

Reseñas/Book Reviews

– *¿Democracia no lograda o democracia malograda? Un análisis del sistema político del Ecuador, 1979-2002*, by Francisco Sánchez López. Quito, Ecuador: FLACSO Ecuador, 2008.

The rise of well-organized Indigenous movements and an unusually high degree of political instability has defined the recent political history of Ecuador. In 1997, 2001, and again in 2005, street protests removed three different increasingly unpopular presidents from power. While social movements excelled with these types of oppositional politics, they were much less successful at implementing positive alternatives. In *¿Democracia no lograda o democracia malograda?*, political scientist Francisco Sánchez López provides an excellent and highly readable survey of Ecuador's political system from the return to civilian governments in 1979 to the election of Lucio Gutiérrez in 2002. He divides this period into three distinct phases. The first begins in 1978 with the drafting of a new constitution and elections that led to the return of a civilian government. The second and longest period ran from 1984 to 1996 that brought a certain amount of stability with competing parties complying with established electoral norms. The final period began with substantial revisions to the electoral system in 1996 that for the first time permitted electoral alliances and the creation of political movements.

The first chapter summarizes the key characteristics of political parties in Ecuador. It provides a solid introduction to the recent history and current status of Ecuador's political landscape, including tracing the rise and fall of political parties. Sánchez points to the twin factors of party fragmentation and electoral volatility as explaining the persistently politically unstable situation in Ecuador. He argues that not only do political parties fail to contribute adequately to the necessary conditions for a consolidation of democracy, but worse they help create a politically unstable situation. In fact, surveys reveal that political parties and the national congress are two of the most discredited institutions in the country.

In the return to civilian government in 1979, the military tripled the number of signatures a party needed in order to secure a position on the ballot. This was part of a deliberate attempt to limit the number of leftist parties who could legally compete for power. What it also reinforced was the use of charismatic leaders who could draw people onto their electoral rolls. Unfortunately, these caudillos too often promoted their own personal or, in the best of all cases, local or provincial interests rather than national concerns. All of these factors, Sánchez argues, have hindered the consolidation of democratic systems in Ecuador.

Sánchez's closing essay examines the engagement of Indigenous movements with democratic systems, particularly in the emergence of a new political movement called Pachakutik. Much more than an Indigenous party, activists conceived of Pachakutik as a space where a broad range of social movements could gather to press their economic, political, and social concerns. Eventually the movement took an ethnicist turn, and mestizos who were blamed for electoral failures left the party. In the subsequent 2006 elections the party performed miserably, with the historic Indigenous leader Luis Macas only winning 2 per cent of the vote in the

presidential race. At the time many Indigenous activists pointed to his dismal showing as a persistence of racism in Ecuador, but Sánchez contextualizes his study in such a way that it raises the intriguing idea that it was not racism but a lack of alliances and successful coalition building that led to Pachakutik's decline. Sánchez notes that there are few studies on Pachakutik, but this book provides a solid basis on which to build further studies of Indigenous movement engagement with electoral political processes.

¿Democracia no lograda o democracia malograda? provides both a general introduction to Ecuador's political systems that will be useful to readers new to the topic, as well as a large amount of data, statistics, and technical explanations of the functioning of electoral systems that provides an excellent reference point for experts on the topic. The book is organized into five different essays that the author concedes can be read independently of each other, but this also means that the volume contains a certain amount of redundancies. Sánchez wrote the book before the promulgation of the 2008 constitution under the control of the current left-populist government of Rafael Correa, which means that unfortunately the text already has a dated feeling. Nevertheless, Sánchez concludes the book with an observation that still remains true, and unfortunately may continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Although Indigenous movements have made significant advances, the continuance of exclusionary structures hinders the consolidation of properly functioning democracy. Overcoming racial discrimination and class divisions remain a key task in order for Ecuador to advance forward.

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– *Radical Democracy in the Andes*, by Donna Lee Van Cott. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

In the mid-1990s indigenous peoples began to enter formal politics in significant numbers. In Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana and Venezuela, candidates emphasizing an ethnically indigenous identity and representing parties affiliated with indigenous social movement organizations gained control of local and intermediate governments, as well as a foothold in national legislatures. In Bolivia nearly one-third of elected mayors in 1995 were identified as indigenous or campesino, and in Ecuador, Pachakutik, the most important indigenous political party, won seven of every ten races it entered. Newly elected indigenous leaders often promised to provide a more participatory intercultural model of democracy. In her book *Radical Democracy in the Andes*, Donna Lee Van Cott looks for an answer to the question: are indigenous parties fulfilling their promise to deepen democracy after ten years in office? She conducted her research in Bolivia and Ecuador where indigenous parties were formed in the mid-1990s. Both countries provide a ten-year history of ethnic party governance. She employed a qualitative, comparative research design based on ten municipalities, five in each country, using unstructured interviews, ethnographic works and documents and newspaper articles.

Indigenous movements throughout the Andes have developed a common ideology of intercultural, participatory, deliberative and transparent government. The ideal-typical model of indigenous-party is directed towards institutional innovation