

Politics and society of latin america

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Politics and society in Latin America Encomienda period or the age of colonialism and slavery in Latin America, which lasted for almost 350 years, made its influence on contemporary state of affairs in Peru, Guatemala, Nicaragua and other countries. Brenner (2002) and Lisovsky (1999), for instance, underlines the influence of slavery on the racial structure of colonial society, which led to brightness in racial structure in the contemporary Latin American world. White peninsulares (those born in Spain) and criollos (those born in America of Spanish background) were considered elite then; they were served by the white Canary Islanders, who naturally worked as wage laborers; then came a large group of ethnically mixed pardos, who by the late eighteenth century numbered more than half the total; they were followed by African slaves, who constituted about 20 percent of the inhabitants; and, lastly, by the Indians. Furthermore, the population inherited colonial mentality, which affects the whole organization of the governments. Colonial mentality is a term that is connected with one of the following: " A cultural notion of inferiority sometimes seen amongst populations previously subjugated and colonised by foreign entities; a willing within one nation to expand its own culture and its political and economic control in other countries" (Wikipedia, par. 1). Civil wars and guerilla movements (in 1950s-1970s) in these countries destroyed colonial system, but still haven't eliminated the approaches to governing. Guerilla movements were supported by the United States and International organizations such as UN. On the other hand, these movements were chaotically controlled and often threatened newly-born democracy (as it happened in Peru in 1980s) and preached the principles of cruelty, violence and bloody revenge.

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Nowadays, Latin America lacks the ability (and probably the will) to set up a true people's democratic system, as it has fixed itself to a narrow international trade whose negative upshots are clearly obvious to everyone. But administration has a vital role in building democratic state, which is more important than its supervision of financial matters. Indeed, 'merely returning to big government will not resolve anything, because it is inefficient and generates the opposite but equivalent imbalance. Certainly, it may be that the framework for a state that can preside over a true democracy has yet to be created' (Caputo, 2005, par. 4). The same might be assumed regarding the market economy. The Washington Consensus (which was forced a lot by the United States) - with its stress on liberalization, deregulation, and privatization - does not predict the increase of per capita income and does not remove poverty. Yet, it increases social disparity. On the other hand, political independence cannot be divided from economic freedom. Latin American nations' independence in the global market is yet another important issue, as it is vital 'that national governments have the power to execute their citizens' will' (ibid, par. 6). The economic and political parts of government's duties therefore must be combined. This does not necessitate instantly establishing new governmental structures, but expert political organization ought to be at the core of this debate and direct it to the successful results. As we can see from the current situation, globalization in Latin American countries has affected the area of economy (due to the dynamic trade with the United States, which were the first country aiding Latin American countries during de-colonization period), yet, the government still has democracy declared on the paper, but not implemented within the society.

Globalization seems to have destabilized the ability of the state to influence the course of neoliberal policies. Neoliberalism has created a "hollowed out" (Keeling, 2003, par. 16) state, where most economic decisions now are made by the market, by corporations, and by newly emerging global or regional institutions. This leads to decrease of policy room for administrations to introduce social programs the purposes of which are curbing unemployment, poverty, and the destruction of fundamental public services.

Bibliography

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