

ABSTRACTS

Political Program and Democracy in Venezuela. Elements for Reviewing Concepts

Miguel Angel Latouche R.

A review of the Venezuelan political process during the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first, suggests that there has been a progressive construction, in the author's opinion still incomplete, of the National State. Nevertheless, this process has been marked by the particular conceptions that successive leaders have had over the administrative problems they had to face and the solutions they sought in the different contexts within which they operated. What this article argues is that the political project that emerges is very much a product of those ideas and beliefs that make up the 'conceptual vision' of the power-holding elite.

Key words: Political program, democracy, governance, public administration.

Social Management, Poverty and Exclusion in Venezuela From the Perspective of the Social Missions (2003-2004)

Neritza Alvarado Chacín

This article examines the record of the current Venezuelan administration in combating poverty and exclusion since the oil strike launched in December 2002, with a view to identifying its central thrust and potential. It is argued that, despite the government's efforts to articulate a policy designed to combat poverty and promote a greater social inclusion (attacking simultaneously on different fronts, specially education, health, employment and food), and without denying some relatively successful initiatives, the current emphasis on the so-called 'social missions' reveals that the programs continue to be isolated one from another, piecemeal, and basically paternalist and focalized. While current policy is more in line with what was promised in the government's original program than that applied during the first four years of the administration, it is far from the universal, integrated model envisaged in the Constitution, government policy papers and other official documents. Some of the reasons for the failure to establish clear norms are discussed and the author concludes with some commentaries on the potential implications of the drift of current policy.

Key words: Social policy, social missions, poverty, exclusion, Venezuela, Chávez administration.

Presidentialism, Authoritarianism and Personality Cult (Hugo Chávez and the Exercise of Power)

Trino Márquez

This article examines the way in which the President of the Republic, Hugo Chávez, has performed since assuming power in February 1999. The author argues that in his way of exercising power, Chávez goes beyond the Presidentialism characteristic of the Venezuelan political regime ever since the break up of Grand Colombia in 1830 and that his regime should be qualified as personalist, autocratic and authoritarian. Furthermore, the personality cult fomented by this style of governing is typical of authoritarian regimes. A comparison is offered between the 1961 and 1999 constitutions in relation to presidential prerogatives, together with concrete examples how Hugo Chávez acts in an autocratic and authoritarian way.

Key words: Presidentialism, authoritarianism, autocracy, personality cult, democracy, rule of law.

Emerging Paradigms. The Role of Socio-Political and Juridical Intervention as Key Factors for Education in the Modern Era

Luz Martínez de Correa

This article aims to understand the relationship between values, interest and action, examining the cognition frameworks and social conditions that limit practical activity in the field of education. The research is based on an analysis of discourse covering the presidential periods from 1935 to 2001 and a database that permits an exploration of philosophical, socio-political and socio-juridical considerations. The result is a theoretical approximation to the educational experience that accounts for the dynamics of social change and reveals current contradictions in the educational field.

Key words: Interdisciplinary studies, education, paradigms, values, common good.

Evaluating Management in Higher Education as an Instrument for Strategic Planning

María Alejandra Cabeza

This article is based on research into the application of management indicators to the higher education system in Venezuela. The preliminary results are organized on the following basis: 1) fundamental premises for the application of indicators, 2) basic conceptual definitions: regulation, auto-regulation, institutional evaluation, auto-evaluation, accountability and quality, 3) the concepts of

performance indicators and their validation, 4) the definition of the teaching, research, extension and management functions and 5) conclusions.

Key words: Indicators, education, management, evaluation, universities.

Promoting the Intellectual Basis for Forming Innovators

Migdalia Perozo B.

This article explores the possibilities of encouraging programs designed to stimulate innovation, increase competitiveness and improve living conditions, on the basis of joint initiatives involving the universities, business enterprises and public organisms. Emphasis is placed on inter-institutional agreements designed to promote social objectives, particularly at a regional and local level. Examples are: the development and application of experiences related to the management of knowledge for forming innovators; strategic alliances for a formation leading to the Qualification as an Exercising Teacher in a municipality; and adjustments and changes in the administration of university academic programs.

Key words: Innovation, university, business enterprise, public organism, training schemes, promoting knowledge, strategic alliances.

Management and Social Policy: Analyzing their Relationship with an Assessment of Performance during the Caldera Government (1993-1998)

José Gregorio Vieira B.

The central aim of this article is to explore the relationship between social management and social policy during the second Caldera administration. This period has been chosen for the analysis because it is characterized by an attempt to apply and consolidate the social policy model initiated by Carlos Andrés Pérez during the preceding administration: an attempt to broach the problem of poverty on the basis of focalized compensatory measures. At the same time, the policies applied in this period constitute a point of reference for the succeeding Chávez administration.

Key words: Social policy, social management, focalization, direct subventions, poverty.

Commercial Activity in the La Guaira Port Town. The Impact of the 1999 Landslides

María de la Fe López, Alexis López, María Guerra & Lola González

As a result of the natural disaster that occurred in Vargas State in December 1999, economic activity in general, and that of the port in particular, were seriously affected. This article uses the demographic statistics proportioned by

the Central Office for Statistics and Information, the information provided by the Vargas Project in Cendes and the data available from the Port authorities in La Guaira, in order to calculate the impact of the landslides on the commercial activity of the port town.

Key words: Landslides, port commercial activity, toxic substances.

Citizens' Union and Environmental Democracy

Alexander Luzardo Nava

On the basis of the proposals of some international trade union organizations, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Italian Labor Union, together with the experience of the Socio-Environmental Amazon Observatory, supported by these and other Latin American trade union organizations, the author discusses the relationship between the environment, trade unions and democracy. The article underlines the importance of the 1992 annual congress of the ICFTU celebrated in Caracas and dedicated to explore the Central Theme of 'Trade Unions for Democracy and the Environment'. It is argued that the trade unions ought to incorporate clauses on environmental conditions in the workplace into their contracts but the author also suggests that the concepts of 'citizens' unions' and 'environmental democracy' point towards the need to go beyond the traditional industry-related demands.

Key words: Environment, citizen' union, environmental democracy.

Proposals for a Debate over the Role of the Market: A Neo-Institutional Interpretation of Contracting in the Poultry Business

Ricardo Castillo López, Agustín Morales Espinoza

This article aims to provoke a debate over the role corresponding to the market in certain special circumstances. From a neo-institutional perspective, the authors examine the economic rationality underlying the use of contracting as an alternative to the market, both for the assignation of resources and for the coordination of productive activities in the Venezuelan poultry industry. The article underlines the usefulness of contracts when faced with certain problems that the market is unable to resolve.

Key words: Venezuela, neo-institutional economics, contracts, poultry industry.

Thinking about Latin America. What does it mean?*Sulbey Naranjo de Adarmes*

Paradoxically, the Western World appears to be paralyzed in the face of scientific and technological advances. August mausoleum or simply a common grave? Is there no way out? The reluctance to abandon the world that has been conquered is reflected in a fleeing from all that is associated with death; at the same time, life, seems to be in suspense. By way of contrast, in Latin America, circumstances have produced a different world vision: a recurring search for identity with life projects developed between contrasts and prolixity, with a clear horizon and a historical patrimony steeped in magic realism, tragedies and illusions that opens out possibilities instead of provoking a sensation of having already reached the tip of the peak. Two worlds confronting one another: the one with a calling to sculpt on the world's body; the other, attacking, scheming or lazing around in exile. Faced with these uncertainties, basic questions are forced on our attention: What does it mean to think about Latin America? Do we experience history or do we mould it? We have an identity or is it something we are creating? We enjoy liberty or must we embrace it?

Key words: Philosophy, experience, hermeneutics, truth, identity, projects.

The Blair Report and the War Against Iraq*Seny Hernández Ledezma*

The UK government's decision to join the United States, Australia and Spain in invading Iraq in 2003 was justified on the basis of the document "IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (The Assessment of the British Government)" and presented by Prime Minister Tony Blair to the British parliament in September 2002. This article offers a qualitative analysis of this document as an exercise in political communication, from the point of view of the doctrine of humanitarian intervention. It also examines the impact of the document on the British political scene, once the invasion had been completed.

Key words: Tony Blair, Saddam Hussein, arms of mass destruction, British Parliament, war, Iraq.