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Outsiders and the Impact of Party Affiliation in Ecuadorian Presidential Elections

by

Rachel Lynne Hammond

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts
Department of Department of Government and International Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Dedication

For the Ecuadorian people who struggle daily to survive, whether in their native country or as immigrants in a strange and distant land; and for the leaders of the country, that God may guide them to find a strategy of governing that allows for representation, equality and justice. *Que Dios les bendiga.*

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I rejoice with my Lord who has given me the opportunity to experience Ecuador and its people, and allowed me to intimately study the country that I have grown to love deeply. I also praise God for my wonderful, encouraging parents that have been my support system through countless days of writing, editing, rewriting, and editing again. I love them both.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Chapter One Literature Review	1
Introduction	1
Democratic Systems	6
Political Parties	7
Populism, Neopopulism, and Personalism.....	15
Delegative Democracy.....	17
Outsiders and Case Studies	19
Ecuadorian Literature.....	23
Chapter Two Research Design and Methodology	32
Case Study Design	32
Field Experience	38
Document Analysis	40
Historical Development.....	40
The 2002 Elections	43
Chapter Three The Return to Democracy and Ecuador's First Three Elections .	47
Historical Construction	47
José María Velasco Ibarra and his Impact on the Political System.....	54
Transition to Democracy and Political Parties.....	63
1979-Widespread Support for León Roldós	66
1984-León Febres Cordero and the Right	71
1988-Rodrigo Borja and the Left.....	74
Chapter Four The Shift Occurs (1992-2002)	80
1992-Sixto Durán Ballén-From Insider to Outsider	80
1996-Abdalá Bucaram, the Populist	86
1998-Jamil Mahuad, the Career Politician	95
Economic Collapse and January 21, 2000.....	106
The Disappearance of a Party	114
Chapter Five 2002 and the Triumph of Outsiders.....	116
Potential Candidates and Speculation	120
Alvaro Noboa, the Businessman and Rich Benefactor	123

Lucio Gutiérrez, the Military Coupster.....	129
León Roldós, the Independent.....	136
Jacobo Bucaram, The Exiled Ex-President's Brother	138
Traditional Candidates	143
Rodrigo Borja, the Experienced Politician.....	145
Xavier Neira, the Insider and Free Market Advocate	146
Round One Analysis	149
The Second Round and the Results	156
Chapter Six Conclusions	162
Political Parties	162
Legislative-Executive Relationships.....	166
An Empowered Electorate	167
Outsiders	169
Social Movements	171
Final Thoughts	173
References	175

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Rachel Hammond

ABSTRACT

How has the party affiliation of presidential candidates impacted presidential elections in Ecuador? Historically, how have political party candidates and outsiders performed in elections and how has this changed over the last 20 years of democratic history? This case study attempts to answer fundamental questions about the connections between parties and electability of presidential candidates. In a country with an inchoate party system and a history of populism, personalist candidates have always had relatively high levels of electoral success. Yet, it would seem that preference for unaligned candidates is increasing. After years of domination by political party candidates, the Ecuadorian people elected two political neophytes to compete in the final round of the 2002 elections. Both campaigned as outsiders, with strong opposition to the party system, and both created personal political parties that served as electoral vehicles.

The dependent variable, the success of outsider candidates in the 2002 elections, appears to come from three main independent variables: a history of weak and highly ineffective parties, voter alienation from institutions due to continuing political and economic crises, and a political culture that revolves around personalist and populist presidents. Because of these evident trends, outsiders in Ecuador have found favorable situations for messages of opposition to the political system. In addition, appeals to alienated citizens, based on a personal campaign, have proven successful in Ecuadorian elections. Parties appear to become increasingly irrelevant in the executive sphere.

After a brief historical orientation, this thesis discusses the impact of the presidencies of Abdalá Bucaram (elected 1996, impeached 1997) and Jamil Mahuad (elected 1998, overthrown 2000) as important background for the 2002 election. The hypothesis is that in 2002, alignment with traditional political parties diminished the support for candidates in the presidential elections. This thesis analyzes the presidential candidates that participated in the 2002 campaign, and concludes that affiliating with a traditional political party was a liability for a presidential candidate in the 2002 elections.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The recent democratization of Latin America has spread across the continent over the last two decades. For various reasons, including economic problems and a loss of legitimacy of governing bodies, virtually the entire region abandoned decades of authoritarian, military and dictatorial rule and returned to a governmental system of representative democracy. In a climate of economic collapse and ineffective bureaucracy, democracy provided hope for fundamental changes in Latin American governments. These new democratic institutions were frequently accompanied by a new economic program, dubbed neoliberalism, which attempted to address deep economic problems, including bloated bureaucracies and inefficient economic practices in the region. The combination of democracy and neoliberalism was supposed to make drastic changes in Latin America, leading to more open, representative and responsive government, accompanied by a reinvigorated economy that provided prosperity similar to that enjoyed by the United States and other first world countries. It was to be Latin America's time to shine.

The experiment did not go as planned. After widespread optimism and initial enthusiasm for governmental and economic reforms, both economic and political systems have fallen far short of the promised results for governmental and economic stability and prosperity. Neoliberal reforms failed to bring about significant changes in the quality of life for the majority of Latin Americans, and states lost important sources of revenue due to privatization. As governments struggled to keep up with debt payments, austerity measures continued to cut social services and increase inequalities in Latin America. Country after country experienced economic crises. These unending economic problems have deeply affected Latin America's perception and opinion of democracy, as in 2004, 54.7% of Latin Americans interviewed reported that they would be willing to accept an authoritarian government if that government could solve deep economic problems. (UNDP, 2004:31)

Latin America's elected executives have also not fulfilled expectations. Marred by corruption scandals and lack of capacity to address economic problems, these leaders have lost much legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. In multiple countries, politicians have become viewed as corrupt, unresponsive, self-interested men and women, little concerned with the conditions of the majority representation of the populace. As international financial institutions obligated presidents to push through unpopular and widely rejected austerity measures, presidents have become vulnerable to unconstitutional departures from office. The promises of development have not come through.

It is important to highlight significant accomplishments in establishing a viable democratic system in Latin America. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) emphasizes the general perception that Latin America's long history of authoritarianism seems to have finally come to an end. Nearly the entire region has converted its political system into a democratic one, and elections are the accepted way to choose leaders. Yet, United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan asserts that elections aren't isolated events, but a part of a larger process of democracy. (UNDP, 2004:44)

The evolving democracy in Latin America has had a huge impact on the political, economic, social and cultural life of the region. Never before in history has a region with such pronounced problems of poverty and inequality been completely organized under democratic regimes. (UNDP 2004:36) In contrast to armed opposition, Latin Americans have begun to log their protest against the status quo inside the democratic system. In recent years, particularly in the last decade, Latin America has experienced a new wave of political and social movements. These social movements have challenged traditional elite rule in Latin America. Fighting for the inclusion of alienated groups of people, such as indigenous citizens, women, and citizens of African descent, social movements have frequently moved into the political sphere.¹ The populace is generally becoming much less tolerant of general Latin American political characteristics, including corruption, ineffective rule, and unresponsive and inefficient

¹ For a more extended on the development of social movements across Latin America, please see Vanden's two works.

government bureaucracies and programs. (Vanden, 2004:1 New political movements) According to Latinobarómetro, a respected public opinion poll, most Latin Americans continue to favor democracy as a political model. (Shifter, 2003:2) Yet dismal economic performance has impacted the credibility and legitimacy of traditional politicians. Elections continue to be seen as the most accepted way to select leaders. (Shifter, 2003:2)

Politically, the populace has rebelled against existing institutions, parties and politicians by rejecting their candidates in presidential and congressional elections. The United Nations Development Programme recently released a report on the state of democracy in Latin America, highlighting the crisis of political parties as an agent of representation. This has resulted in a loss of confidence in political parties by the electorate, and affected their electoral choices. (UNDP, 2004:3) Using the power of the ballot, Latin Americans have often steered away from candidates aligned with established parties. A new group of leaders, dubbed outsiders or neopopulists by some, have worked to appeal to dissatisfied citizens, frustrated with the lack of economic development and opportunities in their countries. The plethora of new political and social movements has greatly changed the face of Latin American politics in recent years.

In regards to presidential elections, the role of political parties has evolved in many unexpected ways. Though political parties have rarely formed the cornerstone of a Latin American political system, many Latin American

constitutions tried to legislate important functions for political parties when reconstructing the political system. These contemporary constitutions intended to create an essential role for political parties, by casting them as critical links between the state and civil society.

Yet, the historical reality of Latin America's personalism and populism impacted the construction of healthy and effective parties. Latin America's leaders have historically arrived into office based on their personal capacity to obtain and hold power, not due to institutions that have supported and assisted in their quest for power. Caudillos ruled Latin America for decades in the 1800's, and populists quickly adapted their political message to create an attachment to an individual politician as opposed to an organization or institution. In the context of historically weak party systems in many Latin American countries, the democratic era has given the power to elect leaders back to the public. As many parties have gradually lost legitimacy, the situation has arrived to a point where in some circumstances aligning with a traditional political party can be damaging for a presidential candidate. While political parties provide important legislative support and also critical constraints on executive candidates, voters have sometimes rejected traditional political party presidential candidates in a variety of party systems in Latin America. This trend has strengthened in recent times. Of late, several outsiders, unaligned with political parties, have been elected into

office on highly oppositional, personal campaigns.² They include Peruvian candidates Alberto Fujimori and Alejandro Toledo, Venezuelan Hugo Chávez, and Ecuadorian Lucio Gutiérrez. Many of these new leaders enter the executive office with no experience in politics whatsoever.

Democratic Systems

The UNDP emphasizes an important concept of a full democracy, which includes social, economic, and cultural rights. In addition, the UNDP asserts that politics is a critical component of democracy. While contemporary literature has focused on the characteristics of a democracy in the context of a political regime, this has negated important complementary parts of a democracy. For this study, inside the electoral arena, a political definition is necessary. Yet this study fully supports the broader concept emphasized by the UNDP report on democracy, which states that a strictly political definition of democracy hinders the development of a concept of democracy which actively limits the capacity of the state to respond to great inequalities in the region. As the government fails to provide social and civil rights, it loses credibility among large sectors of the population. (UNDP, 2004:47)

Dahl (1989) and O'Donnell (1996) have constructed definitions of political democracy. Dahl establishes a formal definition of democracy, with the following attributes: elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, the right to

² This thesis defines outsiders as, "Candidates who have little or no political experience, campaign on opposition to established institutions, political parties and political elite, and highlight their absence of relationship to existing political system."

run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy. O'Donnell adds the following attributes: elected officials (and some appointed persons, such as high court judges) should not be arbitrarily terminated before the end of their constitutionally mandated terms, elected officials should not be subject to severe constraints, vetoes, or exclusion from certain policy domains by other, nonelected actors, especially the armed forces, and there should be an uncontested territory that clearly defines the voting population. All of these characteristics of democracy highlight the importance of free and fair elections.

Political Parties

Political parties have formed an important base for most democratic political systems. In parliamentary systems, political parties play an essential role in the election of the prime minister, which must come from a party with strong support in the legislature. In presidential systems, the executive and legislative branches are more independent of one another, but political parties continue to form critical parts of the legislative system. Parties have the responsibility to propose or postulate candidates for the national executive post.

General political party theory, especially in the past, comes from the United States and Europe. The characteristics of these countries, including military subordination to civilian governments and a vital role for the legislature, form an assumed basis for their works.

Scholars concerned with the obvious differences between democratic theory and reality in Latin America have struggled to reconcile theory with reality. The fundamental differences in the Latin American reality made political party theory from Europe and the United States a weak base for understanding Latin American politics. Von Mettenheim and Malloy (1998) assert that western democratic theory neglects important realities of Latin American politics, and that theoretical applications based on Western reality can't be accurate for Latin America. Western theory bases its definition on competitive elections or emphasizes ideal standards of citizen participation. Yet, theorists fail to provide means or reflections on how to reach these standards.

The political history of Latin America varied widely from that of Europe. In the 1970's and 1980's, Latin American countries began a rapid transition from military dictatorships and systems of bureaucratic authoritarianism to democracy. With the reintroduction of democracy in these countries, many countries focused on constructing a viable and effective representative democracy, less prone to coups and dictatorships. In constructing these new democracies, leaders used constitutions as one way to address fundamental grievances about lack of representation of different sectors of society in the political system. Latin America's political culture rarely valued political parties as important components of a political system. Yet in Ecuador, leaders used the constitution to make political parties critical players in government. These architects tried to mandate changes in political culture, using constitutions.

One of Latin America's most historically dominant institutions in politics has been the military, which has greatly affected the development and construction of government. (Lieuwen, 1961, Johnson, 1964). Samuel Huntington made an important theoretical contribution to the understanding of the Latin American power structure. (Huntington, 1968:196), He established the idea of a praetorian system. In this system, social forces confront each other nakedly; neither political institutions, nor corps of professional leaders are recognized or accepted as the legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflict. While Huntington developed this in the context of military intervention in politics, this applies to societies that have weak institutional systems. Other scholars have focused on the changing role of the military in politics since the reintroduction of democracy in Latin America. (Millett and Cold-Biss, 1996, Loveman and Daives, 1997).

Several theorists began to look at the construction of parties in Latin America. Many classified party systems based on the number of political parties, ranging from two-party systems to multiparty systems. Two important theorists took other avenues in identifying and classifying party systems which was not strictly based on numbers of political parties. They argued that the significance of the party system was the role the parties played in government. Scholars have warned against the assumption that political party systems are going to play an important role in the western sense in the Latin American context. (McDonald and Ruhl, 1989). Yet, theory dictates that a democratic system has several

important key institutions that serve specific roles. Mainwaring and Scully claim that a strong, institutionalized party system is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for consolidating democracy and governing effectively. (Hartlyn, 1996)

Political parties are defined as any political group that presents candidates in elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office. A party system is seen as a set of patterned interactions in competitions among parties. (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995).

Ronald MacDonald (1989) attempted to measure the significance of parties by the functions they perform in electoral processes and government, including political recruitment, political communication, social control and government organizing and policymaking. He emphasized the importance of personalism and the military in Latin American history, including the reality that private sector groups generally have worked directly with governments instead of working through political parties. In classifying different types of Latin American party systems, he looked at the role of parties in society. He found that the significance of party systems is closely related to the subordination of the military to civilian authority. He highlighted the characteristics of Latin American parties, including elitism, fractionalism, personalism, organizational weaknesses, and heterogeneous mass support. (1989:7-8) In addition, he asserted that it is through elections that political legitimacy comes. By winning elections and having the freedom to participate in them, parties and democracy gain their legitimacy. (1989:6)

Mainwaring and Scully (1995) provided a landmark book on party systems in Latin America, concerned with the study of the institutionalization of party systems. They assert that the institutionalization of an effective party system forms a fundamental base for a successful democratic system. They emphasize the importance of parties, due to the domination of electoral politics and that candidates almost always run through party labels. According to the authors, “parties shape the nature of political competition and provide symbols that orient the electorate and political elites.” (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995:4). Further, to institutionalize a system, four conditions must occur: regularity of party competition (low electoral volatility), stability of parties roots in society, legitimacy accorded to parties by elections, and the existence of solid party organizations independent of individual leaders. (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995:2) Party functions include: channeling and expressing interests of the electorate, giving the electorate a “shortcut” to what the candidate will stand for, because of ideological base, helping groups elaborate their interests while allowing governments to govern, and establishing legitimacy.

Mainwaring and Scully address the historical reality of personalism and populism in Latin America. They assert that the lack of solid parties creates great space for populists, who aren’t constrained by parties and don’t attempt to create institutions. (1995:22). When party systems aren’t strong, public opinion becomes an important tool of electability, which leads to campaigning on a campaign of popular, though not realistic ideas. Weak party systems have a

tendency to punish the parties of the incumbents, due to projected promises that later aren't fulfilled. (1995:25-26). In addition, once a president comes to power, a weak party system hinders effective governing due to the inability of solid parties to construct coalitions.

Elections form the base of legitimacy in the democratic system. (MacDonald, 1989, Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Party systems form an important component of establishing legitimate government. In terms of executive and legislative elections, parties play a vital role. In an institutionalized party system, the party chooses the candidates for the executive and the legislature. The party has a base in society, and a general ideological viewpoint. The electorate can infer certain assumptions about the candidates due to their political party affiliation. Once a candidate becomes the president, he or she is able to work with their party and other parties in the legislature to enact effective legislation. In times of trouble, the party becomes a system of support for the executive.

Few Latin American countries function like this. Yet, the theoretical importance of parties continues to form a fundamental base of the establishment of an effective and self-sustaining democratic system in Latin America. This thesis addresses the connection of party affiliations and electability among one of Latin America's least stable and least institutionalized party systems, that of Ecuador.

Mainwaring (2001) makes four important points as to the consequences of a weakly institutionalized party system. Firstly, because of the lack of the electorate's connection with the party system, people vote for personalities, which make individuals instead of institutions the main political power players. Secondly, weak party systems impede accountability. Thirdly, the weak party system impacts the representation of popular interests. Finally, the candidate lacks a system of political support to sustain him and support governmental policies once in office.

While McDonald and Ruhl organize different party systems in Latin America based on citizens attitudes towards parties (dominant, primary, secondary, or marginal), Mainwaring and Scully choose levels of institutionalization as the way to categorize different party systems (institutionalized party systems, hegemonic party systems in transition, and inchoate party systems). These are the following groupings, according to both McDonald and Ruhl (1989) and Mainwaring and Scully (1995). This forms an important historical context for important changes in political party structures across the continent.

Mainwaring and Scully, 1995

Institutionalized-Venezuela, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina

Hegemonic-Mexico, Paraguay

Inchoate-Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador

McDonald and Ruhl, 1989

Dominant-Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico

Primary-Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Cuba, Nicaragua

Secondary-Peru, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Bolivia

Marginal-Paraguay, Panama, Haiti

In addition, Catherine Conaghan defines Ecuador as an “extreme multi-party system” (1995:434) which emphasizes the prevalence of a multitude of different political parties.³ The weakness in this extreme multi party system is that few, if any, parties have the capacity to become ideologically based, because of the frequent reorganization, appearances, and disappearances of parties. In addition, this has created clashes between the legislative and executive branches, due to the difficulty of coalition building in Ecuador. Finally, this configuration impedes the possibility that party systems can serve as a shortcut for the electorate to know what a party label means.

In many different Latin American countries, political parties have become increasingly notorious for their perceived corruption and lack of capacity to address important societal, economic and political problems. In a recent survey, 59% of political leaders interviewed stated that political parties are failing to fulfill their necessary role, including the critical one of representation (UNDP, 2004). In addition, when asked if governments provide what they promise, only 2.3% of

³ Conaghan defines an extreme multiparty system as, “A party system that revolves around competition among at least five or more parties.” Mainwaring and Scully, 1995:434.

Latin Americans said yes. When asked why politicians don't complete promises, 64.3% said because politicians lie to win elections. (UNDP, p. 49 of report)

Populism, Neopopulism, and Personalism

Latin America has always had distinct patterns in leadership style, ranging from military dictators, to caudillos, to parliamentarians, to socialists. (Conniff, 1999:2) .Scholars have argued that in Latin America, power is seen in more personal terms, not in impersonal institutionalized forms. (Angell, 1968:362, Vanden and Provost, 2003).

Since the 1930's, Ecuador has formed an interesting (if somewhat understated) case study of the phenomenon that is referred to as populism. To define populism in a single sentence is a difficult task, as debate rages over whether populism is a historical phenomenon, an ideology, or a political movement. Michael Conniff's general definition (Conniff 2000:4-6) highlights many characteristics of populists, including a new style of campaigning that held voter loyalty, a focus on nationalism and cultural pride, promises of a better life, and the ability to court followers from all different economic classes. These populists also exhibited charisma, which Conniff defines as "special personal qualities and talents that, in the eyes of their followers, empowered them to defend the interests of the masses and uphold national dignity." (Conniff 1999:4)

A main problem in developing an adequate definition of populism is the influence of each country's particular political development on their populist experience. In larger Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Brazil,

populism's main support came from the working class created by the process of industrialization. In other cases, populism flourished in unindustrialized countries, and the leader made no attempts to create a party system, as is the Ecuadorian case.

The history of populism in Latin America has greatly impacted the construction of political party systems. In countries where populists focused on building political parties, these parties played a large role in the political development of the country. One particular assessment of the power of Latin American populist has been that they were particularly successful at doing four things: gaining high office, holding onto power, maintaining their following, and renewing their careers. (Conniff, 1999:1)

New theoretical work on the prevalence of candidates with populist campaigning styles but different economic priorities has formed a branch of leaders, dubbed neopopulists. Demmers, Fernandez Jilberto, Hogenboom. (2001), address the transformation of Latin American populism. Both classical and neoliberal populism is associated with significant economic changes. While the staying power of classical populists directly related to the state's capacity to meet people's demands, neoliberalism has changed the capacity of the state to meet people's material needs. Populism depended on a strong state and on income to satisfy all elite groups who would fight for power. In addition, government remained accepted if they continued to spend large sums of money on social services and program. As neoliberalism removed the state capacity to

financially meet the demands of large sectors of society (spending became restricted and regulated), many thought populism would cease to exist. With strictly controlled finances, populists couldn't have the financial support to succeed in office.

With the sole exception of 20th century Mexico and the staying power of the PRI, Latin American politics has generally centered on personalities as opposed to institutions. Because of the democratic trend, politicians still need widespread mass support to win elections, a situation bureaucratic authoritarian regimes didn't encounter. Due to the return to democracy, large masses of politically uncommitted people are being incorporated into the system.

Neopopulists appeal to the informal sector and the urban poor, and have integrated many strategies of populism (including organization around charisma, dedication to the masses and personalism). Yet while traditional populists advocated an active state, neopopulists have shifted economic policy. Rightist neopopulists have endorsed strict economic austerity once in office, regardless of campaign promises. Both neoliberal reforms and neopopulists support the concept of hierarchical decision making, as a central leader makes decisions for a whole group of people.

Delegative Democracy

Guillermo O'Donnell has addressed the shortcomings of democratic theory in regards to the third wave of democratization. (O'Donnell, 1994, 1996, 1998.) He claims that general democratic theory has too many unexamined

assumptions due to the third wave of institutionalization occurring in a reality where the division between economically developed countries and the developing world continues to widen. Scholars searched for more adequate theories of democracy that addressed the unique situation of democratization in Latin America which includes the important distinction of an overwhelming debt crisis. In other waves of democratization, countries didn't face such extreme financial pressures from the outside world. As many Latin American countries scrambled to create a democratic system while meeting international financial obligations, Latin America's new elected presidents needed vast power to push through radical, fast paced changes in the economic and political structures of the country. O'Donnell's theory of delegative democracy (O'Donnell, 1994) attempted to address the important historical context of strong authoritarian institutions and how those interact with rapid democratization. O'Donnell's delegative democracy established a distinct category of democracy, different from representative democracy. The electorate voted for the president. The president saw this positive support during the election as trust to rule the country as he sees fit. He felt no strong restrictions by campaign promises and didn't have a strong political party system constraining him. Nor did he/she have a strong party organization to sustain him/her or his/her government. This construction becomes most obvious with countries such as Argentina and Brazil that have strong traditions of authoritarian presidents ruling without either vertical or horizontal constraints.

Vertical accountability addresses the capacity of citizens to “punish or reward incumbents by voting for or against them, or the candidates they endorse, in the next elections.” (O’Donnell, 1999:29) O’Donnell points to the weakness of vertical accountability in the fact that elections are only present every few years. Horizontal accountability is the ability of government incumbents who are part of the state apparatus to provide checks on each other. (O’Donnell, 1999)

Outsiders and Case Studies

Further, the last decade in Latin America has seen a new group of leaders, often referred to as “outsiders.” The term was coined in the context of Alberto Fujimori’s election in Peru in the early 1990’s. Fujimori, a virtually unknown Peruvian of Japanese descent, brought a strong message to Peru’s people. He used his lack of experience in the political system as a key positive factor in his election. Due to widespread disapproval of existing political parties, Fujimori was able to win the elections. He campaigned with a strong oppositional message to the current political and economic situation, and highlighted his lack of association with established politicians. He emphasized people’s dissatisfaction with and alienation from the system and had a populist platform. Once elected into office, Fujimori slowly consolidated power in both the governmental and economic sphere. He enacted strong neoliberal reforms (often by decree), defeated a major terrorist guerrilla threat, and retained enough popularity to be reelected. Fujimori even managed to close down congress and restructure the government, and win the concurrent election. Fujimori’s rejection

of traditional political parties and his campaign as an outsider, unaligned political player brought him from the status of an unknown to the head of the nation.

In the last five years, certain democratic systems have changed radically. Some of these changes have come from historically stable party systems. In Mexico, the PRI lost their first presidential election in over 70 years in 2002. In 1998, former coup leader Hugo Chávez's election prompted a new constitution and a new judicial system in Venezuela. His campaign as an active opponent to the corrupt, established politicians and parties appealed to wide sectors of Venezuelan society, and the armed coup he led against a democratically elected government in 1992 didn't impact him negatively at the polls. Chávez founded and created his personal political party, to provide him with a banner under which to run and to place allies in other branches of government. This has unquestionably altered the political structure of Venezuela, and highlighted the disillusionment of the electorate with traditional political parties and their presidential candidates.

Finally, the 2002 elections brought another former coup leader to the presidency in Latin America. In Ecuador, Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez's surprising popularity in the 2002 campaign led him to victory in the second round of the 2002 elections. A formerly unknown military man, Gutiérrez grabbed the spotlight with his role in the 2000 ouster of then President Jamil Mahuad and his participation in a short lived junta.

In all of these case studies, one important political institution is conspicuously absent: traditional political parties. Their candidates are performing poorly in countries that have historically had institutionalized, hegemonic, and inchoate party systems. The electoral choices in Latin American indicate a clear trend away from a traditional political party system, and exhibit the electorate's desire for a new kind of leader, if not a party or movement. At this time of examination and reflection on the process of democracy in the context of economic crisis, political parties appear to be weakening in multiple countries. Yet scholars have traditionally insisted that political parties play a vital role in any functioning democratic system.

In addition, political parties continue to play an important role in congressional elections, negatively impacting governability. Due to the strong emphasis on personalism, outsider candidates often have to build difficult coalitions in the legislature to pass legislation. Traditional parties are represented in congress, outsiders continue to win presidential elections, and presidents receive little support in congress or in the larger political system.

Stable democracies usually have an effective party system which plays a vital role in government. In governments where outsider candidates have won, these same countries often eventually suffer from inevitable problems with the democratic system. Both Venezuela and Peru have faced economic and political unrest. After Fujimori won corrupt and fraudulent elections in 2002, the public protest toward him and his measures forced him out of office and into exile in

Japan. Startling revelations about the widespread corruption in his government and the undemocratic practices of his administration came out. Chávez, after rewriting the constitution with widespread support, was challenged by a coup in April 2002. Though Chávez reclaimed his presidency, millions of Venezuelans have voiced their support for a presidential recall, a clause included in his new constitution. Both countries have suffered from constitutional crises.

As many authors have underscored, many Latin American countries have never had an effective party system that fulfills its role within the political system. Yet, authors seem to agree that those roles are still very important and other groups attempt to fill them, including personalist presidents, former coup leaders and new political movements. If Latin American voters continue to steer away from party representatives, one wonders how this will change the face of Latin American democracy.

It is important to note that in 1989 and 1995, Ecuador's party system was weak by any of the various measures set forth by different scholars. (MacDonald, 1989:10, Mainwaring and Scully, 1995:30) Generally, Ecuador was grouped with other Andean republics such as Peru and Bolivia, which both have similar histories of highly ineffective party systems. Though it is not the intent of this work to discuss or contest these groupings, they suggest that Ecuador has a long history of weak and uninstitutionalized parties. This study uses information such as this to build the important background for the reflections on the political situation in 2002.

The failure of administrations backed by traditional political parties in the 1980's has caused an irreparable alienation of political parties from the electorate in presidential elections. Over the last decade, the electorate has become mobilized in opposition to unending economic crises. The lack of effective political parties, leaders, or other coherent political institutions capable of addressing this problem has created a space for personalist leadership and new, highly politicized social movements. Ironically, while electing personalist leaders, many of the same citizens quickly call for their ouster after the candidates haven't met the expectations they set for themselves. This study suggests the elections in 2002 provide concrete evidence that the populace is alienated from political parties at a historically high level. The 2002 elections placed an outsider candidate with no legislative support and no party system support in office. Subsequent events further suggest that the new president's support will decline and that he and his government may soon suffer a marked decline in their legitimacy.

Ecuadorian Literature

Ecuador has received little attention in both qualitative and quantitative studies of political culture and values. Few quantitative studies on public opinion in Ecuador exist. The most informational view of contemporary public opinion in Ecuador came out in a joint study by the University of Pittsburg and Cedatos Ecuador in 2002 (Seligson, 2002). This study addressed perceptions of democracy in Ecuador, including support for democracy, antidemocratic values,

local government and democracy, civil rights, corruption and democracy, and participation in civil society. All of these public opinion studies address feelings after democratic transition.

The joint study by the University of Pittsburg and Cedatos Ecuador identifies two main categories of qualitative studies about political culture in Ecuador. The first category focuses on the contradictions between political development (in embracing systems such as the democratic one) and the continual informalization of political styles and discourses. This shows that while the political system has fundamentally changed, rhetoric and campaign style continue to focus more on personality as opposed to institutions. As a prime example of this phenomenon, the study of José María Velasco Ibarra dominates the study of populism. The second tract focuses on ethnic diversity and democracy, due to the presence of strongly organized indigenous groups. Thematic studies tend to address issues of identity, consensus, equality and inequality, governability, democracy, citizenship and populism.

Nearly all works on Ecuadorian politics highlight the endemic instability of Ecuador's political system, both before and during the democratic era. This question has interested a number of scholars. (Blanksten, 1964, Martz, 1972, Fitch, 1977 Lucero, 2002, Gerlach, 2003, Walsh, 2001.) Research after the democratic era has mainly addressed the transition and consolidation of Ecuador's system of democracy. In 1979, Ecuador became the first dictatorship in Latin America to transition to a democratic system of government, with the

support of the military and prominent civilian leaders. Corkhill and Cubitt (1988) Blanksten (1964) and Fitch (1977) addressed the military's role in Ecuador since its initial intervention in civilian politics in 1925.

George Blanksten (1964) develops the concept that historically, Ecuador's conquerors imposed a power system based on the divine right of rule and hierarchical, unquestionable authority. Neither the Inca empire nor the Spanish empire valued or encouraged democracy. His assessment of caudillos integrates the idea of caudillos representing the history of monarchy in Ecuador, yet disguised in "republican dress." This means that many of the monarchical values became a part of Latin American politics and Latin American presidencies. This analysis of Ecuador's political characteristics, far before the reintroduction of democracy in Ecuador, highlights the importance of a singular figure (a president, dictator or caudillo) having enormous power and influence.

Of the academics who have chosen to focus on Ecuador, they have almost exclusively covered the 20th century. John Martz (1972, 1987), David Schmidt (1988), and Anita Issacs (1993) addressed the decade of the 1980's, including the transition from military rule to representative democracy. Catherine Conaghan (1988, 1995) published insightful works about both Ecuador's industrialists and the political party system. As all of these scholars present explanations of modern trends in Ecuador's political reality, the historical impact of political parties and their successes and failures in the executive sphere contributes to a more complete understanding of the Ecuadorian political picture.

A small group of Ecuadorian social scientists have made important, nuanced contributions to the study of their country. Distinguished Ecuadorian scholars such as Osvaldo Hurtado (1980) and Augustín Cueva (1982) have addressed questions of power and domination in the Ecuadorian political system. Hurtado's work (1980) provided a helpful analytical analysis of the historical construction of power in Ecuador, and first hand knowledge of the push to return to democracy. Cueva focused more on regional politics and the role Ecuadorian populists played in the 1930's-1980's.

Simón Pachano, in his book Democracia sin Sociedad (1996) focuses on contemporary democratic Ecuador. In his discussion based on governmental documents, he correctly identifies the constitutional tradition of centralism. He further states that Ecuadorian governmental structures have not been receptive to acknowledging regional differences and the reality of political parties and problems of representations. Similarly, Rafael Quintero (1997) and Amparo Méndenez-Carrión (1986) have written extensively on José María Velasco Ibarra and his role in bringing populism to Ecuador.

Ximena Sosa-Buchholz, a historian, and Carlos de la Torre, a sociologist, both natives of Ecuador teaching at American universities, have addressed populism in Ecuador. (Sosa Buchholz, 1999, de la Torre, 1997, 2000). De la Torre has focuses much of his studies on Abdalá Bucaram and the impact of his discourse on Ecuadorian politics. His work emphasizes the impact of discourse

and the popularity of populist messages. Sosa Bucholz, a historian, focuses on the historical reality of populism.

In addition, the development of populist political parties impacted the national political scene. (Guerrero Burgos, 1994). Pyne (1977) wrote a fascinating article about Ecuador, highlighting the realistic difficulties of Ecuador's populist president ruling in a system with no party support, and the impact of his resistance towards the development of a political party. While populists have always enjoyed wide levels of support in the coastal provinces, they receive minimal support in the highlands, and their presidencies have often been extremely difficult.⁴

Huratdo identified personalism as the dominant characteristic of Ecuadorian politics in 1980, and it continues to be so through the present day. Conaghan documented the oppositional relationship between the executive and the legislature (Conaghan, 1995.). This is before the electoral success of outsider candidates. Political instability continues, as no Ecuadorian president has managed to finish his constitutionally elected term since the presidential elections in 1992.

In addition, Jorge León Trujillo (2003) examines the contribution of a regionalized political system and how that has affected contemporary Ecuadorian political, economic and social crises. He focuses on regionalism, an important

⁴ Abdalá Bucaram, elected in 1996, exhibits many populist characteristics salient in Guayaquil. The 1996 first round presidential election resulted in the victory of two candidates from Guayaquil, making the second round a guaranteed victory for one of them. To see more information about Abdalá Bucaram and his tumultuous presidency, which lasted six months before congress declared him mentally unfit for office, please see Baez et al, de la Torre and Hoy.

source of division in Ecuador. While the government attempted to establish hegemonic control and develop the state as a legitimate governing body, the coast (particularly the port city of Guayaquil) continues to view the state as an instrument to promote and expand trade with other nations.

In terms of contemporary democracy, researchers focusing on party systems agree that Ecuador is one of the most consistently unstable party systems (*Coppege, 2003*, Scully and Mainwaring, 1995, MacDonald, 1989) and has an “unconsolidated and uninstitutionalized democracy.” (Power, 2003). They point to the chronic ineffectiveness of the party system in Ecuador as a main cause of instability. (Conaghan, 1995).

Ecuador does not command much attention in literature on contemporary Latin American political parties. Catherine Conaghan’s article on Ecuadorian political parties entitled “Politicians Against Parties: Discord and Disconnection in Ecuador’s Party System,” published in Mainwaring and Scully’s Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America,” (1995) provided the most complete analysis of Ecuador’s democratic experience with parties to date. Her historical construction, focus on conflict between the legislative and executive branches, and understanding of the intricacies of the Ecuadorian case make this article of prime importance for those interested in Ecuadorian political parties. Conaghan concludes there are three main characteristics of Ecuadorian party systems: an extreme multi-party system, no popular /lasting attachment to

particular political parties, and the marginalization of parties in policy making process-especially in economic decision making.

The most complete guide to Ecuadorian political parties, written by Freidenberg and Alcántra (2001), offers an in depth view of all dominant Ecuadorian political parties. The author's analysis of internal party structures, their successes in congress and their ideological positions develops a complete picture of historically and currently significant Ecuadorian political parties. The authors include a chapter on Pachakuitk, an indigenous political movement that supported Gutiérrez in the 2002 elections. The authors address the role of personalistic leaders in each individual party, the internal structure of the party, and the ideological development of each party. In addition, voting records and opinion questions clarify political party beliefs.

Freidenberg and Alcántra's study emphasizes the development of political parties. It also addresses the changes that occurred in the system due to legal changes. From 1979-1994, only political party candidates could compete in elections. After 1994, referendum approved by the electorate allowed the candidacy of citizens who were non-affiliated with political parties. While political parties still hold an enormous weight in the Ecuadorian political system, Freidenberg and Alcántra highlight importance changes due to these laws.

Andres Mejía Acosta (2002) addresses the difficult attempts at coalition building in the Ecuadorian congress. After a historical orientation, he analyzes the reality facing Ecuadorian executives, who come into power with minimal

support in the legislature. The president must immediately build coalitions among multiple parties in order for Congress to enact legislation. As many of these presidents have come into power with a strong message of opposition to political institutions, this creates an immediate need for presidents to work with those same institutions that they claim harm the country.

Continual constitutional reforms attempted to address problems by creating ties between presidential candidates and parties, yet changes have failed to prevent the election of presidents with little or no political party support. This, in turn, hinders executive-legislative relationships. After the new constitution came into effect in 1998, the citizens of Ecuador have overwhelmingly supported the unconstitutional dismissal of two fairly elected presidents who ultimately experienced high levels of unpopularity. The elections, presidencies and dismissals of these presidents will be explored in Chapter Four.

The presidential and congressional elections in October and November of 2002 produced peculiar results. Ex-Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, military leader of the coup d'état that ousted President Jamil Mahuad from office in January 2000, won the presidential elections. He campaigned on frustration with corrupt Ecuadorian politicians and bankers, vowing to address the flight of corrupt bankers to other countries and found his main support in the indigenous population of Ecuador. His election, based on his opposition to the establishment, traditional political parties, and unpopular neoliberal reforms, proved successful. Yet, the same

electorate strongly supported traditional political parties in the legislative elections.

Neither parties, personalities, nor institutions have managed to consolidate power in the Ecuadorian political scene. As the electorate has watched traditional political party politicians make promises they don't keep while the country's economic situation continues to worsen, the candidates and their parties have lost legitimacy and support. The UNDP report serves as important evidence that Ecuador is a part of a larger alienation from politicians and traditional political parties in Latin America as a whole. In Ecuador, outsider politicians have become attractive to the Ecuadorian electorate, and over the last decade, have increasingly garnished more of the vote. In 2002, the Ecuadorian population voted two outsiders without political experience into the second round of the presidential elections. This occasion provides the opportunity to test the hypothesis that party affiliation can damage presidential electoral opportunities in Ecuador.

CHAPTER TWO RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Case Study Design

The UNDP argues that economic and social rights are important components of a successful and self-sustaining democracy. This study acknowledges and encourages a concept of democracy that includes crucial attention towards social, societal and economic problems. The paper focuses exclusively on a critical part of a democratic system, elections and the electoral process in Ecuador. It addresses how political institutions, political organizations and candidates interact in the electoral process. Specifically, it looks at the performance of traditional political party candidates and outsider candidates in Ecuadorian presidential elections from 1979-2002.⁵

Free, clean and fair elections are one of the fundamental components of any democracy. (UNDP, 55). Elections form the legal way for citizens to choose their leaders. Elections also give citizens a tool to remove and replace leaders when the leaders aren't adequately representing those they serve. In this system, the people are the source and justification for the authority of the state to govern. (UNDP, 56) The importance of studying elections comes from elections serving as the legitimate way for citizens to choose their leaders. When leaders win

⁵ For more information on the larger picture of democracy, including the discussion of economic and social components of democracy, please see the UNDP report on Democracy in Latin America, published in April 2004.

elections freely and fairly, this gives them legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. This study looks at the performance of different candidates, and analyzes general trust in parties or politicians, as measured by parties' respective performances in elections.

In establishing a research design, this study uses a quasi experimental method based on the 2002 Ecuadorian presidential elections. There is no control over the application of the independent variable, nor is it possible to form control and experimental groups. This work looks at Ecuadorian political history, the construction of a democratic system, and the gradual decline of political parties' capacity to win presidential elections after the constitutional development of a party system.

This work examines the manifestation of disillusionment with the political system, and how that disillusionment is expressed in terms of candidate choice. The hypothesis is that alignment with traditional political parties in the 2002 election damages a presidential candidate in Ecuador. There are a few main reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly, Ecuador has a history of weak and highly ineffective political parties through the present day. Secondly, increased voter alienation due to continual political and economic difficulties (particularly the 1997 and 2000 crises) has further distanced the populace from political parties. Finally, Ecuadorian political culture has revolved around personalist and populist presidents. The electorate has supported these individuals, instead of providing more widespread support to specific parties or political institutions. Candidates

unaligned with traditional politics, dubbed outsiders, have found favorable situations for messages of opposition to the political system. These are the independent variables studied in the paper. The dependent variable is the performance of traditional and outsider candidates in presidential elections. In addition, appeals to alienated citizens based on a personal campaign have increased and proven successful in Ecuadorian elections. Parties continue to be increasingly less relevant in presidential campaigns.

Establishing definitions is an important part of any research design. Traditional political parties consist of the political parties that have been present in Ecuador for at least 15 years, were developed by a group of people (as opposed to a single dominant leader), have evident ideologies, have made an effort to develop roots in society, have an internal organization which is not based solely on a single personality, and have held the office of the presidency once during the democratic era from 1979 through the present day. These parties also are competitive in the legislative elections, and have had strong voting blocks in the legislature. They include the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID), *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC), and the *Democracia Popular* (DP). In contrast, a personalist parties were created by a specific individual, usually for the exclusive purpose of supporting his own election. These parties have not developed an ideological base and have not attempted to develop long lasting roots in society. The founder of the party (or current party boss) makes all major decisions relating to party candidates. Most have a strong rhetoric of opposition to

traditional parties. These parties include the *Partido Roldósista Ecuatoriana* (PRE), *Concentración de Fuerzas Populares* (CFP), *Partido Sociedad Patriótica* (PSP), and the *Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional* (PRIAN).

This research design has several advantages as the study addresses issues of “outsiders” in Latin America’s highest elected office. Outsiders are defined as candidates who have little or no political experience, base their campaign around opposition to established institutions, political parties and political elite, and highlight the absence of their relationship to the existing political system. A case study design permits a realistic way to test the hypothesis and address the research questions relating to Ecuadorian democracy. The case study design proves useful due to the characteristics of this study. This design allows for an in depth qualitative study of a specific political anomaly. The inductive nature of this study allows for the intersection of a wider trend towards outsider politicians in Latin America while taking into consideration the unique nature of Ecuador’s political history.

Robert Yin notes that a case study, “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and when there are multiple sources of evidence being used.” (Reynolds et al. 2001:143) The concern with establishing a link between the independent and dependent variables in the 2002 elections contributes to the wider literature on outsiders in Latin American politics and the evolving face of Latin American democracy.

The study begins by briefly addressing important background trends of Ecuador's presidential history. It establishes the constant dominance of personalities over institutions (which could be civil, military or governmental). In addition, it highlights how the legacy of charisma has impacted Ecuador's contemporary democracy with its foundations in a political party system. The thesis traces the absence of any solid development of effective political institutions or political parties. This resulted in the creation of a political system based on individual leaders, who became the prominent component of government. Political parties failed to provide adequate representation and advocacy of the electorate's needs and desires as individual leaders made parties subordinate. The leader worked to maintain loyalty based on his personal connection to the electorate, as opposed to developing a political party. The leader, not political parties, began to be viewed as the ideal representative of the public will.

With Ecuador's redemocratization in 1979, the architects of modern Ecuadorian democracy used the constitution to address Ecuador's lack of effective political institutions. The 1979 constitution attempted to create a functional political party system for many reasons, one of which was to control and eliminate populism. The weakness of political parties and the tradition of populism were already a present, active component of Ecuadorian political culture, and those trends became integrated in the democratic system.

The historical analysis of elections since 1979, emphasizing campaigns, politicians, and how presidencies affected political parties forms an important construction of contemporary political reality in Ecuador. While the Ecuadorian population initially elected presidential candidates from the traditional parties, the inability of traditional parties to address economic problems undermined their legitimacy and led the electorate towards more personalist politicians.

The alienation from traditional political party candidates has not occurred overnight. The constitution of 1979 established a modern democratic system based on political parties. Initially, the populace elected presidents from traditional political parties, but lost their trust in parties after repeated failures to effectively address economic problems. The political and economic situation in Ecuador has changed drastically since 1979. After initial enthusiasm with the redemocratization of Ecuador, political parties have become less effective and less popular in presidential elections, voter alienation has increased, and candidates with populist and outsider messages have become more common. This becomes evident due to Ecuador's two distinct phases of political party competition. The first phase was from 1979-1992, where traditional political parties competed in and won presidential elections. In 1992, the first outsider president came into office after publicly breaking from his political party and running as an independent minded politician, emphasizing the negative connotations of political party affiliation. Outsider candidates began regularly passing into the second round of the elections. Finally, outsiders began winning

elections, as the electorate preferred these unaligned candidates to those linked to traditional political parties.

As strikes and protests have become a more common form of expression of opposition against incumbent presidents, discontent with the current system continues to be on the rise. In addition, Ecuador's citizen approved a new constitution in 1998 that allowed for unaligned political candidates to compete in presidential elections. The lack of political party affiliation has become a central theme in election rhetoric, as candidates have worked to distance themselves from the traditional political system.

Observation and document analysis play important roles in the research design. Both methods of research have important advantages and disadvantages, but when used together, they form a more complete picture of Ecuadorian democracy.

Field Experience

The author's presence during important times of economic and political crisis (particularly the 1999 economic crisis, which ended in dollarization and the termination of Mahuad's presidency in 2000) has allowed this study to integrate an important on-site understanding of Ecuadorian politics. In addition, the author was present in Guayaquil, Ecuador, from May through November of 2002, during the 2002 presidential campaign season. The author's arrival in Ecuador in May coincided with various announcements about potential presidential candidates, and she observed both the first round elections (October 20, 2002) and the

second round runoff elections (November 25, 2002). This has given her important insight and valuable direct experience in Ecuador, by talking with Ecuadorians about their political system, reading national newspapers daily, watching political television shows, and listening to political radio shows. This has provided a unique understanding of the importance (or lack of importance) of political parties, and gauging popular opinion of the political system and democracy's strengths and weaknesses in Ecuador. Particularly, the author observed a lack of any strong affection for a political party and a low capacity to identify between potential programs and ideologies of presidential candidates. The utter failure of political parties to indicate ideological viewpoints, or attract a dedicated following was readily observable in the media, in general conversation, and in campaign strategies. This, in turn, was juxtaposed with a genuine frustration bred by constant economic problems. The results of the election showed a strong endorsement of neophyte, outsider politicians. This Ecuadorian election placed non-traditional candidates with no political experience in office. These candidates held new and unique ideologies, ideas and rhetoric. When offered a choice between a traditional political party candidate and an outsider candidate, voters rejected the political party candidates. A main reason for this was voter perception that political parties had opportunities in office and had failed to solve economic problems.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is the most prevalent form of data collection. In an age of internet access, researchers can obtain documents from many places across the world. It is non-reactive, and unobtrusive. Document analysis also has several drawbacks. Language and translation can present problems. In addition, selective survival can create a problem. Documents can be incomplete or contain inaccurate data. Yet document analysis is an important, cost efficient strategy to gain information about Ecuador's electoral history.

Primary, untranslated documents form an important part of this research. These documents include current and previous constitutions, election observation reports, election results, newspaper articles, magazine articles, interviews, and primary documents from prominent Ecuadorian political scientists.

Historical development

The study begins with a focus on the lack of development of effective political parties and political institutions. Understanding the democratic experience with the party system forms a crucial background for the events of the last decade. Since 1979, the Ecuadorian population has slowly but intentionally shifted their support for presidential candidates associated with preexisting political parties to candidates without party affiliation who might best be described as personalist candidates. Exploring and highlighting this transition forms an important part of the historical background. This study relies on

documented campaign strategies, platforms, and analysis from scholars and experts in Ecuadorian politics, in additions to election results to analyze the change in support for particularly parties.

An important shift in presidential elections took place after 1992, with the victory of Sixto Durán Ballén in that year. His campaign formed the first incidence of a candidate breaking from his previous political party to form his own party, and running under a personalist banner in the presidential campaign. He formed a new political party, and included important dominant players from his previous party. This is a stark example of the lack of commitment to political parties by elite members. His election also serves as an example of the weak voter loyalty to a particular political party. Voters have tended to become attached to a specific presidential candidate, as opposed to a party.

Since the election of Abdalá Bucaram in 1996, outsider candidates have performed extremely well in presidential elections. In addition, none of the presidents elected after 1996 have managed to successfully complete their term in the presidential office. Abdalá Bucaram, who campaigned on a populist platform, survived barely seven months in office until being impeached on grounds of mental incapacity. Bucaram fled to Panama and has been directing his political party from Panama since 1997. He has promised a return to Ecuador's politics. One of the leading players in arriving to a peaceful dismissal of office was Jamil Mahuad, who would win special elections called in 1998. Mahuad served in office for sixteen months of his four year term, until social and

political protest led to a bloodless coup against him, lead by sectors of the military and indigenous organizations. One of the main leaders of this coup was Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, who would go on to win normally scheduled elections in November, 2002.

As outsiders performed well in the 1996 and 1998 elections, the governmental also suffered from unprecedented constitutional crises during both Bucaram's and Mahaud's presidencies. As Bucaram campaigned as a populist outsider, his dismal performance in office highlighted the difficult reality of being an effective outsider president. Two years later, the country chose former mayor of Quito and career politician Jamil Mahuad as president, yet his victory came by a slim margin over billionaire outsider Alvaro Noboa. Though the vote was almost evenly split between Harvard educated Mahuad and political neophyte Noboa, faith in outsider candidates was shaken after Bucaram's disastrous presidency. Fearing Noboa's close connection to Bucaram and looking for a more predictable candidate, the populace once again turned to a career politician to confront increasingly bleak economic and political situations. Mahuad's presidency ended no better than Bucaram's, as national protests and strikes forced his removal. This set the stage for the 2002 election. Both populist, outsider candidates and career public administrators had both been delegitimized with by their performance in office.

The 2002 Elections

Before beginning analysis on the 2002 elections, this work examines sections of the new Ecuadorian constitution (ratified in 1998) that address presidential elections and political parties. It looks at the law of political parties and the constitutional rules for the formation of a political party, and also looks to the role of political parties that is prescribed by the Ecuadorian constitution. The analysis highlights certain articles of the Constitution that try to assist in controlling the multitude of minor parties, including requirements for support in order to maintain registered, and laws related to campaign spending. It also addresses the new electoral laws that allow independent candidates to run for president without any alignment or affiliation with political parties.

The role of the *Tribuno Supremo Electoral (TSE)* is also prescribed in the constitution, including how the TSE is organized. The Tribuno is an independent and autonomous institution that organizes, supervises, directs and guarantees the electoral process, and is responsible for official results of elections. The presidential election functions on a two round system.

This study of the 2002 presidential elections looks at the six contesting candidates. There were a total of eleven candidates, but five received less than 4% of the vote each in the first round. It introduces the six dominant candidates in the presidential election and looks at their party affiliation, ideology, campaign strategy, and the rhetoric of each candidate. One sees that certain candidates

focus on qualifications, while others focus on personalities in order to garnish support. In a crowded field, three candidates identified themselves as outsiders (Gutiérrez, Noboa and Roldós) and two candidates came from established political parties (Neira and Borja). Jacobo Bucaram campaigned as an outsider, but came from a historically populist party. The majority of this information on this election comes from primary resources, including newspaper articles, magazine articles, candidate websites, and published interviews. These documents address both general themes in the election, and clarify political party involvement in the elections and campaigns.

When discussing the results of the first round, newspapers and magazines are relied on as important references. Additionally, the reports, opinions and conclusions of various international observation groups, including the European Union, the Organization of American States, and the International Republican Institute form an important part of this analysis.

After a careful analysis of the 2002 round one results, including a brief statement on the legislative results of 2002, the study moves into the second round. Due to the fact that two non-traditional, outsider candidates placed in the second round, this work analyzes differences and similarities in support, ideological content, plans of governments, and campaign strategy. In addition, the reactions of other politicians to the presence of Gutiérrez and Noboa in the second round are included. An important discussion of which second round candidate political parties supported, or why they chose to not endorse any

candidate, is included. This analysis highlights main issues in the 45 days between round one and round two, and addresses speculation of how each candidate's victory in the election could potentially impact the country.

Finally, the study concludes with important comments about the role of opposition in the Ecuadorian political system. In every presidential election since the election of Jaime Roldós in 1978, the electorate has soundly rejected both the incumbent party and the party's ideological position. The last three elections have placed into power extremely distinct presidents, two of whom have non-traditional political backgrounds. Forming strong opposition to a current president gives a party or politician a distinct advantage in the next elections.

The 2002 election results in both the first and second round affirmed the population's alienation from nearly all political party candidates. Though many polls predicted that traditional politicians would perform well in the elections, the voters soundly rejected those candidates at the polls. Noboa and Gutiérrez were strikingly different candidates, coming from different backgrounds, different regions, with different ideologies and vastly different sources of support. Yet, they had two very important points in common. Firstly, neither man had any political experience whatsoever. Secondly, they both campaigned offering the concept of a new way of politics that differed greatly from traditional politicians. Both spent the majority of their campaign focusing on the needs of the poor and excluded. Noboa used his wealth and business success as an indicator of what his business contacts could do for the country. Gutiérrez became a representative

for the multitude of indigenous citizens and impoverished Ecuadorians who were fed up with economic decline, corruption, and a distant political system. No candidate with political party ties managed to connect to these groups.

The 2002 election again brought an unexpected result. For the first time in modern democratic history, the electorate completely rejected traditional political party candidates by supporting outsiders in the first round. No political party candidate managed to even finish among the top three. The liability of affiliating with a political party showed through in the election results, as outsider candidate performed markedly better in the first round than insider candidates. This thesis will look at why.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY AND ECUADOR'S FIRST THREE ELECTIONS

Historical Construction

This brief historical orientation suggests the Ecuadorian state held very little power in the 19th century and the early 20th century. In addition, there was an almost complete absence of institutional power in Ecuador, as nearly any state consolidation occurred because of a specific caudillo and his programs. Political parties held almost no influence in government, and never developed an institutional base that was independent of from strong, dominant leaders. The two political parties that formed in the mid-1800's, The Liberal Party and The Conservative Party, represented little more than different regional elite interests. Neither party attempted to create roots in society, develop coherent ideology, or create long lasting grassroots support. Instead, the caudillos formed the base for the political system, without integrating political parties as an important component.

In 19th century Latin America, the continent had several presidents who held strong despotic power but extremely weak institutional power. Caudillos, defined as, "strongmen on regional or national levels who seize power through extra legal means," became Ecuador's dominant presidents. (Morner 1993:7)

Ecuador had yet to fully develop effective governmental institutions. Ecuador's first president, Venezuelan Juan José Flores, was primarily concerned with maintaining internal cohesion (Morner 1993:7). The dominant characteristic of the state from 1820-1855 was the use of force to maintain unity (Ayala Mora 1983:9).

The different priorities of regional elites formed the base of Ecuador's first contentious political parties. The highland elite (mainly landowners and *hacendados*) formed the political base of the Conservative Party. In contrast, the coastal elite (agro exporters and commercial bankers) created the Liberal party in Guayaquil. As elite regional priorities differed greatly, regionalism became an additional source of division. This shaped a political culture where politics consisted of splintered factions of elites, and politics remained largely outside of the average citizen's realm.

Much of the division among the elites came from ideologies of Gran Colombia. Conservatives tended to support Bolivarian ideas of the formation of independent states, which encouraged top-down, hierarchical, strong, authoritarian rule with an emphasis on order and control. Bolívar favored the supremacy of the president in comparison with other branches of government. The Liberals found their base in the opposition of Santander, who believed in a more democratic form of government. His system highlighted the separation of powers and emphasized the system of checks and balances.

The experience of party development in independent Ecuador showed a longstanding tradition of weak and ineffective political parties. This shaped the development of modern political parties. The Conservative Party, based in Quito, was the first to gain control of the central government. It placed its priorities on establishing order and cementing the role of the Catholic Church in Ecuador's new political system. As Gabriel García Moreno served as president for over a decade, those alienated by his strict Catholicism and conservative ideology quickly joined the opposition Liberal party. When in power, the Liberal party attempted to undo many of the reforms enacted by the Conservatives.

Neither the Conservative Party nor the Liberal Party served as an adequate base to the development of a contentious party system in which political parties functioned independently of specific leaders. Both parties became steeply dependent on their leaders, and became defined more on personalistic qualities of their respective caudillos instead of different ideological bases. Both parties only included elite members of their regional stronghold, and neither made an attempt to bring politics outside of the elite sphere. In addition, their doctrines differed on the sole issue of the role the Church played in society. Both Conservatives and Liberals claimed to be devoutly Catholic, so the small variance in their vision of the relationship between the Church and the State formed the main noticeable ideological difference.

The Church enjoyed a prominent and powerful place in society, including complete responsibility for all levels of education and the responsibility for

registering births, marriages and deaths. The Constitution of 1830 declared the newly independent country as a Roman Catholic state, and obligated the state to protect the Church “to the exclusion of all others.” Ecuador did not become a secular state until the beginning of the 1900’s.

Gabriel García Moreno, Conservative president from 1860-1875, is widely seen as the man responsible for beginning the consolidation of the Ecuadorian state. His presidency fostered decades of Conservative rule from Quito’s elite. The disorder of the state provided the authoritarian García Moreno an opportunity to use military might in his attempt to establish order in Ecuador’s fragmented territories. His regime emphasized strong presidential authority, a subordinate national congress, the control of individual liberties, public morality, centralized government, institutionalization of political power, and, most importantly, the dominance of the Catholic Church (Hurtado 1980:101). His personal beliefs, including his devout Catholicism, became the base of the country’s government. In a barely consolidated country with little rule of law, he used his personal authority and force to implement his programs.

His regime’s push to establish the Catholic Church as an intimate part of the state resulted in the, “Most theocratic regime in all of the Americas.” (Martz 1972:69) Other authors have addressed the theocratic characteristics of his regime (Handelsman 2000:9). Congress became completely subordinated to the whims of the president (Martz 1972:64). The establishment of Catholicism as the only recognized religion emphasized this privileged position of the church. In

addition, the Church gained control of additional tracts of land. The coastal elites, living in an area where the church had little influence in regards to issues of landholding and control of bureaucratic decisions, objected to the church's privileges and its active role in the state. García Moreno became an appropriate representative for the established highland bureaucracy, heavily influenced by the Spanish colonial experience. He used strong force in his attempt to integrate the state and the church.

The Conservative regime and its leaders began to lose their grip on power, and the political orientation shifted to a new ideology. The liberal revolution, beginning with coastal leader Eloy Alfaro's first presidency from 1895-1901, would dominate the country for over twenty years. Martz described Alfaro's "magnetic appeal to the masses" as a new phenomenon in national Ecuadorian politics. While the patriarchal system of rule in Ecuador facilitated the construction of a highly paternalistic political system, this adoration of him by common people served as an important component of the political system. Yet, Martz also states that Alfaro had an extremely difficult time governing. This juxtaposition of a politician with a populist message who has strong popular support but does not govern effectively is a trend that becomes evident in Ecuador's future.

The legacy of the Liberal revolution, which lasted from 1895-1925, included constitutional revisions that primarily addressed the role of the Church in the state and society. While in no means anti-Catholic, Ecuador became a

secular state in 1906, guaranteed non religious public education, established separation of Church and State (therefore subordinating the Church to the State) and recognized freedom of thought. The Liberal constitutions also included clauses addressing the responsibility of the State to care for indigenous citizens of Ecuador.

Alfaro and the Liberals ruled in an era of economic boom, which allowed the state to take an active role in the development of the nation. The high levels of revenue from cacao exports allowed the government to provide funding for many different factions of society (Schodt 1988:36). Schodt argued that Ecuador became an active state for the first time during the Liberal Revolution, which not only provided public works, but also formed an expected level of investment and expenditure by different elite groups and regions (Schodt 1988:36). Yet, this ability to satisfy competing demands depended on a constant high price of a single export, whose price was determined by the international market. Inevitably, the price dropped, and Ecuadorian leaders had to design a new strategy that continued to satisfy fiscal demands that exceeded income.

George Maier claims that the linkages between economic performance and political performance, while important in every country and region of the world, are particularly transparent in Latin America (Maier 1971:490). World War I caused much economic decline for exporting countries, and Ecuador's economy suffered harshly. The diminished revenue in the coast transferred into diminished income for the central government, because of less duties and taxes on exports.

The government, running a budget deficit, had three main choices. Firstly, the government could cut back on expenditures, including abandoning many of the already initiated public works projects. Secondly, the government could begin to print money and continue with the programs. Finally, the government could borrow money from Guayaquil's banks, to supplement the decreased income. The government chose to print additional money and also borrow money from Guayaquil's banks, the central government's only source of credit. These measures resulted in spiraling inflation, which negatively affected both coastal and highland interests.

The military as an institution had not yet intervened in civilian politics at this point in Ecuadorian history. Flores and other presidents had long military careers. Yet, the lack of cohesion of the Ecuadorian military in state development and the general disorder in government were two important reasons why the military hadn't forcefully taken power from civilian governments. For the first time in Ecuadorian history, the military as an entity became involved in Ecuadorian politics during the 1920's. The ideological justification of this intervention came from frustration with the economic stagnation of Ecuador, in addition to disillusionment with liberal governments which promised structural changes but produced little of it. Augustín Cueva states that young officers, frustrated by the unfulfilled promises of upward mobility of the liberal revolution, rebelled against an entrenched power system, which restricted professional advancement of the

new middle class (Cueva 1982:15). The enemy became the entrenched political system, and members of both the Conservative and Liberal political parties.

The military junta and its reformist agenda suffered attacks from Guayaquil. Guayaquil's elite believed that the reforms desired by the military aimed to diminish the economic power of Guayaquil by diverting much of Guayaquil's wealth to the central government and the highland region. The military government further alienated itself from Guayaquil by ignoring the city's powerful elites and aligning with the old, aristocratic highland oligarchy (Cueva 1982:16). These antagonisms between the military establishment in Quito and the business sector of Guayaquil lead to a period of continual governmental instability.

The 1930's represented a period of both economic and political crisis in the Ecuadorian state. This situation of widespread discontent with the political elite and their political parties, the occurrence of fraudulent elections in the 1930's, and mediocre experience with military intervention in politics created a space for a different type of political candidate.

José María Velasco Ibarra and his Impact on the Political System

Both the Conservative and Liberal governments had become less legitimate in the eyes of the people. Conservatives hadn't held power in decades and failed to find a leader that brought new life to the party. The Liberals faced accusations that much of the economic decline of the country was due to their governmental policies and that the liberals only aimed to serve Guayaquil's

business community. This deadlock resulted in a situation where neither group had the power to implement their governmental programs. This “tie” between elite groups resulted in a space for a charismatic leader, unlike Ecuador had seen before. A Congressman from Quito, José María Velasco Ibarra came onto the national stage with his vocal opposition to a fraudulently elected liberal president in the early 1930’s. In this, he obtained the support of Conservative highland factions, who preferred his rhetoric as opposed to revolution. Using rhetoric of change, Velasco Ibarra managed to unite much of the country behind him. Velasco Ibarra was the politician who would give the country a new type of politician with a new rhetoric of opposition to the status quo.

Literature on populism almost always includes Ecuadorian José María Velasco Ibarra as a member of the classical populists in Latin America, due to his campaign style, his rhetoric of change, and his attempt to include Ecuadorians who had traditionally been ignored by politicians. Both Carlos de la Torre (2000) and Ximena Sosa Buchholz state that Velasco Ibarra founded Ecuadorian populism (Sosa Buchholz, 1999:138).

Certain authors portray Velasco Ibarra as a politician who attempted to address the needs of Ecuador’s common citizens. They cite the source of his electoral success in increased urbanization in Guayaquil. In contrast, in El Mito de Populismo, Rafael Guerrero observes that Velasco Ibarra came to power in 1933 with the strong backing of elite groups. Guerrero stated that in a climate of worldwide socialist revolution, the Ecuadorian elite preferred Velasco Ibarra to a

wider social revolution. While rhetorically, he attacked the political class and the elites, he didn't have the power to make real changes.

Velasco Ibarra won his first presidential election with a strong support from Quito's establishment. The Conservative elites recognized that Velasco Ibarra was a politician who could help break the coastal resurgence of power. In addition, the party was conscious of the fact that none of the Conservative candidates were strong enough to win (Cueva 1982:24). Historian Alfredo Pareja acknowledges Guayaquil's role in the victory of Velasco Ibarra. Pareja states that Guayaquil's population supported Velasco Ibarra because of his rhetoric of opposition to the established elite and a fundamental change in governing, even though he came from a conservative political tradition (Pareja 1979:415). The disenchantment with the established political order allowed a politician to establish strong support in both the highlands and the coast, a rare occurrence in Ecuadorian history.

Populist discourse, including that of Velasco Ibarra, constructs politics as the "moral and ethical struggle between the people and the oligarchy." (de la Torre, 1997:14) In the era of Velasco Ibarra, the oligarchy included the political elite and their respective political parties. Velasco Ibarra took politics out of the hands of elites and into public plazas. He revolutionized campaign strategies by touring most of the country, claiming he represented, "political incorporation through honest elections." (de la Torre, 1997:13) Velasco Ibarra did manage to expand the Ecuadorian electorate from 3.1% of the population in 1933 to 16.8%

in 1968, even though literacy requirements continued to exclude large sectors of society. (de la Torre, 1997:13)

In a time of economic problems, his rhetoric and his ability to create himself as the hope and future of the country and the only person capable of fixing deeply rooted problems earned him much trust and support in the beginning of his career. Yet, these same anti establishment views, combined with his resistance in forming a political party that could provide him legislative support, made him extremely vulnerable once in office. He had no support system to assist him through difficult times when in office, no allies in Congress who could fight for and pass his plans and programs, and little support to survive as a dictator.

Velasco Ibarra's moralism, personalism and authoritarianism contrasted with important democratic concepts. Though seeing himself as the embodiment of the will of the people, Velasco Ibarra lacked respect for democratic institutions on many occasions. He assumed temporary dictatorial powers, and abolished the constitutions of 1935, 1946 and 1970. (de la Torre, 1997:13)

Many of his failures in political office came from his lack of organization within his government and his determinedness to rule without assistance. His personal whims and unwillingness to listen to anyone who disagreed with him made his government unpredictable and unstable.

Velasco Ibarra was elected president five times but only completed one full term. The contradiction of a consistently popular president who can't

complete his constitutional terms provides a fascinating example of conflict and contradiction in the Ecuadorian governmental system. While Velasco Ibarra remained personally popular, his performance in office merited multiple military interventions and civilian pushes for him to be removed from office.

Velasco Ibarra's legacy contributed heavily to the developing political system and its characteristics in several ways. Firstly, this legacy of personalistic rule in Ecuador formed the cornerstone of the developing political system. Instead of developing a party that could continue to play a role in the political system when Velasco Ibarra wasn't in office, Velasco Ibarra worked to maintain the masses' loyalty as an individual. Carlos de la Torre highlights the fact that, "The weakness of political parties since Velasco Ibarra's times and the continuing inability of liberal democratic institutions to provide a sense of participation and belonging to the political community have contrasted with symbolic political participation through populist, non-parliamentary politics." (de la Torre, 1997:15) As political parties have failed to give citizens a sense of place and participation in the political system, individual politicians have created populist movements to include more citizens in the political system. Therefore, citizens become involved in politics through a personal candidate as opposed to a party.

Secondly, Velasco Ibarra's attitude toward political parties also played an important role in the lack of political party institutionalization. He actively discouraged the development of political parties to support him and his ideology. Instead of relying on party machinery, Velasco Ibarra often performed other

activities that political parties, the bureaucracy and interest groups usually undertake in other political systems. His position as president represented an important link between the government and public opinion, as Velasco Ibarra worked to maintain lines of communication open while connecting individuals and groups. He did not believe in using a political party to intermediate his relationship with his followers. He traveled extensively through the country to meet with different social and economic groups and explained governmental policies to them. This is a job that political parties and interest groups usually direct, but Velasco Ibarra did it himself. Instead of creating a bureaucracy to gauge the situation and public opinion in the country, he found out firsthand what the people wanted as he toured the country. Yet, this energy and time put into developing a direct representation meant less focus, consideration and reflection on policies and programs. (Pyne 1977:289)

Velasco Ibarra fought bitterly against developing institutions and parties to support his candidacy during the campaign and his regime once in office. Yet, though parties generally were associated with elite interests and rarely effectively represented the people, his lack of political party machinery had distinct disadvantages. Velasco Ibarra himself acknowledged the weakness at position, when he stated, "I cannot count on a structured political party which would know how to defend me, how to carry out successful propaganda, and how to keep alive that civic emotion in spite of the difficulties that wear away the popularity of any government." (Pyne 1977:293)

Thirdly, the lack of political doctrine allowed him to appeal to all different interest groups. His vagueness and failure to develop an ideological position gave him heterogeneous support. Yet, this made his presidencies extremely unpredictable because no one knew exactly what he would do once elected. A vague platform has become common among Ecuadorian politicians, as campaigns don't adequately or realistically address presidential plans or programs that would be implemented once in office.

Finally, Velasco Ibarra's disdain for the legislature and his outright refusal to develop a political party has greatly impacted Ecuadorian democracy in three ways. Firstly, Velasco Ibarra cemented the establishment of the president as the single most important component of the governmental system. Secondly, he encouraged reluctance by presidential candidates to affiliate or associate with an ideological party ally in Congress. Finally, he encouraged a lack of cooperation between outsider presidents and a congress dominated by political parties. In addition, an outsider president with little or no political party support made coalition building crucial to the functionality of the political system. In the Ecuadorian political system, coalition building and cooperation among parties has been historically difficult, and Ecuador had done this with little success. (Pyne, 1977)

In the late 1960's, discovery of large petroleum reserves in Ecuador's Amazon area impacted the political scene of Ecuador. Velasco Ibarra was elected for the last time in June of 1968, 35 years after his first presidency. The

situation in Ecuador consisted of “a hostile congress, overwhelming economic problems and increasing political chaos.” After elected, he decided to disband Congress, abolish the constitution and declare himself a dictator in 1970, with the backing of the Ecuadorian military. As Velasco Ibarra aged and approached the end of his political career, a new populist leader from Guayaquil and his political party became increasingly important in Ecuadorian politics. Assad Bucaram, who had served twice as the former mayor of the port city of Guayaquil and was a member of a prominent Lebanese immigrant family, came to dominate the political scene with strong support from Guayaquil. As the 1972 elections came, Bucaram declared himself a candidate with the support of the *Concentración de Fuerzas Populares (CFP)*, a populist political movement formed as a splinter of the Velasquista movement in the late 1960’s. Bucaram seized control of the party in 1960, and used the party machinery to develop his personal prominence on a national scale. The ideology of the CFP, a center-right regional political party with nearly all its support in Guayaquil, was unabashedly populist in its rhetoric, appealing to the growing urban population of Guayaquil that began to fight for political inclusion.

The military intervened and overthrew Velasco Ibarra before the 1972 elections could occur. A primary factor in the military intervention came from the widespread belief that Bucaram would win the 1972 elections. Both the military and the civilian business sector feared a presidency of Bucaram, due to his unpredictability and his outrageous campaign promises. Particularly at a time

when Ecuador finally had a large influx of petrodollars, the military saw this as a golden opportunity to address deep economic problems. The military feared that if Bucaram were elected, he would misuse the money. In the military's viewpoint, his clientelism apparent in his campaign would squander the new wealth.

Ecuador finally had the necessary funds to make investments in the development of the country. Therefore, a reformist military junta prevented the 1972 elections and took over political control at a time of great opportunity for Ecuador. Army Chief of Staff General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara became leader of a "nationalist and revolutionary military regime." The military regime looked towards Peru's experience with a reformist military government in office, and hoped to reorient Ecuador's government and economy.

The military in Ecuador is one of the most respected institutions in the country, and has much more general public support than any political institution. When the military has become involved in civilian politics mainly to mediate between opposing political factions, but has generally hesitated to play an active role in the government. When it does, it intervenes when the military views civilian decisions as being detrimental to the country. The wealth provided by the oil boom allowed many to begin to dream of a new future for a prosperous and economically healthy Ecuador.

Rodríguez Lara ruled for three years, but the continued reliance on imported luxury goods and the increasing debt burden on the government resulted in mediocre economic improvement. As inflation increased, and

Rodríguez Lara failed to make any noticeable changes in areas such as agrarian reform, he suffered from a bloody coup attempt in September of 1975 by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The unsuccessful coup resulted in the loss of 23 lives, and exposed the lack of unity within the military. On January 11, 1976, a second bloodless coup removed Rodríguez Lara, and a military junta took over power with the expressed desire to return to democratic rule.

Transition to Democracy and Political Parties

The military government and civilian elites came to an agreement to purposefully democratize the country. The process stemmed from economic modernization of the Ecuadorian economy, based on the discovery and exploitation of oil reserves during the 1970's. (Hurtado, 1980, Corbitt, 1988, Gerlasch, 2003, Martz, 1987.) In their push for industrialization and advancement, democracy represented a complimentary, purposeful component to a modern Latin American state. Military and civilian leaders formed a partnership to establish a functional political system. (Hurtado, 1980). In 1979, Ecuador became the first Latin American country to re-democratize.

The process didn't go as intended when the military initially decided to allow a return to civilian rule in 1976. The military planned for a two year transitional period which would allow the construction of a new constitution and a new political system, but the process took almost four years. As the first step in the return to democracy, an appointed civilian commission was to draft new governmental charters and electoral laws. Then, the entire nation would vote

between two proposed constitutions. The appointed commission, attempting to construct an effective governmental system, identified weak political parties as one of the key problems in Ecuador's chaotic political past. Due to the historical instability that had accompanied personalist leaders (including Velsaco Ibarra) and the antagonisms between the legislature and the president, the commission attempted to use electoral laws to create a more smoothly functioning government. The commission took advantage of the consensus and widespread support for establishing a new, effective political system. Therefore, they included important clauses in the constitution that attempted to create a healthy link between politicians, political parties and the electorate.

The awareness of the dysfunctional party system prompted a special legislative commission to evaluate party regulations in 1977. (McDonald, 1989:315) Two of Ecuador's most influential up and coming politicians served on the commission. Jaime Roldós and Osvaldo Hurtado addressed problems that parties had created in Ecuadorian governance. Hurtado described the problems as, "vacuous rhetoric, personal conflicts, and ad hoc grouping. " (Levy and Mills, 1983:21).

The Supreme Council of Government, made up of the military leadership, knew that Assad Bucaram, the probable victor of the 1972 elections cancelled by the military, could be a strong contender in this first election. This reality continued to worry both the commission and military leaders. Bucaram's combative style, unpredictability, and personal domination over his political party

served as prime examples of historical problems of personalist candidates within Ecuador's political system. The delay in the process of democratization occurred in part because of the military's attempts to manipulate the electoral process and control the outcome, preventing Bucaram's presidency. In a creative maneuver, the commission chose to prohibit people whose parents weren't native born Ecuadorians from becoming presidential candidates, a stipulation believed to be directed at Bucaram. Bucaram's parents were born in Lebanon, and though Bucaram was born in Ecuador, he could not be a presidential candidate.

Ecuador's elites believed that the development of a functional, capable party system would cure Ecuador's perpetual political problems, and the country would enter a new stage of stability and prosperity after its rocky political history. Ecuador needed a strong party system with modern, national parties, even though the country had almost no experience with effective political parties. (Freidenberg and Alcántara, 2001) The commission created laws guaranteeing the right to form political parties, and attempted to create a strong party system by imposing requirements for party names, membership, organizational structure, and program philosophies. In addition, to stem the prominence of outsider politicians, the commission agreed that a presidential candidate must run under a party affiliation in presidential elections. With this clause, the commission hoped the constitution would help create a more stable base of political parties in society.

The Ecuadorian case study becomes very unique in this context. Leaders attempted to create a functional party system by reform and laws, even though the country had no history of a party system that fulfilled theoretical roles assigned to political parties. Therefore, the legacy of ineffective political party systems existed long before the return to democracy. Yet, the long transition to democracy under military rule supposedly allowed the country time to develop a viable governmental strategy that included political parties as a crucial part of the equation.

This transition is distinct from other Latin American cases, where bureaucratic authoritarian governments and military dictatorships yielded to democracy after the blatant failure of the import substitution industrialization economic model and authoritarian rule lost their legitimacy. The purposeful intention of Ecuador's transition, combined with civilian and military support of democratic governance, didn't create the need to study conflicts brought about by this transition. Therefore, scholars focused on more drastic transitions.

1979-Widespread Support for León Roldós

The Constitution prevented Bucaram's candidacy for president, but Bucaram was still a major player in the first elections. Bucaram handpicked his nephew-in-law, Jaime Roldós to run as his stand in under the CFP party banner. (Conaghan, 1995:442) Bucaram's new strategy was to campaign as a congressional candidate, obtain the presidency of Congress, and control the country from the legislature. Roldós' campaign slogan was, "Roldós to the

Presidency, Bucaram to power.”(Conaghan 1995:442) Apparently, the attempt to diminish Bucaram’s influence in the election failed.

After years of intentional work focusing on curbing the prevalence of personalism and dominance by a strong leader in the new political system, Bucaram managed to creatively insert himself as a potential leader of Ecuador. While new electoral laws hoped to subordinate individual leaders to parties, the CFP functioned in the opposite way. The party leader handpicked a relative to take his place in the elections, and indicated in every way possible that Bucaram would eventually be the one in control of the country. By postulating as a legislative candidate, Bucaram hoped to have a puppet president that would enable him to rule from the Congress.

Yet, Roldós didn’t act as Bucaram had planned. An intelligent and prepared politician himself, Roldós distanced himself from the CFP and Bucaram with his choice of Vice Presidential candidate, Osvaldo Hurtado, from the *Democracia Popular* (DP). Both Roldós and Hurtado played important roles in the commission to reestablish democracy, both were young politicians, and their candidacy combined two popular politicians in Ecuador’s two dominant regions. This combination appealed to a wide group of citizens. Though Rodrigo Borja of the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) led in many of the polls, the first round of voting put Roldós and and *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC) candidate Sixto Durán Ballén in the second round. The military, fearful of Bucaram’s possible involvement in the government, delayed the second round by several months to allow Durán Ballén

time to build a coalition of right leaning parties and supporters. Much to the surprise of civilian elites and the military, Roldós and Hurtado won the second round with a sweeping 68.5% of the vote.

After initial doubts as to whether the military would allow Roldós to take presidential power, Roldós was inaugurated on August 10th, 1979. With the economic situation improving and increased state revenue from petroleum sales, Ecuador hoped to modernize and stabilize the economy. Yet, the economic and social changes weren't accompanied with changes in the highly fractured, personalistic, regionalist political system. After his inauguration, Roldós regularly passed over Bucaram's candidates for ministerial posts. In response, the CFP ceased to support presidential legislation in Congress. In addition, Bucaram established a majority in Congress and took control of the unicameral legislature, the *Congreso Nacional*. As Bucaram failed to develop his own platform, he focused on blocking Roldós' legislation. The president began to look outside his party for support in Congress.

The commission to reestablish democracy attempted to use structural changes in the governmental system to control such problems as personalism, fragmentation, and personal animosity that prevented a functional government. Yet, constitutions can't change or mandate political culture, and the pre existing political culture became woven into the constitutional system. Bucaram's attempts to sabotage Roldós' legislation as punishment for not submitting to clientelistic demands served as a poignant example of Ecuador's historically

personalistic political system. Bucaram played an important role in the dysfunctional state of political parties in the democratic era. Personalism and fractionalization within political parties became a major component of the first presidential administration after so many careful reforms and laws to avoid these exact problems. In these critical first years of democracy, with the support from the entire country and the military, Ecuador lost a critical opportunity to put theory into practice, and enact a system that allowed for the development of a more cohesive party system. The reorganization of the political party system, so carefully addressed on paper by people like Roldós and Hurtado, was based around avoiding the exact problems that plagued the Roldós administration.

Roldós broke off ties with the CFP and formed his own political party, *Pueblo, Cambio y Democracia* (PCD) as his former political party became an obstacle instead of an ally in Congress. This set an important precedent. In the first democratic election of the modern democratic era, a president rejected the party under which he was elected, split from his party banner and created a personalistic party that could better suit his needs and provide him with legislative support while in office.

This reality highlighted an evolving trend in Ecuadorian politics, which is the lack of allegiance by prominent national leaders to political parties that support them in elections. Leaders have rarely been subordinate to their political party. If the party has tried to control an individual leader, the leader often responded by abandoning his political party and creating one of his own.

Ecuador's first attempt at a modern political party system resulted in a party boss hand picking his successor, internal party conflicts becoming critical in an executive-legislative deadlock, and the a presidential decision to abandon the party he ran under during elections and form his own party while in office. The experiment of functional political parties began dreadfully. New political parties fell victim to "internal conflict and subsequent schisms," just like the previous two traditional parties. (Conaghan 1995:439)

In August, 1980, Roldós' candidate managed to beat the CFP candidate for the presidency of Congress, and Roldós enjoyed increased support in Congress. However, Roldós did not have the opportunity to create a more effective political system with his newfound backing in Congress. In May, 1981, President Roldós, his wife, and the minister of defense died unexpectedly in a plane crash near the Peruvian border.

Assad Bucaram suffered from a heart attack in the same year and passed away. The two dominant political players and their respective parties faded from the scene. As Vice President Osvaldo Hurtado from the DP became president in a time of increasing debt pressure and impending economic crisis, Ecuador had a second chance at establishing a less violatate and personalistic political system.

Hurtado, Roldós' constitutional successor, entered office in a difficult economic situation. As the petroleum boom suddenly ended, the country found itself struggling to meet debt payment obligations. In addition, the phenomenon of El Niño damaged Ecuador in 1982 and 1983, as Ecuador suffered severe

economic losses due to extreme weather conditions. Infrastructure damages resulted in a \$640 million loss, with an additional \$300 million in balance of payments deficit. Inflation reached its highest point in the history of the country, at 52.5% in a single year (Return to Democratic Rule).

Hurtado, though ideologically a center-leftist, implemented many unpopular austerity measures to gain the support of the International Monetary Fund and keep the country's lines of credit open. Hurtado suffered from four major strikes during his short time in office; one of which was called off due to the fear of a coup d'état in October of 1982 (Return to Democratic Rule). Though Hurtado suffered from lack of public support, he managed to help consolidate the democratic system and keep lines of credit open during a time of economic and political turmoil. Yet, the dismal economic conditions under a center-left president gave free market advocates an opportunity to attack the current administration.

1984-León Febres Cordero and the Right

Ecuador had another opportunity to begin anew in 1984, with an election between apparently distinct political parties with differing ideologies. The second round featured Guayaquil's León Febres Cordero of the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC) and Rodrigo Borja, the leader of the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) from Quito. In this election, there were two candidates from different regional strongholds, with different economic plans, different ideologies and support from different populations. The simple fact that the electorate put these two candidates

into the second round showed a willingness to trust political party candidates with the government.

In evaluating the electoral history of Ecuador, this election is the only one that pitted the two traditional parties against each other. This shows that Ecuador attempted to develop a contentious party system with two dominant parties. In this election, the two candidates were markedly different, as were their political parties. Not only did the candidates and their parties espouse contrasting ideologies, but they also had support in distinct geographical areas, developed ideological bases, had different ideas of the role of the state in the economy, and had different platforms on how to govern. The left faced the right, the *Serranos* faced the *Costeños* and a Reganist, free market reformer (Febres Cordero) faced a social democrat (Borja).

These two politicians also had different campaign styles, and emphasized different personal strengths in the campaign. Febres Cordero focused on his business connections as opposed to political ones, and ran a charismatic, aggressive, personalist campaign, with an image as a dominant leader. In contrast, Borja emphasized his political experience, diplomacy, concern with building consensus, and connection with his party and the political system as a whole.

León Febres Cordero, who was a national deputy of the PSC, came into prominence due to media attention because of his attacks on Hurtado's government. (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994:132) An unabashed believer in the

free market and representative of Guayaquil's business sector, Febres Cordero quickly became a prominent and aggressive politician who would dominate the PSC for decades. This put this conservative party in a good position for the 1984 elections, especially after the economic meltdown following the 1982 debt crisis in Latin America. Many citizens were looking for a more efficient government. (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994:132)

Febres Cordero won a narrow victory by 81,000 votes and acted rapidly to implement neoliberal reforms in his attempt to save Ecuador from a deepening economic crisis. His presidency included a strict neoliberal economic program and received the strong support of not only Guayaquil's business elites, but also of the United States and the larger international financial community. Politically, his controversial and authoritarian leadership style created many enemies, including congressmen from Borja's party, the ID, which was the largest party represented in Congress. The presidential administration had many severe problems. They began with the loss of the majority in congress in 1986 and the establishment of the ID as the leaders of the legislature. In addition, the legislature requested Febres Cordero's resignation, which he refused to give. Other events included a deepening economic crisis and a failed referendum initiated by Febres Cordero to restructure the political party system by allowing independent presidential candidates to run. (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994:170) In one of the more outrageous occurrences, members of the Air Force kidnapped and held President Febres Cordero hostage for two days before releasing him.

Febres Cordero himself described his presidency as governing, “With a pistol to his throat.” (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994:172) Once again, overwhelming personal opposition and animosity between the two branches of government crippled the capacity of the government to govern.

In 1988, the Ecuadorian electorate had the first opportunity in the democratic era to reform the constitution to allow candidates who have no political party affiliation to run for president. This idea was rejected at the polls, as a referendum to this effect failed to pass. This suggests that at this point, the electorate still supported the concept of a presidential candidate from a political party that would run on the same platform as congressional candidates.

1988-Rodrigo Borja and the Left

As the 1988 elections came, other politicians quickly became leaders in the presidential campaign. As became common in Ecuador, candidates who held different ideological positions from the incumbent president became frontrunners in the campaign. The president’s most outspoken opponent, Rodrigo Borja, was a strong candidate for the 1988 elections. Borja’s two previous experiences in the presidential campaign (in 1979 and in 1984) made him an experienced and well known candidate.

The second round brought a new face to national prominence, Abdalá Bucaram from Guayaquil. Nephew of deceased CFP party boss Assad Bucaram and brother in law of deceased president Jaime Roldós, Abdalá established a populist political party in honor of ex-president Roldós, the *Partido Roldósista*

Ecuatoriana (PRE) in 1983. Bucaram was elected as mayor of Guayaquil in 1984, an important political post in Ecuador. After being ousted as mayor due to corruption charges, Bucaram fled to Panama and was incarcerated briefly for drug trafficking. Bucaram came back to Ecuador in order to run in the 1988 elections, and managed to win 17.6% of the first round vote for second place. This put him in the runoff against Borja for the second round.

Finally, the incumbent party ran a candidate in the elections. Sixto Durán Ballén, one of the founders of the PSC, ran hoping to continue the PSC's tenure in office. Durán Ballén performed poorly and placed third in the first round. With this, the Ecuadorian electorate had thoroughly rejected the PSC's experiment with free market reforms and their lack of success of improving Ecuador's continually dismal economic situation.

Bucaram's political party, the PRE, served an important function in Ecuador's national political scene. Since the 1930's, Ecuadorian politics always had a dominant, outsider leader, who received strong support from the non-elite population. Velasco Ibarra was Ecuador's prominent populist for almost 40 years, from the 1930's through the 1970's. As Velasco Ibarra aged, Assad Bucaram established the CFP and used a populist message to create a personal following. When Bucaram died in 1981, Abdalá quickly began filling the roll of an opposition politician, distinguishing himself from the political elites and establishing himself as the embodiment of the national will. Abdalá managed to create a political party machinery that gave him support and worked for his candidacy. Abdalá

represented the excluded in Ecuadorian politics. His Lebanese roots, campaign full of dancing, sports, and spectacles, and his condemnation of traditional politics won him adoration by many citizens who had always felt excluded from the political scene.

Borja's image, personal history, and experience couldn't have been more different. An established politician and Congressional representative, Borja had a long history of intimate involvement with the government. An academic who saw public service as his personal duty to his country, his image was that of a serious, well-trained politician, completely the opposite of Bucaram. Borja campaigned on a social democratic approach to government, emphasizing the importance of social services. He advocated more state involvement in the economy. After four years of structural adjustment under Febres Cordero' he promised no new fiscal shocks. In addition, Borja hoped to insert Ecuador back into the international arena, after Ecuador defaulted on its foreign debt in 1987 (Hey, 1995). After Febres Cordero's economic policy, closely aligned with the United States, Borja attempted to build relationships with Ecuador's neighbors. Borja won the presidential competition by receiving 252,160 votes more than Bucaram (Revista Vistazo).

The Ecuadorian electorate had the opportunity to choose from a politician with strong political party support, or an outsider politician with a populist message. The ID was the most strongly represented political party in Congress, with a clear ideology, a long history in the legislature, and had strong connections

to institutionalized politics. Bucaram represented little ideological development, ran on a campaign of opposition to the established system, and his brief political experience as the mayor of Guayaquil resulted in his removal and exile.

Borja entered the presidency in a time of grave economic problems and a general feeling of animosity for not only the free market reforms that Febres Cordero had implemented, but also what former President Osvaldo Hurtado called Febres Cordero's administration, a "civil dictatorship." (Revista Vistazo) Borja brought his experience in politics and campaigned with an optimistic message that addressed opening channels for political participation, stabilization of the economy in a way that allowed the democratization of credit and a focus on job creation, and finding a "peace with dignity" in respect to a border dispute with Peru. Borja entered his presidency with 30 seats in Congress (42.2%), and with members of the ID in prominent provincial posts in 17 of Ecuador's 21 provinces. This put Borja with the most legislative support any candidate had since the return to democracy in 1979.

Borja used his legislative approve and implement mini-devaluations of the sucre in an attempt to control inflation. Borja believed in socialist principles with an active state in the economy. Yet due to adjustment packages and internationally imposed economic policies in conjunction with continued debt relief, Borja had few options but to continue free market reforms and open the economy to privatization. Though Ecuador had defaulted on its external debt, Borja made symbolic payments to show the international market of Ecuador's

intentions to be involved in the world economy. Though rhetorically, Borja advocated adequate social services for the impoverished population in Ecuador, he did not make significant progress in reducing levels of poverty. Borja failed to take advantage of his ID majority in Congress from 1988-1990 to pass and implement programs that significantly improved the living conditions of the poor. In 1990, Borja lost his majority in Congress, and become yet another Ecuadorian president who had the difficult task of trying to rule with little congressional support.

By 1992, inflation had begun to rise and petroleum prices continued to be increased by the government, resulting in high levels of unpopularity for Borja's government. In addition, a new, powerful social movement that would greatly impact Ecuadorian politics and election emerged on the national scene during Borja's presidency. The *Confederación de Nacionales Indígenas de Ecuador* (CONAIE), claiming to represent the 25-40% of the Ecuadorian population with indigenous roots, staged its first national protest and strike during Borja's presidency in 1990, and presented 18 demands to the government relating to necessities for the indigenous population. Initially, Borja negotiated with CONAIE and its leadership. The dialogue continued but included several ruptures, new threats for uprisings and strikes, and general rejection of the government and its policies by the indigenous citizens. Only minor progress was made in the development of a mutual relationship.

Ecuador's indigenous population has been excluded from politics for hundreds of years. The indigenous have suffered from lack of the most basic necessities, such as food, housing and adequate medical care. As many speak native indigenous tongues, language is another main obstacle to integrating the indigenous sector into society. CONAIE formed to address the specific needs of these citizens, who for hundreds of years, have been viewed as less than citizens. Initially, this social movement purposefully stayed out of traditional politics, and has used such methods as strikes, protests and governmental negotiations to achieve their demands. After supporting the development of a political movement, Pachakutik, to compete in elections, groups such as the CONAIE began to advocate for inclusion in the political system and make demands to a government that was not adequately representing them or meeting their needs.

CHAPTER FOUR THE SHIFT OCCURS (1992-2002)

1992-Sixto Durán Ballén-From Insider to Outsider

The sheer quantity of presidential candidates (ranging from six to 12 candidates in any election) has created a unique reality for those campaigning for the presidency. This plethora of candidates produced varying results in a two round election system. Candidates can often pass on to the second round with 15-20% of the national vote in the first round. Therefore, instead of building a broad national consensus in the first round, candidates can pinpoint a specific population or region that will actively support them. If they do this successfully, this can often result in a second round appearance, which is generally when candidates then make their campaign strategies more nationally based and inclusive. Yet, a first place finish in the polls after the first round does not necessarily indicate widespread support of a certain candidate or ideology. The electoral system also can result in two candidates with similar ideologies, backgrounds, or regional strongholds. In the second round, mandatory voting means the electorate must pick between one of the two candidates, regardless of whether they feel either candidate adequately represents them.

In 1992, Rodrigo Borja's presidential term came to close amidst rising economic speculation and inflation. The multiple strikes and protests by CONAIE and other social groups created a sense of general unrest. Continual problems with servicing the external debt and bleak macroeconomic factors combined with a strong congressional opposition against Borja and his center-left ideology. Candidates with a conservative, free market based ideology dominated the presidential electoral season. Borja and the center-left had no nationally viable candidate.

Of the 12 candidates who ran for the presidency in 1992, the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC) and its members dominated the election season in a surprising way. Febres Cordero affiliated with the PSC to run for Congress in 1978, but he continued to identify himself as a businessman as opposed to a party militant. As President of Ecuador from 1984-1988, he established himself as the undisputed head of the party. Sixto Durán Ballén, one of the PSC's founders and PSC candidate for president in 1979 and 1988 decided to contest the nomination of Jaime Nebot Saadi during the PSC convention. Nebot had strong backing from Febres Cordero and business elite of the party. Yet, like Durán Ballén, some of the party militants and career politicians objected to Febres Cordero's domination of the party and his authoritarian style. Durán Ballén wanted to redirect the PSC to its roots as a political organization instead of continuing with its current close alignment with powerful business sectors.

Nebot won the nomination, but Durán Ballén's voiced suspicions about voting irregularities at the presidential convention. When the party did not address his complaints, he cut off all ties with the PSC, a move that was widely popular with the public. After much urging to join the presidential race without PSC affiliation, he became a candidate and his public support skyrocketed. As the public was growing increasingly less tolerant of internal bickering among political parties, Durán Ballén's attempt to stand up to party leaders won him many admirers.

An experienced politician and political party member, Durán Ballén saw the stunning electoral success of Peruvian outsider President Alberto Fujimori, who had recently shocked the international community with his rapid rise to prominence and sweeping victory in the presidential elections. Fujimori had no political experience and won on his identity as a candidate with no connection to the traditional political class. Durán Ballén, like Fujimori, could campaign on a platform as an independent candidate, uninfluenced by traditional political parties, and untainted by the declining public support for parties that had increasingly become viewed as corrupt, ineffective, and unable to address the needs of the populace (Conaghan, 1995).

Due to constitutional regulations, Durán Ballén needed to run as a member of a political party. He created the *Partido Unión Republicana* (PUR) to serve as his party for the 1992 elections. This creation of a party for a personalist candidate showed the inverse relationship of parties and politicians in Ecuador.

Politicians continued to see parties as vehicles for personal ambitions, not as ideologically solid organizations, independent of individual leaders.

The lack of ideology of the PUR made Durán Ballén's choice of a vice president an important sign of his governmental plans and intentions. Durán Ballén chose Alberto Dahik as his vice presidential candidate. Dahik, a hard core right wing, neoliberal economist, had served as economic minister under Febres Cordero. The PUR director, Mauricio Gandara, opposed Dahik, who was a political insider, as Durán Ballén's vice presidential candidate. Gandara feared Dahik would decrease Durán Ballén's capacity to market himself as an independent political candidate from the ideological center, due to Dahik's close party affiliations and extreme free market views. As conflict ensured, the PUR expelled Gandara.⁶

Durán Ballén, along with Jaime Nebot of the PSC and Abdalá Bucaram of the PRE, became the dominant candidates. The first round, won by Nebot, concurred with a strong victory for the PSC in the legislative elections (the PSC won 27.3% of the seats in Congress). Nebot's close alignment with ex-president Febres Cordero and his active role in the party made him an insider candidate, affiliated with the established political system. He ran with the support of the established business elite from Guayaquil, claiming that the country needed to be run more efficiently.

⁶ For more information about this event, please see Catherine Conaghan's article written in 1995.

Although Durán Ballén founded the PSC, was the party's presidential candidate on two different occasions, and continued to have strong contacts within the party, He managed to shed his image as an insider politician and highlight his newfound independence. Durán Ballén used this fact to establish himself as an outsider candidate, which appealed to the population alienated by political parties. The PUR only won seven seats in the legislature, which was 15.6% of the seats. In the second round, these two candidates with common regional, party and ideological roots had few distinctions from each other. Their main difference was their current affiliation with traditional politicians and political parties. While both developed their careers inside the conservative, business oriented PSC, Durán Ballén's condemnation of the traditional order and his willingness to abandon his own political party showed that no political organization (most of which were gaining a reputation as corrupt and inefficient) could control him. He could come into office as an outsider candidate, untainted by past failures of political parties and their administrations.

Durán Ballén went on to win the second round and became president in Ecuador in 1992. As the new president began his term with only seven allies in congress, that soon decreased to a single PUR member in Congress after the 1994 legislative elections. In addition, Durán Ballén's administration became involved in a major corruption scandal. Among the many governmental officials accused of unethical behavior was Vice President Alberto Dahik. Dahik accused the legislators and the judiciaries of forcing the president to pay bribes in order to

provide legislative support to implement programs. The Congress and the Supreme Court responded by beginning impeachment proceedings. Dahik went public with his accusations, stating, "The relationship that has developed between Congress and the executive branch over the last 15 years has led to a permanent form of blackmail from individuals, groups of people, and political parties in Congress. In this administration, three different political groups—the *Movimiento Popular Democrático* (MPD), the *Partido Rodolista Ecuatoriano* (PRE), and the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC)—have permanently engaged in blackmail to obtain favors from the government, reaching unbearable levels." (Noti-Sur, 1995)

In September, the Supreme Court filed multiple criminal corruption charges against Dahik, including embezzlement and bribery. In addition, Congress threatened to file political charges of bribery, abuse of office, and actions that damage the national honor. On September 11, 1995, Dahik fled to Costa Rica with his family to avoid prosecution, and was granted political asylum in Costa Rica in April of 1996.

As this crisis unfolded, congress members, judges, and administration members all suffered from a loss of legitimacy. As the political mudslinging continued with the exile of Dahik and the dismissal of Supreme Court justices, the deep corruption at all levels of government became apparent. In addition, political notables used the scandal as an opportunity to gain prominence and set up their campaigns for the 1996 elections. Durán Ballén's administration

responded with an anti-corruption campaign, but much of the public had lost faith in him as a leader. The president who had campaigned as an outsider had become embroiled in scandal surrounding his administration's relationship with political parties. Finally, congressmen from multiple parties suffered from a loss of legitimacy, as the accusations and actions portrayed them as self-interested thieves who demanded payment in order to enact any programs.

1996-Abdalá Bucaram, the Populist

The political situation in 1996 was shaped by two main events. The first was the corruption scandal involving Vice President Dahik, Supreme Court justices, and many members of the legislature. Every branch of government suffered from accusations of bribery, and each branch continued to blame the others for the unethical practices. In addition, Durán Ballén continued on the path of free market reforms, including privatizations of major industries, austerity measures and economic liberalization. Inflation, unemployment and underemployment continued to be endemic problems, as neoliberalism had yet to improve the quality of life of most Ecuadorians.

Nine candidates competed in the first round of the elections. While the election was dominated by familiar faces, there was one historically excluded population that became involved in government. The indigenous population had continued to unify and play an increasingly important role in the politics of the nation. They decided that in their quest to advocate for the specific needs of the indigenous population, they would support a candidate in the presidential

elections as an organization. Freddy Elhers, a non-politician and host of a popular news show in Ecuador, campaigned under the independent banner of Nuevo Pais, and ran explicitly supported by the *Confederación Nacional de Indigenas de Ecuador* (CONAIE), indigenous groups and progressive social movements. Elhers campaigned as an outsider, with no connection to organized politics, attempting to represent a segment of Ecuador's population that has historically been ignored.

As is tradition in Ecuador, many of the 1996 presidential candidates had already competed in previous elections and lost. Both ex-presidents Rodrigo Borja and Sixto Durán Ballén ran for president twice before being elected, and each of them performed particularly poorly in one election (Borja in 1979, Durán Ballén in 1988).

Three familiar faces entered the arena once again. Rodrigo Borja from the ID, ex-president of Ecuador, campaigned. In addition, Jaime Nebot made his second appearance in the presidential elections, with the strong support of Febres Cordero and the PSC. Finally, Abdalá Bucaram, candidate in 1988 and 1992, ran for the third time under his PRE party banner. Bucaram's populist, non traditional campaign included an exaltation of Ecuador's poor, gifts of food and basic necessities, an entertaining campaign full of dancing, singing and excitement, and an unabashed attack on established political parties and the existing political order. Though Bucaram's campaign did not differ significantly from 1988 or 1992, traditional political parties had been embroiled in corruption

scandals and had proven ineffective at dealing with the economic situation of the country. As the established politicians continued to fail to address the every day needs of the majority of Ecuador's population, the voters looked for new options. As the voters trusted Durán Ballén and his message of change in 1992, Bucaram's message of antagonism against the political class and his willingness to identify with ordinary Ecuadorians made his candidacy stronger than ever.

Nebot, in contrast, campaigned with a strict neoliberal campaign, emphasizing the necessity of making Ecuador's economy viable using the tools of the free market. His connection with the business elite in Guayaquil, who funded much of his campaign, steered the country in a clear path of continued privatization, neoliberalism and the accompanying austerity measures and cutbacks. Nebot's campaign was as pragmatic as Bucaram's was vague; while Bucaram avoided specifying realistic governmental programs he would implement and how he would deal with economic constraints, Nebot clearly stated that additional free market reforms and austerity measures would further hinder the government's capacity to provide social services and support. Nebot won the first round by a slim margin over Bucaram, and Freddy Elhers placed third.

Bucaram's lack of ideology and experience worked to his advantage in the second round Bucaram created a hope for the future. Bucaram referred to himself as "el loco" (the crazy one) and brought a campaign unlike any other to the Ecuadorian people. He jumped out of airplanes, danced with popular salsa

models, and sang at his campaign events, which resembled a show as opposed to serious political discussion. He consistently condemned the established traditional parties, and blamed the country's problems on their incompetency and corruption.

Jaime Nebot campaigned with a realistic (albeit unpopular) economic program. He acknowledged that free market reforms and austerity measures would be a part of the next administration, whether a candidate supported or rejected them. He advocated for the needs of the business elite of Guayaquil, and wanted to create an economy and government that could cater to their professional needs. In addition, his intimate connection with Febres Cordero alienated those who disliked Febres Cordero's authoritarian style.

While Nebot only talked of economic progress, Bucaram used his populist rhetoric to create himself as the savior of Ecuador's poor. The protest vote against Nebot and austerity measures gave Bucaram a strong advantage. Yet, scholars termed this election, "A choice between cancer and AIDS" in emphasizing the weaknesses of each candidate (de la Torre, 2000:87).

Bucaram's campaign strategy was to give the people what they wanted, and to tell the electorate what they wanted to hear. Bucaram's charisma, combined with his boisterous style, lack of involvement with politics, ethnic minority status and common language discourse formed a strong challenge to the traditional Ecuadorian political class. In addition, Bucaram campaigned as the first of several "outsiders/opposition politicians" with virtually no connection to the

political system. This group would later include Alvaro Noboa, Lucio Gutiérrez and, to a certain extent, León Roldós. These candidates placed the strength of their campaign on their lack of connection with traditional political parties, their identity outside of the exclusive political class, and their rejection of traditional politics. Bucaram chose not to be part of the establishment, and based his campaign on his voluntary separation from the institution of politics. Before Bucaram, all second round presidential candidates had some connection with a political stronghold or party. Yet, the continual deteriorating situation of the Ecuadorian economy inclined the electorate to support something different.

In 1992, Ecuadorians had chosen to support Sixto Durán Ballén, a long time political party member who had abandoned his political party in search of a new party. His strategy worked in the first round, as Durán Ballén constructed himself as an independent politician, above the corruption and squabbles of established political parties. Yet, his decision to include another political insider, Alberto Dahik, led the country to a deep crisis which shook the institutional base of the political system. As Durán Ballén weathered the storm, traditional politics and its history of corruption became associated with his name. Bucaram's lack of experience on the national political level gave him the right to campaign as a true outsider; one with hardly any connection to politicians or the political system. Durán Ballén's intimate ties to the political system did not disappear as he left his old party and created a new one. Yet, Bucaram's control over his party and personal power gave him dominance. While in previous times, this was seen as a

detriment, it became attractive after all other potential groups and parties had lost legitimacy. To make him even more popular, he aligned with underrepresented and impoverished classes who were suffering even more harshly due to macroeconomic decisions made by a governmental system that had never included them. Bucaram's attempts to integrate these populations gave him credibility among the masses, as they saw Bucaram as a person who would advocate for their perpetually ignored needs.

Bucaram's slogan, "*Primero los pobres!* (First the poor ones!)" set the tone for his campaign. His promises of housing, health care, and food for the poor won their loyalty. Bankrolled by Alvaro Noboa, Ecuador's richest man who was worth several hundred million dollars, Bucaram had access to nearly unlimited amounts of money, and used this to give away t-shirts, food, and clothing on his campaign tours. His patriarchal message, promising to take care of the poor and uneducated, showed his desire to portray himself as the savior of the country. In reality, after unsuccessful and painful neoliberal reforms, Bucaram became the lesser of two evils.

Bucaram won the second round by a slim margin of 27,000 votes over Noboa. Yet, once in office, Bucaram quickly lost the support of the majority of Ecuador's population. He began to appoint relatives and friends to important posts in government, regardless of their qualifications. His antics as president, including releasing his own CD titled "The Man Who Loves" and his national tour to promote the CD with scantily clad models, embarrassed the country. In

addition, Bucaram invited Lorena Bobbitt to the presidential palace, a famous Ecuadorian woman who gained notoriety by cutting off her abusive husband's penis in the United States. Economically, Bucaram quickly turned to structural adjustment packages and harsh neoliberal economic policies, which surprised the entire country after his campaign based on advocating for the needs of the poor. These economic goals included discussions with Domingo Cavallo (architect of the Argentine convertibility plan) to dollarize the economy in 1996. A last straw for Bucaram was his harsh increases in the price of electricity and gasoline, which jumped in price by 200%. In addition, Bucaram increased the price of public transportation by 60%. These goals greatly impacted the entire population, but had a particularly devastating effect on the poorest Ecuadorians. In addition, Congress began to investigate allegations of corruption within the Bucaram administration.

By mid-January, opposition came from many different fronts, including the indigenous population, the urban poor, the middle class, and academics and intellectuals. In a telling statement of the utter loss of confidence by the entire country, even the business sector supported the ouster of Bucaram. Jamil Mahuad led Quito's business associations to join in the strikes and protests against the government. On February 6th, over two million Ecuadorians participated in a 48 hour national strike, calling for the resignation of President Bucaram. On February 7th, using a vague clause of the constitution, the Congress voted to impeach Bucaram on grounds of mental incapacity, and

elected President of Congress Fabian Alarcón as president. The situation became ever more confusing as Bucaram rejected the legality of his impeachment, his Vice President claimed the presidency for herself, and Congress elected a separate president.

As a vacuum of power loomed, the Armed Forces rejected the possibility of taking power. The military encouraged the squabbling civilian factions to find a quick solution to keep the country from falling into anarchy. The military volunteered to serve as a mediator between these fighting groups, and an agreement was made. Bucaram left the country for self-exile in Panama, Vice President Rosalia Arteaga agreed to step down, and Alarcón would become interim president of Ecuador until August of 1998 when special elections would be held to elect a new president. From exile in Panama, Bucaram quickly made it apparent that he was not finished in Ecuadorian politics, and continued to direct his political party from Panama.

This utter failure of Bucaram in the presidential office left the electorate with many harsh lessons. The populace had chosen Bucaram to protest the inefficient and unresponsive government of traditional political parties. Yet, Bucaram's presidency ended in a situation of chaos, with political, economic and constitutional crises negatively impacting the entire country. While political party candidates hadn't been popular, all of them managed to finish their elected term in office. Bucaram's tenure lasted a mere six months. While parties and their presidents had lost legitimacy due to their lack of successful government,

Bucaram's government proved unstable and ineffective to a new extreme. Neither insider nor populist candidates managed to address Ecuador's profound economic and political problems, or provide the electorate with a sense of representation in high levels of government. This left the electorate with little confidence in any type of politician. Both the new and the old had proved unsuccessful. Populist rhetoric had proven to be misleading, as Bucaram's campaign promises did not in any way indicate what he would do once in office.

Ecuador had yet to experience a successful presidency. The right, the left, independent and populist politicians had all failed to make positive changes in the quality of life of the majority of Ecuador's population. As different groups continued to be delegitimized, Ecuador had few additional options. As different people with different bases of support tried to address serious problems of the country, they lost their legitimacy while serving as president and did not meet the expectations of the people that elected them. The population, frustrated by the continued failure of a wide spectrum of parties, politicians and ideologies to improve the situations in the country, prepared for another election in 1998. Wary of unabashed populism and disappointed at Bucaram's performance, presidential candidates had to create themselves as something genuinely unique for the population.

Fabian Alarcón ruled as interim president from February 1997 to August 1998. In July 1997, he dismissed the Supreme Court as they began to investigate accusations that Alarcón had over 1,000 ghost employees on the

government's payroll. This removed the Supreme Court justice that was pursuing a corruption case against the interim president. Alarcón did not have the political support in Congress or the time to implement real changes. Though he attempted to get permission to complete Bucaram's four year term in office, civil and political opposition prevented this. In addition, because Alarcón had not been elected to the presidency, he has less legitimacy in the eyes of the people than other leaders. Alarcón ended his lame duck term in August 1998.

In a context of never ending corruption scandals among Ecuador's highest government officials, the 1998 election season began. The electorate had trusted Bucaram to be an outsider president who would make important changes in the economic and political situation of the nation. That experiment ended in near disaster, so the populace approached this election with wariness. Outsiders now had a strike against them, and the general fear that Bucaram would somehow manage to return to the country to attempt to be in power again impacted electoral choices. Frustrated by the unbecoming behavior of Ecuador's previous presidents and outraged at the corruption apparent in all levels of government, Ecuador's population looked for candidates with experience in office who had a clean record.

1998-Jamil Mahuad, the Career Politician

These elections became the first elections that occurred under a new constitution, ratified in 1998. Much of the reason to change and update the constitution came from the confusing events of Bucaram's ouster in 1997, when

Ecuador had three people who claimed to be the legitimate president. Though eventually a peaceful solution occurred, the prior document did not clearly mandate what was to happen in a situation such as this. This constitution hoped to clarify these issues, and again addressed political parties. In a new approach to politics, the constitution also permitted the candidacy of independent candidates running without a political party banner.

Important roles of political parties are discussed, and the document attempts to assign functions to political parties and how they fit in the general system as a whole. Before addressing specifics of the 1998 elections, this study gives a general overview of the legal system in place for the 1998 elections.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador acknowledges the importance of the political party system. The Law of Political Parties states, "Parties are organized by political doctrines, and are made up of people who freely associate with each other to participate in the life of the State." (OAS, 2002:28). Additionally, the law establishes an important role for political parties, stating that they, "constitute a fundamental element of the democratic system—they express and orient the public will, they promote active civic participation of citizens, they train their members to become involved in public life, and they select the best men for the term of the government." (OAS, 2002:28). Even the Ecuadorian legal code recognizes the importance of parties, and claims that they should form a "fundamental element" of the democratic system.

In Article 114, the constitution guarantees the right to found political party systems and participate in elections in the conditions established by law. Article 115 states that in order for a party to be recognized by law, it “should present doctrines that individualize them, present a program of political action that abides by a democratic system, should be organized nationally [as opposed to regionally], and have the number of members that the law requires.” In order to control for the multitude of minor parties and personalist parties, the law also states, “whatever party or political movement that does not obtain a minimum of 5% of the valid vote in successive national elections will be eliminated from the electoral register.” In terms of campaign limits, Article 116 establishes that, “the law will fix the limits of campaign spending. Political parties, movements, organizations and independent candidates will have to present accounts before the *Tribuno Supremo Electoral* (TSE), about the amount, origin and destination of resources utilized during electoral campaigns.” Finally, “electoral publicity using the means of communication can only occur during the 45 days immediately before the date of the closure of the electoral campaign.”

Article 209 of the constitution establishes The *Tribuno Supremo Electoral* (TSE) is the head of electoral organization, and is made up of seven members who represent the political groups that received the most votes in the last elections. (OAS, 2002:28) It is autonomous and administered independently, and its function is to organize, supervise, direct and guarantee the electoral process. The TSE is responsible for providing the official results of elections.

Presidential elections occur every four years. Article 98 establishes that candidates can either run under political party banners, or can run independently, without affiliation with political parties. In addition, while presidents and vice presidents can't be consecutively reelected, they can be elected after one term has passed. Article 100 of the Constitution suggests that military members should resign from military posts before running for office.

A candidate can win in one electoral round under two conditions. Firstly, a single candidate can obtain a simple majority of the vote. Secondly, if a candidate wins 40% of the vote, and over 10% more than the immediately following candidate, a second round is unnecessary. In Ecuador, no election has ever finished this way. If neither of these situations occurs, a runoff between the top two candidates takes place. The second round produces the new president of the republic.

Mandatory voting means that candidates have to convince the majority of Ecuadorians that their candidacy will be able to address the country's profound economic problems, along with political and social challenges. This requirement attempts to integrate all social and economic classes into the political system, and give everyone a say in the government. In a political system that has generally been highly exclusive, mandatory voting hopes to force candidates to address issues that are important to a large sector of the population. With between 60-80% of Ecuadorians living in poverty, improvement in the quality of life is a fundamental issue of every campaign. Mandatory voting reinforces the

importance of a bond between politicians and the general electorate. Candidates must be attractive to the general population.

Though mandatory voting intends to involve the entire country in the electoral process, it has important unintended consequences. Specifically because of this, campaigns have often featured few realistic campaign promises and platforms. Considering that the vast majority of Ecuadorians live in poverty and have low levels of education, such campaign strategies that use clientelism and handouts to the people become popular. In addition, this makes Ecuador ripe ground for unrealistic but attractive campaign promises. Instead of acknowledging realistic budgetary restraints, presidents speak of programs and changes that would be extremely difficult to actually implement. For example, highlighting the reality of continued austerity measures would be a detriment to a candidate. Yet, they are inevitably going to be a part of their government. Instead, candidates talk about new housing for the poor, programs that assist in providing food, and increased numbers of jobs that will be created by a new presidency. In addition, this has assisted in creating a campaign season where candidates sometimes say whatever necessary to get elected, as opposed to addressing serious financial and economic realities.

Bucaram's platform forms a poignant example of a candidate specifically targeting voters alienated from traditional political party rule, advocating for important changes to improve the lives of Ecuador's poor, and implementing unexpected, harsh austerity measures once in office. These surprising

measures included such decisions as sharply increasing the prices of basic necessities such as public transportation and electricity. These mandate switches, very common in Ecuador, have damaged the legitimacy of the president.

Latin American constitutions have a long history of creating an ideal picture of how a government should function instead of taking into account realistic constraints and integrating the reality of a political culture that has been dominated by a history of authoritarianism as opposed to democracy. This constitution is another example of Ecuador's attempts to use legal documents to regulate and change a political culture that never developed any strong attachment to political parties. After 20 years of a political system based on an important role of political parties, this constitution gave independents the right to run for presidency. In 1988, the populace rejected a similar referendum that would allow independent candidates to run, but after the dismal performance of various political parties in the president, the electorate was ready for new and untested governments.

Sixteen months after Bucaram's departure, the 1998 elections occurred. The chaos and near disintegration of the government was fresh on many voter's minds. The trauma and instability caused by Bucaram's six month presidency and his unconventional removal from office formed an important background for these elections. The unbecoming antics of Bucaram while in the presidency gave academically trained candidates with practical experience in politics an

advantage, as Ecuador looked for a candidate that could return a sense of honor and seriousness to government.

Only six candidates campaigned in these elections, the fewest to date in Ecuador's history. After *Democracia Popular* (DP) candidate Rodrigo Paz finished fourth in a field of nine in 1996, the DP ran a different candidate for the President, Jamil Mahuad Whitt. Mahuad campaigned with a promise to modernize Ecuador's state apparatus and crack down on crime and corruption. Though the DP never had held the presidency, they had been an important group in Congress and were known for their moderate viewpoints and their ability to negotiate with other political parties. Identified with the highland middle and upper class, the DP had a centrist ideology, and hoped to build some consensus in order to allow for the proper functioning of government. In addition, Mahuad had an impressive résumé and a somewhat unusual reputation as a clean and honest politician in a country where the majority of politicians are viewed as corrupt by the public. His training in Public Administration at Harvard University, combined with his respectable mayorship of the city of Quito, gave him the necessary experience and academic combination to propose serious programs to assist the country out of a continual economic downslide.

Multi millionaire Alvaro Noboa was almost the exact opposite of Mahuad. Noboa blazed onto the political scene in 1998, under Bucaram's party banner, the PRE. Noboa had bankrolled Bucaram's successful presidential campaign in 1996. With Bucaram in self-exile in Panama and ineligible to run for the

presidency, he agreed to back Noboa as a presidential candidate, and have his party sponsor Noboa's candidacy. Noboa had no political experience whatsoever and many Ecuadorians saw his wealth as a product of his inheritance as opposed to hard work. Bucaram's connection to Noboa also brought much speculation, as the population wondered if a Noboa presidency would also mean Bucaram's return to Ecuador. Rodrigo Borja ran for presidency under his political party banner, the ID, for the fifth time. In addition Freddy Elhers campaigned again under the banner of Nuevo País.

The characteristics of this election were markedly different from other ones. Firstly, only six candidates ran for presidency, as opposed to the usual field of anywhere between eight and twelve. Secondly, Noboa's status as the only candidate from the coastal region of Ecuador gave him a huge comparative advantage. In a country where region often shaped the presidential election, 1998 was the first year that the traditionally strong coastal party of the PSC didn't field a candidate. Therefore, Noboa had no competition from another coastal candidate, which improved his odds at passing into the second round. Thirdly, Noboa's personal wealth and ability to finance his campaign, combined with the clientelistic support structure of the PRE, gave him a combination of effective political party machinery with an unlimited pocketbook. As no campaign spending limits were in effect, the costs associated with running for president skyrocketed.

Coming from an influential coastal family that made its wealth in Ecuador's banana export trade, Noboa claimed to have the international connections and

the business knowledge to help the country out of its deep political and economic problems. His dominant, charismatic personality and lack of experience in the political sphere filled the void left by Bucaram, as the poor suddenly had a new populist leader to support. Noboa used his personal wealth to travel throughout the country, giving away food, flour, t-shirts and medicine.

As Noboa gained support of mostly poor, alienated voters, the political elite of the country feared a return of Bucaram into a position of power. Therefore, in an extremely unusual occurrence, coastal business elites looked to support a candidate from the highlands. Rarely in Ecuadorian history have elites from the highland and coastal regions agreed to support a single candidate. The coastal elites threw their support behind Mahuad, due to the damage Bucaram's presidency did to the view of the country's stability. In addition, with no practical experience in politics and no real ideological platform, Noboa seemed unqualified to govern a country in the midst of severe economic, financial and political problems.

Mahuad and Noboa passed into the second round with significantly more support than any of the other candidates. In the second round another surprise occurred, as Noboa abruptly severed ties with the PRE and its political machinery. While Noboa claimed that he had planned to do so all along, the PRE contradicted him by saying that Noboa could not have passed into the second round without the support of the PRE. Many people believed that a personal rift had occurred between Noboa and Bucaram. Bucaram insisted on complete

authority within his political party, and Noboa was attempting to take more control. When Bucaram wouldn't cede any power within the party, Noboa responded by ending all connections with the PRE and creating his own political party, called the *Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional* (PRIAN). Therefore, Bucaram became opposed to Noboa. Some analysts claim that this split cost him the election.

The second round election featured a showdown between two completely distinct politicians. Mahuad represented experience and pragmatism. He had a platform to address some of the deep rooted problems in Ecuador, including inadequate state apparatus, corruption in high levels of government, and continual economic problems. Noboa, on the other hand, represented a rejection of the traditional political system and little developed ideology. Noboa's optimistic campaign promised the voters an improved quality of life, but offered few practical ideas as to how that would occur.

Both of these politicians represented a variation of a presidency Ecuador had seen before. Noboa followed in Bucaram's footsteps, using populism and clientelism to win the loyalty of citizens. Ecuador has often had politicians use this approach, which has been widely successful. In contrast, Mahuad represented traditional politics, but came from a political party with a somewhat solid reputation. Mahuad had proven himself to be a capable administrator of Quito, and had the proper credentials to rule the country at the time of crisis.

After the near collapse of the government under Bucaram, the country wanted a president that had preparation for the difficult road ahead.

Mahuad beat Noboa in a closely contested race, with only 200,000 votes separating the two candidates (OAS 1998). Noboa vigorously protested the results, claiming fraud gave Mahuad the victory. International election monitoring groups, including The Organization of American States, continued to verify that Mahuad fairly won the elections. As Noboa claimed the elections were stolen from him by a conspiracy of Ecuador's elites to allow Mahuad's presidency, Mahuad was inaugurated in August 1998.

The second round of 1998 clearly shows the ideological swing back towards a career politician and away from a neophyte outsider after a chaotic and unsuccessful populist presidency with Bucaram. The population once again decided to place their trust in a political party and a president with intimate contacts with government. The population gave the DP 33 seats in Congress, another important victory for Mahuad, as he would have collaborators in Congress.

Mahuad came to national prominence firstly by his mayorship of Quito, and then by taking a leadership role against a fairly elected president that had lost legitimacy in the eyes of the people. By supporting Bucaram's ouster, Mahuad gained important respect in the political sphere. 1998 was the first time in 10 years Ecuadorians had chosen a president from an established political party. Finally, Mahuad represented the true theory behind political parties, as the

party chose Mahuad to run under the party banner. Mahuad played an important role in his party, but did not dominate it absolutely, a rarity in Ecuadorian politics.

Economic Collapse and January 21, 2000

Mahuad, who came into power with an impressive 33 members of his political party in Congress, hoped to modernize Ecuador's political system. Almost immediately after entering office in August, 1998, Ecuador came to the verge of war with Peru over a boundary dispute that had existed since 1942. Ecuador had fought three wars with Peru over this territory, including a conflict in 1995 which cost Ecuador a significant amount of revenue and saw dozens of soldiers killed. Mahuad and his counterpart, Peruvian Alberto Fujimori, came to a peace treaty that favored Peru, but included concessions to Ecuador.

The immediacy of addressing a potential border confrontation diverted important attention away from the economic front. As the peace treaty finally came into effect, Ecuador was hit with another wave of serious problems, this time on the economic front. Due to a global overproduction of oil, the price of a barrel of petroleum (Ecuador's main export) had dropped to \$8-9 a barrel. With the Ecuadorian budget based on a price of between \$17-22, Ecuador suffered from a huge decrease in state revenue. In addition, the El Niño phenomenon, warm water current that impacts global temperature and climate, hit Ecuador in 1998. While El Niño generally harms Ecuador's agricultural crops and infrastructure, this year the storm caused enormous damage to the country's exports, roads, and residencies. Millions of dollars of export crops were

completely destroyed, which further hurt the country and its economy. All of these problems resulted in increases in the inflation rate, as the sucre, the national currency, began to weaken.

1999 was one of Ecuador's worst years in the economic history of the country. In the beginning of March, the currency began to rapidly lose value against the dollar. To avoid capital flight which would result in the bankruptcy of several banks and to avert hyperinflation, Mahuad declared a bank holiday in March, as banks closed for over a week. Widespread protests erupted as the administration's economic team decided to freeze saving accounts to keep banks solvent. In addition, Mahuad attempted to raise the prices of gasoline within the country to help cut the budget deficit. After facing protests and marches that nearly brought the country to a standstill, Mahuad relented on his gasoline price increases and compromised over which accounts would be frozen and which accounts people would have access to.

As Mahuad struggled to meet with all of the austerity measures required by international financial institutions in order to keep Ecuador's lines of credit open, he faced another angry segment of the population that had felt betrayed and abandoned by the government. The indigenous social movement, CONAIE, sponsored several uprisings against Mahuad and his government in protest of cuts in subsidies for basic needs, increases in the cost of living, and inflation that impacted the entire population but particularly hurt the poor.

The banking and financial sector suffered severely from increased inflation and decreased economic stability. The government attempted to bail out several failing banks and spent billions of dollars in trying to keep the banking system solvent, but currency continued to slide and several large banks went bankrupt. Not just the result of macroeconomic factors, the banking crisis also revolved around unethical banking practices. Many of the high level staff of large banks left the country with millions of dollars of Ecuadorian's money while the bank slid into bankruptcy. Particularly devastating was the bankruptcy of *The Banco del Progreso*, Guayaquil's largest bank, which still closed after the government bailed the bank out and spent over \$1 billion. In September, Ecuador became the first country in history to default on its Brady Bonds and the economic forecast went from bad to worse.

After losing almost two thirds of its value in 1999, the sucre lost over 30% of its value in the first week of January 2000. The country was on the verge of approaching hyperinflation, and Mahuad's approval rating continued to plummet as the population saw him as an incapable administrator to handle these severe problems. Mahuad's focused on avoiding a bout of hyperinflation which would ruin the country. Hyperinflation hadn't occurred in Ecuador to this point, but other countries such as Argentina and Bolivia had suffered harshly from its disastrous effect on the economy and the cost of living.

As the currency continued to slide, more information became public about the sources of funding for Mahuad's campaign. The 1998 elections brought

expenses to a new level in Ecuador. Due to the fact that the country had not established a legal campaign spending limit and Alvaro Noboa also had unlimited funds at his disposal, Mahuad needed to raise a significant amount of money to remain competitive in the elections. Mahuad and Noboa each spent an estimated \$15-18 million dollars in the election season. A further blow to Mahuad's legitimacy occurred when a reporter broke the news that Mahuad had received over \$3 million for his campaign from Fernando Aspiazu, president of the now bankrupt Banco del Progreso. Mahuad's government spent over \$1 billion in its attempt to bail out this bank, but all of the depositors lost their money. After the bank failed, Aspiazu left the country with millions of dollars and did not face any consequences for his action. Mahuad had staked his reputation on honesty and transparency, and had been a strong opponent to corruption. This startling fact became an additional betrayal of the people by Mahuad and his political class.

Due to the accusations of corruption against Mahuad and outrage at the drastic devaluation of the currency, CONAIE and other sectors called for a national strike beginning on January 10, 2000. Mahuad shocked the country with his decree on January 9. He decided to follow a drastic, untested path, as he used his executive power to abandon the national currency and adopt the American dollar as Ecuador's legal currency. This took the country by complete surprise, as he had not elaborated on a plan such as this in public. Ecuador became the first country in Latin America to fully dollarize the economy, and it did so in a time of economic meltdown. Mahuad pegged the value of the sucre at

25,000 sucres per dollar. Mahuad's presidency had begun 16 months ago with an exchange rate of 5,500 sucres per dollar. Under his watch, the national currency had lost almost 80% of its value.

In addition, dollarization meant the loss of any control over fiscal policy and adopting a foreign currency. This angered many Ecuadorians, but the tremendous impact of the high exchange rate made life savings disappear and decreased the purchasing power of salaries instantly. Particularly hard hit were the poor, who had not been able to purchase dollars in times of crisis and found their meager salaries suddenly not sufficient for even the most basic of all expenses. CONAIE was outraged at this undemocratic decision and the lack of consultation with the public to implement a national program such as this. They declared their intention to march to Quito with the goal of forcing Mahuad out of office.

The trajectory of Ecuadorian politics would change forever on January 21, 2000, when a sector of the military, combined with CONAIE, ousted a fairly elected, constitutionally legitimate president from the presidential post.

CONAIE, represented by leader Antonio Vargas, formed an unusual alliance with a sector of the Ecuadorian military. Though from a distance, the collaboration of the military and an indigenous social movement seems odd, the Ecuadorian military has a much different tradition and reputation from other militaries in the continent. Widely seen as one of the most respected institutions

in the country, the military had historically played an important role as a mediator between civilian groups in times of political crisis.

Due to goals of national integration of all of Ecuador's different regions, members of the military have often been stationed in areas with strong concentrations of indigenous people in Ecuador's highlands and Amazon region. A large component of the active military comes from families with indigenous roots, as the military is often formed of those coming from lower classes that have few other professional options. In addition, the military and indigenous warriors fought together against the Peruvians during border disputes. The military's outrage with the incapacity of civilian governments and their call to defend the integrity and honor of their homeland has led to resistance against democratically elected presidents who are seen as abusing the power of the post they occupy.

After occupying the congressional building with a people's congress claiming to represent the true will of the country, thousands of indigenous citizens protested outside the presidential palace and in other places across the country. The military informed President Mahuad that they would no longer guarantee his safety, and advised him to leave the presidential palace. As Mahuad's location was unknown, a new junta appeared in the presidential palace, claiming to be the new junta of national salvation that would truly represent the will and desire of the people. Appearing on the balcony were Antonio Vargas of CONAIE, Carlos Solorzano, a former supreme court justice, and Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, who

represented a sector of the military that supported Mahuad's ouster and advocated for a government that listened to the needs and desires of the population. Gutiérrez found himself in the national spotlight, as he spoke of a peaceful revolution that would create a government that addressed the desperate needs of Ecuador's indigenous citizens and its impoverished population.

Gutiérrez claimed that he was not doing this out of self interest and had no desire to take over power, but felt obligated to take action against a government that had abused its power and implemented painful austerity measure that impoverished more of the population. In addition, he rallied against dollarization, lamenting at the loss of national sovereignty and claiming the exchange rate was unreasonably high for most Ecuadorians. This peaceful overthrow (referred to as a bloodless coup) gained much respect from the population.

As the night wore on, Gutiérrez was forced to allow General Carlos Mendoza to take his place in the junta. The military, intent on not appearing as fragmented, needed someone with a higher rank to represent the institution. After communications from many nations and international organizations, including threats by the United States for an embargo against Ecuador, Mendoza withdrew the military's support of the junta, declaring that Mahuad's Vice President Gustavo Noboa (no relation to Alvaro Noboa) should occupy the presidency. As the international community condemned the undemocratic removal of Mahuad and several groups began to protest the unconstitutional dismissal of power, Noboa came to Quito to begin his interim presidency in a time of political uproar

and instability. Noboa, with the support of the legislature and the military, became president until Mahuad's term ended in 2002.

The People's Congress and the junta only held power for a few hours. Yet, this uprising of mainly indigenous citizens against the established traditional politicians and their success in peacefully overthrowing the government marked a new moment in Ecuador's democratic history. CONAIE taught the country that they were unwilling to sit on the sidelines any longer as president after president ignored their needs and implemented unpopular and impoverishing austerity measures. This episode brought up a wider question of grass roots democracy and how it works in Latin America. When a freely, fairly elected president has lost legitimacy and the population rises up against him and overthrows him, is this the ultimate expression of democracy, or an condemnable undemocratic action?

In Ecuador's case, the military and CONAIE became the protagonists for overthrowing a widely unpopular president. Though many disagreed with the tactics used, few were sad to see Mahuad leave his office. CONAIE had entered institutional politics in the constitutional and legal way with its political party Pachakutik. They had logged their protests within the system peacefully. When this failed to make adequate changes, CONAIE resorted to disrupting the country's roads and staging general strikes and marches when the system did not give them the adequate channels to voice their grievances and concerns about the direction of the government and the decisions it was making.

Gutiérrez became a household name after this episode. His obvious attention to the concerns of common Ecuadorians came through in his image of a frustrated citizen defending his country against corrupt politicians who were willing to hurt the country for personal profit.

The Disappearance of a Party

Mahuad came into the presidency with a strong academic and political background and a promised to update the political system. He left behind a country with a currency valued at 1/5 of the value when he entered, a drastic decision to abandon the national currency by decree, a banking system in ruins, 26 bankrupt banking entities, millions of dollars of frozen deposits, and Latin America's first successful indigenous uprising that resulted in a regime change. The DP watched their party go from national prominence to becoming responsible for Ecuador's economic meltdown. It began with Mahuad's ouster and continued in July of 2000 as 12 legislators split off and formed their own Movement of International Integration (MIN). In August of 2001, long time DP supporter, ex president, and 2002 presidential candidate Osvaldo Hurtado abandoned the party, along with another group of legislators.

The DP forms a stark example of how an unsuccessful administration can completely destroy a political party that spent decades establishing roots in society. In addition, this also highlights the importance of the presidential candidates that these parties choose. Winning a presidency and having that candidate lose legitimacy can easily be death for a political party. Members of the

party will quickly abandon the unpopular name or stigma around an unsuccessful candidate.

CHAPTER FIVE 2002 AND THE TRIUMPH OF OUTSIDERS

The International Republican Institute (IRI), one of the three international organizations monitoring the 2002 elections, highlighted its importance.⁷ In its initial report, the IRI emphasized the volatile political and economic environment in Latin America. While Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru experienced profound political problems, Argentina and Uruguay suffered from financial crises. Brazil recently received the largest IMF loan package in history to avert a financial meltdown. Though the Ecuadorian situation had not commanded media attention, the IRI asserted that the 2002 elections were important to Ecuador and the entire Andean region. Due to the fact that Ecuador has had six presidents since 1996 and neither of the last two democratically elected presidents has survived their terms, this election was a significant test of the strength of Ecuador's democracy. In the late 1990's, the financial crisis that devastated the country led to a political crisis that ended the term of presidential Mahuad. Though the country has stabilized somewhat after dollarization, Ecuador still

⁷ The International Republican Institute, the Organization of American States, and the European Union all participated in elections observations. The IRI released three pre-election reports. Report #1 covered a period from July 17-24, 2002, Report #2 covered a period from August 18-24, 2002. Report #3 covered a period from September 12-22, 2002.

faced serious economic and political problems, such as rising costs of living, low salaries, and unemployment and underemployment (IRI Report 1:2-3).

The 2002 elections arrived during a time of economic adjustments that were necessary due, in part, to its new currency, the United States dollar. Interim President Gustavo Noboa rejected the idea of running for president in the 2002 elections. The country hoped a new president could help continue the fragile stability obtained under Noboa's watch, and proceed to strengthen democratic institutions and responsibly address the economic reality of the country. Noboa took power in a situation of crisis and was able to continue the process of dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy. After several months of using both the sucre and the dollar, the country stopped using Ecuadorian currency in March of 2001.

Noboa managed to finish his term without any major scandals. He was credited with preventing the country from falling into anarchy in January 2000 and for stabilizing the country economically by continuing the process of dollarization.

In 2002, for the first time in Ecuadorian history, the *Tribuno Supremo Electoral* (TSE) established spending limits for presidential campaigns. After the 1998 elections, where both Alvaro Noboa and Jamil Mahuad spent an estimated \$12-15 million each on the campaign, the TSE decided to create and implement spending limits. It set the fine for exceeding spending limits at twice the amount of the excess. The limits, low by many country's standards, were set at

\$1,139,882 for the first round and \$227,976 for the second round. Though the TSE had little legal backing to enforce this rule and candidates with personal fortunes could easily overspend, this was a first attempt at controlling spending of candidates. After the scandal in 2000, where banker Fernando Aspiazu donated over three million dollars to President Jamil Mahuad's campaign, the TSE attempted to create more accountability and establish a realistic base for campaign spending (OAS final report, 2002:21-22).

Like many other times in Ecuador's history, this campaign was overshadowed by the events that ended the previously elected president's rule. Ecuador's indigenous groups demonstrated their willingness and capacity to overthrow a democratically elected government that did not listen to the desires of the electorate and integrate the unique needs of the indigenous population into government. In addition, Mahuad's deep connections with the institutions of government further alienated the population from the traditional parties. Outrage about white collar crime, corruption at high levels of government, and the exodus of bankers who had stolen the money of depositors before their banks went bankrupt and had then escaped to the United States and other countries became a key issue in this election. The population demanded accountability for these men. They wanted these criminals extradited and brought to Ecuador to stand trial.

The Organization of American States stated that the election season was characterized by strong voter apathy (especially in large urban centers) and a

loss of credibility by political parties. As the left, right, outsider politicians, populists, and well trained public administrators had all struggled through their terms in office (or in the case of Bucaram and Mahuad, had been removed from office after a short time), the population hesitated to place their trust in any politician. By August 4th, less than 80 days before the election began, 89% of the population was undecided about the candidate they would support (*Indecisión electoral*, August 5, 2002). The OAS highlighted one of the main reasons for this apathy as the lack of leadership and personalities that captured the attention of the voters.

In addition, political parties faced additional disapproval due to their failure to cooperate in the legislature and build coalitions necessary to create and implement programs that addressed the socioeconomic demands of the people. Particularly in a time when traditional politics had been delegitimized and overthrown by a coalition of the excluded, this election seemed to have space available for a new series of leaders, movements and parties that attempted to capture the electorate with their discourse condemning corruption and established political parties and politicians (OAS 2002:49).

All three international observation organizations highlighted the complexity of these particular elections. The first round of the presidential voting coincided with Congressional elections for the entire unicameral congress (100 seats), 67 provincial council members, 677 municipal council members, and, for the first time in history, five representatives to the newly formed Andean Parliament (IRI

Report 1:3). Therefore, though much attention remained on the presidential race, the Ecuadorian electorate also was responsible for electing a completely new legislature and important municipal and regional posts.

Potential Candidates and Speculation

Presidential candidates had until August 20th to register with the TSE. The tradition of running tickets with a presidential candidate from the coast and vice presidential candidate from the highlands (or vice versa) continued, highlighting the continued importance of regionalism. Alvaro Noboa began campaigning actively for the 2002 elections soon after his narrow defeat in 1998. Noboa used his personal wealth to give away shoes, boots, clothes, food, and other items, in an attempt to gain voter loyalty. Without the *Partido Roldósista Ecuatoriana* (PRE) party banner, Noboa worked to establish the *Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional* (PRIAN) and created a disciplined following that would support him in the presidential elections and his party's candidates for legislature. According to the International Republican Institute, Noboa enjoyed wide support before the official beginning of the campaign, with public opinion polls placing him easily in first place.

In addition, León Febres Cordero, former president from 1984-1988 and mayor of Guayaquil from 1992-2000, found tremendous support (particularly in the coastal region) for a presidential campaign. His admirable job as mayor of Ecuador's largest city gave him credibility as a no-nonsense, assertive, effective leader who completed public projects that benefited the entire region. Many

analysts saw Febres Cordero as a shoo-in second round candidate in the presidential elections, and some even claimed that he had a strong chance at winning (IRI Report 1, 2002:10). On July 23rd, after traveling to Miami for medical appointments, Febres Cordero announced that he would not be a candidate for president, due to medical restrictions. Febres Cordero endorsed the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC) candidate, Xavier Neira, who he claimed possessed, “integrity, capacity, decisiveness and the loyalty necessary to achieve positive results for the people, changing for the better the quality of life of all Ecuadorians and especially the poorest.” (Febres Cordero, 2002)

Preliminary analysts asserted that this election could end with many surprises, as the population seemed particularly alienated from traditional political parties. In fact, many seemed apathetic about elections in general. Two former presidents were also potential candidates--Rodrigo Borja from the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) and Osvaldo Hurtado, formerly a member of the now defunct *Democracia Popular* (DP), party of ex-president Jamil Mahuad. Ex-Colonel and coup leader Lucio Gutiérrez also became a potential presidential candidate, running under the political organization he created, the, la Sociedad Patriótica 21 de enero (PSP). (IRI Report 1, 2002:7-8)

As of August 6th, 2002, not a single presidential team (president and vice president) had inscribed in the TSE. By August 20th, 11 candidates had met legal requirements for the presidential campaign. The candidates consisted of a wide variety of political insiders and outsiders. Two ex-presidents ran, Rodrigo Borja

and Osvaldo Hurtado. Abdalá Bucaram's brother, Jacobo Bucaram, ran under the PRE banner. León Roldós, nephew of deceased ex-president Jaime Roldós ran as an independent candidate. In addition, other candidates expected to run turned in their petitions. Noboa ran, and so did two of the three junta members from January 21st, 2000, Ex-Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez and Antonio Vargas. In addition, several other candidates from minor parties joined the campaign.

In this round, two common characteristics of the election made results so unpredictable: Firstly, the presence of 11 candidates fractionalized the vote, so a low number of votes could pass someone into the second round. In this election, no clear frontrunners emerged. Secondly, with mandatory voting, candidates with charisma and personality could attract large groups of voters. While political party machines jumped into the campaigns to promote their candidates, the general disillusion with political parties and their empty promises created an uphill battle for party candidates.⁸

Six candidates quickly jumped to the field of serious contenders. By looking briefly at each of these candidates, their biographies, party affiliations, ideological platforms, and connection with traditional politics, one can learn about the current political situation in Ecuador, and the electorate's personal feelings towards democracy, institutions, and personalism.

⁸ Both of the characteristics have been common in Ecuadorian politics, as presidential contests have often had anywhere between six-twelve candidates. This election, in particular, saw an electorate more isolated than ever from traditional political parties, due to the economic crisis during the Mahuad years, and the accusations of corruption against his government.

Alvaro Noboa, the Businessman and Rich Benefactor

Alvaro Noboa Pontón is a 52 year old from Guayaquil. Educated as a lawyer, he is Ecuador's most prominent businessman. Worth hundreds of millions of dollars, Noboa inherited much of his wealth, and has continued to enrich himself through banana exportation. He also owns the country's flour mills. His only political experience was as the president of the Junta Monetaria during Bucaram's short lived presidency. Finally, he served as the PRE's presidential candidate in 1998.

Noboa's support came from the banana growing provinces of the coast, and his campaign centered in Guayaquil. His candidacy and his political party attempted to create a new base of power in the coastal area. After the self-exile of Bucaram, Noboa had the opportunity to become a new personalistic, populist coastal leader. Noboa's has not demonstrated any other political interests except to serve as the president of the republic.

Noboa claimed the support and loyalty of Ecuador's poorest. He had been targeting the poor in coastal provinces since his loss in the 1998 presidential elections. As he toured the country in his trademark vehicle, his yellow Jeep Wrangler, he often used rhetoric constructing himself as the only candidate who could help the country out of its economic decline.

It is important to clarify that Noboa, as a much more visible and well funded alternative to Abdalá Bucaram, was attempting to replace Bucaram as the savior of the poor. His lack of political experience made him a leader with no

strikes against him. Though he hadn't proven himself as a politician, he did not have any political scandals or failures in his past. Common wisdom stated that if Noboa could create and manage a profitable and thriving private business, he could bring some of those skills into running a government. Noboa himself claimed that his achievements in the international economy and his extensive business contacts could help Ecuador out of its precarious financial situation.

The *Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional* (PRIAN) as a political party has little, if any ideological development. Noboa claims that he is the great representative of the people that will solve their problems. The PRIAN's main role is to support Noboa's image of benevolent *patrón*. An electoral vehicle, the party does not have deep roots in society, only raising support during the presidential campaign via populist gestures. Like its founder, PRIAN has not presented a coherent ideological position and is likely to act in an opportunist fashion in the 2002-06 Congress.

The process of nominating Noboa as presidential candidate for the PRIAN showed the personalistic nature of the party. While Noboa was in New York on business, the first assembly of the PRIAN met in Guayaquil for the sole purpose of ratifying Noboa's candidacy. No other potential names of candidates were mentioned (Ronquillo, 2002). On August 1st Noboa hinted that he might not be a candidate for the 2002 elections, as he claimed that traditional politicians had started a campaign against him and had changed the dates of registration to personally damage him. (*Alvaro Noboa*, August 11, 2002)

Noboa claimed that the key to economic growth was using the funds from Ecuador's largest export, oil, to implement social service programs for Ecuador's poorest citizens. Noboa's four years of "campaigning" in Guayaquil, and establishing himself as the rich benefactor of the poor, greatly contributed to the development of his image. He and his wife, an attractive doctor, used their personal wealth to give away medicines, t-shirts, and even flour from the state flour company he owned. He set up sites for people to come and apply for jobs that would be created if he were elected president.

Noboa's close second place finish behind Mahuad in the 1998 elections, claims of election fraud, and Mahuad's dismal performance in office gave Noboa credibility to attack Mahuad's presidency and the established system. After Ecuador's financial meltdown, Noboa identified himself as a businessman who has a proven track record with responsible administration of a private business. Noboa claimed that the Ecuadorian state needed someone who understood the important financial management and budgetary aspects of government.

Noboa's campaign attacked not only traditional political parties, but also other personalist candidates. His familiar, blatantly populist rhetoric, effective use of clientelism and self identification as champion of the people attracted many followers. His unlimited personal campaign funds, combined with the lack of necessity to form any alliances for monetary reasons, made him an almost completely independent from any party, organization, or ideology.

Noboa's, and therefore, the PRIAN's resistance towards coalitions became clear in interviews. When asked what kind of cooperative agreements he would form with other parties and leaders if he passed into the second round, he stated that he didn't believe in alliances. He said, "The people vote for who they want to. The people who are with the PRE, who voted for me in both rounds in 1998, the people who are with Colonel Gutiérrez are going to vote for me, because Gutiérrez wants change too, and the only difference is the way we are proposing the change, many people who voted for Jacinto Velazquez are going to vote for me, and a huge part of the PSC is going to vote for me." (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002a). By stating this, Noboa doesn't acknowledge any necessary coalition building or concessions to win these votes.

This concentration of power and opposition to alliances shows Noboa's belief in personal power. While alliance building is crucial in the Ecuadorian congress, Noboa dismissed the concept completely. The PRIAN was developed to be subordinate to his personal desires. His party could not exercise any control over him. Noboa's party was not predicted to be a major winner in the legislative elections, and it had no desire to build alliances that would allow him to rule effectively. Therefore, the vagueness about how he would rule if elected continued.

Many people speculated that Noboa would quickly begin to sell off state apparatus, which would please international lenders. Yet, some analysts also believed he would use his power and access to these industries as president to

enrich his own personal empire. In response to that question, Noboa stated, “I will differentiate what is mine and what is the State’s.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002a). He claimed that the main difference between managing a private business and a government is that the state is regulated by laws that he is obligated to obey, and he can do whatever he wants with his personal holdings.

Noboa’s net worth established the perception that he would not be involved in corruption scandals (as have the last two presidents and the 1992 vice president) simply because of his comfortable financial situation. The logic went that Noboa did not need to steal money from the state, because he was already worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Noboa’s opposition to Mahuad preceded Mahuad’s loss of legitimacy and eventual dismissal from power. He claimed in his campaign that he had warned the country of the trouble in trusting Mahuad and the established politicians, and the country did in fact enter Ecuador’s worst financial crisis in decades. Though it is impossible to know if another president had been in power the same crisis would have occurred, Noboa had the opportunity and credibility to assert that the situation would have been different with him in power. His break from the PRE and ex-president Abdalá Bucaram forced him to establish a candidacy and political party based on his own name.

Noboa’s main proposals of his government addressed five areas: delinquency, agriculture, investment, corruption, and health. In the area of

agriculture, Noboa promised that he would increase agricultural production by between 30% and 40% in the first year. He would also extend credit to farmers in order for them to buy necessary tools. To stimulate investment, he would create special tax breaks for foreigners and Ecuadorians interested in creating new businesses. He planned to control corruption by developing transparency in public funds, where people would have access to know how money was spent. Finally, he wanted to establish a National Health Plan, which would consist of planning, promotion, prevention, healing and rehabilitation.

Noboa's close loss in 1998 gave him the legitimacy to attack both Jamil Mahuad personally and the political system as a whole. His accusations of fraud in the 1998 elections faulted the traditional political parties for conspiring against him and giving the presidency to Mahuad. As Mahuad's administration ended with a historically profound economic crisis, the political system that supported his candidacy (including several established political parties) suffered heavily. Therefore, Noboa became one of several candidates with a legitimate right to attack the political parties that supported Mahuad's mandate. Strong opposition to the incumbent government gave Noboa solid footing for a campaign based on a new type of government with a new structure. His lack of experience in the political arena meant that Noboa has committed no major errors, had no political scandals, and no governmental failures to negatively impact his image.

Lucio Gutiérrez, the Military Coupster

Lucio Gutiérrez Borbúa shot onto the national spotlight on January 21, 2000, for his role in the peaceful uprising that resulted in the removal of then-president Jamil Mahuad from office. Gutiérrez, 45, was educated as a civil engineer. He has spent nearly all of his professional life in the Armed Forces, and finished his career as a Colonel. He resigned from the Armed Forces after being imprisoned for six months due to his role in the overthrow of President Mahuad.

Doubts arose if Gutiérrez was legally eligible to postulate in 2000. Article five of the Constitution states that, “Those that have held power in a de facto government, described in numeral 4 of the 101 section of the constitution, can’t be candidates.” Gutiérrez’ successfully argued that he never held power, due to the fact that the junta never became constitutionally recognized. (*Dudas sobre Gutiérrez*, July 24, 2002)

Gutiérrez decided to become involved in the political arena after he was released from prison and received amnesty for his participation in the January 2000 events. A non-politician, Gutiérrez saw himself as an educator and advocate for change in a system plagued by corruption and increasing irrelevance to the population. Many of his supporters told him that if he wanted to make a real change, he needed to become involved in politics at a high level. His desire to provide a venue for the needs and demands of the population is what pushed him into the political arena. Gutiérrez soon gained the support of a power

ally, Pachakuitk, a political party linked to CONAIE that advocated for the needs of indigenous peoples in Congress. In addition, CONAIE and other leftist groups threw their backing behind Gutiérrez. The endorsement by CONAIE and other important leaders in the indigenous sector gave Gutiérrez a numerically large, politically active support group. Pachakutik's endorsement gave him legitimacy in the eyes of the often marginalized indigenous population, who make up between 25-40% of Ecuador's eligible voters. Indigenous citizens had been exercising their right to vote more now than ever before, and Gutiérrez was one of the only candidates that was attractive to this population.

Gutiérrez' campaign addressed not only the needs of the indigenous Ecuadorian peoples, but also other groups who had been alienated from the political system. Due to his role in Mahuad's overthrow, Gutiérrez gained a respect among non indigenous citizens opposed to the general direction of government. In addition, The Armed Forces, one of the most respected institutions in the country, was seen as defending national honor, playing a critical role in negotiating civilian disputes during times of political upheaval, and as not being involved in corruption. Gutiérrez' willingness to step down as a member of the junta, combined with his appeals for a peaceful transition of government, gave him legitimacy in the eyes of many.

Gutiérrez claimed if he becomes president, it would be a historic opportunity for the country to address deep cleavages in Ecuador's society. He had significant support from the masses of marginalized and excluded

Ecuadorians. He asserted that these citizens were the same people who often bring the country to a standstill with strikes and uprisings, so he could use his presidency to help create a mutual relationship and work constructively with those who lead and plan marches, strikes and protests.

His professional sacrifice for his participation in the uprising combined with his determination to keep the confrontation from becoming violent made him a distinct and appealing candidate. Gutiérrez did not use the stage on January 21st to make a personal push for power, but portrayed a genuine interest in ousting a president that had lost legitimacy among the vast majority of Ecuadorians. The dollarization of the country, combined with an enormous loss in the purchasing power of the sucre, negatively impacted the economic situation of nearly every economic class. As Mahuad made the radical decision to dollarize by decree after permitting the extreme devaluation of the currency, the electorate became more alienated than ever with the political system and political parties. Neither the president nor congress brought the idea of dollarization to the people to approve or reject; it was imposed on the country, which made many citizens furious.

Gutiérrez' capitalized on his image as a frustrated Ecuadorian whose interest was in creating a democracy that serves the needs of the population. In addition, his lack of experience in politics, and his lack of connection with political parties and organizations gave him an image as a responsible, incorruptible leader, intent on assisting progress for the country. His military training gave

discipline, love of country, and a sense of honor in his candidacy. Gutiérrez created an image as a man running for president in order to serve the country as opposed to doing so for personal reasons; this gave him a platform based on putting the country first before individual needs.

Gutiérrez's created his own political party, the *Sociedad Patriótica 21 de Enero* (PSP). This party was brand new and has not had much ideological development, nor did anyone expect the party to play a significant role in congress. Gutiérrez himself downplays the role of his political party in his campaign. His rhetoric made him popular with many people. When talking about his political party and his plans of reform, he clearly establishes himself as an outsider who places priority on the country as a whole before any special interest. He claims that allegiance is to, "God, my conscience and the Ecuadorian people. It's not even with the PSP [Gutiérrez' own political party]." (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002b)

Gutiérrez was asked about the concept of a leftist military leader. He answered that, "While I feel very comfortable being supported by movements of leftist ideology, I define myself as a nationalist that deeply loves Ecuador, as an individual that isn't so much dogmatic as pragmatic, that wants to change everything to benefit Ecuadorians. The enemy of Ecuador isn't the left or the right; it is poverty, illiteracy and the lack of competition." When asked why he went from a military to a political career, he answered, "[The Armed Forces] taught me that I have to defend the country, the truth, and to fight against

corruption: that a military person is at the service of society, so I did this [entered the political arena].” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002b)

The former Colonel was also asked about his role in the uprising of 2000. Due to his role in overthrowing a democratically elected government, the interviewers asked what Gutiérrez would do if he were elected president and in a similar situation as Mahuad. He responded by saying, “If I commit the same errors [that prompted a coup d’etat against Jamil Mahuad], they shouldn’t stop with just overthrowing me, they should shoot me.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002b) He claimed that his participation in the uprising wasn’t focused on obtaining personal power, but on preventing the country from sliding into chaos.

His campaign platform focused on strong measures combating corruption. Firstly, Gutiérrez insisted in requesting the extradition of white collar criminals who escaped with depositor’s funds from Ecuador’s bankrupt banks. Many corrupt bankers fled the country with millions of dollars, while the Ecuadorian government spent over a billion dollars to bail the banks out. Gutiérrez then wanted to try them in Ecuador on corruption charges with long sentences. He wanted to name independent judges (with no connection to political parties) and wanted to create a fourth branch of the government to control and justify government expenses and actions. In addition, he advocated drastically reducing the number of Congressmen, claiming that many of them aren’t efficient and

don't do their job. Finally, he wanted to reduce the number of political parties to create a climate more conducive to governability. (*Lucio Gutiérrez*, July 30, 2002)

In financial terms, while condemning dollarization as a painful and damaging inheritance, Gutiérrez emphasized the importance of a strong currency. Seeing dollarization as an irreversible process, Gutiérrez hoped to strengthen it so that devaluations of currency don't negatively impact the country's business environment. Later, he hoped for reasonable, self-sustaining public finances. Eventually, he would like to remove the president's power to allocate money. In addition, Gutiérrez saw competitiveness as an important goal for the financial health of the country.

He believed in the possibility of renegotiating Ecuador's international debt, but not until Ecuador decided to address problems of corruption, banking scandals, control customs, and create an honest government that focuses on the social needs of the country. When that happens, Gutiérrez believed the IMF would consider renegotiation.

Many credited Gutiérrez with avoiding bloodshed in the 2000 uprising that ended Mahuad's term. In Gutiérrez' own view, he stated the government was putting the military in a position where a possible confrontation with protestors would occur. Gutiérrez and his collaborators refused to fire upon the unarmed protestors, and were not willing to risk the loss of life to defend Mahuad.

Gutiérrez embraced the image of a military leader in the 2002 campaigns. He did the majority of his campaigning in military fatigues, emphasizing his

successful military career and inevitably reminding the population of his role in the overthrow of Mahuad's government.

His willingness to take the campaign out of the traditional geographical sphere also impacted these elections. Historically, campaigns have centered in the largest, most populous cities (Quito and Guayaquil) and also in the two main regions of Ecuador, the coast and the highlands. Gutiérrez took the campaign out of those regions and visited the Amazon, a scarcely populated area of Ecuador, dominated by indigenous tribes.

His new approach, in giving special attention to the specific concerns of Ecuador's indigenous population, also represented a milestone in the country. Gutiérrez proved his loyalty to the causes advocated by CONAIE in January 2000, and advocated not only for more general concerns (such as a rejection of neoliberalism, more equal division of wealth, and opposition to globalization) but also to specific indigenous needs, such as bilingual education and the state of agriculture in Ecuador. Indigenous needs went from the periphery to the center stage and Gutiérrez' willingness to address them distinguished him from other candidates.

His military background and image gave him credibility with non-indigenous Ecuadorians, who respect the institution of the armed forces and Gutiérrez himself for avoiding bloodshed in the January 21, 2000 coup. In addition, he appealed to an extremely alienated electorate. Much of these supporters had lost faith in politics, but Gutiérrez gave them hope. The

indigenous and marginalized populations of Ecuador finally had someone to believe in.

León Roldós, the Independent

León Roldós, claiming to be “the citizen’s candidate,” never formed his own personal political party as a vehicle for his presidential run. In a radical move, he refused to align with any political party, running as the only true independent in this race. León Roldós Aguilero, a 60 year old lawyer from Guayaquil, had much experience in the public eye. He served as secretary of the Municipality of Guayaquil from 1969-1970, president of the Junta monetaria (1979-1981), Vice president of the Republic from 1981-1984, the Rector of the University of Guayaquil (1992-current) and a congressman (1998-2002). Roldós, brother of deceased ex-President León Roldós, brought a high level of experience and training into his campaign. As the rector of the University of Guayaquil, he had made vast improvements to Guayaquil’s largest university, and had the reputation of a serious educational leader in Guayaquil.

Roldós was somewhat of a surprise candidate in the campaign, especially to other center-leftists who were preparing campaigns. (*León Roldós*, July 23, 2002.) He claimed that if he ran, he would do so without party support, but by obtaining the number of necessary signatures to run as a legally recognized independent candidate and presenting them to the TSE. Roldós took advantage of the clause in the constitution that allowed independents to run. Because of Roldós’ refusal to align with a party, he didn’t have party machinery at his

disposal to obtain signatures, a fact many analysts saw as a potential problem. Roldós declared his intention to collect signatures without the support or alliance with any political party (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002d). Some didn't see this as feasible without the help of party machinery, but Roldós managed to collect the required signatures for his candidacy.

Roldós' long political career as a socialist, and his alignment with the *Partido Socialista Frente Amplio* (PSFA), didn't prevent him from running as an independent candidate. Before Roldós inscribed as a candidate, the socialists had decided to back Gutiérrez. By August 10th, the *Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano* (PSE), withdrew their support of Gutiérrez and backed Roldós. (*Socialistas*, July 3, 2002). Additionally, the now irrelevant *Democracia Popular* (DP) supported Roldós.

Many wondered why Roldós decided to join the campaign, especially at such a late date. He claimed that his desire to have a candidate that was more than a representative of a political party, but a representative of the interests of the country propelled him to candidacy. Though many political parties came out in his support, Roldós continued to claim his independence from the parties, stating, "I don't want to be a candidate who is dependent on political parties. I am going to inaugurate a new way to do politics: to dialogue with everyone."

(Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002d)

The ideological similarity between Roldós and Gutiérrez, their mutual rejection of traditional political parties, and their support by the socialists, created

an interesting situation. While newspapers acknowledged that the entrance of Roldós damaged the candidacy of Gutiérrez, *el Universo* reported that Gutiérrez was willing to renounce his candidacy if he arrived to an agreement with Roldós.

Roldós did not have the charisma or personal appeal that Noboa and Gutiérrez did. His reputation as a serious academic and lack of funds prevented him from gaining significant media attention in the already crowded field.

Jacobo Bucaram, the Exiled Ex-President's Brother

Jacobo Bucaram Ortiz, 55, came from Guayaquil. His academic training was in agronomy. He served in the Congress from 1988-92, 1992-94, and 1996-2000 as a member of the PRE voting bloc. Among Jacobo's most memorable antics was punching Jamil Mahuad during a session of Congress in the early 1990's. In addition, he was a dominant athlete in Ecuador, participated in the Olympics, founded the *Universidad Agraria del Ecuador*, and is the current mayor of Milagro, a small town close to Guayaquil.

The *Partido Roldósista Ecuatoriana* (PRE) and Jacobo found their main source of support in the poorer classes in the coastal area, particularly in cities outside of Guayaquil. Abdalá Bucaram used over a decade of clientelism to establish a significant organization in coastal provinces. In previous elections, the PRE was the main party of opposition and non-alignment with traditional political parties, personified in the leadership of Abdalá Bucaram. The party was the first widespread populist party in the democratic era that managed to use the anti-establishment message to win an election in 1996.

In 2002, the PRE found many other candidates competing for the same base of support. While the PRE had been the voice of excluded Ecuadorians for the past decade, now those alienated from the political system and tired of traditional politics that never seemed to solve any problems found several politicians who included their needs in their campaign rhetoric. These included Alvaro Noboa, Lucio Gutiérrez, and León Roldós. Politics was now flooded by personalist, outsider candidates. After the disastrous presidency of Abdalá Bucaram, the PRE has lost some credibility with the popular classes.

Finally, the PRE has never managed to spread its influence out of the coastal area of Ecuador. In the coast, the PRE faced tough opposition with the PSC (which dominates the city of Guayaquil) and Alvaro Noboa's newly established PRIAN. Though the PRE has had over a decade to work on creating deeper roots in a wider geographical area, it has failed to do so.

Previous discussions of the *Partido Roldósista Ecuatoriana* have been included in this work. As stated before, the PRE was developed to support Abdalá Bucaram's multiple attempts at winning the presidential post. The PRE's relationship with other parties has been generally rocky, as the PRE support in congress has been inconsistent, unreliable, and opportunistic. The ideological orientation of the PRE claims to be center-left, with an emphasis on the needs of Ecuador's poor. Yet, actions in office by PRE president Abdalá Bucaram

completely contradicted his campaign promises. Actual evidence has shown PRE policy decisions to be more neoliberal and rightist.⁹

The party is not institutionalized in any sense of the word. While it has been the only party to compete in each of the last three elections with different candidates, Abdalá Bucaram continues to make all major decisions from Panama. Alvaro Noboa used the PRE party machinery in 1998 to pass on to the second round, but quickly abandoned the party in the second round. After much speculation about whether the PRE would even field a candidate, Bucaram's brother, Jacobo, stepped in for the campaign.

The bad blood between Noboa and the PRE carried over into 2002. The Universo claimed that even before the PRE had a candidate, their campaign strategy centered on criticizing and damaging Alvaro Noboa's campaign. More focused on vengeance against Noboa for abandoning the party as opposed to finding a candidate shows the decreasing influence of the PRE. As Abdalá Bucaram continued to make all major party decisions from his exile in Panama, the party failed to find a candidate willing to stay in party ranks and be subordinated to Abdalá Bucaram. Jacobo Bucaram, Abdalá's little brother, was the only real possibility.

It wasn't until days before the inscription deadline that the party chose Jacobo Bucaram as its candidate. The Congress, meeting in its "home" in the exiled leader's Panama, chose Jacobo to pick up the PRE banner. Jacobo

⁹ See Freidenberg and Alcántara for more information

attempted to establish his own political career, stating, “I have an image and my own identity.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002c). The interviewers began by asking about the PRE, wondering if it was a “party” or a “dynasty.” Jacobo Bucaram claimed that the party finds its birth in human reflection and is attractive to many different groups of people. He established the roots of the party in populist Assad Bucaram, idealizing the contribution of Assad Bucaram to Ecuador.

The interviewers then asked about his late entry into the race. Jacobo asserted that he wanted to wait and try to create a front between different parties and social sectors from the center and center left groups. When asked about his personal ideology, Jacobo stated, “I have the thoughts of a center-leftist, and my character is social. I don’t value my country in money, but in projects and in works completed.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002c)

When asked about his ability to work with other groups, and who would be in his cabinet, Jacobo answers, “This country is atomized. I believe in collaborating with all of the political forces that are trying to work on Ecuador’s political and economic interests.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002c) The interviewers, knowing that the PRE has a longstanding rivalry over control of the coastal vote, ask about working with the PSC. Jacobo claimed that he can work with everyone, even the PSC.

Jacobo’s program highlighted four main areas: education, the economy, rural areas, and the social sphere. He aimed to prioritize investment in education.

Specifically, he wanted to increase state investment in the development and the transference of technology. In the economic realm, he hoped to develop an antimonopoly law, which should stimulate honest competition. He also highlighted the importance of recuperating confidence in the banking system by establishing stricter controls of banks and lowering interest rates. In rural Ecuador, he sought to establish housing programs, which should reduce the levels of migration and create incentives for farmers to stay in Ecuador. Finally, in the social area, Jacobo focused on improving nutrition. He also wanted to start a breakfast program at schools and establish public kitchens. He advocated increasing the health budget and providing free maternity care.

When asked about his brother, the most well known Bucaram, Jacobo asserted Abdalá's importance while claiming his independence from his brother. The PRE has advocated the return of Abdalá to Ecuador under immunity, which would be a part of any PRE presidency. Jacobo claimed that his brother's impeachment was unconstitutional, and that the Congress didn't do justice. When asked if he won, if he would maintain a distance from his brother or rule in his brother's shadow, Jacobo became offended with the question. He then went on to list everything he has done without his brother, and everything his brother has done without him. He acknowledged that Abdalá is a very important leader in the country, but that he was independent of his brother.

Traditional Candidates

In the 2002 elections, one could argue that only two of the 11 candidates came from even somewhat “traditional” political parties. The dominant parties that still hold electoral weight in recent democracy have been the *Partido Social Cristiano* (PSC), a business oriented, right wing party from coastal stronghold Guayaquil, and the *Izquierda Democracia* (ID), Quito’s leftist leaning, social democrat party. *Democracia Popular* (DP), which had played a strong role in Congress for years, virtually disappeared after DP Mahuad’s failed presidency.

Both the PSC and the ID had presidents in office (León Febres Cordero (PSC) in 1984 and Rodrigo Borja (ID) in 1988). Yet, neither party has been able to place one of its candidates into the presidency since their respective candidates governed.

Though Febres Cordero and Borja’s personalities and ideologies contrast heavily, the PSC and ID had important similarities. Febres Cordero’s forceful personality (Conaghan and Malloy, 1994) was the opposite of Borja’s more subdued, academic sensibility. Their political styles and source of support differed. Yet, both parties had dominant, unquestionable party bosses. Both Febres Cordero and Borja were currently the undisputed heads of their political parties. The simple fact that both Borja and Febres Cordero played a major role in the elections of 2002 (18 and 14 years after governing, respectively) shows the personalist tendencies even within political parties. While Febres Cordero attempted to create a successor in Jaime Nebot (PSC candidate and second

round loser in the presidential elections in 1992 and 1996 and current mayor of Guayaquil), Rodrigo Borja has not even made an effort to transfer his political party into other hands, nor has he allowed anyone but himself to be the parties' representative in the presidential elections. Whether this is because of Borja's monopoly of control within the party or due to Borja's lack of capable successors, the ID has never been independent of Borja.

Evaluating the performance of these two political parties continues to center on the dominance of two individuals within their respective party organizations. Febres Cordero actively campaigned with the PSC replacement after refusing the PSC nomination. His presence in Xavier Neira's campaign included his name or picture on virtually all campaign literature. Since Borja's presidency, he has continued to compete in presidential elections, yet hasn't successfully passed into the second round. Though both the PSC and the ID have played important roles in the legislature and have often had legislative majorities, the both continue to rely on a dominant personality as an identity to the party. In these cases, both leaders have had prominence for over a decade. The 2002 election season showed clearly that neither man intends to retire from the political scene in the near future. This highlighted the reality that even traditional political parties in Ecuador have dominant leaders who monopolize the party and personalist tendencies.

Rodrigo Borja, the Experienced Politician

Dr. Rodrigo Borja, 67, has played an active role in politics since founding the *Izquierda Democratica* (ID) in 1970, after splintering off from the Liberal Party. A five time presidential candidate, Borja served as president of the republic from 1988-1992. His rule was one of relative political stability, but Borja only enjoyed a legislative majority for his first two years in office. The ID did not postulate its own candidate in 1996, but Borja was a candidate in 1998, placing third after Mahuad and Bucaram.

Borja found base of his support among moderate citizens in the highlands, particularly the capital of Quito. His long presence in the city and his reputation as a serious academic and leader draws support from more moderate Ecuadorians. His party, the ID, espouses a reformist, center-left ideology, and has performed much better in legislative elections than in presidential ones in the recent past. Borja has been known for attempting to build alliances between political parties, particularly ones in the highlands.

The ID's identity is closely connected with its leader. When interviewed about this, Borja claimed that "here people don't vote for people they don't know, so our tactic is to combine a well known person with someone young." (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, October 7, 2003) Borja says his party insists that one must govern, "for the well-being of the country," as opposed to personal aspirations for increased wealth or power (*La ID se escundo*, September 2, 2002).

Borja's center-left tendencies attempted to create a functional political party with Social Christian characteristics, and lack of support for the neoliberal program made him an important figure among center-left parties. He protested the dollarization of the country and has opposed selling important state enterprises. His campaign was based around a mixed economy, where state capital and private business work together to modernize the business of public services. Borja rejected the neoliberal equation of total privatization, claiming it hasn't worked in Latin America. In addition, he also had a strong message against corruption, claiming that his administration would carefully monitor state funds. In order to revitalize the economy, Borja advocated increasing petroleum production and emphasizing tourism as a source of income.

Finally, Borja's campaign emphasized a campaign to make internet service more obtainable to Ecuadorians, to implant clear, stable economic rules, and to focus on health care in Ecuador.

Xavier Neira, the Insider Free Market Advocate

Xavier Neira Menéndez, 55, an economist by profession, served as a legislator from 1994-1996 and 1998-2002. A long term member of the PSC, Neira replaced ex-president León Febres Cordero as presidential candidate in July. Febres Cordero's absence dealt a huge blow to the electoral chances of the PSC, as he was an obvious frontrunner in public opinion polls and had widespread name recognition. Neira, affiliated with the PSC since 1994 but a

close partner of Febres Cordero since 1977, has been a loyal member of the party and has the trust of party notables. (*Un hombre*, October 10, 2002)

The PSC was founded by a group of upper class Roman Catholics in Quito in the 1950's, but of late found its major support in Guayaquil. The PSC asserted that it commands over 18% of the national vote. (*La vision*, October 11, 2002) Over the years, the PSC has become a party closely identified with regional advocacy, as the party has fought to maintain local control over local business and pushed for autonomy and decentralization. Though the party focuses on free market reform and has intimate connections with Guayaquil's business sector, it had attracted millions of citizens from Guayaquil of all economic and social backgrounds. While the PSC's support remained regionally concentrated, the widely successful and respected mayorship of Febres Cordero gave the PSC a reputation of a party that was effective in public administration. Jaime Nebot, current mayor of Guayaquil, continued in the tradition of consolidating PSC support in the city of Guayaquil. Due to the focus on local management and opposition to large government in Quito, the PSC tended to perform very well in coastal provinces but poorly in other regions.

Neira addressed the idea of alliances within a government. He claimed that the PRE is becoming extinct, the DP has ceased to exist, and that he could possibly talk to the ID. Neira argued that political parties were suffering and losing their importance in the political system. Yet, the weight of Febres Cordero in the PSC brought up some questions as to whether the PSC was moving

towards a more populist party as opposed to an ideological one. When interviewed, Neira rejected that idea, stating that, “The party is ideological and for that reason, it continues to be strong.” (Almedia, Palacio and Febres Cordero, 2002c). Neira claimed that the doctrine of the PSC becomes evident in their support of the market economy to handle social problems, emphasizing the equality of opportunities, and free markets with effective state regulation.

Neira asserted that the majority of Ecuador’s political problems came from a lack of effective leadership in the presidential post. Due to the extremely strong role allocated to the president in Ecuador, a political party without power in the executive post was significantly restricted in its capacities. Neira claimed that no presidents have managed to effectively use the power of the presidency to make fundamental changes in the political and economic sphere. He went as far as declaring that the problem in Ecuador wasn’t moral, economic or social, but was the lack of political leadership. Neira claimed that a president must be elected for his campaign discourse and must stay true to what he promised. If changes couldn’t be achieved in Congress, Neira stated that a referendum must occur; the citizens must have the capacity to decide what changes the country needs. Neira established that security, reactivating the economy, increasing production and creating more jobs were the country’s most urgent needs.

His campaign centered on several main areas. In the social arena, he said that schools, housing, hospitals and ports were indispensable for growth, and that the poorest Ecuadorians should benefit from these works. He advocated for

the decentralization and transparency of the state. In the economic sphere, Neira insisted that economic growth would decrease poverty, which was the main cause and effect of corruption. He would work with international financial institutions, but was adamant that none of them could impose a general economic strategy on the country, such as forcing the sale of certain state owned businesses. Finally, Neira believed that dollarization would eventually result in the growth of exports, and would increase levels of saving and investments.

Round One Analysis

In the first round of the elections, a main theme continued to be corruption. According to *Transparencia Internacional*, Ecuador is the second most corrupt country in Latin America, with an estimated \$2 billion lost due to corruption each year (Naranjo, 2002). All candidates had a platform which emphasized the importance of transparency in the government and in control of spending. Due partially to the corruption scandals of past presidents, a reputation of honesty and a strong campaign against corruption became essential.

The basic necessities such as housing and employment formed an important cornerstone of the campaign. These campaign ideas, varying from general thoughts of reactivating the economy to actual inscription at party headquarters of the homeless and jobless have played an important role in presidential campaigns for over a decade (Ponce, 2002). The 2002 elections were no different, with candidates promising housing and jobs.

The presence of eleven contenders created an interesting situation for the candidates. Due to the plethora of candidates, many candidates chose to focus their campaigns to a specific population. The PRE and the PSC stayed generally in the coast, as did Noboa. Noboa continued to play the role of the resident populist, giving away free medicine, t-shirts, flour and multiple other products to supporters.

In an interesting new approach to politics, Gutiérrez catered to a previously ignored group. He specifically addressed the unique needs of Ecuador's large and impoverished, politically motivated and frustrated indigenous community that participated in the 2000 uprising with him. Gutiérrez campaigned in his combat fatigues, making his identity as a military man a core part of his identity. By combining special attention to the needs of the indigenous population (an estimated 25-40% of the country) and relying on the high approval rating the military receives in Ecuador, he espoused a completely new campaign strategy.

On Sunday, October 20th, millions of Ecuadorians cast their vote for the next president, congressional elections, and elections for local offices. All of the candidates worked to in different ways to gain support from different citizens. Due to the obligatory vote, over five million Ecuadorians went to the polls to elect their president. The lack of trust in public opinion polls created true suspense as to who would pass onto the second round. (*La desconfianza*, September 9, 2002).

The outcome stunned several political parties and millions of citizens. While traditional political parties performed well at the legislative level, the three outsiders who staunchly refused to align with any traditional parties swept the executive elections. Former coup leader, ex-Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez of the PSP-Pachikutik, shocked the nation with his victory in the first round after obtaining 19.1% of the vote. Gutiérrez managed to win the first round election without winning either the province of Guayas or Pichincha, an extremely difficult feat. Guayas and Pichincha are the two most populous provinces in Ecuador, which contain Guayaquil and Quito and approximately half of the country's population. In addition, Gutiérrez had an extremely limited campaign budget. Former front runner Alvaro Noboa of the PRIAN placed second with 17.3% of the votes cast, after spending nearly 10 times as much money on his campaign as winner Gutiérrez.

León Roldós, the candidate who refused to run under any party banner, finished a close third with 16.9% of the vote. In an extremely close race, Rodrigo Borja finished fourth and won his home province of Pichincha. Xavier Neira finished fifth and won Guayas. Jacobo Bucaram finished sixth. Only eight percentage points of the vote separated first place from sixth place.

For the first time since the redemocratization of the country in 1979, no established party would participate in the second round of elections. The gradual shift towards candidates independent of political parties and established organizations became complete in 2002. The elections analysis of the first round

done by the newspaper El Comercio of Quito was titled, “Ecuador preferred to leave political party rule behind.” In their analysis, they state that the three outsider candidates attempted and succeeded in creating confidence in their capacity to address important economic, political and social problems that political parties had failed to address and improve. Secondly, the results indicated the electorate’s desires for a new type of politics and a new type of politician, who has no obligations to the delegitimized political parties. The victory of Gutiérrez, who based his campaign on a strong denunciation of established politicians and a promise to attack corruption at its roots, was given legitimacy by his actions on January 21st, 2000, when Gutiérrez risked his career to overthrow a corrupt and unpopular president. (*El Ecuador deajo al lado*, October 20, 2002). In addition, El Universo stated that the victories of Gutiérrez and Noboa signaled an increased polarization in the country and a thorough rejection of traditional political parties.

The main losers in the election were the traditional political parties, who failed to maintain the support of voters who were once loyal to them. As the election results became clear, the political parties reacted with anger and shock. PSC leader León Febres Cordero had the harshest comments. He bluntly stated in a press conference after the election results that, “The country made a mistake.” (*El Ecuador se polariza*, October 20, 2002) In addition, he asserted that, “The Ecuadorian people elected two unprepared leaders.” He stated that neither had the qualifications to be presidential candidates, and were even less

prepared to be president. He further expressed his fear that due to lack of experience, neither candidate would have the knowledge to make appropriate decisions. (*León Febres Cordero*, October 21, 2002.)

Scholars went as far as to claim that the party system in the country was at risk. They warned that while governments of charismatic leaders aren't always catastrophic, they tend to be full of problems, especially in Latin America. Scott Mainwaring warned that, "These types of leaders arrive in power with an individualistic style and tend to govern individually and with authoritarianism." In other Latin American countries with outsider leaders, outsider presidencies tended to further weaken political parties and political institutions. (*Analysis*, October 24, 2002)

Noboa and Gutiérrez also emphasized the rejection of political parties in their comments after winning the elections. Gutiérrez stated, "If Noboa and I are the ones who won it is because the people said, "Enough!" to the same old politicians. The Ecuadorian people wanted a change after being led by an old political class that the people don't want in power anymore." Noboa stated that he was the "figure of change" and that the Ecuadorian people had "punished [traditional politicians] at the polls." (*El Ecuador se polariza*, October 20, 2004)

The results of the elections obviously indicated a clear shift away from traditional political parties in the executive post. Yet, the election results on a whole indicate a somewhat different picture. Both the PRIAN and the PSP performed poorly in the legislative elections. In contrast, the PSC, ID and PRE

won the majority of the seats in Congress. Though traditional parties lost heavily in the elections, PSC insider León Febres Cordero won more votes in the legislative election than any other candidate postulating. He and his party will have an active leadership in the Congress. Yet, Neira placed 5th in the presidential elections.

This fact points away from the thesis of complete alienation of political parties in Ecuador. In what could potentially be a very difficult reality, this created a situation where neither second round candidate would enjoy any significant level of support in Congress. Therefore, the tradition of opposition and antagonism between the executive and legislative branches seemed very likely to continue.

Secondly, in a country where charisma wins elections, the PSC and the ID both fielded candidates who failed to connect significantly with the general population. They did not manage to adequately address the people's problems with political party rule. Borja's lack of charisma has been a part of his reputation for decades, and Neira's mediocre campaign both damaged each of their electoral opportunities. Borja, referred to as one of Ecuador's political "dinosaurs," is a representation of the old, political party politician. Neira, coming from a costal tradition of charisma and populism, didn't connect with the voters in any significant way. Traditional political parties might not have had more options in terms of candidate choice, but neither one managed to inspire the electorate. It would seem that traditional political parties have no chance of winning elections

unless they find leaders who can espouse a message of change in a country that suffers from continual political, social and economic problems.

In addition, the indigenous support for Gutiérrez played a tremendous role in his victory. Due to the plethora of candidates, having the loyalty of a powerful, active organization who takes voting seriously was enough to propel Gutiérrez into the second round. Yet, his identification with the military and his actions on January 21st tapped into an important group of non-indigenous, frustrated citizens. His complete refusal to acknowledge the supremacy of any organization (such as a political party) over his obligation to the people rang well with alienated voters.

An extremely important new component of the elections was the lack of real governmental plans espoused by either candidate. Neither Gutiérrez nor Noboa detailed specific ideas of governmental plans in their campaigns. This did not become a detriment, as the electorate focused more on the possibility of something new as opposed to new concrete ideas. The lack of experience actually gave both of these candidates credibility in the eyes of Ecuadorians.

Noboa and Gutiérrez both founded their own political parties in order to compete in the presidential campaign (*El Ecuador se polariza*, October 20, 2004). While Noboa's personal wealth has allowed him to dedicate more funding into the development of a political party, his strategy has been obviously clientelistic. Neither candidate seriously attempted to build a credible party organization, and rejected forming any kind of alliance with another traditional

political party. Gutiérrez' alliance with Pachakutik differed, due to the fact that Pachakutik also ran candidates with an outsider platform, and was seen as a party with strong opposition to the established order.

Finally, the lack of political experience formed another important break from the past in Ecuador. Neither Gutiérrez nor Noboa have held any elected posts in government, or have served in any governmental administrations. Both are complete neophytes to the political game, with weak political parties and few friends within the political sphere. Yet, in a country alienated by political party rule and constant corruption scandals, their lack of connections to any political party or organization formed an important base for their campaign platforms. This did not address how to feasibly rule once in office, but their status as a businessman and as a career military officer were preferred over the other four candidates, all of whom had significant governmental experience.

The Second Round and the Results

Because of the plethora of candidates in 2002, a fact of the first round was that Noboa and Gutiérrez received barely more than a third of the total vote combined. Immediately after the elections, many analysts questioned the usefulness of a two round electoral system, when this can mean that candidates with between 17-19% of the country's support become the only two options in the second round. Almost two thirds of the country didn't choose either one as their preferred candidate, so Noboa and Gutiérrez had to focus on obtaining the

support of those votes. Due to relatively high levels of voter turnout, these voters would decide who would be the next president.

As second round candidates waited for endorsements from first round losers, few came. El Comercio commented on this lack of enthusiasm by political parties and movements to form alliances with either candidate. The PSC told the country that they would not endorse any candidate. Roldós, who had the loyalty of many small parties, also declined to support a candidate. He said those who voted for him must decide for themselves who to support, but that he personally would not align with either one. The ID decided to respect the elections, but prohibited its members from working actively to support either candidate. The PRE stated it was too early to pick an alliance.

Gutiérrez and Noboa approached the second round very differently. Gutiérrez immediately began to talk to political parties and established political organizations, hoping to build bridges with traditional parties. He decided to campaign in business suits more often than fatigues, and worked with important sectors that were nervous about what a possible Gutiérrez presidency would do to the perception of stability in the country. As the international media and Latin America watched Venezuela become increasingly polarized over Hugo Chávez rule, Gutiérrez worked to differentiate himself from Latin America's other military president. Venezuela had suffered from serious strikes, protests, attempted coups, and continual political upheaval. Gutiérrez set out to convince the country that his presidency would be different than that of Chávez.

Gutiérrez wanted a very active campaign, with open and direct communication with the media to spread his true campaign message. Instead of ignoring potential opposition from important political players in Ecuador, Gutiérrez addressed the importance of creating a sense of calm in the sectors where his candidacy generated resistance. These included the business community, free market supporters and right leaning political groups.

In a field of two unexperienced outsiders, Gutiérrez focused on establishing a plan of government and demonstrating a coherent and pragmatic program for his presidency. Now that Gutiérrez had sufficient media attention, he wanted to distance himself from his military identity and focus on becoming a “civilian leader ready to peacefully achieve important reforms.” (Candidatos, October 23, 2003). Though most famous for his actions in overthrowing a government on January 21st, 2000, Gutiérrez worked to emphasize his desire to peacefully and democratically make important changes in Ecuador. In regards to other political parties, Gutiérrez actively pursued the support of other leaders to work with his government.

Noboa did the exact opposite. Gutiérrez immediately began looking for alliances and working on attracting voters who didn't vote for him in the first round; Noboa stayed silent. As Gutiérrez established important communication with the press, Noboa refused to meet with any group. Gutiérrez began to caravan across the country looking for support and Noboa took a vacation from the campaign. Noboa didn't look for any alliances among political parties.

When Noboa decided to join the campaign trail again, he began a very personal attack against Gutiérrez and his presidency. Allegations came out by Noboa that Gutiérrez had been physically abusive to his wife. Gutiérrez quickly rejected that claim, but Noboa went on with an ad campaign that asked if Ecuadorians wanted an abuser to be president. He worked to develop female opposition to Gutiérrez, trying to win the vote of Ecuador's women. Noboa seemed to be much more comfortable personally attacking Gutiérrez as opposed to talking about campaign issues.

Politically, Gutiérrez attempted to keep the campaign based on platforms and ideas. He repeatedly challenged Noboa to a live debate. After days of not responding, Noboa finally agreed and a debate was scheduled a couple of weeks before the campaign. Noboa later cancelled the debate and it never occurred.

On November 24th, Ecuadorians returned to the polls and elected their next president. Lucio Gutiérrez won by a comfortable margin, even after Noboa's last minute smear campaign. The night of his election, Gutiérrez claimed that he would never again be seen in military fatigues when doing presidential duties, and that he felt a great sense of responsibility to help mend some of the deep cleavages that existed in Ecuador.

The Ecuadorian population knew they were going to have a new type of leader in 2002. They chose between a rich businessman and a military coup leader. Gutiérrez's success came from his real attempt to build bridges between other political groups during the second round. In addition, more citizens

identified with Gutiérrez, a hard working military man with a strong sense of country as opposed to an elite member of the business society. Gutiérrez managed to develop support and hope among Ecuador's indigenous population, and made their needs an important part of his program. Gutiérrez worked to create an inclusive government that addressed the needs of not only the business community, but also the impoverished sectors and indigenous community.

Lucio Gutiérrez did not represent a victory of populism. Alvaro Noboa ran a completely populist campaign, and ended up losing at the polls. Gutiérrez became a fresh face with a new ideology for a nation in recovery from an extreme crisis. Gutiérrez' attempts to reach out to all sectors of society, including business elites, the urban poor, the military, and indigenous citizens hopes to create bonds that will help the country move forward. Yet, Gutiérrez has virtually no support in Congress and an alliance with CONAIE that could disappear at any minute.

If Gutiérrez survives his term through 2006, he will be the first president to do so in the last decade. Based on Ecuador's democratic history, the next president will probably be a conservative, more traditional politician from the coast. Those following Ecuador's current situation should watch for politicians mounting strong attacks against Gutiérrez to become presidential candidates.

Finally, political parties have become almost irrelevant in Ecuador's presidential elections. In 2002, candidates who affiliated with a political party

finished far worse than those who rejected party rule. Though political parties tended to have more money, deeper roots in society, and can assist in campaigning and advertising, this did not provide any benefits for the candidates. Outsiders have become serious contenders in every election in the last decade, and won two of the three that occurred. Expect outsider candidates to continue to perform strongly.

CONCLUSIONS

Ecuador has currently had over two decades of experience with democratic government. Due to widespread consensus by the military, elite groups, and common citizens, Ecuador seemed to have the possibility of being a success story of the redemocratization of Latin America. The country's brightest academics and public policy analysts carefully constructed a constitution and a democratic system that would change some of the traditional characteristics of Ecuadorian democracy and create a system that functioned more smoothly. In order to control such endemic problems as personalism, executive-legislative conflict, and weak and ineffective institutions, the constitution mandated a system that hoped to construct independent and significant political parties. This formed the base for more cooperation between the legislature and the government. Yet, the past twenty years of democratic experiences has shown the constitution and laws have failed to change a political culture based on these problematic characteristics.

Political Parties

Firstly, political parties and institutions have not become stable and effective in the country. While the country gave politicians from political parties support in the 1980's, their mediocre presidencies pushed the electorate away from unconditional support of any particular party. Political parties have failed to

adequately perform their theoretical functions, which include channeling and expressing interests of the electorate, helping groups elaborate their interests while allowing governments to govern, assisting in establishing the legitimacy of the political system, providing an avenue for representation, creating roots in society, developing and implementing programs for the country, and in constraining presidents who attempt to overstep their boundaries.

The tradition of personalism has continued within political parties. After 20 years, these parties continue to be dominated by a person as opposed to ideology. Both the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) and the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC) have obvious party bosses that make most of the party decisions, and often decide for themselves who will be a presidential candidate. There is very little room for debate within the party, and there is no avenue to dissent from the leader's opinions. When Durán Ballén contested his loss of the nomination at the 1992 party convention, there was no democratic procedure in place to address that. Instead, he simply split off from a political party that he had lead for decades and formed his own.

After a political party has held office, it usually becomes less popular and often loses support, at least temporarily. Political parties have become particularly vulnerable after a presidential term. An unsuccessful presidency can often destroy both personalist and traditional parties. No party has been able to win the presidency twice in the democratic era. Though one would expect personalist parties to have less influence after a difficult administration, this is

also true for established political parties. Jamil Mahuad's party, the *Democracia Popular* (DP), had been active in Ecuadorian politics for decades. It worked to develop an ideological platform, had roots in society, and a fairly democratic structure. It won more seats in Congress in 1998 than any other party and gave Mahuad strong allies in the legislature. Yet, after Mahuad's disastrous presidency, the party virtually disappeared. Some of the remaining DP congressmen split from the party and formed a different party. The DP went from prominence to near extinction in less than two years.

Due to the unsuccessful presidencies of political party candidates, few Ecuadorians feel any kind of long term loyalty to any particular party. The political parties are at fault for failing to attract a loyal electorate. The people have given political parties ample opportunities to prove themselves as capable administrators once in office. Yet, instead of developing ties to specific parties, the electorate evaluates its support for a party or a person based on his tangible performance once in office.

The constitutional requirement that mandated presidential candidates to run under party banners hoped to create important ties between presidential leaders and congressional representatives. In an interesting twist, this resulted in individual candidates running under one political party and then abandoning that party once in office, which occurred with León Roldós' presidency. This was a hint of what was to come, as in the 1990's politicians began creating individual political parties with the sole purpose of meeting the constitutional requirement of

party affiliation to run for office. The particularly telling case of Sixto Durán Ballén, who failed twice to win the presidency under the PSC banner, became successful in his presidential aspirations after abandoning his political party and constructed a completely new party for a specific campaign.

Political parties have failed to do their most fundamental task; represent the needs and desires of the population. While Ecuador is not the only country in Latin America where this has happened, this failure has resulted in other movements or individuals that have tried to fill the void of representation. Populist and outsider presidents have attempted to construct themselves as the most effective ally of the people in Congress. Some have even claimed that political parties have proven their lack of capacity to represent the people, and the people should be directly represented by the president. (This reinforces the concept of delegative democracy).

These new personalist political parties, created by individual politicians to support their presidential aspirations, have not had success in the legislative elections. These parties, which include the *Partido Unión Republicana* (PUR) created by Sixto Durán Ballén, the *Partido Roldósista Ecuatoriana* (PRE) created by Abdalá Bucaram, the *Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional* (PRIAN) created by Alvaro Noboa, and the *Partido Sociedad Patriótica* (PSP) created by Lucio Gutiérrez, have not won many seats in the legislature. This means that personalist presidents often come into power with little or no party

support once in office. In addition, these parties also quickly lose any influence they managed to gain once their leader is no longer in power.

Legislative-Executive Relationships

These realities highlight another important reality of Ecuadorian democracy. There continues to be more conflict than consensus among the branches of government, and the legislative-executive relationship has been particularly oppositional. This has been a key cornerstone of Ecuador's political culture for decades, and the implementation of a democratic system has not found an effective way to promote cooperation between the different branches of government. The Roldós administration began with particularly difficult problems with the legislature. In addition, Febres Cordero repeatedly ignored mandates from Congress, which became so frustrated with the president's authoritarianism that they asked for his resignation. Durán Ballén's administration suffered as his vice president fled the country into exile after he made public the bribes that were necessary in order to have legislation passed. Congress willingly impeached Bucaram to end his mandate. Finally, an ex-Supreme Court justice played a key role in the overthrow of Mahuad's presidency.

The prospects for increased cooperation are weak, particularly with the evolving trend of electing outsider presidents and a legislature dominated by traditional political parties. In the 2002 elections, President Gutiérrez' party has only 7% of the seats in Congress. While that will make implementing policies extremely difficult on its own, Gutiérrez' congress is dominated by ideologically

opposed political parties, particularly the PSC. While Gutiérrez campaigned with support from leftist groups and a strong role for indigenous needs, the PSC continues to focus on business concerns and free market reforms.

Gutiérrez does not have the political support necessary to implement the changes he advocated in his campaign. Much of his time will be spent attempting to build coalitions in the legislature. Particularly troubling is the fact that both President Bucaram and President Mahuad has significantly more allies in Congress than Gutiérrez, yet neither one managed to survive their constitutionally mandated term in office.

An Empowered Electorate

One of the historic changes that occurred in 1979 with the arrival of the contemporary democratic era was the extension of the vote to illiterate Ecuadorians. Historically, this clause was used to exclude the majority of the population from voting and resulted in elections of elite members of society by the same socioeconomic class. This also prevented non-Spanish speaking indigenous citizens from voting. In 1979, millions of poor Ecuadorians gained the right to vote for the first time in history.

The estimated 25-40% of the indigenous population had never before played any role whatsoever in governmental politics or policies. With the new voting rules, the indigenous population began to participate in national politics. While in the 1980's, their needs and demands continued to be largely ignored by mainstream politics, in the 1990's they became an important and influential

group. Their nontraditional actions of protest against government policies (such as strikes, protests and uprisings) made the government pay attention to their needs. Methods of protest often included blocking transportation lines. This prevented food and other necessities from arriving to cities in the highlands. Presidents have begun to dialogue with CONAIE and other groups on a regular basis.

The previously excluded indigenous groups and other progressive social movements now play an active role in the political events of the country. In a new trend in Ecuadorian politics, the events of the past five years has shown that the people will actively support an unconstitutional dismissal of a freely and fairly elected president that has performed poorly in office and lost legitimacy. An electoral victory no longer guarantees extended support throughout their elected term. Bucaram was in office for only six months until he was forced to leave office. The public widely approved of his quasiconstitutional removal. In addition, Mahuad's presidency ended because of the actions of an angry and disillusioned electorate. Though both Bucaram and Mahuad were elected in fair and free elections, it took little time for the population to revoke their support and then fight for his ouster. The vast majority of the population supported both Bucaram's and Mahuad's dismissal.

This trend has intensified in the last decade. In the 1980's, candidates who were elected managed to survive their terms, even if they were unpopular. The population waited until the elections and then rejected that candidate, their

party, and their ideology by voting a completely different person into office. The presidential elections have consisted of victorious candidates with a leftist ideology followed by a candidate with a free market, conservative ideology. In the 1990's, the electorate refused to wait for a candidate to finish his term in order to reject his ideology. Instead, they actively supported his dismissal. As presidents struggle, the electorate looks toward the incumbent's opponent in the next election.

In this last point, the 2002 elections become particularly poignant. Both Noboa and Gutiérrez solidified an important trend in Ecuadorian democratic history; Strong opposition to the incumbent government creates a favorable image for the following elections. Noboa attacked Mahuad in the 1998 elections, and accused him of cheating. Gutiérrez played a critical role in Mahuad's dismissal from power. This opposition to the incumbent president also propelled Febres Cordero, Durán Ballén, Bucaram and Mahuad to power.

Outsiders

The disappointment in the Ecuadorian political system and the lack of effective political parties has created a rich environment for outsiders and populists, who campaign on opposition to what was instead of what they plan to do. This has created a situation where the country has little idea what to expect from a president when he enters office. They claim to serve as better representatives of the public than other political parties or politicians. Within the political system, these candidates have asserted that they don't need the support

or help of an established party to represent the people. In fact, some have said that they can be the voice of the frustrated within the system. The increasing successes of candidates who reject parties as means of representation are performing well in elections.

Yet, these candidates are often unclear about the logistics and plans of their government and have little legislative support. This vagueness, while popular during the election season, comes with a price. The country has extreme constraints placed on it by the international financial community. Any government has little room to maneuver and little access to funds to implement real programs that impact the levels of poverty and unemployment. Outsider candidates often don't address this reality, and don't include necessary budgetary cutbacks and austerity measures as part of their platforms. Yet, once in office, the president has no control in this respect. After making promises to millions of poor to improve their quality of life, provide new services, and work advocating for their needs, these candidates often come into the presidency with little room to maneuver. They then must continue complying with austerity measures imposed by international financial institutions, and the budget does not allow for new social programs. These candidates quickly lose their legitimacy and support if they can't fulfill at least some of their campaign promises. Bucaram's presidency is a prime example of this reality. After winning the presidency, over two million Ecuadorians participated in a strike against him that assisted in his ouster a mere six months after he became president.

Social Movements

People have organized in other ways to voice their needs. They have mobilized and become organized. Some groups have decided that in order to be heard, they must work outside of the system to put pressure on the government to listen to them and their demands. These groups, including powerful social movements, (particularly CONAIE) and other organizations, such as labor unions and student groups have become important actors in the political reality of the country.

In this aspect, social movements have become a source of representation for previously ignored populations. Some social movements reject the idea of forming a political party and working within the system for change. They assert that the system is inherently corrupt, so change must be forced from the outside. The strikes, mobilizations and protests employed by these groups to receive concessions from government have formed another attempt at representation. They have participated in unconventional actions that have resulted in regime changes in the government. Some assert that this is an ultimate example of democracy, while others argue that groups such as this disrupt the democratic process. Many members of these organizations argue that the democratic system gives them no real representation, so they are forced to voice their demands in different ways.

Though most of Ecuador seems committed to the democratic process, the country elected Gutiérrez, a man who became famous because of his role in an

unconstitutional dismissal of the previous freely and fairly elected president. As evidenced by the UNDP report, much of the region of Latin America continues to feel ambivalent about democracy as a political system. Much more concerned with effective rule and solutions to economic problems, the populace in Ecuador would likely support any group that could establish some control over the country's financial situation. Gutiérrez's affiliation with the armed forces has posed the question of whether civilian administrators are really in the best interest of the country.

Any president of Ecuador enters office in an extremely difficult situation. They must juggle international financial requirements with national social demands. The president walks a fine line between losing credibility with the international community or his own people. The organization of the political system, with Congress based on coalition building, does not give the president significant support to make decisions. The population has demonstrated that they only have so much tolerance for economic decline and governmental scandal. Therefore, a president entering office must be prepared to negotiate and work with multiple groups just to keep the country stable.

Finally, the structure of the political system could be a source of ineffective presidencies. While the electoral system has often given the presidencies to outsiders, once in government these outsiders face enormous opposition from a congress dominated by insiders. The population has repeatedly elected presidents without giving them any support in congress. In the past, this has

meant difficult coalition building. Presidents have asserted that this reality also assisted in the continual endemic corruption within the system, as presidents believe they must bribe political parties for their support once in office. This reality finds its roots in a constitution that continues to insist that political parties play a critical role in government. As political parties become increasingly illegitimate, the system might need some fundamental changes to allow presidents the capacity to govern.

Final Thoughts

Perhaps the most important problem in Ecuador stems from a genuine feeling that the population has no institutional avenues of representation within the governmental system. While political parties are supposed to be the intermediaries between government and the people, the parties in Ecuador have not managed to successfully do so. As the electorate has become more empowered to advocate for their rights, new forms of representation within and outside the political system has occurred. While Ecuador is not the only country in Latin America where this has happened, this failure has resulted in other movements or individuals that have tried to fill the void of representation.

Populist and outsider presidents have attempted to construct themselves as the most effective ally of the people in within the system. Some have even claimed that political parties have proven their lack of capacity to represent the people, and the people should be directly represented by the president. Other groups, outside the system, have attempted to become representatives of the

people and have included important, powerful social movements, (particularly CONAIE) and other organizations, such as labor unions and student groups.

Until the political system provides proper avenues for people to voice their opposition and frustration within the system, social movements and outsider presidents will continue to be popular.

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Political Parties/Candidates

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