

POLITICAL CULTURES IN THE ANDES

1750–1950



EDITED BY NILS JACOBSEN AND CRISTÓBAL ALJOVÍN DE LOSADA

**POLITICAL CULTURES
IN THE ANDES,
1750–1950**

**A BOOK IN THE SERIES
LATIN AMERICA OTHERWISE:
LANGUAGES, EMPIRES, NATIONS**

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POLITICAL CULTURES IN THE ANDES 1750–1950

EDITED BY Nils Jacobsen

AND Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada

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ABOUT THE SERIES

Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations is a critical series. It aims to explore the emergence and consequences of concepts used to define “Latin America” while at the same time exploring the broad interplay of political, economic, and cultural practices that have shaped Latin American worlds. Latin America, at the crossroads of competing imperial designs and local responses, has been construed as a geocultural and geopolitical entity since the nineteenth century. This series provides a starting point to redefine Latin America as a configuration of political, linguistic, cultural, and economic intersections that demands a continuous reappraisal of the role of the Americas in history, and of the ongoing process of globalization and the relocation of people and cultures that have characterized Latin America’s experience. *Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations* is a forum that confronts established geocultural constructions, that rethinks area studies and disciplinary boundaries, that assesses convictions of the academy and of public policy, and that, correspondingly, demands that the practices through which we produce knowledge and understanding about and from Latin America be subject to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

This collection of essays examines the cultural politics of nation-building in the Andes. Comparisons extend across countries—Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia—and across time, from the half century before independence through the middle of the twentieth century. Its focus is on the cultural tensions generated by the extraordinary transformations involved in state-making; in other words, it looks at struggles between and across ethnic groups, genders, and the Andes’ few elite and many subaltern peoples.

We have no comparative studies of this kind which make clear both the significance of the cultural dimensions of power and the varied courses that cultural politics can take. The volume

as a whole is a strong argument that Andean politics cannot be understood without a careful analysis of its cultural forms, of the ideological and social complexities through which state power is represented, expressed, built, rejected, challenged, and reworked. It is a strong argument that contemporary questions regarding the direction and the hope of Andean politics must be grounded in its turbulent cultural past.

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Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada
Champaign-Urbana and Lima, April 2004

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE ON
POLITICAL CULTURES, ESPECIALLY FOR
THE MODERN HISTORY OF THE ANDES

Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada

It is hardly surprising that the study of political cultures has gained in popularity over the past decade. A confluence of major political events and re-orientations of intellectual currents has once again focused attention on the production of consent and dissent in all types of political regimes, while questioning mechanistic linkages between economics and politics. The fall of the Soviet Union, the wave of democratization (however shallow), the resurgence of ethnic nationalism and communalism, and, among intellectual currents, the fall from grace of Marxism, “the linguistic turn,” and the broad-based critique of Eurocentrism signaled some of the most salient trends of the late twentieth century on a global scale. In the case of Latin America, the winding down of the region’s “thirty years war” (Jorge Castañeda) between military-authoritarian regimes and guerrilla movements, along with the upsurge in “new social movements” of women, shantytown dwellers, and indigenous and black groups, put issues of democracy, inclusion in the political arena, and the role of civil society at center stage.

Political culture assumes that culture provides meaning to human ac-

tions. We understand culture as a malleable ensemble of symbols, values, and norms that constitute the signification linking individuals to social, ethnic, religious, political, and regional communities. A pragmatic political culture perspective does not a priori exclude other approaches to the understanding of historical and contemporary politics, such as political economy and institutional analysis.

Still, behavior of individuals and groups cannot be derived in a linear fashion from interests or institutional constraints. As the case studies in this book will show, human actions are always involved in a complex language of symbols and values that make them intelligible to self and others. In focusing on the meaning with which public symbols, rituals, discourses, sequences of actions, and institutions are imbued by individuals and groups, the political culture perspective illuminates the production of consent and dissent to regimes, parties, movements, or political leaders. It yields insights into the mechanics by which politics sustain themselves or are challenged or toppled.

Relations of power undergird any political process. They necessarily draw on subjective, cultural, *and* interest and institutional dimensions.¹ In the modern era, publicly wielded power, as well as the key dimensions of a polity—citizenship, laws, institutions—is related to the state. Thus the nature of the state, the nature of civil society, and the nature of their contested relationship are crucial subjects for the political-culture perspective. The way a state operates and is institutionalized sets the framework of politics and shapes political practices and identities.

The kind of perspective on political culture advocated here is helpful for bringing into a common frame of discussion various conceptual approaches to nation-state formation and the construction of power in Latin America, approaches which often fail to communicate with each other. To simplify, we can identify two broad clusters of approaches: the “Gramscians,” foregrounding the issues of hegemony, subalternity, and postcolonialism; and on the other hand, the “Tocquevillians,” focusing on civil society, the public sphere, the ideological and institutional nature of political regimes, and citizenship.² While scholars working in the Tocquevillian perspective have tended to focus on urban topics, those working in the Gramscian perspective have focused on indigenous and black populations and how their values, practices, and institutional traditions related to and interacted with those of elites. While the Tocquevillians tend to highlight the emancipatory aspects of political modernity, the Gramscians tend to highlight the manner in which

subaltern groups suffered exclusion and repression through elite groups, especially during the period of nation-state formation. The concept of political culture can serve as neutral ground for practitioners of both approach clusters as it privileges issues important for each. This book brings together contributions from scholars on either side of this conceptual divide, and includes scholars trying to bridge that divide.

This book pursues three goals: First, to provide historical depth for current debates about transitions to and ongoing redefinitions of democracy in Latin America. Issues of democracy, authoritarianism, citizens' rights, and the exclusion or inclusion of people based on notions of "race," ethnicity, gender, and class have been at the forefront of political debates and social movements in the region since the waning days of the colonial regime some two hundred years ago. These struggles have profoundly imprinted the values and practices of diverse groups and have influenced many institutions at issue in today's debates.

Our second goal is to advance an understanding of the formation of modern Andean political cultures through state-of-the-art case studies covering the two formative centuries of nation-state formation in the region. We reject the notion of one specifically Andean political culture. Our case studies from four Andean nations—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia—demonstrate how even a focus on the same issue—for example, the deployment of race for the definition of citizenship—can have distinct meanings, depending on specific constellations of power and ethnic identity. The volume clarifies which issues have been prevalent in the construction of Andean nation-states.

Finally, we endeavor to exemplify the rich potential of a pragmatic political culture perspective for deciphering the processes involved in the formation, reconstruction, or dissolution of historical polities. The carefully crafted case studies, a comparativist conceptual essay, and the broad reflections in this introduction will help clarify the concept of political culture.

This volume cannot cover all major themes and issues of Andean political cultures between 1750 and 1950. Themes that do not receive the attention they deserve include electoral campaigns, working-class movements, popular religiosity, and the meaning of laws. Even so, the volume's broad chronological, spatial, and thematic coverage gives greater precision to the specificities of Andean political cultures within the comparative frame of Latin America. In this introduction we trace the history of the notion of political culture, discuss specific problems for the modern political culture perspec-

tive, and outline major issues of Andean political cultures on which scholars have focused to date.

THE HISTORY OF THE NOTION OF POLITICAL CULTURE

The modern scholarly use of the term “political culture” first appears in an article published by Gabriel Almond in 1956.³ However, its subject matter has been debated at least since Plato and Aristotle sought to relate certain virtues or values to regime types. Among modern social scientists, Max Weber unquestionably has been most influential in preparing the later formal concept of political culture. He inserted culture (substantively) and meaning (methodologically) into the analysis of societies and greatly influenced the North American social scientists who pioneered the approach. Although for Weber most actions were prompted by material or ideal interests identifiable in terms of groups (class, religion, region, caste, ideology, etc.), he conceived them as molded and processed by customs, traditions, and values through which each individual derived meaning (*Sinn*). As Raymond Aron put it, for Weber “the contradiction between explanation by interests and the explanation by ideas is meaningless.”⁴ In Weber’s scheme of classifying action from a subjective perspective, goal-oriented rational pursuit of group interests was only one in a wide range of potential individual motives for action that also included hatred or friendship and custom or ritual.⁵ Moreover, Weber retained Hegel’s distinction between civil society and the state. He emphasized that “the belief in a legitimate order differs in kind from the ‘coalescence of material and ideal interests’ in society.”⁶ A state with claims of legitimacy on its subjects or citizens is not just “the executive committee of the bourgeoisie” or of any other dominant group. Its stable functioning needs explanation regarding its relation to society that goes beyond ascertaining interests.

The conjuncture that gave rise to the concept of political culture occurred from World War II to 1960. The Nazi dictatorship and its modern politics of irrationality and genocide discredited both liberal and Marxist notions about the inevitability of achieving bourgeois-democratic or socialist societies in the “most advanced” nation-states. The breakup of the colonial empires and the foundation of new nations across Africa and Asia urgently raised the issue of whether democratic governance depended on more than economic development.⁷ One school of thought, at the intersection of

psychology, anthropology, and political science, “sought to explain recruitment to political roles, aggression and warfare, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, fascism and the like in terms of the socialization of children—infant nursing and toilet-training patterns, parental disciplinary patterns and family structure.”⁸ Another literature—with a troubling heritage of geographic and racial determinism—attempted to establish distinct “national characters” through statistical definitions of “modal characters” showing a nation’s predominant value and behavior patterns based on methods of child rearing, family structures, and religious beliefs.⁹

The initial political culture approach arose in close proximity to those literatures, yet “in reaction against . . . [their] psychological and anthropological reductionism.”¹⁰ One seminal study launched the first wave of political culture studies: *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963).¹¹ Worried about the threat of totalitarianism and the stability of the officially democratic political systems of West Germany, Italy, Japan, and the new nations of Africa and Asia, Almond and Verba sought to explore the characteristics of the political culture best suited to strengthening democratic regimes. The authors reacted also against the institutional and constitutional orientation then dominating the field of comparative politics. If democratic political systems were to take root in continental Europe, Africa, and Asia, more than a transfer of institutions was needed, because “a democratic form of participatory political system requires as well a political culture consistent with it.”¹²

The authors defined political culture as “specifically political orientations—attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system.”¹³ They developed behaviorist methods to test the relation between political attitudes and the political system as a whole. Based on Talcott Parsons’s classification of action (cognitive, affective, evaluative) and Almond’s own systems-theoretical approach, the authors designed a matrix scoring the attitudes of individuals to a variety of structural elements of political systems. Depending on how the interviewed citizens responded to elaborate questionnaires, a political culture could be classified as

parochial (political orientations not separated from religious and social orientations, little expectation of change initiated from political system; example: Ottoman Empire)

subject (frequent orientation toward differentiated political system and its “output aspects,” but hardly any orientation to “input aspects,” i.e., bottom-up demands on political system, and to self’s active participation; example: imperial Germany)
participant (orientation toward input and output aspect of political system, and to activist role of self in the polity).¹⁴

These were ideal types; contemporary political cultures usually would be mixtures of these types. Older—parochial or subject—orientations often were not fully relinquished as citizens adopted additional orientations. In fact, the authors saw the currently most adequate political culture for sustaining a democratic political system, the *civic culture* of the United States and the United Kingdom, as a “mixed culture, combining parochial, subject and participant orientations.” This specific mix of orientations helped balance activity and passivity toward the political system allowing citizens to participate, but also to withdraw into quiet lives in the community. Yet, in other mixes, the ghosts of the past could produce regressive effects.¹⁵

While Almond and Verba accepted diversity within political cultures through specific “subcultures” and “role cultures,” these were subsumed within the aggregate political culture, without providing a force for change.¹⁶ On the critical issue as to whether this approach to political culture could *explain* why certain political systems were democratic and others not, all the authors would claim that it “demonstrating the probability of some connection between attitudinal patterns and systemic qualities.”¹⁷ While their behavioral approach called for radical empirical verifiability or falsifiability, their systems-theoretical approach required correlations—or, in Weberian terminology, elective affinities—rather than logically and chronologically sequential cause-effect relations.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, this approach to political culture spawned numerous case studies and further theoretical elaborations among political scientists.¹⁸ But it soon ran into heavy opposition, and, by the 1980s, had gone out of fashion among political scientists.¹⁹ Almond himself blamed this development on “reductionisms of the left and the right,” to wit, various types of Marxist analyses and rational choice theory. For these approaches, the study of attitudes and values could contribute little to explaining political structures and processes.²⁰ Certainly the loss of a broader optimistic con-

sensus around modernization theory undermined the appeal of the political culture approach during the 1970s. Yet, whatever the merits of Almond and Verba's model, it had serious flaws, partly rooted in the 1960s grand theory approach to political science, which entailed

- an evolutionist, ahistorical tendency in the analysis of modernization
- a static model of cultural traits
- a behaviorist bent and reliance on quantitative data for determining subjective, cultural phenomena
- a bias toward one particular model of Western political culture
- an indeterminacy of cause and effect between political culture and political system²¹

Although Almond and Verba, along with many of the comparative politics and societies theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, came out of the Weberian tradition, they bent that tradition in a certain direction. They weakened Weber's own intricate linkage between "explaining" (analysis) and "understanding" (interpretation), between historical contingency and social science modeling, between cultural and socioeconomic causation. By trying to turn the study of the subjective in politics into a "hard," empirical science, this approach to politics called forth reactions espousing entirely different methods and epistemologies.

Since the 1980s, political culture has become a prominent field of inquiry in history and anthropology. These disciplines were in the grip of powerful new or rejuvenated theories and epistemologies, which gave a different orientation to historical and anthropological studies of political culture. We shall name five of these new approaches:

- the "linguistic turn"²²
- redefinitions of culture from a social science category to a humanities category, and, in a second step, from an essentially unified, substantive entity to a more fragmented and processual concept²³
- the critique of "Eurocentrism," associated, on the one hand, with studies of subalternity and postcolonialism,

and, on the other, with a critique of the notions of
 progress and social evolution
 the turn toward hegemony and power relations as central
 to understanding both state–civil society relations and
 relations between various social, ethnic, and gender
 groups
 the rediscovery of the “public,” and of civil society as
 central variables for modern polities²⁴

These theoretical turns increased the interest of historians and anthropologists in the notion of political culture. In their writings the concept differs considerably from the model developed by political scientists during the 1950s and 1960s. In U.S. history, the breakthrough for political culture came with the discovery of “republicanism”: values and cultural orientations stressing public virtues over inherited privilege that originated in the Renaissance underpinned the norms of Jeffersonian revolutionaries and Jacksonian working-class democrats.²⁵ One political scientist noted admiringly that American historians of political culture escaped “the necessity of choosing between interests and culture as explanations, instead using political culture to transcend that dichotomy.”²⁶ For example, Gordon Wood’s 1992 magisterial work, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, analyzed the shifting political culture of the thirteen colonies during the eighteenth century by demonstrating how various classes of people construed the meaning of their political rights, their social condition, and the legitimate exercise of power. Interconnection between social, political, and cultural dimensions also underlies Lynn Hunt’s approach to the French Revolution. “The values, expectations and implicit rules that expressed and shaped collective intentions and actions,” she wrote in 1986, “are what I call the political culture of the Revolution; that political culture provided the logic of revolutionary political action.”²⁷

Other proponents of a political culture approach to the French Revolution have committed to a full-blown cultural/semiotic methodology. Keith Baker has penned the most frequently cited definition of the concept:

[Political culture] sees politics as about making claims; as the activity through which individuals and groups in any society articulate, negotiate, implement, and enforce the competing claims. . . . It comprises the definitions of the relative subject

positions from which individuals and groups may (or may not) legitimately make claims one upon another, and therefore of the identity and boundaries of the community to which they belong. It constitutes the meanings of the terms in which these claims are framed, the nature of the contexts to which they pertain, and the authority of principles according to which they are made binding. It shapes the constitutions and powers of the agencies and procedures by which contentions are resolved. . . . Thus political authority is, in this view, essentially a matter of linguistic authority.²⁸

Baker's linguistic approach limits human agency, but does not deny it. "Human agents find their being within language; they are, to that extent, constrained by it. Yet they are constantly working with it and on it, playing at its margins, exploiting its possibilities, and extending the play of its potential meanings, as they pursue their purposes and projects."²⁹ This heterogeneity of languages, localized in different political traditions or regional histories, is part of the study of political culture.³⁰ The reading of a symbol or a discourse can be subversive or favor the status quo, depending on who receives it and what s/he does with it. Many social movements build a contestatory discourse out of the official one. For instance, the republican discourse of citizenship, reason, and law has had two different sides, one subversive and the other conservative.

Still, this semiotic approach to political culture, staying for "explanations" of change purely within systems of linguistic or other types of symbols, opens itself up to the charge of "cultural determinism."³¹ As Emilia Viotti da Costa has recently lamented, "the result of the shift from one theoretical position [scientistic Marxism] to another was an inversion: we simply moved from one reductionism to another, from economic to cultural or linguistic reductionism. To one type of reification we have opposed another. Both are equally unsatisfactory."³² A pragmatic perspective on political culture seeks to avoid this reductionism.

POLITICAL CULTURES IN THE ANDES: ISSUES AND DEBATES

Andean scholars took up cultural approaches to the study of politics once again after the early 1980s. Influenced by French debates about *mentalité*,

Peruvian historians Alberto Flores Galindo and Manuel Burga developed the notion of an “Andean utopia.” They understood this as a unique blend of Andean and European social and political projects, emerging out of the overlay of the Andean notion of repeated *pachacutis* (cataclysms of cosmic proportions) and Judaeo-Christian linear eschatology. From the early seventeenth century to the present, repeated eruptions of Andean utopian projects used the Inca past as a model for an ideal future polity, adapted to ongoing economic, political, and cultural change.³³ Even before Flores Galindo and Burga had published on Andean utopia, a heated debate about indigenous peasants’ engagement with the Peruvian nation in the context of the devastating War of the Pacific and its aftermath had opened up a culturalist perspective on republican politics.³⁴

The concern with the Incas for modern-day political struggles is primarily a Peruvian perspective, much less important in Ecuador and Bolivia, and virtually absent in Colombia. In Bolivia a cultural perspective first arose around bold new interpretations of indigenous movements fighting for economic and political rights since the late-colonial period. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui criticized conventional Marxist and modernization theory analyses of “peasant revolts” as sudden “expressive” outbursts lacking realistic “instrumental” strategies for achieving their far-fetched goals. Rivera showed how the altiplano’s Aymara “peasants” and their leaders had repeatedly organized their struggles around real and invented traditions of their communities and macroethnic groups. Rather than weakness, it showed their strength that they had taken on the white and *misti* (mestizo) authorities and ruling groups in their cantons, provinces, and the entire republic, *on their [the Andeans’] own terms*, that is, stepping outside the frame of reference prescribed by the colonial and republican regimes.³⁵ More broadly, the Taller de Historia Oral Andina (THOA) by the late 1980s began to uncover and reconstruct the vision of Bolivia’s highland indigenous groups of their own history under colonialism and republicanism. Simultaneously, THOA sought to strengthen that autonomous consciousness and organizing capacity among the Aymara and Quechua communities.³⁶ Not for the first time, grassroots organizing among Andeans and elite intellectual debates were closer to each other in Bolivia than in Peru.

In Ecuador as well, scholars first introduced cultural perspectives into the study of politics in the context of the struggle of the indigenous peoples from the Oriente and the highlands for autonomy and land rights within a

multicultural nation, a struggle that became surprisingly intense in July of 1990.³⁷ Deeply influenced by French poststructuralist social and cultural theory, Andrés Guerrero published a series of important studies deconstructing semiotic systems of representing “the Indian” in Ecuadorian administrative practice and elite discourse. Administrative institutions and practices of the early postcolonial republic disempowered the ethnic authorities and their political space. During the late nineteenth century, liberalism imposed its political imaginary onto indigenous leaders and their projects, turning their discourse into “ventriloquist speech.” The elites’ discourse showed telling continuities in their construction of poor helpless “Indians” in need of salvation by paternalistic hacendados and the civilizing mission of the nation-state.³⁸

Colombian scholars took up the political culture perspective between the mid-1980s and early 1990s focusing on the issue of political violence and the relation of civil society to the state. At the time, political elites and the Colombian public increasingly felt that the institutions of the republic were failing and “the only solution was to refound the state.”³⁹ The resurgence of a multifaceted *violencia* and the ineffectiveness and corruption of the judicial and executive branches of government persuaded politicians to enter into a process of deliberating a new constitution, which was promulgated in 1991. Scholars began to ask new questions about the connections of violence to a broad array of regional and national political institutions, practices, and attitudes. They sought to understand the perceived weakness of Colombian civil society that had failed to translate the long tradition of multiparty elections and strong regional power sharing into effective democracy and rule of law. The new constitution did take up the human rights of the republic’s indigenous groups and large Afro-Colombian constituency. Yet Colombian scholars were more hesitant than those of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia to incorporate the issues of the racial order and remnants of the colonial caste system into their discussions of the nation’s political culture.⁴⁰ These issues would be introduced more forcefully by foreign scholars.⁴¹

Intense communications among scholars from the Andean region, Europe, and North America, as well as the politics of scholarly training between the North Atlantic and Latin American regions, have led to a broadening range of issues studied from a political culture perspective. As a result, our understanding of Andean politics during the past 250 years now looks considerably different from the notions developed by several generations of

historians and social scientists until the 1980s. Liberal, nationalist, and Marxist approaches to politics in the Andes had defined normative trajectories of state power, nation building, the development of the rule of law, and the interplay between political institutions and civil society, derived from a limited set of idealized North Atlantic models. They had portrayed the failures in the trajectories of the Andean republics—the violence, political corruption, weak and routinely subverted institutions, the horrific levels of poverty wracking the region until today, the gendered nature of power structures, the racist and social exclusiveness—as deficits and breakdowns from those prescribed models.

The political culture perspective has helped to historicize those models and associated discourses, practices, and power constellations, and opens the view to the plasticity of each historical moment. We are beginning to perceive different futures and trajectories from the past embraced by various actors during critical conjunctures and over the long stretches of quiet life, work, and struggle in communities, confraternities, mines, sugar *ingenios*, factories, tenements, *chicherias* (Andean pubs), barracks, mutual aid societies, fire brigades, schools, and all the other spaces of political socialization. The political culture perspective has been instrumental in getting beyond an image of modern Andean political history as the boringly repetitive struggle of various elite and military sectors battling it out for control of the state. In that worn-out vision, Andean farmers, other popular groups, and women only appeared as victims, clients, or bystanders. The focus on attitudes and values of different social, ethnic, and gender groups, on rituals and practices in the political arena and the public sphere, emphasizes their agency. The best work in the political culture perspective on the Andes highlights the interaction of attitudes, norms, and practices regarding the political sphere with changing institutions, structures, and interests.

The literature to date has focused on a limited number of topics and periods of Andean political cultures. Not surprisingly, the indigenous experience under imperial Spanish and republican national rule has been a focal point of scholarship. The roots of this literature lie in the Andean anthropology and ethnohistory boom associated with John Murra, Tom Zuidema, María Rostworowski, Franklin Pease, and their students. From different theoretical vantage points they sought to decipher the functioning and inner logic of “Andean” society and culture.⁴² Between the late 1970s and late 1980s, a related scholarship on “Indian resistance” grew out of a contestatory

socioeconomic ethnohistory on Andean peoples. Karen Spalding was one of the first to apply Murra's analytical tools—reciprocity, redistribution, and vertical intraethnic exchange—to the analysis of postconquest Andean communities, their continuities, and ruptures in terms of society and economy, but also of authority structures and religion.⁴³ Tristan Platt inserted even the most “traditional” Andean communities into the field of politics and nation-state formation by emphasizing the effect of different state policies on Chayanta's communities—from the colonial “compact” to the disentanglement of communal property and free trade in grains after 1874–78.⁴⁴

During the 1980s the literature on indigenous resistance and rebellion gradually shifted emphasis from stressing economic and social issues to emphasizing the cultural logic behind the mobilization of Andean communities.⁴⁵ Steve Stern's 1987 edited volume, significantly titled *Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, contained diverse perspectives on peasant agency, ranging from political economy and social network analysis to full-blown semiotic and culturalist interpretations such as those by Jan Szeminski and Frank Salomon. In the introduction Stern himself set the tone by merging political economy with the logic of historically specific Andean notions of legitimate rule in eighteenth-century peasant mobilizations.⁴⁶

Since the late 1980s, the culturalist turn has taken this scholarship considerably further by giving weight to indigenous political projects and agency. Anthropologists have most boldly asserted different, partly autonomous trajectories for Andean peoples' postconquest and postcolonial political imaginaries. Joanne Rappaport has shown how the Paez of Colombia's Cauca region constructed their own postconquest identity through oral and written memory, seemingly merging the two, and through these processes repeatedly put forth autonomous political projects.⁴⁷ In his ambitious ethnography and history of the Bolivian altiplano's K'ulta “people,” Thomas Abercrombie uses the notion of “social memory” to suggest how the community has constantly regenerated its own cultural, social, and political identity, sharply delimited from misti and *cholo* outsiders through cultural practices and asymmetrical power constellations. At the same time, the K'ultas have engaged the Hispanic-dominated power structure and culture of the colonial regime and the Bolivian nation. This involved the K'ulta in a Bolivian national “intercultural,” participating willy-nilly in asymmetrical power relations and symbolic and material exchanges.⁴⁸ Both Rappaport and Abercrombie fully incorpo-

rate the dynamic changes of values and practices underlying native peoples' political cultures. Yet, more than most historians, they insist on an essential wholesomeness (not to say separateness) of native polities within Hispanized colonial and national states.

Much work about native peoples within Andean political cultures focuses on negotiation, compacts, issues of inclusion and exclusion, on the one hand, and representations of race and racial orders on the other. A number of scholars—often associated with the Yale school of Latin American history—take a Gramscian approach to subaltern studies, highlighting the vital political role Andean peoples have played in both sustaining and subverting colonial and national orders.⁴⁹ They stress increasing internal differentiation among indigenous groups (often explained as class formation), alliances of native elites with Hispanic power contenders, and the vital role of “organic intellectuals” for “counterhegemonic projects” of Andeans. Most importantly, they have highlighted the diminished political autonomy of Andean indigenous peoples as nation-states consolidated in the second half of the nineteenth century. Florencia Mallon has suggested that in the crises of post-colonial nation-state formation in Peru, certain groups of Andeans elaborated a national project of their own. Obligated to forge alliances with mobilized peasants, Hispanic elite sectors made concessions to subaltern national imaginaries. But in the crises' aftermath, Peruvian elites repressed their erstwhile allies. Mallon and others writing in this vein portray a stark choice of trajectories for Latin American postcolonial regimes: “hegemonic rule” based on inclusion and partial acceptance of subaltern groups' demands, or repression to prop up exclusivist, neocolonial regimes.⁵⁰

Authors differ widely on what precisely makes a regime hegemonic.⁵¹ Alternative elite policies toward indigenous peoples are equally problematic: the liberal dismantling of ethnic political authorities and institutions, on the one hand, and, on the other, the nationalist *indigenista* policies, reemerging since the 1890s, which inscribed racialized images of “Indians” in protective legislation, including the recognition of communal landholding. Moreover, the engagement of republican politics by Andean communities did not erupt suddenly in the crises of nation-state formation. Recent scholarship shows it to be an ongoing process bringing both losses—e.g., divisive politics within the communities and between them—and gains. New forms of association first promoted by liberals and later by anarchists, socialists, communists, populists, and Catholic Action groups in some regions strengthened communal identities and native social movements.⁵²

The place of native peoples in Andean postcolonial politics also depended on how they weathered the Bourbon civilizing project and what role they assumed during the insurgencies fought for independence from Spain. Apart from demographic tendencies and economic pressures, this varied considerably between Andean territories according to the strength of communal institutions and their centrality for the colonial state and elites: generally greater in the south (from central Peru through the Bolivian altiplano) than in the north. Indigenous political projects and multicultural alliances with significant native participation and leadership were increasingly repressed. Yet in many places native authorities and commoners developed a new culture of politics, imbuing updated notions of ancient rights with ritual practices and meaning influenced by the Enlightenment.⁵³

People of African descent also played a strong role in Andean political cultures, especially before the 1850s. Enslavement had largely deprived them of the corporate privileges and organization that made native Andeans such formidable factors in the statecraft of colonial and republican Andean political elites.⁵⁴ But in urban and rural areas of Colombia's Atlantic coast and Cauca Valley, Esmeraldas, Ecuador, and along Peru's entire coast they deployed autonomous organizing activities—in guilds, religious brotherhoods, and *cabildos*, autonomous hamlets, maroon societies, and bandit groups—that made them forces to be reckoned with. Recent scholarship has shown how they engaged exclusive politics and laws through contesting Hispanic honor codes, assuming important roles in the late-colonial and independence-era militias, forging alliances with elite political factions, fighting in urban electoral campaigns, and taking emancipation from slavery into their own hands.⁵⁵

After 1850, liberal elite race politics posed a difficult political juncture for people of African descent. Racial imaginaries of the national elites of Colombia on the one hand, and Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia on the other, took different courses after emancipation. In Colombia the liberals embraced the notion of creating an ever whiter Hispanic-Andean mestizo nation through “breeding out” the native populations in the central highlands. The large Afro-Colombian populations were seen as dangerous outsiders, to be marginalized and repressed, or their existence to be denied, wherever possible.⁵⁶ In the other Andean republics elites more thoroughly expunged people of African descent from their imagined nation, while wavering on the “Indian problem” between liberal “civilizing” projects and neo-traditional protection policies. The literature on elite representations of race in the

postcolonial Andes is contributing much to the understanding of shifting racial orders between the liberal era and the era of interventionist states, with their rhetoric of populist nationalism.⁵⁷

Gender norms and their negotiation or subversion have played a vital role in the construction of power in the Andean area. In complex association with Catholic doctrine and popular religiosity, norms for proper behavior of men and women formed a metaphorical linkage between notions of individual honor and morality and the construction of legitimate power. During the late-colonial period and the early decades after independence, public roles for respectable women were largely circumscribed to the sphere of church activities. Yet the late-colonial insurrections, the revolutions for independence, and the civil wars of the postindependence decades saw women assuming critical, quasi-public roles in local and national contests over power. Contemporary respectable opinion lionized pure virtuous women martyrs for independence. But it treated political activity, such as that of Micaela Bastidas and Bartolina Sisa during the Great Rebellion (1780–82), and “La Mariscala” (the strong-willed wife of Peruvian President Agustín Gamarra), with derision or moral condemnation. Only later popular, nationalist, and feminist currents of opinion underscored their importance. As Sarah Chambers has shown, while women were excluded from formal political participation, their role as behind-the-scene advisors, as friends giving advice from a womanly perspective, could be accepted and effective.⁵⁸ Against narrowly drawn elite norms, women’s protagonism for the defense of community and family against abusive authorities, hacendados, or traders and the injustice of slavery had a long tradition among people of color in the Andes.⁵⁹

The nineteenth-century “domestication” of women, along with patriarchal republicanism, has also been discussed in the literature on the Andes. Yet the transition was not as drastic as in some of the North Atlantic nations for which these models were developed. Andean liberalisms invested polarized gender roles with new urgency for the formation of the nation and for achieving modernity. While removing some of the legal and educational impediments to women’s civic participation, elite opinion assigned women special functions around the moral progress of the nation.⁶⁰ The literature suggests that by 1920, strategic sectors of popular women—as market vendors and *chicheras*—confronted political authorities and male power structures by appealing to their importance for the nation, social justice, and notions of occupational “respect” that contravened elite racialized honor codes.⁶¹

The complex relationship between republicanism, constitutional rule, and personalist, authoritarian regimes is crucial for political culture research in the Andes. For a long time, citizens in the Andean republics did not *automatically* view military or civilian caudillos as antidemocratic. While formalistic Andean constitutional studies have a long tradition, to date few scholars have approached the republics' legal and constitutional trajectories from a social and cultural perspective. For the colonial period, John Leddy Phelan's studies of bureaucracy, law, patrimonial rule, and society in seventeenth-century Quito and of the linkage between social movement and defense of "constitutional" rights in Nueva Granada's Comunero rebellion of 1780 were pioneering.⁶² For the republican period, Fernando Trazegnies' notion of "traditional modernization" highlights the repeated Andean practice of bringing legal codes up to the most "modern" standard (often defined by foreign elites) as a way to buttress entrenched power constellations and socioethnic orders.⁶³

François-Xavier Guerra's *Modernidad e independencias* shifted emphasis in Latin American political history by combining constitutional issues, political philosophy, and ideology with the study of sociability and the public sphere. Guerra helps us understand the new polities in relation to the liberal ideology expressed through the constitution and political practice.⁶⁴ Recent studies have shown for Peru and Bolivia that the justification of most nineteenth-century revolutions was the defense of the constitution. Caudillos routinely claimed that they wanted to found a stable, truly republican system and accused their predecessors of despotism and fraudulent elections.⁶⁵ Other studies provide insight into the social and cultural construction of caudillo regimes: the centrality of coalition building, gaining control of local spaces through hierarchies of subaltern authorities, and expressing the expectations and understandings of popular groups.⁶⁶

Since the 1990s, electoral studies have become important for understanding nineteenth-century Latin American politics. Previously, scholars had seen most pre-1930 elections as rigged elite affairs with miniscule popular participation, devoid of any consequence. Much of that criticism is justified. Nevertheless, elections created a public space and forced caudillos and oligarchic parties to launch political campaigns and organizations.⁶⁷ By the 1870s, Peruvian politicians put much effort into electoral campaigns and many mestizos, people of African descent, and native Andeans participated even if they could not vote.⁶⁸ Elections were the only way to acquire legal and legitimate power in the postcolonial Andean republics.

A field of increasing importance for Andean political cultures concerns the public sphere and civil society. Both in the Tocquevillian and various Marxist traditions, “modern” means of communication and associational activity are considered vital for democracy or hegemonic regimes. Because of difficult transportation, low literacy rates, and the habitual claim of the Catholic Church to fill the needs for nongovernmental public communication, public sphere and civil society—in this modern sense—long remained thin in the Andean republics. They lagged behind other Latin American societies even during the liberal era after 1850, when hundreds of new civic organizations were founded in Peru alone, from fire brigades to mutual aid associations, philharmonic societies, and electoral clubs.⁶⁹ But more informal, popular arenas for the formation of public opinions continued to flourish, from peasant community assemblies and *chicherías* to religious and civic fairs and festivities.⁷⁰ These spaces provided opportunities to discuss public issues and define common projects. Yet they largely limited access to elite-dominated spheres of power to clientelistic ties.

Decentered public spheres raise the issue of the regional or local origins of and contests over Andean nation-states. In Colombia, even by the mid-nineteenth century, regional elites found means to incorporate nonelite civil society, thus consolidating their power vis-à-vis the weak central government in Bogotá. In Ecuador the change from a tripartite regional elite struggle for power (Quito, Cuenca, Guayaquil) to a bipolar contest between Quito and Guayaquil during the massive political transformations from García Moreno’s Catholic modernizing regime (1860–75) to Eloy Alfaro’s Liberal Revolution of 1895 was accompanied by regionally distinct developments of communications and civil societies. The most dynamic and integrative developments occurred on the coast.⁷¹ The multifarious Peruvian regional elites increasingly depended on linkages to the central state to control autonomous popular organizing and spheres of opinion. But just as the state began to gain strength—first briefly during the 1870s and then increasingly after 1895—it also began to adopt a more ambivalent attitude toward the pretensions of regional elites, increasingly viewed as “feudal” and anti-national. Recent studies have highlighted the need to envision the formation of Andean nation-states from a less centralist perspective, paying closer attention to regional and local constructions of the nation and engagements with the state.⁷²

Popular culture—its regional, social, and ethnic segmentation or hybrid-

ization—presents insights into the formation of national political imaginaries. When and how did various popular traditions—from music to food, sports, speech, and religious practices—broaden the political arena by subverting elite notions about proper public conduct? When did “polite society” embrace elements of Andean, African, or Chinese popular traditions? Did elites openly acknowledge the ethnic or lower-class origins of those practices, or did they try to neutralize their potentially *déclassé* and destabilizing connotations? Moreover, when and how did elites, the state, the Catholic Church, or commodity and cultural markets affect specific popular cultural traditions? We know much more about elite effects on popular culture than we do about the effects of popular culture on elite practices and identity. Varying regional and national power constellations and forms of conflict resolution have shaped the timing and modalities of incorporating popular traditions into elite practices. Not unlike the trajectories of race and nation, it is plausible that in the northern Andes (especially Colombia) elites embraced elements of popular culture—from *arepas* to the Cumbia—earlier (or at least more openly) than elites did in the southern Andes. After 1930, authoritarian nationalism and state interventionism combined to regulate and modernize ever more aspects of popular behavior and practices. This period marked a decisive wave in the “folklorization” of indigenous and African ceremonial and artistic traditions, as for example Cuzco’s Incaic *Inti Raymi* festivities. Yet elite appropriation, reinterpretation, and cultural neutralization of popular culture was a drawn-out process, touching various traditions at different times. For example, the Señor de los Milagros—of syncretic pre-Hispanic and Afro-Peruvian origins—became Lima’s most popular *and* elite-sponsored Catholic devotion no later than 1920. Yet even by the mid-1970s, after decades of massive migrations from the highlands, Andean music could only be heard on Lima’s radio stations between 5 and 7 A.M., disappearing from the airwaves for the rest of the day when “respectable” society listened in. Political culture analysis for the Andes thus needs to carefully consider timing and modalities of popular culture shifts before connecting them to changes in the relative inclusiveness of power structures.

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The chapters in this book tackle many of the issues we have presented here. They contribute to a newly emerging understanding of how, over the past

250 years, modern Andean political cultures were formed, challenged, and re-formed. In this introduction we have sought to outline the contours of a pragmatic perspective on political cultures.⁷³ Let us recall the shifts from the concept's origins as 1960s behaviorist political science theory within the modernization paradigm to the more interpretive, qualitative, and historicizing perspective now adopted by historians and anthropologists. This shift entails its own dangers. The pragmatic political culture perspective we advocate here has to navigate between "cultural reductionism" and "mechanistic voluntarism." Such a course portends the conceptual and methodological border crossings so central in Max Weber's work. It is evident today in the best political culture work on the Andes.

NOTES

1. For a processual approach to power, see Wolf, *Envisioning Power*, esp. chap. 1.
2. Of course, the theoretical lineages of approaches to the history of politics and power in Latin America are considerably more complex. Especially the impact (or lack thereof) of Foucauldian and postmodern ideas on practitioners in either of the two approach clusters creates a perpendicular fault line dividing scholars into those positing that history primarily concerns contested representations, and those believing that behind such representations there still exists a "reality" (even if objectively unknowable) that matters.
3. "Comparative Political Systems"; Formisano, "The Concept of Political Culture."
4. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, 2: 251, 264; see also Bendix, *Max Weber*, 46–47.
5. Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, 2: 220–21.
6. Bendix, *Max Weber*, 494.
7. Almond, "The Study of Political Culture," 13.
8. Almond, "Foreword," ix; the seminal study in this school was Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*; for an update of this approach incorporating recent psychological research on emotional development, see Hopf and Hopf, *Familie, Persönlichkeit, Politik*, chap. 3.
9. Berg-Schlosser, *Politische Kultur*, 21–25; for a famous Latin American example, see Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*.
10. Almond, "Foreword," x.

11. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*; for a recent discussion of Almond's and Verba's concept concerning Colombia, see Jaimes Peñaloza, "Balance y reflexión."
12. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 5.
13. Ibid., 13.
14. Ibid., 17–19.
15. Ibid., 29–31, 500–501.
16. Ibid., 32–33.
17. Ibid., 75.
18. See, e.g., Pye and Verba, eds., *Political Culture and Political Development*; Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building*; Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy*; Berg-Schlosser, *Politische Kultur*; for early applications of political culture to Latin America, see Fitzgibbon and Fernandez, eds., *Latin America*; and contributions to Tomasek, ed., *Latin American Politics*.
19. By the 1990s, there were signs of a revival, but with little reference to the new political culture approach developed in history and anthropology; see, e.g. Eckstein, *Regarding Politics*; Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, *Culture Theory*.
20. Almond, "Foreword," x–xi; for a more fine-grained classification of critics, see Almond, "The Study of Political Culture," 16–17.
21. Gendzel, "Political Culture," 229; among critical voices, see Pateman, "Political Culture"; Wiatr, "The Civic Culture"; Muller and Seligson, "Civic Culture and Democracy"; for discussion of Almond's and Verba's original cases in light of the criticism, see Almond and Verba, eds., *The Civic Culture Revisited*.
22. For its effects on history, see Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, 207–17; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, chap. 15.
23. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, esp. 3–30; on applications to political culture history, see Gendzel, "Political Culture," 233–35; for a critical account of recent notions of culture among American cultural anthropologists, see Kuper, *Culture*, esp. chaps. 3–7; on culture as praxis, see Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology."
24. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*.
25. Seminal works on republicanism include Baylin, *The Ideological Origins*; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*; and Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*.
26. Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture*, 148–58.
27. Hunt, *Politics*, 10–11.
28. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 4–7.
29. Ibid., 6; see also Chartier, *Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*; Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*.
30. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 4–7.
31. Cf. Darnton's discussion of Baker and Chartier in "An Enlightened Revolution?"
32. Viotti da Costa, "New Publics, New Politics, New Histories," 20; for a critique of self-referential concepts of culture, see Kuper, *Culture*, passim; for a pragmatic anthropological approach to political culture bridging symbolic and social dimensions,

see Adler Lomnitz and Melnick, *Chile's Political Culture and Parties*, 1–16; see also Tejera Gaona, ed., *Antropología Política*.

33. Flores Galindo, *Buscando un inca*; Burga, *Nacimiento de una utopía*.

34. Bonilla, "The War of the Pacific;" Manrique, *Campesinado y nación*; Mallon, *The Defense of Community*, chap.3.

35. Rivera Cusicanqui, 'Oppressed But Not Defeated'; see also Albó, "From MNRistas to Kataristas;" Platt, *Estado boliviano*.

36. Mamani, *Taraq*; Choque, *La sublevación*.

37. Ramón Valarezo, *Regreso de las runa*; Ibarra, *Indios y cholos*.

38. Guerrero, "La loi de la coutume," 331–54; Guerrero, *La semántica de la dominación*; Guerrero, "The Construction of a Ventriloquist's Image," 555–90.

39. Safford and Palacios, *Colombia*, 336.

40. Sánchez Gómez et al., *Violencia y democracia*; Sánchez Gómez, *Guerra y política*; Leal Buitrago and Zamosc, eds., *Al filo del caos*; for different perspectives on *violencia*, see Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez, eds., *Violence in Colombia*.

41. Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*; Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*; Appelbaum, "Whitening the Region."

42. For an overview of those literatures, see Salomon, "Andean Ethnology in the 1970s," 75–128, Salomon, "The Historical Development," 79–98; Salomon, "Testimonies"; Poole, "Antropología e historia andinas," 209–45.

43. Spalding, "Kurakas and Commerce"; Spalding, *Huarochirí*, esp. chaps. 7 and 8.

44. Platt, *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino*.

45. O'Phelan Godoy, *Rebellions and Revolts*; a significant forerunner was Condarco Morales, *Zarate, el temible Willka*.

46. Stern, ed., *Resistance*; see also Szeminski, *La utopía*; the precursor for cultural interpretations of the Great Rebellion was Rowe, "El movimiento nacional inca."

47. Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*.

48. Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory*, esp. 109–25; Abercrombie, "To Be Indian to Be Bolivian," 95–130.

49. See Mallon, "The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies," 1491–515.

50. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*; Mallon, "Indian Communities," 35–53; Thurner, *From Two Republics to One Divided*; on the western highlands of Guatemala (expressly referring to Andeanist historiographical models), see Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala*.

51. For an insightful comparison of a broad gamut of different types of state formation in nineteenth century based on varying types of relations between the central state, the military, and popular groups during wars and civil wars, see López-Alves, *State Formation*, chap. 1, conclusion, and (on Colombia) chap. 3; for sarcastic anecdotes and linguistic erudition as tools of hegemony among nineteenth-century Colombian politicians (especially Conservatives), see Deas, *Del poder y la gramática*, esp. 45.

52. Diez Hurtado, *Comunes y haciendas*, chaps. 4 and 8; Clark, *The Redemptive Work*, chap. 6; Jacobsen, "Liberalism"; Jacobsen and Diez Hurtado, "Montoneras, la Comuna de Chalaco y la revolución de Piérola"; Gotkowitz, "Within the Boundaries of Equality."
53. Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*, chap. 3; O'Phelan Godoy, *Rebellions and Revolts*, chap. 5; O'Phelan Godoy, "L'utopie andine"; O'Phelan Godoy, "El mito de la independencia concedida"; Serulnikov, "Su verdad y su justicia," and essay in this volume; Thomson, "Colonial Crisis, Community, and Andean Self-Rule."
54. O'Phelan Godoy, "Discurso y etnicidad."
55. See articles by Garrido and Helg in this volume; Helg, "The Limits of Equality"; Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price for Freedom*; Aguirre, *Agentes de su propia libertad*, esp. chaps. 6 and 7; Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition*, chap. 5.
56. Larson, "Andean Highland Peasants," 580–81; Safford, "Race, Integration and Progress"; Applebaum, "Whitening the Region."
57. See articles by Larson and Gotkowitz in this volume; Mendez, *Incas si, Indios no*; Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, esp. chaps. 6 and 7; de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*; a cautionary note on elite essentialist racism in Mücke, *Das Indianerbild*.
58. Chambers, "Republican Friendship."
59. Silverblatt, *Sun, Moon and Witches*, chap. 10; Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price for Freedom*, 76–85.
60. Hünefeldt, *Liberalism in the Bedroom*; Denegri, *El abanico y la cigarrera*; Manarelli, *Limpías y modernas*; Barragan, *Indios, mujeres y ciudadanos*, 33–38.
61. Gotkowitz, "Within the Boundaries of Equality"; de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, chap. 4.
62. Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito*; Phelan, *The People and the King*; for recent interpretations of the Comuneros, see McFarlane, *Colombia before Independence*, 64–71.
63. Trazegnies, *La idea de derecho*.
64. Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias*; for the Andes, see Demelas-Bohy, *L'invention politique*; Garrido, *Reclamos y representaciones*; on nationalist and republican symbols in independent Nueva Granada, see König, *En el camino hacia la nación*.
65. Aljovín, *Caudillos y constituciones*; Irurozqui Victoriano, "A bala, piedra y palo"; on violence as part of democratic politics in Colombia, see Pecaut, *L'ordre*, esp. 17.
66. Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*; de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*; cf. striking similarities in the construction of a dictator in Kershaw, *Hitler*.
67. Among numerous studies on nineteenth-century elections and suffrage, see Baragán, *Indios, mujeres, y ciudadanos*; Irurozqui Victoriano, "A bala, piedra y palo"; Peloso, "Liberals, Electoral Reform"; Chiaramonti, "Andes o nación"; Démelas-Bohy, "Modalidades y significación"; for Latin America in general, Sabato, "On Political Citizenship"; Sabato, *The Many and the Few*; Sabato, ed., *Ciudadanía política*; Posada Carbo, ed., *Elections before Democracy*.

68. McEvoy, “Estampillas y votos”; McEvoy, *La utopia republicana*; Mücke, *Der “Partido Civil” in Peru*.

69. Forment, “La sociedad civil y la invención de la democracia”; Forment, *Democracy in Latin America*; for the development of progressive Catholic associations and sociability in Antioquia, see Londoño-Vega, *Religion, Culture and Society in Colombia*, esp. 299–315.

70. On *chicherias*, see Rodríguez Ostria and Humberto Solares, *Sociedad oligárquica*; on women’s networks of public opinion, see Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens*, chap. 3 and 220–21; del Aguila, *Callejones y masones*; see also Jacobsen’s chapter in this volume.

71. Ayala Mora, *Historia de la revolución liberal*, 69–71.

72. Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire*, 11–13, 315–23; Roldán, *Blood and Fire*, 298.

73. For a similar approach, see Formisano, “The Concept of Political Culture,” esp. 423–24.

IS POLITICAL CULTURE GOOD TO THINK?

Alan Knight

Discussing the utility of concepts is a tricky business, since (*pace* neoclassical economists) “utility” is a subjective thing, which will vary according to the interests and approaches of particular social scientists.¹ If someone believes that divine providence or the Hegelian world spirit offers the best explanations of history, empirical evidence is not likely to persuade him or her to the contrary. Furthermore, historians, more than most social scientists, can be cavalier with their concepts, failing either to scrutinize or clarify them adequately.

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL CULTURE

If we are to evaluate the utility of “political culture” in the Latin American context, however, we need some notion of what it means. Unfortunately, the recent explosion of cultural history, however rich in terms of its empirical foci and findings, has muddled more than clarified the conceptual waters.² The “new cultural history” has therefore failed to produce a clear consensus

regarding “political culture.” Its imperialistic urge to gather all human historical activity into its broad bosom may be correct, since all human activity is certainly cultural, in the sense of being mediated through words, ideas, symbols, discursive practices, etc.³ Yet this is a form of self-defeating imperialism, which, by including everything, excludes nothing, and hence lacks any discrimination (and the one thing that useful concepts should do is discriminate).⁴ If all human activity is cultural, the key qualifier is “political,” hence political culture refers to all forms of political—as opposed to, say, economic or aesthetic—activity.

The political scientists who embrace the term do, at least, offer clearer definitions, which are worthy of attention. I stress this point since my critique of political culture has been seen as a kind of tilting at ancient windmills (e.g., Almond and Verba).⁵ In fact, the windmills are by no means all ancient.⁶ They are certainly not imaginary, and, whatever their faults, they at least present a clear and stable profile on the horizon, which is more than can be said of some of the will-o-the-wisp new cultural history, which often seems to make a virtue of obscurity and inconsistency. What is more, social scientists have methodological resources that historians—certainly historians of nineteenth-century Latin America—entirely lack: for example, survey data and participant-observation, which enable them to “operationalize” the concept in ways that historians cannot.⁷

Definitions of political culture vary, but one, which at least has the merit of capaciousness, brings together the “subjective propensities, actual behavior and the framework in which behavior takes place.”⁸ This does not seem to me radically different from—though it is perhaps a little more specific than—Keith Baker’s definition, which historians regularly cite with apparent approval.⁹ Political culture therefore embraces underlying attitudes (e.g., venality, parochialism, machismo), actual behavior (e.g., barrack revolts, rigged elections), and the (institutional?) framework within which behavior occurs (e.g., authoritarian or praetorian government).¹⁰ However, it is the first that is usually associated with political culture—and not just in the key text of Almond and Verba.¹¹ This association seems semantically valid, to the extent that “culture” implies enduring beliefs and attitudes, whereas “actual behavior” could entail discrete events, amenable to quite different (noncultural) explanations, and “the framework” leads us to macroexplanations which, likewise, carry no necessarily “cultural” implications.

These different viewpoints may converge on the same historical phenom-

enon, but their approach is rather different. For example, if we state that, during the Porfiriato (1876–1911), Mexican elections were rigged, corrupt, and fairly meaningless, we could couch such a statement (a) in cultural/subjective propensity terms (“Mexicans were culturally attuned/accustomed/suited to such elections”);¹² (b) in terms of actual behavior (“during elections, few voted, and those who did were dragooned”); or (c) in terms of the framework (“the Díaz government habitually rigged elections”).

While these three perspectives are compatible, they approach the explanandum from different directions; indeed, we could say that the first might be favored by the cultural historian, the second by the political-narrative historian, the third by the political-institutional historian. Or, again, while a culturalist political scientist might endorse (a), a rational-choice theorist would prefer (b) and (c) over (a).

Though these three statements may be potentially compatible, their logical relationship is asymmetrical. While (a) would seem to require (b), since “subjective propensities” by definition must determine behavior, a propensity being “the quality of being inclined to something,”¹³ (b) does not require (a), for behavior need not be seen as springing from prior propensities: a Mexican who fails to vote may do so because of illness, intimidation, bribery, a rational perception that voting is futile, or because he has something better to do on the day. None of these motives requires a subjective propensity. There is some psychological support for my argument. Stuart Sutherland discerns a “universal tendency to ascribe other people’s behavior to their character traits or dispositions rather than to their situation”; hence the “error [of] attributing an action to a person’s disposition rather than to the situation is extremely common.”¹⁴ So, we can—and usually should—analyze behavior without assuming subjective propensities. The reason is simple: we can observe behavior in abundance, but we usually guess at subjective propensities; indeed, we may, when we guess, simply invent them. After all, some subjective propensities are hard to get at, even in the contemporary world, where we have survey data and participant-observation to help. I do not mean transient and specific propensities—how a Mexican might vote in tomorrow’s election, for example—but rather those kind of deep, enduring propensities that usually pass for political culture. Attempts to calibrate tolerance, trust, or democratic commitment are not entirely convincing. And if we are trying to plumb the subjective propensities of, say, insurgent peasants in nineteenth-century Latin America, the task is even more difficult, in

many cases insuperable.¹⁵ When the peasants of Comas resisted Chilean invaders during the War of the Pacific, did they do so in order to protect the Peruvian *patria*, or their own backyards? Was their resistance spurred by (proto-?) patriotism—a shared cultural trait—or by immediate self-preservation? The evidence does not, I think, permit a firm conclusion either way.¹⁶

So, even if such propensities exist (which they may not), they remain obscure. The best approach is to analyze actual behavior, which is what historians usually do: they record people working, trading, marrying, parenting, fighting, migrating, and so on. Behavior, including political behavior, may reveal distinct patterns: electoral participation or abstention, lobbying, litigation, land invasions, strikes, flight, riot and rebellion.¹⁷ However, little is usually gained by attributing such behavior to underlying propensities; it is about as useful as Aristotle's explanation of gravity—things fall because it is in their nature to do so. In fact, the historical evidence for supposed underlying propensities is usually behavioral in the first place. We see a number of rebellions in Morelos or Juchitán and conclude that the Morelenses and Juchitecos are a rebellious lot (as Díaz himself observed, “those tramps of the south are tough”).¹⁸ But it would be a dangerously circular argument to invoke the rebellious disposition of the Morelenses as the cause of the Zapatista insurrection. Hence, statements about political culture are usually *descriptive at best*: to denote a particular political culture as, say, rebellious, deferential, democratic, corrupt, or violent is a shorthand way of saying that the group in question tends to *behave* in discernibly rebellious, deferential, democratic, corrupt, or violent ways.

Now this sort of shorthand may be harmless and may even, on occasions, be useful. So long as “political culture” is used *purely descriptively*, it may do no great harm. However, before we leap from bits of “behavior” to notions of a gestalt “culture,” I think we should impose some basic criteria. Roughly, I assume that a pattern of recurrent actions denotes behavior; and a pattern of recurrent behavior (i.e., a great many cumulative actions), evident over time and, perhaps, space, may be *descriptively* referred to as culture.¹⁹ A one-off revolt does not indicate a culture of rebellion. Still less—to return to modern survey data—does an intention to vote for a particular party denote a particular culture. (In passing, I would suggest that survey methods are best at establishing precisely such one-off, specific intentions and worst at revealing supposedly deep cultural traits. They can predict the result of an imminent election; they have yet to show that they can predict, say, a sys-