The charges were that Pérez had misused funds meant to cover Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro's defenses.

7. For a detailed report on Venezuela's financial problems, see *Latin American Weekly Report* (1994).

8. Pedro-Pablo Kuczynski, a manager of the Central Reserve Bank, later recalled the impossibility of squaring the circle of paying for modest reforms while promoting Peru's exports by printing money (1977, 77; see also chap. 7 for a revealing portrayal of the limits to tax reform).

9. For a fascinating testimonial of the rural insurgency, see Isaza (1994).

10. The probity of the procedures themselves became a matter of considerable dispute, as many of the congressmen who voted were themselves on traffickers' payrolls. A Citizens' Oversight Commission turned in findings after the last impeachment vote, finding reason to believe that Samper did in fact know about the illicit contributions. It is not known whether in fact the Drug Enforcement Agency or Central Intelligence Agency was behind the tape's release (*New York Times* 1996; *El Espectador* 1997; Dugas 2001, 157–74).

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