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Venezuela crit sum

In Venezuela there are a variety of land types from mountains to coastlines. During the colonial period they relied on livestock and agriculture. The Spanish conquest of the country was erratic and when natives died they later imported slaves for labor. Caracas was designated as a central city for economics and politics. In 1811, Venezuela had an independence movement and joined the Republic of Gran Colombia, however, the country was in ruin after movement. Independence was possible through slaves, who demanded freedom for help.

Caudillos were main leaders of post-independence period, with coffee as the base of the economy. Jose Antonio Paez was the caudillo that encouraged moving from cacao to coffee production. He led the country for a time and during his rule he established free trade by giving the people the security of their property and contracts they formed. At the time still two main parties, Liberal and Conservative. Two following liberal caudillos, Jose Tadeo and Jose Gregorio Mongas, supported liberal ideas like abolishing slavery, relieved debt, and modernization of the country. Next caudillo leader was Antonio Guzman Blanco who made social change and had goals for the leadership, such as establishing a public order, increasing international trade, providing free compulsory education and taking power from church.

Fought over Venezuela-British Guiana border, but Venezuela asked US to get involved claiming the Monroe Doctrine as a reason. US aided in settling disputes and gained power in the process. Another dispute with European countries was when country didn't pay debts, so countries tried to take land but US stopped and created the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine so no one would enter their hemisphere. Last caudillo gain control shortly after, Juan Vicente Gomez, who brought peace to the country and led the country into the petroleum age.

Petroleum became the main export of Venezuela by 1962, they were even called the Petro-state since politics were affected by the export. The more power that oil companies had the more power Gomez got. In 1922 a law was passed to put all the land containing oil in government hands so that the president could have more power and use the money how they wish. However, since the oil boom agriculture has declined because all the money went back into getting more oil. The oil boom also encouraged people to move to cities and created inequality in classes, such as the elite associated with oil and a powerless working class. Due to all the problems in 1943 the government change to using the revenue in other areas.

In the early 1900s there were many military governments with the army influencing politics. New political parties also emerge and presidents came and went until the Punto Fijo democratic emerged. Punto Fijo democracy led to the different block parties meeting to respect the electoral process and share power. It's promoted every group benefiting from the petrol wealth and neutrality of armed forces for resources so they may not take control of the country. Then more variety of presidents came along under punto fijo with varying political stances like more leftist Tomuo Betancour and Raul Leoni or rightist Rafael Caldera, all of one of the new political parties (Liberal AD and Conservative COPEI), The Punto Fijo system fell after the caracazo violence. There was too much poverty and inequality as well as distrust of the politicians by the citizens that it could no longer succeed.

In the late 1900s after the 2 political parties collapsed Hugo Chavez led a revolt in '92, but failed. However, after starting the Movimiento Quinta Republica in '98 he was more successful and won the presidency due to his stance against the elites who the people had problems with. He created a new constitution that reorganized the government, like allowing reelections. He also moved for power of petrol industry which prompted a coup supported by the US that failed. Since the US tried to kick him out he grew untrusting of them but still continues to sell oil.

The title does seem relevant because the power the country got from oil seemed to cause problems within the government, between the classes, and with international relations. It also created a reliance on one product so that the country didn't produce much of anything else, Venezuela didn't seem to particularly stand apart from the rest of Latin America. They had many common patterns with some distinct characteristics. One was the Punto Fijo System, which doesn't seem like something other countries have done. Also, in Venezuela there seemed to be a long history of caudillos, with even Chavez having been compared to a modern day caudillo.