

Martín Tanaka (ed.), *La nueva coyuntura crítica en los países andinos* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2009), pp. 410, pb.

Much has been written in the last ten years about the problems of democratic governance in the Andean republics, not least in relation to varied responses to the prescriptions offered by the Washington Consensus. This volume brings together writings by some of the region's most prominent analysts to address the so-called 'democratic deficit' and what to do about it. The book's editor, Martín Tanaka, introduces the collection of articles by highlighting the notion of this being a 'critical juncture', a turning point at which 'one historical cycle ends and another opens itself up' (p. 11). And so it would seem, as the various countries of the region seek to provide answers – albeit in very different ways – to the shortcomings of the market-led reforms that dominated policymaking in the 1990s.

The book is the result of a symposium held in Lima in August 2006, and most of the chapters were revised during the course of 2007. The book was therefore assembled at a time when all of the five countries concerned – Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia – were undergoing presidential elections in which the limitations of the Washington Consensus were very much the subject of discussion. That these elections resulted in very different sorts of government – from Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador to Alan García in Peru (not to mention the re-election of Alvaro Uribe in Colombia and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela) – underlines the heterogeneous nature of the region's politics.

One of the issues with which this volume seeks to grapple is whether, beneath these different manifestations, there are common problems that are a consequence of a complex *desencuentro* between state and society. Faith in representative models of democracy has been shown to be seriously wanting in most of these countries, and new forms of political contestation have emerged as a consequence. But while there are clearly some common denominators, the experiences of these five countries over the last decade underline the many differences that exist.

The book is organised into five sections, two chapters apiece. The first looks at parties and patterns of representation. Carlos Meléndez seeks to explain the persistence of some historic parties, although most of these are today but a shadow of their former selves. Possibly the exception here is Colombia, where Felipe Botero and Juan Carlos Rodríguez argue that party reforms were successful in reducing fragmentation, but that this is not the same thing as creating strong parties.

The second section looks at instances of regime change, namely in Venezuela and Bolivia. Miriam Kornblith argues that since Chávez's election victory in 1998 the institutions, actors, rules, procedures and values of representative democracy have been eroded and that Chávez's desire to change the constitution betokens the installation of an authoritarian regime. Fernando Mayorga, writing at the height of anti-government protest against Morales in Bolivia, fears for the integrity of Bolivia as a state, given the existence of incompatible projects (ethnic versus regional) of subnational autonomy. In fact, Chávez's constitutional reforms were voted down, while Evo's were finally accepted following a last-minute political compromise.

The role of social movements is taken up in the third section. Mauricio Archilla highlights the impact of these in the coalescing of opposition to the Uribe government in Colombia, and the 'repertoire of collective actions that seek to democratise democracy' (p. 157). Carlos de la Torre, writing on Ecuador, stresses the country's

strong populist tradition and the way in which populism there is perceived as 'democratic'. There are relatively few people, he argues, who would regard democracy as being just about installing liberal political institutions and the rule of law.

The links between economic liberalisation and democracy are taken up in the fourth section. Roberto Laserna, writing about Bolivia, highlights two economic concepts that he regards as key in limiting the country's democratic potential. The first is what he calls the *ch'enko productivo*, the persistence of a structurally heterogeneous economy with small-scale producers opposed to the spread of capitalism. The second is a culture of rent seeking that gives pride of place to influencing state decisions at the expense of public policy. Simón Pachano underlines how he sees progress towards neoliberalism in Ecuador being repeatedly blocked by vested interests (not just on the Left but also among business groups) and by the inability of the state to impose its will on the wider society.

The last two chapters deal with ongoing challenges. Augusto Varas discusses the way in which the fiscal benefits of the commodities boom have created new problems because of the expectations and redistributive conflicts surrounding public spending and the difficulties facing state institutions in rising to the redistributive challenge. Scott Mainwaring, the only non-Latino contributor, concludes by arguing that the problem of democracy in the Andes (and elsewhere) lies not so much with political parties and intermediation but with the shortcomings of the state in providing what citizens require: social and physical security.

This is a volume that provides important inputs both to an understanding of the politics of the Andean region and to processes of democratisation more widely. As is often the way with collections of conference papers, however, the disparate arguments presented need to be drawn together; a concluding chapter would have been helpful in this respect. Also, while the more general chapters allude to Peru, it is striking that there is no chapter specifically devoted to Peru. Perhaps, since the book is edited and published in Lima, this was thought unnecessary, but the contrasts between Peru and its neighbours with respect to the issues dealt with here are highly instructive, not just to foreigners but to Peruvians themselves.

*Latin American Centre, Oxford*

JOHN CRABTREE

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 42 (2010). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10000726

Jerome Branche (ed.), *Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida, 2008), pp. ix + 301, \$69.95, hb.

Despite recent shifts towards perspectives that attempt to address indigeneity and blackness within a single frame, it is still not common to find texts that adopt this agenda in a continental sweep. Branche's collection helps cross the black/indigenous gulf with an accessible and engaging set of essays that will surely be widely used in courses on race and ethnicity in Latin America. Although most of the chapters, of which six focus on blackness and four on indigenouness, do not cross the traditional black/indigenous divide, and Branche's introductory chapter is the only one to engage with indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and their relationships with each other, the book as a whole achieves an encompassing vision. Branche is a literature person, and this is reflected among the contributors: seven