

RECENT RESEARCH ON CHILE:
The Challenge of Understanding "Success"*

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- TAPESTRIES OF HOPE, THREADS OF LOVE: THE ARPILLERA MOVEMENT IN CHILE, 1974–1994.* By Marjorie Agosín. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Pp. 142. \$70.00 cloth, \$39.95 paper.)
- HACIA UNA NUEVA ERA POLITICA: ESTUDIO SOBRE LAS DEMOCRATIZACIONES.* By Manuel Antonio Garretón. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995. Pp. 292.)
- NEOLIBERALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE? THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF THE CHILEAN MODEL.* Edited by David Hojman. (Liverpool, Engl.: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Liverpool, 1995. Pp. 256.)
- MORAL OPPOSITION TO AUTHORITARIAN RULE, 1973–90.* By Pamela Lowden. (New York: St. Martin's, 1996. Pp. 216. \$59.95 cloth.)
- CHILE: THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION.* By Javier Martínez and Alvaro Díaz. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1996. Pp. 156. \$34.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)
- THINKING POLITICS: INTELLECTUALS AND DEMOCRACY IN CHILE, 1973–1988.* By Jeffrey Puryear. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994. Pp. 206. \$42.50 cloth, \$13.95 paper.)
- THE STATE AND CAPITAL IN CHILE: BUSINESS ELITES, TECHNOCRATS, AND MARKET ECONOMICS.* By Eduardo Silva. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996. Pp. 272. \$59.00 cloth.)
- SOLDIERS IN A NARROW LAND: THE PINOCHET REGIME IN CHILE.* By Mary Helen Spooner. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994. Pp. 305. \$30.00 cloth.)
- DEFENSA NACIONAL, CHILE, 1990–1994: MODERNIZACION Y DESARROLLO.* By Augusto Varas and Claudio Fuentes. (Santiago: Libros FLACSO, 1994. Pp. 291.)

The inauguration of President Patricio Aylwin in 1990 ended sixteen years of military rule in Chile and completed the wave of democratic transitions sweeping Latin America since the late 1970s. Given Chile's

*I would like to thank Pushkar for his many useful suggestions.

long history of democratic politics, it is ironic that Chile was one of the last countries in the region to undergo a transition. Once the democratic government was installed, however, Chile quickly rejoined the most stable countries in the region and is again a model of democratic politics.

Chile's second democratic administration is now well into its term of office, and research on Chilean politics has entered a new phase. The country's diverse and dramatic experiences have left ambiguous legacies for understanding Chilean politics. The nine books under review here attempt to untangle the significance of these legacies from different vantage points and with different objectives. The insights that they offer will enrich our understanding of not only Chilean politics but the prospects for democratic stability and economic development in Latin America as a whole.

Democratic Breakdown, Military Rule, and the Transition: Filling in the Missing Pieces of the Puzzle

The breakdown of Chilean democracy and the ensuing military regime have been examined by numerous analysts. The studies under review here are more focused, providing greater detail and insight on both new and old themes. Mary Helen Spooner's *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile*, for example, provides first-hand accounts of the fears and divisions endemic in Chilean society. A U.S. foreign correspondent who was living in Chile, Spooner supplements her personal experiences with interviews with a wide range of individuals, including political leaders, ordinary citizens, and retired military officers. She also tries to dispel some of the "myths" surrounding the period, documenting such topics as Augusto Pinochet's mediocre career in the armed forces and the minimal role he played in the coup; the limited role played by the United States in the coup and its aftermath; how President Salvador Allende took his own life in the presidential palace; and dissent within the Chilean armed forces despite the personalized nature of the Pinochet dictatorship. Much of what Spooner discusses is fairly well known, but the book uses personal testimonies from the victims of the regime to provide a compelling, even moving account of life in authoritarian Chile.

The horror of authoritarian rule inevitably generated a moral outcry within civil society. But as Pamela Lowden's *Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule, 1973–90* demonstrates, the surprising part is that the outcry came so quickly and from the Catholic Church, an institution that in other countries has played an ambiguous if not a "complicitous" role in response to human rights abuses by authoritarian regimes (p. 14). Within a month of the coup, the church took the lead by creating the Ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace, bringing together most of the religious institutions in Chile. When the committee disbanded due to gov-

ernmental pressure in late 1975, the church established the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, which operated under its exclusive control.

Lowden defines *moral opposition* as “a form of opposition in which moral issues are not only explicit, but constitute the principal reason why that opposition developed in the first place. It aims at achieving a state and society in which natural rights are respected . . .” (pp. 1–2). For Lowden, “moral opposition” to the military regime (as opposed to purely “political opposition”) was essential given the regime’s concerted efforts to create a new hegemonic order: “Simplistically, the determination and strength of the regime meant that an even stronger basis for opposition was required to overcome it” (p. 9). As the most important religious institution in Chile and one intimately involved in politics since the 1960s, the Catholic Church inevitably had to assume the moral leadership role. Moreover, the church itself reflected the sharp divisions within Chilean society. The necessity of defending human rights allowed the church to assume a position of moral authority while remaining above partisan politics. Lowden points out that the church never formally broke relations with the military government to avoid appearing to take a political stance that would only undermine its moral authority. While perhaps true in the abstract, the church’s self-interest was also at stake, as she notes, because it needed to avoid alienating conservative elements within the church who supported the military regime. There were also practical concerns, which Lowden seems to ignore. For example, if the church had broken all ties with the regime, that position would have undermined its efforts to defend the victims of repression.

Lowden also argues that the Pinochet regime’s hegemonic pretensions meant that it could not afford the loss of legitimacy that a direct attack on the church would entail. This concern did not spare the church from indirect attacks but provided the space for the church to become virtually the only avenue for expressing opposition to the military regime until national protests began in 1983.

Marjorie Agosín’s *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974–1994* provides a beautifully illustrated study of one aspect of the Vicaría’s work. Arpilleras are tapestries made of old scraps of material. The movement began in a handicrafts workshop sponsored by the Vicaría in March 1974, with fourteen women whose husbands were “disappeared.” According to Agosín, “At the height of despair,” not knowing “what to do to placate their grief, to remedy the economic crisis, and to feed the children who were without fathers,” the women were given remnants of clothing and they “spontaneously made the first tapestries or arpilleras. They began to tell their stories on pieces of cloth” (pp. 11–12). Workshops spread throughout Santiago and the movement came to symbolize resistance to repression. The women in the arpillera movement used their handiwork to create “one of the boldest means of popular protest in Latin America” (p. 2). Keeping the memories of the disappeared

alive, they could supplement their family incomes as well by selling the arpilleras.

In focusing on Chile's "moral opposition," Lowden reintroduces moral values into the study of politics. Yet the long-term legacy of moral opposition remains ambiguous. The return to civilian rule and the failure of the military's hegemonic project reinforced the rightward turn within the church hierarchy that began when Juan Francisco Fresno replaced Raúl Silva Henríquez as head of the Chilean Catholic Church in 1984. The Vicaría formally closed in November 1992, and the church's moral pronouncements in the political realm since then have been primarily limited to opposing abortion and divorce. As Agosin notes, even the arpillera workshops shut down when the Vicaría closed. Although the church has played an invaluable role in ensuring that Chilean society would never again tolerate the level of repression unleashed in 1973, an important unanswered question is the place of moral values in defining the quality of Chile's new democratic regime or any other.

Lowden's work raises another question: Why did it take sixteen years to end military rule in Chile? Whereas other works have focused on the highly institutionalized and personalized nature of the military regime, and on divisions within the opposition (Garretón 1989; Remmer 1989), Jeffrey Puryear's *Thinking Politics: Intellectuals and Democracy in Chile, 1973–1988* analyzes the role that intellectuals played in the evolution of Chilean political opposition. During this period, according to Puryear, "Chile's intellectuals embarked on a decade-long 'learning process' that was to reshape political thought and civil society" (p. 56).

The political influence of Chilean "intellectuals" is unique in Latin America. This situation reflected in part a quarter-century of efforts to institutionalize social science research in Chile prior to 1970. In the 1960s, Puryear notes, intellectuals were deeply ideological and often held radical views. Politics was viewed in instrumental terms for implementing their ideologies, and "intellectuals ceded their critical and creative abilities to the priorities of political leaders" (p. 21). Although Puryear tends to downplay the point, intellectuals actually helped undermine Chilean democracy when their radicalism accelerated polarization and made compromise nearly impossible.

During the 1970s and particularly the 1980s, the relationship between intellectuals and politicians reversed, as intellectuals diluted their ideological zeal and politics became increasingly "de-intellectualized." The trauma of military rule made intellectuals of both the Left and the Center more appreciative of political democracy and more receptive to new ways of thinking. Continued exposure to graduate training abroad and international funding agencies exerted indirect pressure. After the coup, established research centers such as the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) were transformed, and new centers like

the Corporación de Investigaciones Económicas para Latinoamérica (CIEPLAN) emerged to provide a “sanctuary” for opposition political activity. Puryear observes, “There was a crucial difference between the plight of dissident politicians and that of intellectuals: politics was flatly prohibited, while research was . . . generally legal. . . . Science could speak when politics could not” (pp. 37, 59). He suggests that the ongoing interaction between intellectuals and politicians helped reestablish mutual trust among adversaries, paving the way for the Center-Left alliance that eventually oversaw the transition.

In contrast to Lowden’s study, Puryear argues in *Thinking Politics* that intellectuals were largely responsible for the displacement of moral opposition in the last years of military rule, which he views as a necessary step for a successful transition. Intellectuals designed an opposition strategy in 1987–1988, convincing surprisingly reluctant politicians to challenge Pinochet in the plebiscite through a moderate campaign that would avoid divisive issues. Puryear explains, “while politicians were arguing that the country wanted heroic things, intellectuals were arguing that what the country wanted was a little happiness, peace, modest programs, security and the recovery of minimal dignity” (p. 144). Once again, the ambiguous role of moral values in defining the quality of democratic politics needs to be assessed.

While it is clear that intellectuals played a pivotal role in the evolution of Chilean politics, their centrality raises important questions. What should be the role of intellectuals in democratic politics generally? Chilean intellectuals moved from an “irresponsible role” leading to the 1973 coup to one of great maturity. Should this positive role be projected into the new democratic regime, and if so, how? Is there an appropriate division of labor between professional politicians and intellectuals that can avoid the excesses of the past? More to the point, why were the intellectuals studied by Puryear different from the intellectuals associated with the military government, who were responsible for the harshness of its economic policies and the Constitution of 1980 with its authoritarian elements? Finally, given the repressive conditions leading to the 1988 plebiscite, political decision making based almost exclusively on opinion polls was invaluable—and there was no alternative. What are the consequences of this kind of political process when democracy is restored? Is there a danger that citizen participation may be displaced by random samplings of public opinion? Puryear’s study unfortunately ends with the plebiscite.

Economic Elites and the Transition to Democracy

Of the class-based actors in Chilean politics, segments of the dominant class tied to the international economy experienced the greatest increase in power during the Pinochet regime. Eduardo Silva’s *The State and*

Capital in Chile: Business Elites, Technocrats, and Market Economics challenges the common belief that these groups had little influence in the economic policymaking responsible for this outcome. Silva disaggregates the upper classes according to the nature of their assets (fixed or liquid), their principal markets (international or domestic), and their level of international competitiveness. He then analyzes formal and informal mechanisms of access to policymaking and concludes, “states that appeared to be closed to societal groups may in fact be more ‘porous’ than previously thought” (p. 8). The changing balance between dominant economic interests within business’s peak organizations, Silva argues, were reflected in changes in the military regime’s economic policies.

Elite interests had been increasingly threatened with the rise of the Partido Demócrata Cristiano in the 1950s. Yet according to Silva, elites abandoned democracy only when efforts to negotiate with the Allende government failed and nationalizations began to affect their core economic interests. The so-called Monday Club was formed in mid-1971 to organize opposition to Allende. Dominated by sectors that preferred a gradual opening to the international economy, this group formulated the regime’s economic policies until 1975. Then a convergence of factors created a new and radical neoliberal coalition among internationalist business interests founded on liquid assets. Nationalizations under Allende weakened business groups producing for the domestic market, and policies favoring economic liberalization weakened them further. The growing availability of international capital meant that once the Pinochet government began to reprivatize, business interests connected to international finance capital could expand their economic power and eventually gain control over peak business associations. Pinochet was also strengthening his personal control over government, handing economic policymaking to the “Chicago boys,” who already enjoyed close ties with the new capitalist coalition. By 1975 this coalition succeeded in excluding all other sectors of the economic elite from the policymaking process. Radical economic reforms and the growing power of the new economic coalition continued unchecked until the economy collapsed in the early 1980s.

The failure of radical reforms led to a shift in the balance of economic power. A new pragmatic neoliberal coalition dominated by internationalist economic interests founded on fixed assets—the same sectors that would be the motor for Chile’s subsequent sustained economic growth—consolidated by 1983. According to Silva, when national protests began in May 1983 and the opposition started to court business interests, Pinochet could no longer take the economic elites’ support for granted. Major policy concessions were made, and the growing influence of the new coalition was reflected in cabinet changes and new mechanisms for this group to participate directly in policymaking.

Chile: The Great Transformation by Javier Martínez and Alvaro Díaz

offers a divergent view. These authors suggest that the military regime rebuffed efforts by business organizations to participate in policymaking. Echoing Silva on this point, Martínez and Díaz note that Allende's reforms undermined the economic power of elites, but their political power remained intact. They mobilized through business associations and right-wing parties to help bring down the Allende government. In the period following the coup, they constituted a new power bloc united by a common threat but without any shared project. Chile's economic elite gave their total support to the military regime, which in turn granted a new "neoliberal technocracy" unprecedented autonomy in policy making. The years 1974 and 1975 proved pivotal, when continued economic instability raised fears about the survival of military rule. In sharp contrast to Silva's argument that economic interests rather than fear determined the economic elites' support of the military regime, Martínez and Díaz insist that business groups closed ranks around the military. The technocracy's autonomy from class interests, plus high levels of state intervention in the economy, made it possible to launch a revolution. When that revolution was threatened by economic collapse in the early 1980s, the same neoliberal technocrats regrouped under the more pragmatic Hernán Büchi and "went from an orthodox monetary approach to a more heterodox one, this time devised and imposed by the IMF and the World Bank" (p. 47). The confidence of the key business leaders was quickly restored—despite their continued exclusion.

Both studies agree that the realignment after 1983 yielded significant consequences for Chilean democracy. With or without access to the policymaking apparatus, the allegiance of dominant economic interests to Pinochet was complete. Moreover, Silva suggests that business groups used their power to extract concessions from the opposition, entering into a "tacit conservative pact" that maintained the central tenets of the economic model established by the military regime in the mid-1980s in exchange for their acceptance of political change (p. 217). Whereas Puryear emphasizes the importance of intellectuals in moderating the opposition, for Silva and also for Martínez and Díaz, the power of dominant economic interests left the opposition with no alternative. The result is a restricted democracy with limited ability to redress problems of social equity.

Although somewhat controversial, Silva's arguments in *The State and Capital in Chile* are persuasive. He draws on important works in comparative political economy that have attempted to understand policy outcomes by disaggregating business interests (Frieden 1988; Gourevitch 1986). His findings are also consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of guaranteeing the access of economically powerful groups to policy making for political stability (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992) and sustained economic development (Evans 1995). Silva provides a wealth of primary research material, including interviews with key business lead-

ers, and his data fit his argument remarkably well. He nevertheless over-emphasizes the importance of the prior personalizing of political power in explaining the rising influence of the radical neoliberal coalition. More important, as Martínez and Díaz argue, in handing over economic (and social) policymaking to the Chicago boys, Pinochet consolidated his power by removing potentially divisive issues from the purview of the military and thus depoliticizing it to a significant degree. Similarly, Silva's insistence on the intense resistance of business interests to social reform and equity policies is debatable (Weyland 1997). It is also inconsistent with the pragmatism and political savvy that he believes characterized Chilean business leadership. Unfortunately, Silva's analysis of the Aylwin government is not as nuanced or well documented empirically as the rest of *The State and Capital in Chile*. In contrast, Martínez and Díaz's *Chile: The Great Transformation* offers analysis that is more structurally deterministic. In stressing the overpowering role of the state under the control of an isolated technocracy, the authors deny Chile's increasingly dynamic business sectors any independent role. The significance of social mobilization and political opposition seems to be constrained by powerful state-led forces that had to run their inevitable course. The two studies, however, concur in predicting a difficult democratic future for Chile.

Assessing Chile's Democratic Experience

The three remaining books under review assess the performance of the Aylwin government and highlight the challenges facing its successors. *Defensa nacional, Chile, 1990–1994: Modernización y desarrollo* by Augusto Varas and Claudio Fuentes is based exclusively on a recompilation of public statements by officials and publicly available policy documents. A wealth of empirical data for defense policy specialists is supplemented by a summary of the findings of a public-opinion survey focusing on the armed forces. Also included are an important brief assessment of the Aylwin government's defense policies and an outline of a possible nonpartisan defense policy.

Defensa nacional covers a variety of topics, presenting the policy positions of the different branches of the armed forces and the Ministerio de Defensa on each issue. In contrast to most other countries in Latin America, Chileans seem to have reached a clear consensus that the military has an important role to play in securing future peace in the country (compare Millet and Gold-Biss 1996). The coalition known as the Concertación de los Partidos por la Democracia, which has governed Chile since 1990, has no plans to alter the legislation enacted by the military regime that set minimum budgets and earmarked 10 percent of the net sales receipts of the national copper company for the military. Moreover, regarding initiatives to divert funds from the military to social programs (a growing trend in

much of the world), Varas and Fuentes warn, "debate over military spending has taken place within a zero-sum framework, more than from a perspective of the possible positive roles that the armed forces' purely military function can play in national development" (p. 18).

Varas and Fuentes argue that Chile needs a nonpartisan and consensual "grand strategy" that would "harmonize the diverse policies that would make development with equity possible" (p. 14). Despite important advances in many areas under Aylwin, no national defense policy has emerged. Varas and Fuentes conclude that "the executive, Congress, and the civilian world have not involved themselves in the formulation of defense policy" (p. 21). The emerging pattern recalls the one that characterized civil-military relations in Chile for fifty years before the coup, when the civilian and military worlds were effectively separated. The "cloistering" of the military led to growing mutual suspicion, contributing to the coup and the subsequent violence (Garretón 1989).

Varas and Fuentes develop the outline of a possible national defense policy, but more needs to be done—especially in the area of political leadership. No one would suggest that another coup is possible in the foreseeable future in Chile. Yet excessive military prerogatives undermine democratic institutions, and there is no guarantee that the military's role will not expand further. Part of the problem is that Chilean society remains sharply divided on this issue. In reviewing the public-opinion data, Varas and Fuentes conclude that these divisions "present serious difficulties for making headway in the development of a national defense policy" (p. 248). The ambiguous role of values in defining the quality of the Chilean democratic government, an issue raised in the transition literature, is far from being resolved. In the area of civil-military relations, Varas and Fuentes suggest such resolution may take a long time: "To the extent that political and economic-social polarization diminishes, access to higher levels of education is generalized, and Chilean society becomes more plural or secular, it will be possible to reduce some of the socio-cultural resistance to the development of a national defense policy" (p. 248).

Many of the issues that Varas and Fuentes raise in *Defensa nacional* as central to resolving the problematic role of the armed forces in Chilean society are dealt with in the volume edited by David Hojman, *Neo-liberalism with a Human Face? The Politics and Economics of the Chilean Model*. The contributions, which are of mixed quality, address the question of whether Chile will become the next economic "tiger," following Asian successes like Taiwan and South Korea. Hojman concludes that it will, despite a number of challenges that need to be addressed by the administration of President Eduardo Frei.

Among those challenges are the difficulties created by a lack of "new ideas" beyond the Right. In her chapter on the Chilean Left, Pamela Lowden notes that it has had a hard time redefining itself after the fall of

the Soviet bloc, despite the success of the Partido Socialista and the Partido por la Democracia (PPD) in the Concertación. The Partido Comunista suffered a severe internal crisis after the transition, when many activists left the party. As Lowden points out, “those still in . . . are those who have resisted . . . all pressures to move toward a social democratic, pro-market position, and remain committed to combat capitalism in all forms” (p. 43). Regarding the Left’s role within the Concertación, she comments that the perception in much of its electoral base is that “its leaders have become more concerned with issues that have little or nothing to do with their daily lives, and, indeed, have become especially concerned with securing their own quotas of power and privilege . . .” (p. 48). Part of the problem is the lack of an alternative project, which has caused some leftists to appear too enthusiastic in supporting the neoliberal project. The much-touted “socialist renovation” has created an identity problem for the more moderate Left, raising difficulties in distinguishing itself from other political tendencies as well as fears that this faction may have moved too far to the Right.

In contrast, Marcelo Pollack argues in *Neo-liberalism with a Human Face* that the Right has “been successful in transforming itself into a party political force” whose ideas appear to be hegemonic (p. 21). One factor in this success was the Right’s ability to combine monetarist economic policy with a social and political theory that could legitimate it. Another was the Right’s “unique ability to develop and carry out [that policy], without any democratic constraints” (p. 21). Although Pollack incorrectly equates the corporatist *gremialistas* with the neoliberal Chicago boys, he correctly points out that the rise of the latter was facilitated by a number of factors (the same ones elaborated by Silva as well as Martínez and Díaz). Echoing Puryear’s analysis of opposition intellectuals, Pollack points to the intellectual support enjoyed by the Right, for example from the prestigious Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP). Even so, the Chilean Right remains divided over the degree of support for Pinochet and his legacy. This division, along with organizational problems and anti-democratic tendencies more generally, continue to limit the Right’s electoral success and may pose a problem for democratic consolidation.

The remaining contributions are more limited or technical in nature and thus fall beyond the scope of this review. Two contributions merit some discussion, however. Markos Mamalakis presents the highly deterministic argument that Pinochet’s economic policies, having laid the foundation for a durable democratic regime, are more compatible with democracy than with dictatorship. The proviso is that the Frei administration must continue the same “correct, i.e., equitable, non-discriminatory mesoeconomic policies” (p. 146). Such logic seems to preclude any understanding of how Chilean democracy flourished for over forty years, yielding some of the highest levels of socioeconomic development in Latin

America before Pinochet got his turn. Mamalakis's obvious predisposition toward the neoliberal economic model blinds him to problems that other authors (including most in the Hojman volume) address in considerable detail.

In a similar vein, Hojman's essay on education argues that Chile's economic success in the 1980s and 1990s is directly related to the military regime's educational reforms. One problem with the argument is that Hojman confuses rising standards of education with the secular trend toward growing literacy (Chile has led the region in literacy rates for decades) and with the growing number of Chileans enrolled in primary education (without accounting for population increases). According to this logic, Chile's growth would seem inevitable, regardless of the specific development policies being pursued, and Hojman makes no effort to correlate these aggregate findings with the specific kinds of jobs being created. More fundamentally, he ignores significant decreases in per capita spending on education under military rule (Arellano 1985) and dismisses in a cavalier fashion one study that suggests a deterioration in Chilean education during the period. While noting the inferior quality of education available to the poor, Hojman neglects to mention that more than 40 percent of all Chileans were living in poverty by the end of Pinochet's rule.

The last volume under review is also the most ambitious, Manuel Antonio Garretón's *Hacia una nueva era política: Estudio sobre las democratizaciones*. In this culmination of a research project that began in 1983 with the publication of the original Spanish version of *The Chilean Political Process* (Garretón 1989), Garretón attempts to understand processes of re-democratization after periods of prolonged authoritarian rule in Latin America.

Hacia una nueva era política asserts that democratic breakdown and military rule led to the disarticulation of Chile's "sociopolitical matrix." The current period of democratic transition and consolidation reflects the incipient emergence of a new matrix. Garretón defines a sociopolitical matrix as "a specific relationship among the state, the system of representation, and civil society" (p. 9). The Chilean matrix was characterized by the fusion of these three elements for most of this century. During the 1960s and 1970s, authoritarian regimes sought to destroy this matrix and replace it with another one in which "the state, politics, and collective action would be replaced by the market and technocratic calculation" (p. 22). With the transition, a different matrix began to emerge. Still incomplete and reflecting elements of the traditional Chilean matrix, this new matrix is characterized by the autonomy of the state, the system of representation, and civil society as each coexists with the other two in a somewhat strained and ill-defined tension. The challenge for Chile and Latin America in general is to ensure the consolidation of this new matrix. For that to happen, individual countries need to consolidate their democratic gov-

ernments by overcoming “authoritarian enclaves” inherited from previous regimes. Democratic governments must also respect the guiding ethical principle that legitimates political democracy in the region: “social democratization.” Adhering to this principle requires reducing inequalities, including marginalized sectors, and achieving greater social integration. Finally, the region needs to define a development model. As Garretón points out, deregulating an economy and opening it up to external trade does not constitute a development model. A genuine model would include an active role for the state in promoting development.

Garretón analyzes the Chilean case within this framework, from the breakdown of democracy through the Aylwin administration. In his view, the coup represented a crisis in the democratic regime in which all actors shared responsibility, but in the end, one group within the new dominant bloc tried to impose a “revolutionary project” on society. But rather than analyze the nature of this project, Garretón focuses on the evolution of the opposition as it confronted three main challenges: the re-establishment of party structures and the relations between parties and social organizations, inter-party negotiation and cooperation to create a single actor of political opposition, and the struggle against the dictatorship.

Several factors stand out in this process. For Garretón (as well as Martínez and Díaz), the social mobilization that began in 1983 was an effective way to channel vast societal discontent and strengthen civil society, but the movement exhausted itself for lack of political guidance. Although the protests provoked a strategic debate within the opposition, it was “relatively incomplete and unrealistic” because it was based on bringing about the collapse of the regime. The opposition never developed “an appropriate formula or strategy for terminating the regime” (p. 85).

The lack of strategy also reflected problems of disunity. The opposition split into two factions shortly after the first protest. For Garretón, this division meant that the problem of defining a realistic strategy for ending the regime was displaced by the parties’ concern for establishing their own identities. The opposition still had to go through a “learning process” that culminated when all opposition parties (except the Communists) agreed to work together and defeat Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite. While the plebiscite offered an opportunity to begin a transition, Garretón underscores how important it was that politicians recognize this possibility, organize a unified opposition, and show moderation in campaigning against Pinochet. Their success demonstrated how “the learning experienced under a dictator had strengthened the responsibility of a political class” (p. 101).

Despite this achievement, Garretón suggests that the first period of democratic rule proved to be one of lost opportunities. Paradoxically, a popular government enjoying economic prosperity failed to meet the principal challenges posed by the need to institutionalize a new sociopo-

litical matrix. Removal of the numerous authoritarian enclaves was “perfectly possible, especially in the first period of greatest legitimacy of the new regime and new government” (p. 119). Such a course would have required agreements with the democratic Right, consolidating its position and thereby strengthening the democratic government (compare with Gibson 1996). Garretón argues that Chile was “on the threshold a successful political democratization, resolving the great historic problem of this century” that led to democratic breakdown: “the rupture between the middle classes and the popular sectors, between the Center and the Left, that is, between those who could ensure political democracy and social change” (p. 122). Despite its partial achievements, Garretón feels that the Concertación lost its historic opportunity.

Garretón contends in *Hacia una nueva era política* that the Aylwin administration had no strategic plan, opting instead for tactical negotiations on each individual issue. Garretón blames “a relative deficit of political leadership” (pp. 124–25). The Right managed to take the initiative on many issues, although exacerbating its internal divisions in the process and undermining its own democratic elements. Political mobilization was deemphasized, resulting in a growing distancing of the population from politicians. Even the symbolically important *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación* lost its potential to resolve the human rights issue because “it was not integrated into a clear government strategy on what the government wanted to achieve” with the report (p. 127). Garretón notes that Chile’s famous “democracy by consensus” (*la democracia de los acuerdos*) was anything but because the agreements reached actually avoided the most important issues.

These problems reflected the fundamental weakness of the Concertación governing coalition. Garretón acknowledges that the transition would have been impossible without the Concertación, in the same way that the consolidation of democracy will ultimately depend on its maintenance. Yet the Concertación’s continued existence is problematic, according to Garretón, unless it can resolve issues of leadership competition. In the meantime, the parties making up the Concertación avoid debates on topics that go beyond the coalition’s agreed-on program, while the non-participative elitist style of politics characteristic of the transition period continues. For Garretón, only a semi-presidential or semi-parliamentary regime that would create incentives for reaching consensus among political parties and reduce the zero-sum tendencies in presidential systems could overcome these problems. Without this institutional change, Garretón warns apocalyptically, “it is inevitable that [political] calculation will lead to a repetition of the all-or-nothing competition that the actual components of the Concertación confronted in the past, facilitating the breakdown of democracy” (p. 251).

Although Garretón does not suggest that Chile’s government is not

democratic, he concludes that “it is of low quality,” making it “more difficult to raise issues about other social projects for the future” (p. 228). The supposed success of the transition may be one of the biggest obstacles to longer-term success. What the government “appears to take from the public opinion polls in simple language is ‘more of the same, but for everyone.’” Garretón points to “a certain self-complacency, expressed by the most diverse sectors . . . , [which] makes it difficult to have debates about the future and above all impedes the discussion of alternatives. . .” (pp. 155–56).

In the end, Garretón predicts that whether remaining opportunities will be taken advantage of or lost will “depend in large part on intellectual critique and reflection” (p. 227). While undoubtedly true, as Puryear has made clear, it is equally important that politicians listen and translate those reflections into policies. Only time will tell whether intellectuals as well as politicians will fulfill such expectations. But Garretón’s introspection demonstrates at least how rich political debate can be.

Conclusion: Interpreting The Heavy Burden of “Success”

Perhaps the most striking feature of recent research on Chile is the absence of fundamental debates. For example, in contrast to much of the literature on Chile written during the period before the transition, one no longer finds serious debate over the causes of the breakdown of democracy or the nature of the military regime. All the authors reviewed would agree that the fundamental reason why Chilean democracy broke down was the inability of politicians to reach a consensus among themselves. This lack of consensus created a spiraling political polarization that spun throughout Chilean society. The military stepped into the resultant void. While analysts disagree over the influence that dominant economic interests had on policymaking during the military regime, all agree that those same interests prospered tremendously at the expense of most Chileans.

It was this marginalized majority that provided the social base for the protest movements that began in May 1983. In contrast to earlier research, recent analyses contain little debate over the significance of this social mobilization. All agree that it served an important symbolic purpose, perhaps even a cathartic one in that Chileans could finally vent their accumulated frustrations. But its political importance was limited. Only political parties and the politicians who controlled them could defeat Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite and then negotiate a transition to democracy. “Moral opposition” was appropriate and even necessary in the absence of opposition political leadership, but moral opposition could not substitute for united political opposition. Once that leadership emerged, moral opposition was displaced. Although observers like Lowden and Agosin might lament that fact, the other authors reviewed here suggest

that there was no alternative. Only when the locus of political activity shifted back into traditional political arenas could the military regime be effectively challenged. The result, by all accounts, has been a remarkably smooth transition to democracy, even if the current regime suffers from significant limitations. Unlike works that place more importance on these limitations than on the fact that Chile again enjoys democratic governance (such as Petras and Leiva 1994), the works reviewed here underscore the challenges that Chileans are facing in trying to improve the quality of their already successful democratic government.

Beyond this dimension lies a third area in which fundamental debates are lacking, and this silence reflects Chilean politics today. The great ideological debates of the past have been replaced by a so-called politics of consensus that actually sidesteps the specific bases of any lasting societal consensus. In part, as Puryear suggests, this reluctance to disagree has resulted from the extremes to which political debates were taken in the past. But it also contrasts sharply with the effervescence of debate and the centrality of moral issues and values characterizing the period leading up to the transition. Although this situation might reflect democratic consolidation and the lack of basic disagreements within Chilean society, such a simplistic interpretation is belied by research findings. Chileans remain divided over important issues, even if support for the democratic government and the current administration stands at an all-time high. Have Chilean politicians and intellectuals learned their lessons too well? Could they have drawn these lessons without having taken part in the rich process of political debate that characterized opposition politics throughout most of the 1980s? What will be the long-term impact of avoiding similar debates, now that stable democratic rule has been restored?

By most measures, Chile's transition to democracy has been successful. Stable civilian rule has been restored, the economy has continued to grow, and the country's accumulated social debt is being paid down through dramatic decreases in poverty and increases in social spending. Yet a certain despondency persists and, as Garretón warns, even a danger that democracy itself may become irrelevant to meeting the needs and aspirations of average Chileans. Surprisingly, the same politicians who accomplished what many thought was impossible as recently as 1987 now suffer from a collective lack of leadership when it comes to tackling the fundamental issues facing Chileans and their future.

This paradox of apparent success despite the underlying fragility of Chilean democracy offers important lessons for other Latin American countries. It also underscores the limits of our theoretical understanding of processes involved in democratization. Chile, with its institutionalized party system, its strong and nonpoliticized state institutions, and its continued economic dynamism, represents the goals to which most Latin American countries can only aspire (Oxhorn 1998). The problems facing

Chile are more often than not smaller than those facing other Latin American countries. Elements of continuity and change and the ambiguous relationship between them remind us that the traditional use of such concepts as "democracy" and "authoritarianism" are too broad (Remmer 1996; Geddes 1995; Przeworski and Limongi 1993). At the same time, the ease with which institutionalized democratic politics have become so dominant challenges analysts to reassess the quality of democratic politics not only in Chile but in Latin America more generally (Oxhorn and Ducatenzeiler 1998; O'Donnell 1996). As all the works reviewed here point out, such reassessment cannot ignore the appropriate role for values and moral issues in understanding politics and in inventing new democratic models, even utopias, to aspire to.

In Chile and Latin America as a whole, the recent wave of democratic transitions has brought new possibilities. The immediate problem is not that Latin American democracies face serious challenges in order to survive but that they may underestimate the danger of complacency. If any opportunity is being lost, it is the chance to engage in necessary debates about how to meet those challenges before they become too great. Yet such debates are being avoided in Chile, and perhaps the rest of Latin America. Garretón as well as Varas and Fuentes (in a more limited way) are attempting to reignite debate. One can only hope that as research on Chilean politics enters its next phase, such debate will reappear. If so, the process will enrich not only Chilean politics but the prospects for democracy in the region as a whole.

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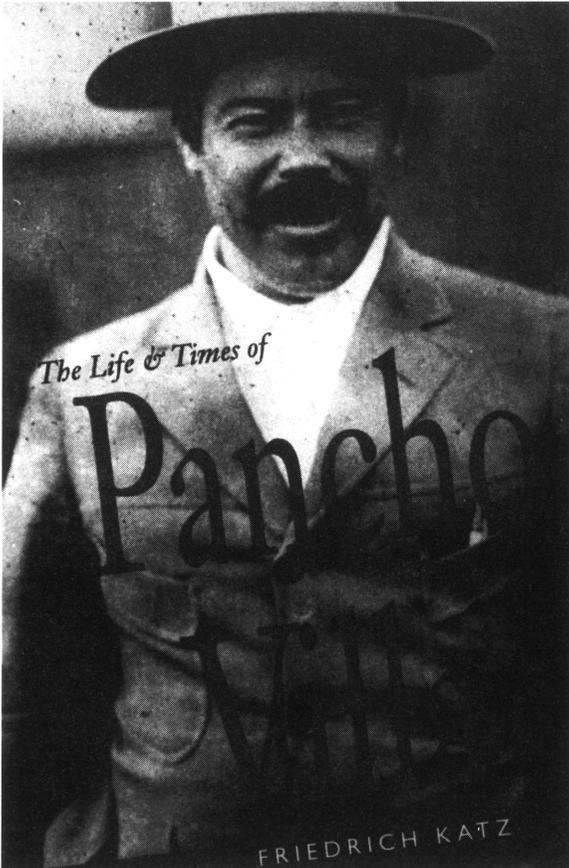
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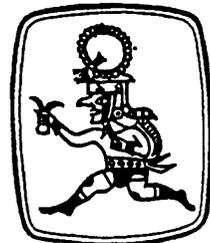
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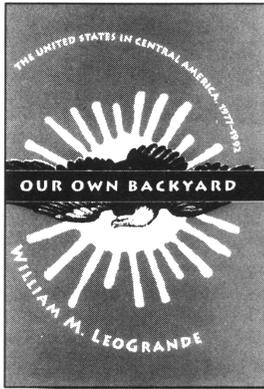
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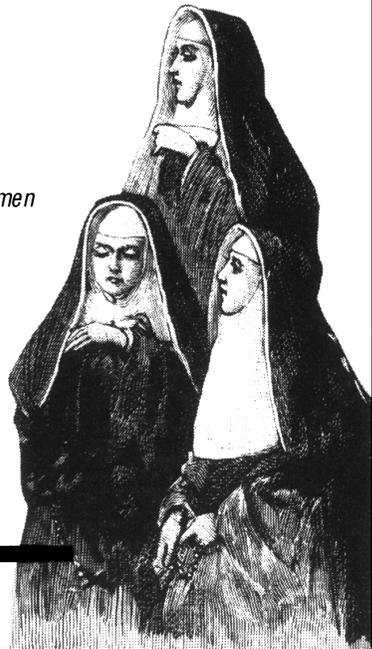
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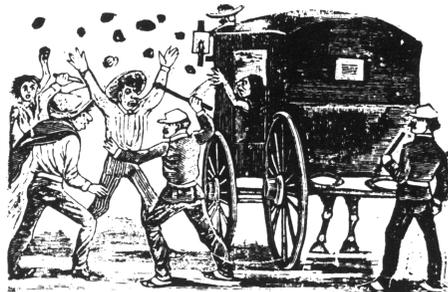
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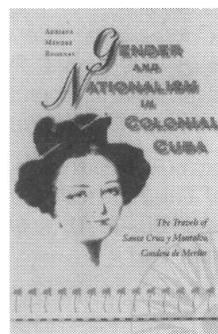
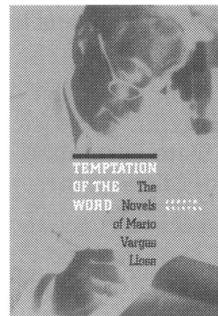
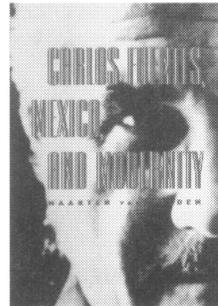
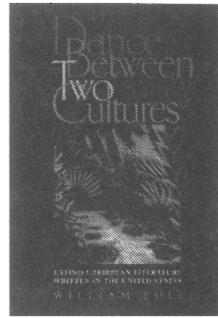
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