

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Decentralizing the State

Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

This book explores the location and dynamics of power within the state, focusing on a recent wave of decentralizing reforms that have swept across both developed and developing countries in recent years. Variation in the timing of reform across countries only vaguely relates to the genesis of an international consensus pushed by big lenders and development banks or the reemergence of democracy in decentralizing countries. Moreover, many of these reforms were enacted from the top, which appears to contradict one of political science's central tenets: that politicians seek to maximize (or at least maintain) control over political and fiscal resources. This book develops a theory linking decentralization's adoption to the electoral concerns of political parties: Decentralization represents a desirable strategy for parties whose support at subnational levels appears more secure than their prospects in national elections. The book examines this argument against experiences in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela and speculates on how recent political changes may affect decentralization's shape and extent in coming years.

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Decentralizing the State

*Elections, Parties, and Local Power
in the Andes*

KATHLEEN O'NEILL



Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521846943

© Kathleen O'Neill 2005

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2005

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

O'Neill, Kathleen, 1970–

Decentralizing the State : elections, parties, and local power in the Andes / Kathleen O'Neill.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-521-84694-3 (hardback) – ISBN 0-521-60970-4 (pbk.)

1. Decentralization in government – Andes Region. 2. Decentralization in government – Andes Region – Case studies. 3. Elections – Andes Region.

4. Elections – Andes Region – Case studies. I. Title.

JL1859.S.D42O54 2005

320.8'098 – dc22 2004024335

ISBN-13 978-0-521-84694-3 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-84694-3 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-60970-8 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-60970-4 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this book and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

Acknowledgments *page vii*

PART I: ELECTORAL THEORY AND COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

1	Introduction	3
	<i>Methodology and Plan of the Book</i>	11
2	A Political Theory of Decentralization	14
	<i>Introduction</i>	14
	<i>Definitions</i>	16
	<i>A Theory of Decentralization</i>	18
	<i>A Formal Model of Decentralization</i>	18
	<i>Alternative Theories</i>	35
	<i>Evidence</i>	43
	<i>Summary</i>	45
	<i>Appendix to Chapter 2</i>	47
3	Decentralization in Comparative Perspective	49
	<i>Introduction</i>	49
	<i>Evidence</i>	51
	<i>Linking Decentralization to Electoral Considerations</i>	55
	<i>Alternative Theories</i>	75
	<i>Conclusion</i>	84

PART II: IN-DEPTH COUNTRY STUDIES

4	The Colombian Experience	89
	<i>Introduction</i>	89
	<i>A Brief History of Party Competition in Colombia</i>	91
	<i>Electoral Factors and Decentralization in Colombia</i>	96

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

Contents

	<i>Constitutional Assembly</i>	107
	<i>A More Detailed Look</i>	110
	<i>Conclusion</i>	121
5	The Bolivian Experience	124
	<i>Introduction</i>	124
	<i>Evidence</i>	129
	<i>A More Detailed Look</i>	143
	<i>Alternative Theories</i>	148
	<i>Regionalism versus Localism</i>	152
	<i>Conclusion</i>	156
6	Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela	160
	<i>Introduction</i>	160
	<i>Ecuador</i>	162
	<i>Venezuela</i>	175
	<i>Peru</i>	189
	<i>Ecuador, Venezuela, and Peru in Conclusion</i>	203
PART III: COMPARISONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND EXTENSIONS		
7	Comparisons, Conclusions, and Extensions	207
	<i>Comparative Lessons</i>	208
	<i>Broad Lessons</i>	215
	<i>Theoretical Extensions</i>	217
	<i>Extensions to Other Cases</i>	220
	<i>Comparisons</i>	236
	<i>Conclusion</i>	239
8	Afterword	243
	<i>Sources Cited</i>	247
	<i>Index</i>	267

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

This project began as my Ph.D. dissertation, then blossomed into a book manuscript as time and feedback drew out the key points of this project. As a result, there are more people to thank than I can possibly name; if you do not find your name listed in these brief pages, I hope that you will know that your support and input were, indeed, appreciated.

First, and foremost, I want to acknowledge the unflagging support of my parents. Without their support, this project never would have been brought to fruition.

I also want to thank my dissertation committee and several other advisers and colleagues without whose help this book would be much less coherent and cohesive than it is. Jorge I. Domínguez deserves special recognition for reading each chapter at least three times and providing detailed comments on each new draft. His work and his encouragement have been invaluable. Rather than ending with the successful defense of the dissertation manuscript, Jorge's work merely began there, and he has continued to provide support and advice right up to the final stages of this project. Robert H. Bates and Dani Rodrik supplied much food for thought in the development of this project and brought up fresh points I had not considered that became important building blocks in the development of my argument. As an unofficial adviser, Jeffry Frieden also provided invaluable help and encouragement along the way. As a reviewer of this manuscript, John Carey made several key suggestions that substantially improved this project. A special

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

acknowledgment must be made to Ricardo Godoy for introducing me to fieldwork in the backlands of Honduras and for introducing me to the politics of Bolivia – a country I have come to enjoy both intellectually and on a much more personal level, as well.

A special thanks is due to my colleagues at Cornell University's government department. This collegial department provided a nurturing environment for my first years as an assistant professor and offered the space and resources that allowed this project to go from dissertation to manuscript. I especially want to thank Christopher Way, Valerie Bunce, Sidney Tarrow, Jonathan Kirshner, Jonas Pontusson, Richard Bensele, Elizabeth Sanders and the Katzensteins for their encouragement, support, and friendship during my term there.

The input of my graduate school colleagues was probably the most critical in the process of writing this book; although I indulge in naming a few individuals, the broader graduate student intellectual community I found in my last years of graduate school still stands unrivaled as the most intellectually alive and generous of any I have experienced, and so I thank everyone who participated in it. I want to single out Ashley Timmer for spending a good deal of her time helping me to develop the formal model in Chapter 2. Mike Tomz provided the invaluable service of challenging my methodology and my argument in ways that forced me to improve and extend them. Mala Htun, Gary Bass, and Kanchan Chandra also provided important input on the argument and organization of the book at key points. Donna Lee Van Cott shared freely from her own research to fill gaps in mine, in addition to sharing critical contact information from her fieldwork in both Bolivia and Colombia. Seminar groups at Harvard and Cornell that allowed me to share my work and that generated lively discussions of my project's weaknesses and limitations have also earned a heartfelt thanks.

I also thank the Institute for Electoral Studies in Washington, D.C., for graciously allowing me to root around in their extensive library of electoral statistics to fill the gaps in my data.

My list of thanks would not be complete without acknowledging the help of those who made my fieldwork in Bolivia and Colombia possible, fruitful, and enjoyable. I gratefully acknowledge the Harvard Institute for International Development, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs for providing funds that made my travels possible. I also

Cambridge University Press

0521609704 - Decentralizing the State: Elections, Parties, and Local Power in the Andes

Kathleen O'Neill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

ix

warmly thank those in both countries who hosted me: the University of the Andes in Bogotá, Colombia; the Federation for Development (Fedesarrollo) in Bogotá, Colombia; and the Entity for Political and Social Research in La Paz, Bolivia (Unidad de Análisis Política Social). I also thank those who contributed to the effectiveness of my research in both countries and all those who graciously submitted to my interviews in somewhat less than fluent Spanish. My sincerest gratitude goes to the Salas family for generously welcoming me into their home during my several visits to Bogotá, Colombia, and for showing me the best of Colombia – both in its historic scenery and in the warmth of its people.