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Author(s): LESLIE ELLIOTT ARMIJO

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The Resurgence of Political Democracy in Contemporary Latin America

That political democracy is not a panacea for social injustice is evidenced by the persistence of disguised elite bias behind a facade of fairness and egalitarian representation, in both the industrialized and developing countries. Nor is democracy a guarantee of economic growth—or even of political stability. Nonetheless, a simple truth leads citizenries in country after country today to opt for this form of government; political democracy offers the best protection for the many against domination by the few in the interests of the few.

In the 1980s, eight Latin American countries ended military regimes and established (or began to establish) civilian, formally democratic forms of government: Peru (1980), Bolivia (1982 to present), Nicaragua (1979–89), Argentina (1983), Uruguay (1986), Brazil (1985), Chile (1990), and Panama (1990). Why? To explore this question I will briefly review the attractions of political democracy and typical barriers to its establishment in developing countries. Next, I will consider the experience of particular Latin American countries, noting that recently established and restored democracies there divide into three categories, each of which confronts a distinct set of challenges. The essay's conclusion seeks to draw useful lessons from a comparison of Latin America and South Asia.

Theoretical Considerations

Political democracy, as used here, means civilian control of the state and the use of regular elections and other democratic procedures to select central government leaders, and requires that political dissenters are free to organize and contest elections. In many cases, however, formidable barriers of information and money effectively exclude some groups, often the rural poor. Democratic procedures—notably the rule of one person, one vote—nonetheless

provide a minimal shield for the majority against arbitrary exploitation by a small, privileged elite. Democratic policymaking also builds popular consensus for unpopular but necessary government activities, such as the levying and collection of taxes. An additional reason for the perennial popularity of the label 'democracy' in many developing areas, including all of Latin America, is its association with a high-growth capitalist economy in the advanced industrial countries.¹ The links between capitalism, rapid economic growth, and political democracy aren't crystal clear, but minimum levels of political and economic freedoms do appear to complement one another, especially when coupled with efforts to increase equality of opportunity for the least advantaged groups in society.

Certain problems afflict democratic governments anywhere in the world, whether in industrial or developing countries. Democratic decision-making processes are cumbersome and react slowly to new information. Better at incremental than synoptic change, democratic governments may be inadequate to certain kinds of crises.² In addition, although majorities are protected from obvious exploitation by a ruling minority, tyranny of the majority over the minority is still possible. For this reason, democracies historically have found it necessary to quickly promulgate bills of rights for individuals, as in the United States or France, or for minority populations, as in India. A third problem is that the elite bias, despite elections in which majorities prevail, is still possible. Where portions of the electorate are poorly informed, apathetic, intimidated or swayed by bribes and petty favors to vote with their patrons, virulent elite bias may persist, even while democratic institutions give the illusion of fairness and representation. Business groups, for example, typically have more adequate representation of their interests than do labour or consumers, whether urban or rural, organized or not, in industrial and in developing countries.³

Three additional problems confront democracies which are new or still in the process of becoming consolidated and firmly institutionalized—a category which encompasses most developing country democracies. Looking at the historical experience of today's industrial, capitalist democracies one might postulate an evolutionary process through which democracies which began with a limited franchise (or limited meaningful, informed political participation) gradually include wider segments of the population in the democratic process. The path of gradual inclusion passes above two

typical pitfalls. First, if the ideological belief in the virtues of democracy is not well-implanted, then group electoral competition may exacerbate group loyalties. Conflict based around ascriptively defined loyalties (ethnic and communal divisions) may be especially dangerous, but class or interest-based conflict also can flare out of control, destroying the limited democracy.

Inclusion must occur at a rate fast enough so that excluded actors are not driven to seek power by extra-electoral means such as guerrilla warfare or urban terrorism, but slowly enough so that economically privileged sectors do not panic and resort to military repression, squelching democratic freedoms.⁴ For example, one explanation for the breakdown of political order after 1930 in Argentina, Latin America's most economically advanced society, is that the politically aware but effectively disenfranchised urban working class saw no hope for political power except through massive strikes and other forms of direct action. Frightened elites responded by supporting repeated military interventions and by excluding the labor movement from electoral representation for so long that labour leaders concluded that political parties—and the habit of democratic compromise and incremental policymaking—were irrelevant to their struggle and their concerns.⁵

A second problem, paradoxically, is the *absence* of intense group loyalties. Just as ethnic divisions have had high costs in political violence for South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, so has homogeneity imposed costs on Latin America. Achieving cultural homogeneity was costly. During three centuries of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule beginning in the early 1500s, the conquerors imposed cultural and linguistic conformity upon both Native Americans and imported African slaves, at least upon those subject peoples who did not perish from violence, forced labour or European diseases. Problems also arise when maintaining cultural unity becomes a very important value. Even today some Latin American political and religious leaders expound corporatist ideologies which posit one unified, Christian nation—and tend to view even mild dissent as dangerous disloyalty. The rhetoric of politics becomes extraordinarily high flown; all central government decisions are proclaimed in the name of the sacred motherland. Both legitimate disagreement and straightforward pursuit of individual or group interests become impossible because they are defined as criminally irresponsible and selfish. In fact, glorification of cultural (and thus

political) homogeneity in Latin America has often meant that citizens relate to politics only as followers of charismatic personalities, producing unstable commitments to any set of institutions or rules in a style sometimes referred to as praetorian or caesarist,⁶ and elsewhere simply as populist.⁷

The third problem of democratic consolidation in developing countries is so important that it might well have been considered first. External interventions by industrial countries, usually the United States, which confuse stability with democracy remains the most significant reason for the failure of democracy in many developing countries. American policymakers forget the bloody struggles which accompanied the consolidation and expansion of North American democracy, including the American Civil War (1861–65) and the strikes and violent repression of labour unions in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite the rhetoric of protection of human rights and freedom, and United States, in practice, almost invariably intervenes against previously excluded groups seeking access to political power, even when these groups employ peaceful, legal, and even electoral tactics.⁸ The very real possibility of foreign intervention reinforces the skepticism of non-elite groups about their chances for inclusion in an expanded democracy, in addition to encouraging elites to perpetuate formal democracies without guarantees of civil liberties or broad access to electoral power. Smaller countries, of course, are more vulnerable to foreign interference than larger ones, while countries with perceived geo-strategic significance get more great power attention than those further away or with fewer trade links and strategic natural resources. While the American Embassy welcomed Brazil's military coup in 1964, for example, no convincing evidence suggests direct American involvement. The same cannot be said of the 1973 coup against Chile's President Salvador Allende (Chile is smaller than Brazil and has heavy American foreign investment), or of the repeated incursions of American forces into Central America and the Caribbean throughout the twentieth century.

Three typical problems for developing countries have been mentioned: excessive group loyalties which impede cooperation, underdeveloped group or class loyalties leading to unstable and excessively emotional politics, and external intervention. Newly restored Latin American democracies today face two additional challenges: how to redefine the role of the military and how to convince their populations to wait patiently before democracy yields

them any economic benefits. In Latin America's new democracies military officers only recently left off day-to-day management of the state bureaucracy, a 'temporary' expedient which in Brazil lasted twenty years. Loss of prestige and sometimes jobs, coupled with societal opprobrium for human rights abuses (and perhaps for economic mismanagement), can strain the military's commitment to civilian government. Argentina, for example, suffered several coup attempts in the 1980s, as did the Philippines—an Asian case of restored democracy whose politics and social structure resemble Latin America's. Meanwhile, democracy was established or restored just as the region hit its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, which toppled governments throughout Central and South America. I refer to the debt crisis of the 1980s and its continuing aftermath. Today one must add to the debt problem the spectre of rising oil prices (a burden for all of Latin America except Mexico, Venezuela, and perhaps Ecuador) following Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Lessons from Existing Democracies

I now turn to consideration of specific Latin American countries.⁹ Only four major countries in Latin America maintained civilian governments and electoral procedures steadily over the last three decades: Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia and Venezuela. It seems logical to look at these examples. However, upon closer inspection, at least three of the four appear to be special cases whose apparent democratic success is best explained by factors not duplicated elsewhere in the region. Mexico, since the 1920s the most politically stable country in Latin America, since the 1940s has been ruled by civilians, ratified if not chosen by nationwide elections. However, Mexico is at best a semi-democracy; many have termed it an authoritarian, corporatist regime. Mexican elections are always won by a single political party, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), on the basis of a mix of genuine popularity, restraints on the opposition's supposed right to organize freely, and systematic electoral fraud. As frustrations with the limits to Mexican democracy mounted within business circles and the middle class, on the right, and the intelligentsia and segments of the labour and peasant wings of the PRI, on the left, the 1980s saw the formation of two new national political parties which mounted a serious challenge to the PRI's less-than-democratic practices. While Mexico may be becom-

ing a full democracy, it is not yet one. Furthermore, Mexican political stability largely results from the popular legitimacy the PRI continues to enjoy as the inheritor of the pro-peasant, pro-worker slogans and images of the Mexican Revolution of 1911–1918. The region's only other popular revolutions (Bolivia, 1952; Cuba, 1959; Nicaragua, 1979) have not yet produced strong, legitimate states, although Cuba and especially Nicaragua may evolve in this direction.

In Colombia national elections and civilian rule also give the illusion of a fuller democracy than actually exists. Colombia has a long tradition, dating back to the nineteenth century, of high levels of political violence, based around regional private militias organized by rural *caudillos* (strongmen) identified with either the Liberal or the Conservative political parties. From 1948–58 the country endured a decade of extraordinarily high political violence, in which an estimated 200,000 people died, that is, between one and two per cent of the total population.¹⁰ In 1958 elites from both parties concluded secret negotiations to agree to an explicit power-sharing arrangement, which endured with only slight modifications till 1986. This meant that national elections did not decide who would be president, since the Liberal and Conservative leaders had agreed that the post, like all subordinate posts right down to post office employees, would alternate or otherwise be split between the parties.

The National Front pact of 1958 provided Colombia with political stability and comparative social peace, but it also served to exclude new groups from politics and was thus not fully democratic. Lack of access to political power through legitimate channels pushed those who might have joined a social democratic party to engage in anti-system guerrilla violence designed to foment revolution. During the 1980s, political violence, the work of drug cartels, leftist guerrillas, and rightist paramilitary death squads, again rose rapidly, threatening without yet overturning civilian rule. Since the very late 1980s, however, the two major guerrilla groups have both laid down their arms and agreed to engage in electoral politics, an unequivocally positive step for Colombian democracy.

Venezuela also has had elections, parties, and civilian leaders since the late 1950s. It is a special case primarily because of its oil wealth, giving it a per capita income of US\$ 3,230 in 1987, almost US\$ 1000 more than that of Argentina, the next richest country in the region. Oil revenues (and rates of social mobilization and urbaniza-

tion behind many of its neighbors) enabled Venezuela largely to escape the growth versus equity, or old versus new claimants on public expenditures, trade-offs so often inimical to democratic consensus elsewhere. While wealth is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for political democracy, its presence enables distributionist (and often politically stabilizing) strategies of governance precluded by poverty.

Costa Rican democracy, like Venezuelan, also can be explained in terms of favourable special factors; in its case a more equal distribution of rural land (and thus of national income) and more peaceful transition to independence than most of its neighbors. On the other hand, Argentina and Uruguay have the former and Brazil the latter, so clearly these factors are not determinate. Tiny Costa Rica, with a population of 2.6 million in 1987, arguably possesses the best institutionalized democracy in Latin America, having had competitive elections and peaceful transfers of executive power with only brief interruptions since the nineteenth century.¹¹ The most useful conclusion one can draw from the successful cases of Latin American democracy (Costa Rica and pre-1973 Chile) is that enduring democracy strongly correlates with elite consensus on the high value to be placed on democratic *procedures*, even when one's preferred substantive outcomes are not obtained. Whether such consensus causes or results from political democracy is indeterminate.

Consideration of existing Latin American democracies thus gives limited help in understanding prospects for today's restored democracies. Another tack is to inquire why eight military governments yielded to civilians in the 1980s, while a third approach examines current challenges to the new democracies. I shall pursue these in turn.

Two Paths from Authoritarianism to Democracy

From the 1960s to the 1980s authoritarian governments in Latin America divided into two basic types: traditional authoritarian regimes and modernizing military regimes. Modernizing military regimes, in turn, existed in two sub-types, those of the right, and those of the left. The processes of democratization differed between the two main types of authoritarian rule. Traditional authoritarian regimes evolved or were overthrown because they could not absorb or placate newly mobilized social groups. Modernizing military

regimes left office peacefully when their economic failures became obvious.

Traditional authoritarian regimes in Nicaragua (under Somoza), Bolivia, and Panama were dominated by military strongmen who closely resembled their predecessors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Leaders ruled by a mix of intimidation and dispensing of patronage, and had close links to traditional agrarian or primary product export elites, on the one hand, and to United States' military and intelligence agencies, on the other. Other examples of traditional authoritarian regimes include Cuba under Batista, Paraguay under Stoessner, and most post-war governments of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Ecuador. The downfall of traditional authoritarian regimes is closely tied to classic processes of social mobilization (urbanization, increases in literacy, expectations of upward social mobility), which could no longer be contained by pre-industrial patterns of social and political control. Traditional authoritarian or *caudillo* regimes still exist in Latin America, but they are anachronisms, fated either to gradually democratize, give way to modernizing military regimes, or undergo revolutions. The fact that certainly Nicaragua, probably Bolivia, and perhaps Panama moved toward democracy when traditional authoritarianism broke down rather than toward modernizing authoritarianism results more from characteristics of the international scene than from clear characteristics of each country's internal politics.

Redemocratization of modernizing military regimes came about for one main reason: they lost political legitimacy with crucial support groups when their economic policies began to collapse. Peru's leftist generals (especially under Juan Velasco Alvaro, 1968–75) promised rural justice and carried out extensive land reform. Unfortunately, design and administration of the reform was so poor that the poorest peasants became even more marginalized, while only better-off rural wage labourers benefitted. The government alienated old elites while profoundly disappointing desperate and newly mobilized rural masses, losing all bases of societal support. In the late 1970s a more economically conservative group of military officers took charge, and the state was returned to an elected civilian, representing one of the traditional political parties, in 1980.

Military regimes of the right took power in the 1960s and 1970s in the four most industrialized countries of South America: Argen-

tina (1966–73; 1976–82), Chile (1973–89), Uruguay (1973–85), and Brazil (1964–84), in all cases justifying themselves by alleging the need to fight civilian politicians' corruption, Marxist urban guerrillas, and inflation and other evidences of economic mismanagement. The opposition, sometimes violent but mostly not, was trapped, imprisoned, tortured, and killed—to the point that this excuse for continued military rule lost whatever credibility it once had for the urban middle and upper classes. The 1970s were a period of comparative economic boom for all of Latin America, particularly Brazil and to some extent throughout the Southern Cone. But, with the coming of the debt crisis in the early 1980s, all the contradictions of the economic model of the modernizing military regimes of the right became apparent: external debt, inflation, stagnant or falling real wages, high unemployment. The urban middle class and many business elites, supported by many representatives of the Catholic Church, no longer accepted the limits on civic freedoms and human rights as a 'necessary' trade-off for industrial progress. In all four cases, as had happened in Peru, military rulers yielded power peacefully—if not precisely voluntarily. They understood that they no longer had the political support to continue.

Challenges to New Democracies

Which are the principal challenges facing Latin America's new or restored democracies? On this question the two groups (ex-traditional authoritarian regimes and former modernizing military regimes) break into three: small countries close to the United States, Andean mountain democracies, and the newly-industrializing countries (NICs) of South America's Southern Cone.

The main problem of new democracies in Central America is the same principal problem of all the small states of Central America and the Caribbean have had throughout the past century: how to cope with the colossus of the North. The United States continually intervenes in its "backyard", usually for high-sounding motives, such as "democracy", which disguise less noble ones such as protecting the interests of multinational corporations like the United Fruit Company in Guatemala in 1954; ousting Panama's General Noriega in 1990, longtime American Central Intelligence Agency informant, but currently an embarrassment because of his blatant human rights violations, drug dealing, and increasingly

strident nationalism. Excepting Mexico, with a population of 82 million in 1987, all the Southern neighbours of the United States have less than ten million persons, and no realistic power resources of trade or (outside Cuba) military force which can protect them. Their major challenge is to avoid the ire (and perhaps the interest) of the United States, which continually intervenes on the side of traditional agro-export elites and the military. Costa Rica thus far has avoided North American intervention by maintaining a very small military and refusing US military aid, on the one hand, and avoiding loud "anti-Yanqui" (Yankee) rhetoric, however justified, on the other. Mexico, as mentioned earlier is large enough to deter military, if not economic, interference.

New and weak democracies in the Andean countries of Peru and Bolivia (some, although not I, would include Ecuador) face a classic problem of integrating economically backward, ethnically distinct, previously politically quiescent rural masses into a national polity dominated for centuries by urban and primary product exporter elites. Although ethnic cleavages are of relatively low salience in Latin America as compared to other developing areas, enough differences remain between rural Peruvians and Bolivians, clearly of Native American ancestry, and citydwellers, who identify with Spanish culture whatever their actual physical inheritance, to be a source of potentially increasing tension. If ethnicity becomes politicized, it will reinforce economic class cleavage, which is slowly achieving political salience. Peru's economy suffered terribly in the 1980s as a fallout of the debt crisis; by late July 1990 inflation approached 3000 per cent annually. The rural-urban cleavage manifests violently in two ways.

The first is through the Shining Path guerilla movement, a radical agrarian political sect founded by a disgruntled provincial philosophy professor and his students in the late 1970s. Admiring only Mao Tse Tung, Cambodia's Khymer Rouge, and Albania through late 1989, the Shining Path plans to abolish capitalism, industry, cities, and even money, reinstituting an idealized agrarian communalism supposed to be a restoration of the majestic Inca Empire destroyed by Spanish imperialism in the early sixteenth century. The Shining Path initially focussed its energies on political assassination of leftist politicians, but since the late 1980s increasingly has concentrated on disrupting the national economy, through dynamiting hydroelectric plants, highways, railroads, and major

government facilities and public buildings—and on attacking military targets. For almost a decade recruits to the Shining Path primarily were underemployed students and members of the middle class, particularly outside Lima, the nation's capital.

About five years ago, however, the Shining Path began to forge links with poor, illiterate peasants in the highland coca growing areas. The United States has pressured the Peruvian government to wage war against the coca growers, funding crop eradication programs which destroy the livelihood of entire mountain regions without providing support for transition to alternative crops, either for subsistence or market sales. Human rights abuses by the Army, recruited from the lower and lower middle classes of Peru's urban and Spanish-identified areas, against peasants, often Quechua speakers, also intensified. Beginning to unite against a common enemy, highland peasants receive military protection from the guerrillas and give a portion of their coca crop to the Shining Path leaders, who sell it to buy weapons.

Perhaps fortunately, central governments in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador—as well as in Colombia in the North—are themselves ambivalent about the coca trade. On the one hand, they sometimes prefer to ignore the traffic: first, because they don't see why their citizens should suffer because (comparatively) wealthy North Americans wish to buy drugs; second, sale of coca is an important, although not officially recorded, source of very scarce foreign exchange. Now that the International Monetary Fund has imposed extremely harsh economic stabilization programs on them, Andean governments are even less disposed to cooperate with the United States. As of July 1990 Peru has a new President Alberto Fujimori, who owes his election to widespread participation of the urban poor and who has a professional interest, as an agricultural specialist, in the problems of the rural areas. Thus far, he has refused American military aid to fight the coca growers and the Shining Path. One only can wish him well. Finding a means to bridge the countries' rural/urban rifts is Fujimori's and the Andean region's most urgent political problem, because otherwise terrorist violence, today in Peru, perhaps tomorrow in Bolivia will certainly spread.

The final group of new democracies—Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay—together with Mexico, comprise the most "modern" and industrialized countries of Latin America. Even Brazil, one of the largest countries in the world, both in terms of land area

(approximately the size of the continental United States) and population (141 million in 1987), has a population over 70 per cent urban, although with large numbers of unskilled, un-or under employed recent migrants from rural areas. All four countries had modernizing military regimes of the right which pursued high economic growth and, except for military *laissez faire* Chile, rapid industrialization. Under military rule each country ignored the political or civic rights of its middle classes, and trampled on the economic rights of the poor, in addition to continuing the tradition of denying them political and civic rights, or even symbolic political participation (with the exception of organized labor in Argentina). As was the case with the modernizing military regime of the left in Peru, redemocratization in the Southern Cone came comparatively peacefully, in response to loss of middle class support for rule by the generals when the long-term costs of their economic strategies became apparent. The four Southern Cone countries all borrowed abroad heavily, paying with inflation and collapse or wild disarray of their domestic financial sectors by the early 1980s.

The challenge for Latin America's newly-industrializing countries (NICs) is simultaneously to accomplish the following tasks: keep the economy from imploding under the strain of the beginning of the second decade of the region's worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s; integrate into the national polity large urban aggregations of angry citizens, who perceive themselves as having been for years unjustly denied of rights and jobs; find new jobs and status for the military, preventing renewed coup attempts while cutting military budgets; and fight to position themselves as advantageously as possible in the international economy, particularly with respect to international negotiations on trade and debt. None of these countries needs worry about its national unity; none today faces as serious internal insurgency; none is without economic and human resources. The problems of the Southern Cone resemble the problems of the poorer European countries. The Challenge of constructing deep respect for civilian, procedural government among both traditional elites and newly self-aware social groups perhaps is the most daunting and the hardest to achieve.

Lessons from and for India

Good reasons exist for Latin American policymakers and opinion leaders to concern themselves with developments in contempo-

rary India. India can be proud of its history of maintaining political democracy, despite tremendous strains, and therefore has the wisdom which could be of use to Latin American democratic leaders. Indian economic policy has been somewhat better at promoting more equal regional distribution and decentralized administration than has been the case almost anywhere in Latin America—even though the Indian Central Government's efforts have frequently been criticized as inadequate or misguided. An economic policy explicitly seeking distribution as well as growth no doubt has contributed to the maintenance of democracy. Indian traditions of democratic decision-making within political organizations also have an illustrious and informative history.

From the Indian side, the potential for great benefit exists from cooperation between India and Latin America, particularly with the larger, more industrial countries such as Brazil or Mexico. Both India and Brazil, for example, have similar interests in maintaining access to the latest technology in such fields as telecommunications and computers. The two are natural leaders of the developing world in scientific and technological research and in such international fora as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Latin America and South Asia are often affected similarly by international events, such as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990, and the American led economic embargo.¹² All Latin American nations face great pressure from the United States to cooperate with it in foreign policy, but Latin America's larger nations also have a strong desire to strike an independent course, especially in the area of South-South cooperation.

My final comments concern the theoretical insights which arise from the Latin America-India comparison on the supposed "pre-requisites" for political democracy in the developing world. Certain "truths" are immediately debunked. A common excuse made by Latin Americans for the lack of democracy in their countries is that they are too poor; widespread political participation, it is argued, requires near full literacy and levels of per capita income significantly higher than that in Guatemala (US \$950 in 1987), Peru (US \$ 1470 in 1987), or Brazil (US \$2020 the same year). Clearly, the case of India (with per capita income of US \$300) belies this reasoning, although no one would argue that poverty and a population lacking education and skills are an advantage for a developing democracy.

On the other hand, political analysts throughout the subcontinent tend to view ethnic and cultural unity as the perfect environment for political stability and democratic flowering; if only citizens were, for example, Indians first and members of a religious or linguistic group second, then politics would be less problematic. Both Brazil and Argentina exterminated or assimilated their populations of non-European origin centuries ago, but national unity has hardly yielded democracy. Paradoxically, it might even be argued that politically salient group identities teach traditional populations to participate in the clash of interests classically associated with liberal democracy, even where group identities initially spring from inherited criteria, such as religion, caste, race or language group, rather than ones based upon "modern, objective" criteria, such as occupation or class position. Latin America's authoritarian leaders have invariably claimed to speak for the nation, the motherland, a polity defined in semi-mystical terms. The phraseology of the corporate state denies both distinct ethnicities and objectively different economic interests of different groups. Therefore, those who would protest find the very act of dissent defined as illegitimate and are driven to seek violent redress outside the system.

Both Colombia and Peru today face urban terrorism and virtual warfare in significant regions of their jungle and/or mountainous areas, in each case due to fighting between security forces and drug traffickers. However, in Colombia the major leftist revolutionary movements are laying down their arms and forming political parties because they no longer believe electoral politics are rigged to deny them power. Peru's situation is much more ominous because revolutionary guerrillas there have no desire to participate in democratic elections. If the rural poor continue to be discriminated against and excluded from national politics, they may progress beyond a tactical alliance with the Shining Path, presently small in numbers, to a solid alliance in which their nascent group interests are tied to the overthrow of the political system, rather than to winning power within it. Corruption, nepotism, clientelism, favouring of one's group rather than having a national perspective—these admitted ills of Indian democracy began to appear as lesser evils when compared to the situation of many Latin American countries which have a well-developed national identity but weakly articulated group interests or political parties. Perhaps the grass always is greener on the other side of the fence.

References

1. Wariavwalla (1988) offers thoughtful comments on the barriers continued political authoritarianism might pose to future economic growth in the East Asian newly industrializing countries (NICs).
2. Newly installed authoritarian governments in Latin America, for example, invariably argue that the deposed democratic government was both corrupt and inefficient—themes being echoed by Pakistan's President today (August, 1990) as justifications for his dismissal of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.
3. A succinct, balanced discussion of elite bias in American democracy is in Wilson (1989, especially Chapters 9 and 15). Wilson gives particular emphasis to the role of an asymmetrical structure of costs (diffuse) and benefits (concentrated) in producing elite bias in public policies.
4. Stephens (1990) discusses this point at some length.
5. Waisman (1989) analyses alternative explanations for the fragility of Argentine democracy.
6. See, for example, Di Tella (1989).
7. See, for example, Wynia (1987).
8. Blasier (1987) offers a recent, reluctantly pessimistic, assessment of the influence of United States' policies with respect to the promotion of political democracy in Latin America. See also Schoultz (1987).
9. Greater detail on specific countries may be found in Diamond, et al., eds. (1989), or Cockcroft (1989).
10. The figure of 200,000 is from Jonathan Hartlyn, "Colombia: The Politics of Violence and Accommodation," in L. Diamond, et al., eds. (1989). The World Bank estimated Colombia's total population at 11.6 million in 1950. See *World Tables*, 2nd. ed. (Baltimore: Published for the World Bank by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 62.
11. Prior to the 1973 coup, Chile was the other nation of the region with a half-century (or more) long liberal democratic tradition. In both countries, elites strongly believed in democracy and in civilian control of the military, a consensus ever-so-slowly being constructed in democratic Argentina today, but rapidly reemerging in newly democratic Chile.
12. In July 1990, for example, both Brazil and India were receiving around 45 per cent of their petroleum imports from Kuwait and Iraq. While India had hundreds of thousands of citizens trapped, and Brazil only two or three hundred, both countries were involved in construction and technological cooperation in the Middle East and had long-term export contracts expected to bring in significant foreign exchange.

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