In 2005, Venezuela underwent municipal and parliamentary elections. Both processes had unprecedented levels of abstention, close to 80%. This study examines the reason for abstention in the light of the country's voting behavior, the political context and theories of democratic disaffection. Based on twenty two focus groups conducted in eight cities, the study reports people's arguments. The research concludes that the different social classes abstained for different reasons, but all protested in favor of democracy.

**Keywords**

Elections in Venezuela; Abstention; Democratic disaffection