
REVIEW ESSAYS

DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA: Recent Developments in Comparative Historical Perspective

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COMPARING NEW DEMOCRACIES: TRANSITION AND CONSOLIDATION IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE AND THE SOUTHERN CONE. Edited by ENRIQUE A. BALOYRA. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987. Pp. 318. \$37.50.)

AUTHORITARIANS AND DEMOCRATS: REGIME TRANSITION IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by JAMES M. MALLOY and MITCHELL A. SELIGSON. (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987. Pp. 268. \$25.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.)

BARTIDOS POLITICOS, DEMOCRACIA Y AUTORITARISMO. Two volumes. By JUAN RIAL. (Montevideo: Centro de Informaciones y Estudios del Uruguay, Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1984. Pp. 152, pp. 88.)

DEMOCRATIZACION VIA REFORMA: LA EXPANSION DEL SUFRAGIO EN CHILE. By J. SAMUEL VALENZUELA. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del ides, 1985. Pp. 150.)

The political changes of the past decade have induced social scientists to return to a topic that was prominent in the literature from the 1960s to the mid-1970s: the problem of democracy in Latin America. Contemporary studies, however, are dominated by different questions. Some of the earlier studies simply established the socioeconomic correlates of democracy (Lipset 1959) or searched for peculiarly Latin American obstacles to democracy, such as the corporatist heritage (Wiarda 1982) and internal-

external elite alliances shaped by dependency (for examples, see the essays in Chilcote and Edelstein 1974). Other works analyzed the factors causing the breakdown of democratic regimes (Linz and Stepan 1978) or the emergence of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell 1973). Contemporary studies, in contrast, are focusing mainly on the reasons for the breakdown of authoritarian regimes or on the determinants of successful transitions and consolidations of democratic regimes.

The works to be reviewed here all address one or more of these aspects of democratization in Latin America. The books edited by Enrique Baloyra and by James Malloy and Mitchell Seligson are collections of essays that mainly discuss the process of (re)democratization in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Baloyra's *Comparing New Democracies* contains two general introductory essays on democratic transitions (one by Baloyra and one by Leonardo Morlino), a conclusion that briefly speculates on the chances for democratic consolidation (Baloyra), and essays on Spain (Rafael López-Pintor), Chile (Carlos Huneeus), Argentina (Carlos Alberto Floria and Waldino Suárez), Brazil (William Smith), and Uruguay (Juan Rial). Malloy and Seligson's *Authoritarians and Democrats* also begins and ends with general, theoretically oriented essays (by Seligson and Malloy, respectively). The contents cover Argentina (Aldo Vacs), Brazil (Silvio Duncan Baretta and John Markoff), Chile (Silvia Borzutzky), Bolivia (Malloy and Eduardo Gamarra), Peru (Luis Abugattas), Ecuador (Catherine Conaghan), Central America (Seligson, Mark Rosenberg), and the role of the U.S. in promoting or obstructing democracy in Latin America (Cole Blasier).

The essays in both volumes are somewhat uneven in quality, particularly from a theoretical point of view, as will be explained. The Malloy and Seligson volume does offer several theoretically interesting essays, in addition to case studies presenting much valuable information, and its wide coverage of South and Central American cases makes it an excellent choice for courses on Latin American politics.¹ Samuel Valenzuela's *Democratización via reforma* discusses the crucial role of the 1874 suffrage reforms for the emergence of democracy in Chile and uses this case to develop careful theoretical formulations concerning the reformist path to democracy, that is, the path that makes no clear break with the old regime. Juan Rial's *Partidos políticos, democracia y autoritarismo* analyzes the role of political parties in the Uruguayan political system under normal conditions as well as in the breakdowns of democracy in 1933 and 1968–1973 and the subsequent redemocratizations. His study provides many interesting insights into a case that has been somewhat neglected in the literature, despite its exemplary quality as a long-lived democracy with a comparatively well-developed welfare state.

What becomes strikingly obvious when reading these works is how far social scientists are from achieving a widely accepted, theoretically

well-grounded, and empirically well-supported explanation of the (re)-emergence and consolidation of democratic regimes in general and in Latin America in particular. The lack of such an explanation greatly impairs scholars' ability to answer the fundamental question posed explicitly by Seligson (pp. 3–12) and implicitly by several other authors about whether we are witnessing just another cycle of redemocratization, another “democratic moment” (Malloy in Malloy and Seligson, p. 236), or whether we are dealing with a fundamentally new situation. The best studies recognize this theoretical weakness and attempt to formulate a theoretical framework (as does Valenzuela) or draw some “tentative conclusions of varying degrees of generality” (Malloy in Malloy and Seligson, p. 237). Others resort to developing typologies of processes of democratic transition (see Baloyra's introduction, pp. 9–52, and Morlino's contribution to that volume).

The lack of theoretical and methodological self-consciousness exhibited by many studies is a serious problem. Only a few essays are explicitly comparative (Seligson and Rosenberg on Central America, and Suárez in the Baloyra volume, in addition to those just mentioned). The rest are case studies. The best of them, especially Valenzuela, ask what their case has to contribute to theoretical generalizations about the determinants of democratic rule and apply theoretically derived concepts and generalizations to their cases (see the essays by Conaghan and Malloy and Gamarra in the Malloy and Seligson collection and Rial's book). But most mainly tell the story of their case, a focus with important implications for their explicit or implicit theoretical approaches. Case studies tend to have a voluntarist bias and tend to focus on perceptual, attitudinal, behavioral, and processual variables. This description particularly fits case studies that analyze political dynamics during a relatively short period of time, such as breakdowns of authoritarian rule and (re)establishment of democratic rule. Confining a study to a single case and a short time period holds structural context largely constant and also reduces the variation in institutional factors.² Case studies that cover a longer period, such as the monographs by Valenzuela and Rial, give equal or greater weight to institutional structures than they do to political actors and their choices. Rial also places his analysis of institutions and actors in the context of changes in the social and economic structure of Uruguay. In contrast, Valenzuela explicitly rejects a social structural perspective. Some of the other case studies also pay serious attention to the emergence and structure of institutions that shape the perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of political actors (Malloy's concluding essay, Malloy and Gamarra, and Rosenberg in the Malloy and Seligson collection; Morlino and Suárez in the Baloyra volume). Still others mention changes in the social and economic structure that affect the strength or behavior of actors (Seligson's introduction, his essay on Central America, and Abugattas in the Malloy

and Seligson volume; López-Pintor and Smith in the Baloyra collection). Only Conaghan integrates into her analysis, however briefly, the nation's position in the world system, internal economic and social structure, development and structure of political institutions, and crucial choices of political actors. Integrated analysis of this kind will have the most significant theoretical payoffs in understanding the historical trajectory and chances for consolidation of democracy in Latin America.

Before discussing the substantive issues raised by these studies, the concept of democracy itself needs to be clarified. Few of the studies contain a conceptual discussion, most operating on the implicit assumption that free and fair elections are the defining criterion of democracy. Thus the important distinction between full and restricted or exclusionary democracies (Remmer 1985–86) is largely absent from the analyses. Valenzuela, however, offers a thoughtful conceptual discussion (pp. 22–35). He starts with Schumpeter's definition of democracy as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1962, 269). Valenzuela then adds three further stipulations: that suffrage be wide enough that groups can emerge to compete for votes and represent each of the fundamental political tendencies generated by the process of formation of the nation-state; that those who win elections hold important decision-making positions in the state apparatus; and that elections be the only way to achieve political power. Accordingly, Valenzuela argues that the exclusion of illiterates does not make a system undemocratic because historically it has not impeded the full development of political collectivities. By implication, Chile became a real democracy in the early twentieth century when the Democratic and Socialist parties emerged because these organizations represented working-class interests and completed the spectrum of fundamental political tendencies. I would suggest, however, that this view has two important weaknesses and that Chile before the 1970s qualifies only as a restricted democracy.³ First, some cleavages may never become political tendencies precisely because some groups remain economically and politically disenfranchised, such as rural lower classes. Second, other forms of restrictions on democratic practices, such as interference by local notables in the electoral process, may systematically bias the outcome of elections. Both of these points apply to the Chilean case and to many other Latin American countries. Such restrictions can be captured in a conceptualization based on the dimensions of contestation and inclusion (Dahl 1971). Contestation denotes degree of institutionalization of opposition, freedom of association and expression, responsible government, and free and fair elections. Inclusion refers to the extent of the suffrage and (non)proscription of parties. This conceptualization allows analysts to distinguish between full and restricted democracies, the latter being systems that

conform to Schumpeter's definition but to varying degrees restrict contestation or inclusion or both.

Let us now examine views of the various authors concerning the factors that are favorable or unfavorable for the emergence and consolidation of democracy. I will follow the approaches of the authors themselves, asking whom they identify as actors that promote or oppose democratization, which institutional arrangements they view as supportive or destructive of democratic rule, and which social and economic structural features they find favorable or unfavorable for democracy.

In identifying the actors behind the initial push for reforms leading toward democratization, a distinct parallel emerges between Valenzuela's analysis of the 1874 electoral reforms as well as subsequent development of Chilean democracy and the analyses of redemocratization processes in the 1970s and 1980s. Valenzuela shows that the impetus for electoral reforms came from an alliance among economic and political elites, Conservatives, Radicals, and some dissident Liberals—their common concern being breaking the incumbents' control over the electoral process. In the initial phases of the present wave of redemocratizations, economic and political elites who were worried about being excluded from political power have also played major roles. An obvious case in point would be party leaders who lost their bases and functions under the authoritarian regimes. But sectors of economic elites who in some cases initially supported the authoritarian regimes and later became concerned about the direction of economic policies have also helped erode authoritarian regimes. Although the impetus for the opening in all cases developed from internal tensions within the authoritarian regimes or the military as an institution, pressures from elite sectors (particularly former allies) greatly enhanced these tensions and strengthened regime factions that favored an opening. In the 1870s in Chile and a hundred years later in various other Latin American countries, however, economic elites promoted political reforms not to facilitate the widest possible popular participation but to strengthen their own political influence. Accordingly, elite-supported reforms created the possibility of the emergence of restricted democracies. In Chile these restrictions remained severe into the 1960s, whereas in recent redemocratization processes, pressures from middle and working classes have seriously challenged them from the start.

In discussing the role of social forces during the process of redemocratization, one must keep in mind the different types of processes of transition, which ranged from abrupt breakdowns (as in Argentina) to gradual openings (as in Brazil). In the latter types, pressures from below have been crucial in advancing the process. As shown by Duncan and Markoff, Smith, Rial, and Conaghan, middle-class organizations like professional and student associations took an early lead in pushing to expand the newly gained political space in Brazil, Uruguay, and Ecuador.

But unions and lower-class protest actions, whether spontaneous or organized by leftist groups, have been crucial in mobilizing mass pressures for (re)institutionalizing contestation and widening political inclusion. The role of working-class and popular organizations in pushing forward the process of political opening is emphasized in the articles on Brazil, Chile, and Peru.

Yet popular mobilization may have counterproductive effects on the process of transition. As already pointed out, economic elites tend to lose enthusiasm for democracy if it involves significant increases in popular autonomy and participation. For instance, Cardoso argues that Brazilian entrepreneurs who in the mid-seventies had adopted a genuine prodemocratic stance began to feel threatened by working-class militancy and therefore swung behind the government's project of controlled liberalization rather than pressing for full democratization (Cardoso 1986, 149–50). A similar counterproductive role may be played by leftist forces if they go beyond peaceful popular mobilization and resort to violent tactics, as the Communists did in Chile. A final actor that has played an important prodemocratic role is the Catholic Church. The essays on Brazil and Chile portray the church as helping undermine the legitimacy of the authoritarian regimes and supporting prodemocratic groups in civil society, such as human rights groups and unions.

Among the antidemocratic actors, the most obvious in all cases are the hard-line sectors of the military supporting the authoritarian regime, especially those who had engaged in repressive excesses. The actual strength of these sectors, however, varies greatly from case to case and over time. Judging from the weight given to them in the studies under review, they were strongest in Brazil and Chile during the process of political opening. To this group one might want to add the resurgence of hard-line factions in Argentina after the transition responding to prosecution for human rights violations under the civilian regime. In some cases, civilian political and economic elites have also played important antidemocratic roles. Again, the most obvious cases are new political elites who rose to influential positions under the authoritarian regimes. Also, economic elites who benefited greatly from the economic policies of the authoritarian regimes are likely to fear the consequences of democratization. For example, Huneeus mentions that large sectors of the Chilean economic elites continue to support Pinochet. There are also instances where antidemocratic or at least nondemocratic postures of civilian elites are much more widespread. Malloy and Gamarra point out that most of the economic and political elites in Bolivia have at best an instrumental and contingent commitment to democracy: they prefer a democratic regime over an authoritarian one only as long as it offers them greater opportunities to participate in the political game and derive benefits from access to state resources. Regarding Ecuador, Conaghan demonstrates

how readily elites called for extraconstitutional means to replace President Osvaldo Hurtado. Clearly, a simple actor-centered approach focusing on perceptual, behavioral, and processual variables cannot explain the reasons for these differences in elite attitudes and behavior. To understand them, analysts must turn to the institutional and structural context.

First, however, I wish to conclude this discussion of antidemocratic forces by commenting on the role of the United States. If one looks beyond the lip service currently being paid to promoting democracy in Latin America and analyzes specific actions toward democratic and authoritarian regimes past and present, the United States emerges as an antidemocratic actor more often than as a prodemocratic one. Blasier argues that the pro-status quo bias of U.S. policy has resulted in frequent support for right-wing dictatorships, less frequent support for centrist democratic regimes, and failure to support left-wing reformist democratic regimes, all denoting a general failure to strengthen democracy. Blasier makes the fundamental point that the high degree of U.S. intervention, both overt and covert, is incompatible with democracy as a form of popular sovereignty in the first place.

The studies under review here that analyze institutional factors all stress the role of political parties—whether strong parties as crucial contributors or weak parties as obstacles to (re)democratization and democratic consolidation. Valenzuela considers the emergence of a complete party system (one that represents all the major political tendencies emerging out of social cleavages) to be a defining criterion of democracy as well as an empirical prerequisite for democratic consolidation because it restrains major actors from pursuing extraconstitutional means of promoting their interests. Rial emphasizes the role of traditional parties in organizing popular protests against the authoritarian regime in Uruguay, particularly in turning the 1980 referendum into a defeat for the regime. In fact, the role of parties in Uruguay was historically so strong that the military's project of relinquishing power and institutionalizing an extremely limited democracy was originally built on the assumption that factions of the traditional parties could and should be involved. Prodemocratic factions prevailed, however, and the parties became the crucial forces pushing for a return to full democracy. Huneeus shows how the reemergence of traditional parties in Chile structured the growing opposition to Pinochet's regime, although historical enmities between them also led to debilitating divisions within the opposition. One could add to this interpretation the crucial role played by the political parties in conducting the winning "No" campaign in the October 1988 referendum. In Peru, as Abugattas argues, the military put aside its long-standing antagonism to choose APRA as the major partner in negotiating the transition. This choice was made not only because APRA stood for the kind of structural reforms implemented by the military government but also

because APRA was the strongest, most disciplined organized political force and thus the most capable of ensuring that agreements reached with the party leadership would be honored. López-Pintor demonstrates that parties also played a crucial role in the transition in Spain, with the signing of the Moncloa pacts.

Strong parties are certainly the pivotal institutional factor in channeling pressures for (re)democratization and negotiating a transition to a new regime with a high degree of political inclusion and contestation. But to a great extent, the effectiveness of political parties depends on the strength of civil society as a whole. Where active unions, professional associations, student federations, and grass-roots movements push the limits of the newly granted political space, the role of parties as mediators between the state and civil society becomes more important, and their capacity to extract growing concessions from the authoritarian regime increases. The weight of parties is enhanced most where they maintain close relations with organized forces in civil society. Rial's discussion of the transition in Uruguay brings out the importance of party-mediated pressures from civil society, and Malloy and Gamarra's treatment of Bolivia and Conaghan's of Ecuador emphasize the negative implications of the lack of strong parties with links to other sectors of civil society.

Weakness of political parties affects political institutions in several ways that are unfavorable to installing and consolidating democracy. Lack of party unity because of personalistic factionalism or clientelistic rather than programmatic ties among leaders, activists, and followers impede the formation of stable coalitions and majorities in parliament. Fragmentation and programmatic weakness of parties tend to produce negative majorities only in the legislature, an outcome that may produce deadlocks between the executive and legislative branches because no reliable base exists for bargaining and accommodation. Fragmented political parties without links to organized interests are not very representative and thus cannot mediate conflict through democratic institutions. Such parties lack influence on mass action, and the result is that organized interests as well as spontaneous mass actions tend to bypass parties and constitutional channels, with predictably detrimental consequences for consolidating democratic institutions.

These problems are heavily emphasized in the essays on Bolivia, Ecuador, and Central America. Rosenberg argues that in Central America, the personalistic, clientelistic style of politics predominates, with family often being more important than party. Malloy and Gamarra show how personalism and clientelism pervade political parties and the entire political system of Bolivia, which they characterize as a neopatrimonial form of rule. Significant expansion of the state's role as dispenser of patronage according to the rulers' personalistic preferences has led to a situation in which economic and political life center around the state while

political institutions continue to be undermined. Conaghan chronicles the almost comical (and at times physical) struggle between President León Febres Cordero and his congressional supporters and members of the opposition majority in congress over appointments to the Ecuadorian supreme court.

Even in Uruguay, as Rial convincingly argues, party fragmentation has debilitated democracy. Although parties have historically been strong in the sense of being the exclusive channels for competition for political power, excessive party fragmentation and clientelism in the 1960s and 1970s made it impossible for the traditional parties to come up with a new political project to accomplish the needed changes in economic and social policy. The traditional parties' failure to do so aggravated the socio-economic crisis and eventually led to the breakdown of democracy in Uruguay. Rial also points to the reemergence of party factionalism as a problem for consolidating the redemocratized regime.

Another institutional feature that has been linked to political crises weakening democratic regimes is the presidential system. Among the studies under review, however, only Suárez raises the issue. He presents a table showing longevity of presidential tenure under different types of regimes in several Latin American countries and argues that "the performance of constitutional governments improved whenever their organizational formats did not follow the classic presidentialist design very closely" (p. 290). Unfortunately, the regime types are not clearly defined, nor is the difference between presidential tenure and regime duration explained. The thrust of this argument is that in complex societies, regimes with elements of parliamentarism tend to be more stable than those with extreme presidentialism. For example, Suárez maintains that adherence to classic presidentialism has been a contributing factor to poor institutional performance in Argentina (p. 292).

Among the institutional factors inimical to democracy, the military has occupied center stage. Lack of professionalism or pervasive personalistic divisions or both have greatly endangered democracy in Central America, Bolivia, and Argentina. Divisions in the armed forces have been crucial for initiating political openings, but under these conditions, anti-democratic factions cannot be brought under control by the central command, not to speak of control by a civilian government, and thus coup attempts or actions violating human rights and the rule of law imperil the survival of democratic institutions. Furthermore, regardless of the degree of professionalism and unity, a strongly entrenched military position in politics becomes a formidable obstacle to democratization. Rosenberg argues that in Central America, civilian leaders are accustomed to making deals with the military and at times even prefer to deal with the military rather than with other civilian leaders, thus bypassing formal legal channels. The problem differs in Brazil. There formal legal channels (although

not necessarily democratic ones) are more institutionalized, but so are the military's prerogatives in the political process (see Stepan 1988). Thus the struggle for democratization in Brazil involves not simply guaranteeing free competitive elections and enforcing the rule of law but bringing crucial areas of decision-making into the constitutional sphere of responsibility of elected authorities.

Weakness of parties or a strong military position in politics or both create the danger that transitions from authoritarian rule may end up in some form of quasi-democratic institutional arrangement. Duncan and Markoff foresee a "semi-authoritarian democracy" as a possible outcome in Brazil: a broad alliance from the center-left to the center-right that is intent on keeping the labor movement weak (and, one might add, tolerant of a continued strong political role for the armed forces). Malloy speaks of hybrid regimes as possible outcomes in some Latin American societies, meaning "regimes that assure democratic political participation and maintain civil liberties, while giving the executive quasi-authoritarian power in times of crisis" (p. 257). The installation of such restricted democracies or mild-mannered authoritarian regimes, aside from disappointing many of the actors involved in the process of redemocratization, would be unlikely to lead to political stability. Restricted democracies can survive for a long time, as occurred in Chile from the 1930s to the 1960s, but not in the context of a vigorous and relatively activated civil society without strong parties to channel and contain political pressures. This subject brings up consideration of structural factors as determinants of installation and consolidation of democratic regimes.

The discussion of structural requisites for democracy was first brought to prominence in Seymour Lipset's (1959) classic essay. Seligson picks up this line of argument to postulate two empirical regularities: a lower threshold of two hundred and fifty dollars (1957 value) of gross national product per capita as well as illiteracy below 50 percent must be reached before stable democratic rule becomes possible (pp. 7-9). Seligson argues that the fact that most Latin American countries had reached this level of development by the 1980s permits some optimism about greater chances for successful consolidation of present democratic regimes than in the past, although socioeconomic development is not a sufficient condition for stable democracy. One must accept the argument that a relationship exists between level of socioeconomic development and consolidation of democratic regimes because too many cross-national statistical studies (some of them methodologically sophisticated) have come up with this result. Yet neither this group of statistical studies nor Lipset nor Seligson provides a convincing explanation of the mechanisms that mediate this relationship.

López-Pintor offers the following explanation of why higher levels of development have facilitated democratization in Spain. He claims that

rising affluence and decreasing inequality depoliticized the population at large and restrained the great majority from engaging in radical action either to overthrow or restore the authoritarian regime. This outcome afforded significant maneuvering room for elites to negotiate the transition. If one tries to generalize this argument to Latin American cases, however, two weaknesses emerge. First, development in many cases has not been accompanied by decreasing inequality. Smith provides data to the contrary for Brazil (p. 182), and Seligson argues that in Central America, uneven distribution of the benefits from rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s has led to the current high levels of political violence and serious problems with democratization. Second, in most cases, a depoliticized population would have failed to push the political openings initiated by the authoritarian regimes toward actual redemocratization. I would suggest that the crucial link between development and democracy lies in the effect of economic development on the structure and strength of civil society and thus the capacity of subordinate classes to pressure for their political inclusion. A case in point is the emergence of the "new unionism" and its role in the transition in Brazil, which is emphasized both by Smith and by Duncan and Markoff.

The argument about the importance of a strong civil society and the weight of organizations of subordinate classes also receives support from analyses of structural factors that keep pressures for democratization weak. The existence of a disorganized, fragmented, or atomized civil society has been mentioned by Borzutzky as weakening the pressures for a democratic transition in Chile⁴ and by Conaghan as an obstacle to consolidating democracy in Ecuador. The latter's fine article also links the troubled history of democracy in Ecuador to the traditional weakness of civil society in general and political parties in particular and argues that this weakness largely resulted from Ecuador's integration into the world economy as an agricultural exporter. The growth of the agricultural export economy left the urban working and middle classes small in size and facilitated the survival of precapitalist labor relations in some sectors of agriculture, which made popular organization difficult and kept the popular base for political parties weak.

Two additional structural factors inimical to democracy are stressed by some of the authors, and at least one more is implicit in some of their arguments. Rosenberg argues that resource scarcity is a considerable obstacle to consolidating democracy in Central America because it leaves governments unable to respond to popular demands and keeps them dependent on private interests. Abugattas points out how the economic crisis has made it difficult for democratic as well as military governments in Peru to acquire legitimacy among large sectors of the population. He concludes that "the most serious challenge for Latin America today is to learn how to maintain democratic freedoms in a context of IMF-sponsored

stabilization measures" (p. 141). In fact, the debt crisis has played a somewhat ambiguous role in the present wave of redemocratization, but the fact that it helped erode authoritarian regimes should not deflect attention from its negative effects on consolidating democratic regimes. Finally, implicit in Blasier's discussion of the impact of U.S. policies on democracy in Latin America is the point that a geopolitical location central to the U.S. sphere of interest has proved to be a liability rather than an asset for installing and consolidating democratic regimes. Certainly, U.S. policy in the 1980s in Central America has done little to promote genuine democratization, notwithstanding public declarations to the contrary.

Is there any coherence in all these analyses? Can we weave these different structural and institutional factors and pro- and antidemocratic actors into an orderly pattern? The obvious point is that these are not mutually independent factors or independent variables to be plugged into an equation. These factors are related, and they interact over time to produce changing political results. Socioeconomic structural conditions shape the constellation of social forces and the emergence of political institutions, which in turn shape the arena for political actors and thus influence political outcomes. These results then have a feedback effect on institutional arrangements and even on socioeconomic structures. The studies reviewed here all analyze some links in this chain, most of them studying the maneuvers of political actors in given institutional contexts and their impact on the process of redemocratization. I would like to briefly place these studies in a more comparative historical perspective that looks at the entire chain and identifies patterns of emergence and consolidation or decline of democratic regimes. Although such a discussion must be extremely compressed, it can sketch a framework for a more solid theoretical understanding of the trajectory of democracy in Latin America and the current situation.⁵

At the center of the struggle over democracy lies the question of power—of access to state power and the consequences of access to state power for control over economic resources. Some groups or classes stand to gain from democratization and others, to lose. Although it is uncertain who will win and who will lose in a substantive sense, the risk of the unknown outcome is much higher for propertied classes than for those who are excluded from access to political power and economic resources.⁶ Because access to state power is mediated through political institutions, the nature of these institutions (which in democracies are most prominently political parties) profoundly affects the process and outcome of democratization. A prerequisite for installing and consolidating democracy is the existence of a delicate balance between pressures from below and threat perception at the top. Pressures from below are needed to open the political system and keep it open. Meanwhile, economic elites need to be reassured that their vital interests will be protected under a

democratic regime in order to keep them from trying to prevent an opening and undermine the system once it has been opened. Political parties are crucial both for mobilizing pressures from below and for protecting elite interests within a democratic framework.

The history of democratization is replete with examples showing that economically dominant classes do not share political power voluntarily with subordinate classes. At times sectors of economic elites have supported an opening of the political system if they perceived it as necessary for their own inclusion. Examples mentioned in the studies under review are Chile in 1874, Brazil in the late 1970s, and Ecuador and Peru under the reformist military governments of the 1970s. But these elite sectors have readily supported restrictions on popular participation if mobilization threatened to get out of control. The more usual response has been an outright antidemocratic stance by economically dominant classes, as pointed out in the case studies of Central America, Chile under Pinochet, Ecuador under Hurtado, and Uruguay in the early 1930s. Historically, landlords have been the most intransigent elite sectors, particularly those engaged in labor-intensive agriculture. In fact, unrestricted democracy was not established before the 1980s in any Latin American country where agriculture was the crucial export sector, the dominant type of agricultural production was labor-intensive, and production was domestically owned. Under these conditions, landlords felt that the prospect of democratization threatened their control over a cheap labor supply, and they were powerful enough to delay the effective enfranchisement of rural lower classes until the 1980s.

Historically as well as in contemporary processes of redemocratization, a significant thrust from below has been indispensable for opening the political system to actual participation beyond elite circles. Civil society must be strong enough to generate pressures for such an opening or to take advantage of the limited political space granted by authoritarian regimes and push for its enlargement. For the opening to expand into full democratization, the lower classes must be organized and must comprise a significant part of civil society. This requirement means that higher levels of urbanization and industrialization are favorable conditions for installing and consolidating democracy because they create conditions for the organization of middle and lower classes.

The leading role in pushing for democratization, historically and currently, has usually been played by the middle classes. Political parties headed by middle-class figures and having strong middle-class support, together with professional associations, have taken the lead in articulating demands for institutionalizing contestation and expanding political inclusion. But to succeed, the middle classes have needed allies. The nature of the allies available has determined whether the middle classes pushed for full democracy or only for restricted democracy. Where sectors of the

economically dominant classes or the military allied with the middle classes, the latter were content with restricted democracy. Where economically dominant classes were intransigent and an organizable working class was available as an ally, the middle classes typically pushed for fuller political inclusion. In the present processes of democratization, the need for a broad opposition alliance to extract concessions from closed authoritarian regimes has combined with the ambivalence of economically dominant groups and the availability of an organized working class to induce the middle classes to demand universal suffrage that would include illiterates. The studies of redemocratization under review clearly show the importance of middle-class organizations in seizing the limited opportunities for political activity provided and pressuring for further democratizing measures as well as the importance of lower-class organizations in reinforcing these pressures. In this regard, the Brazilian case may be the most exemplary.

Historically, the original options for class alliances and the nature of the political parties giving expression to these alliances were shaped by economic and social structures. Once established, however, these parties assumed an important role of their own in shaping further political dynamics. In mineral-export economies, alliances emerged between middle and working classes that pushed for democratization, organized by radical mass parties like APRA in Peru and Acción Democrática in Venezuela or by coalitions between middle-class and radical working-class parties like the Radical, Socialist, and Communist parties in Chile or the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario in Bolivia. In agrarian export economies, alliances between middle classes and sectors of economic elites or the military or both were responsible for the initial democratic opening of the political system. The type of political party that embodied these alliances was the clientelistic party, such as the Liberals and Conservatives in Colombia and Ecuador, the Colorados⁷ and Blancos in Uruguay, and the Radicals in Argentina. Where such clientelistic parties appealed to lower-class support (as did the Radicals in Argentina), they did so primarily on the basis of particularistic favors rather than appeals to class interest and did not promote working-class organization and links between the party and unions.

The alliances of middle and working classes with radical mass parties exerted earlier and stronger pressures for democratization, before any significant industrialization had occurred. They were more likely to achieve an early breakthrough to democracy but were also highly threatening to the dominant classes. The results were strong elite resistance, a high level of conflict, and political instability. This instability could only be overcome if elites gained confidence that their interests could be protected through strong political parties or political pacts (as in Chile after 1932 and Venezuela after 1958, but not in Peru and Bolivia). The

alliances between the middle classes and sectors of the dominant classes or the military as well as the clientelistic parties typical of agrarian export economies were less threatening to elite interests. The earliest breakthroughs to democracy with universal male suffrage took place in Argentina and Uruguay, where non-labor-intensive agriculture predominated and the export sector had generated considerable subsidiary industrialization as well as urbanization, and also where clientelistic parties articulated demands for democratization.⁸ But in countries where labor-intensive production of agricultural exports was dominant and generated little or no subsidiary industrialization and where clientelistic parties were elite-dominated or very weak, political openings tended to be delayed and restricted. Conaghan's analysis of Ecuador follows this pattern, which also fits Brazil and Colombia.⁹ Whereas clientelistic parties moderated threat perception by economically dominant classes and initial political openings were followed by greater political stability than in mineral-export economies with strong radical mass parties, clientelistic parties tended to lose influence in situations of increasing lower-class mobilization or economic stagnation. Where such parties lost their capacity to reach accommodations internally and with other political forces and to control their clientele, economic elites turned against the regime, sometimes in alliance with nonincumbent leaders of the clientelistic parties, and democratic breakdowns were likely to occur (as in Argentina in 1930, Uruguay in 1933, Colombia in 1949, and Brazil in 1964).

For significant progress to be made toward political stability and the gradual removal of restrictions on democratic practices, two conditions were crucial: the emergence of a party system that could reassure economic elites that their interests would be adequately protected, and growth in the strength of civil society. This finding squares with Valenzuela's insistence on the importance of the development of what he calls a "complete party system" for the gradual emergence and consolidation of a democratic regime. He also points out that such a party system can assume different forms, with several more or less programmatic parties representing particular interests or with two or more predominantly clientelistic parties aggregating diverse interests. From the point of view of economic elites, the necessary reassurances can be provided in several ways: by electorally strong right-wing parties, by clientelistic parties with close relations to economic elites at the leadership level, by direct access to the executive arm of the state facilitated by incumbency of clientelistic parties, or by political pacts. But electorally strong right-wing parties are clearly more reliable allies than multiclass clientelistic parties. It is no accident that democratic practices with comparatively mild restrictions on lower-class participation survived for so long in Chile, where the right has long enjoyed electorally strong parties. Where democratic institutional channels for protecting elite interests like the above were lacking or

becoming ineffective, economic elites frequently turned to the military to enlist support in preventing or ending democratic rule, which helped perpetuate military interventionism in politics far into the twentieth century and into the era of professional military institutions.

Whereas institutional prerequisites for elite reassurance were crucial for the survival of institutionalized contestation, lower-class organizational strength was crucial for progress toward full political inclusion. Urbanization and industrialization created the conditions for increasing the strength of civil society in general and lower-class organization in particular, but political parties were needed to promote the formation of unions and to effectively mobilize lower-class pressures for democratization. In mineral-export economies, where radical left-wing parties had already been established when urbanization and industrialization grew rapidly, these parties became the prime mobilizers of the new urban lower classes. Once the lower classes constituted an activated political constituency, centrist parties based primarily in the middle classes had to compete with the left for lower-class support and accordingly adopted demands for expanding political inclusion. A classic case illustrating this dynamic is Chile, where the Christian Democrats competed with the left in organizing mass support and adopted demands for electoral reform to increase lower-class inclusion. As noted, several of the studies point to the importance of parties with close links to popular organizations for installing and consolidating democratic regimes.

This brief comparative historical sketch is intended to provide some coherence for the findings in the studies reviewed concerning the variable roles played by political actors, political parties, and socioeconomic structural conditions. It also allows some partial answers to the fundamental question of whether the present situation constitutes just another beginning in the cycle of democratization and breakdown or at least a partial trend toward the greater consolidation of democratic regimes. At least two factors support Seligson's suggestion that "the present cycle of democracy is likely to be different in nature, potentially more robust in character, and probably more durable, than the ones that preceded it" (p. 9). Seligson himself offers three reasons: the experience of military authoritarianism has made civilian governments less likely to turn to the military for support for solving economic or political crises; military regimes have performed no better than civilian governments in running the economy; and the necessary threshold of socioeconomic development has been reached. The first and second reasons, while certainly valid in the short run, could lose their importance quickly because attitudinal factors are likely to change under new conditions. To be reinforced, new institutions need to be created. Socioeconomic development is fundamental, in contrast, and the preceding discussion helps fill in the black box between level of socioeconomic development and

strength of democratic tendencies. Despite the debt crisis and instances of actual de-industrialization in Chile and Argentina, economic development over the past quarter-century has wrought major changes in the social structure of Latin American countries by increasing the size of the urban population and in most cases the size of the industrial working class, which has strengthened civil society. Moreover, with the notable exception of Central America, economic development has relegated labor-intensive agriculture to secondary importance and has thus weakened the position of large landowners among economic and political elites.¹⁰ The fact that they have by no means disappeared as a powerful group in South America either is indicated by their effective opposition to land reform in Brazil. Nevertheless, their position is clearly weaker than in the 1960s, and their antidemocratic posture is less threatening to the consolidation of democracy.

Another crucial factor that has affected consolidation of democracy is the party system, but in this regard, the picture is less optimistic. Strong parties capable of reassuring economically dominant classes about protection of their vital interests or able to mobilize and mediate pressures for democratization from subordinate classes are the exception rather than the rule. Rial's emphasis on the reemergence of old factions and divisions in Uruguay is also a severe problem in Chile. In Peru the situation in 1980 looked auspicious, but by the mid-1980s, right-wing parties had been reduced to electoral insignificance as leftward-moving APRA and the alliance of various left-wing parties made large gains. The multitude of leftist parties and factions remains a factor in weakening popular forces. Similarly in Argentina, the strengthening and victory of the Radical party gave cause for optimism, but the decline of its political fortunes and the persistence of deep divisions in the Peronist camp have made the political situation more unpredictable and thus potentially threatening again to the economically dominant classes. In Brazil, the parties are still weak, decentralized clientelistic machines, and they have been unable to form an alliance strong enough to challenge the military's privileged political position during the writing of the new constitution. In Ecuador, Bolivia, and Central America too, parties remain extremely weak: largely based on personalistic factions, dependent on clientelistic handouts to their supporters, and lacking close ties to organized interests. On the positive side, the experience of repression under harsh authoritarian regimes has taught party leaders and activists the importance of negotiation and compromise and has increased their commitment to democracy. But as pointed out with regard to Seligson's argument, such attitudinal factors can only be expected to have lasting effects if they are supported by new institutional arrangements like political pacts or more cohesive programmatic political parties or both.

The fact that reassuring economic elites about the protection of

their vital interests has historically been crucial for the survival of democracy highlights the constraints on full democratization in the context of the present economic crisis. Significant increases in popular participation and in the spheres of democratic decision making are bound to raise issues of distribution and socioeconomic structural change. Authors like Malloy and Duncan and Markoff who point to the emergence of highly restricted democracies or mild authoritarian regimes as likely outcomes of the present transitions from authoritarian rule may well be correct in the short run. But the policies likely to be pursued by such regimes would entail continued political and economic exclusion of the working and other sectors of the lower classes. Given the changes in civil society over the last quarter-century, such regimes will tend to be unstable and subject to challenges from these excluded sectors. But whether civil society and parties have grown strong enough to impose redistributive structural changes within a democratic framework and to prevent formation of a proauthoritarian coalition among economically dominant classes and the military is only part of the question regarding the future of democracy in Latin America. The other part is whether the International Monetary Fund will grant the space for significant structural change, and whether the United States has learned to accept such change.

NOTES

1. Another excellent collection of essays on transitions from authoritarian rule has been assembled in the four volumes edited by O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986). The essays in the volume on Latin America are all theoretically informed and of very high quality. Compared to the Malloy and Seligson volume, they also cover Uruguay, Venezuela, and Mexico but not Ecuador and Central America. For an undergraduate course, however, the Malloy and Seligson collection may be the better choice because the case studies provide much basic information, whereas the essays in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead tend to assume that the reader is familiar with the general background and course of events.
2. O'Donnell and Schmitter's influential 1986 work, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, argues that it is the nature of the problem under study that forces a theoretical focus on actors and processes (1986, 4–5). Because it is almost impossible to predict how classes, sectors, and institutions will behave in rapidly changing situations like transitions from authoritarian rule, “normal” social science concepts are inadequate for analyzing such situations. O'Donnell and Schmitter's attempt to capture the process of transition in the metaphor of a multi-layered chess game has significant heuristic value (1986, 66). But an attempt to formulate generalizations based on comparative analysis with the benefit of hindsight—particularly an attempt to assess chances for consolidation of the newly installed democracies—moves conventional social science categories like classes and political institutions back to center stage, as I hope to show in my discussion.
3. For a fuller justification of this view, see Stephens (1989, appendix).
4. Garretón (1986) concurs with this assessment in his insightful analysis of how the legacy of the strong Chilean party system and Pinochet's policies have led to fragmentation and atomization.
5. For a complete version of this argument and empirical support, see Stephens (1989).
6. Przeworski heavily emphasizes the importance of uncertainty in transitions to democ-

- racy (1986, 58). He claims that the alienation of control over outcomes of conflicts by all groups constitutes the decisive step toward democracy.
7. The Colorados were a partial exception, at least under Jorge Batlle. The party had less elite representation and was more programmatic than other middle-class and elite clientelistic parties, but it did not try to organize a party-affiliated labor movement either.
 8. The effective exercise of suffrage by the lower classes, however, was restricted by the large proportion of immigrants among them. Nevertheless, the native urban and rural lower classes carried some electoral weight, and Argentina and Uruguay stand out for their early and long-lived periods of democratic rule.
 9. In Colombia universal male suffrage was introduced in 1936, but interference in the electoral process by local notables in rural areas remained so prevalent that the system can only be considered a restricted democracy.
 10. I would venture the hypothesis that even in a case like Chile, where great overlap exists between landownership and major ownership in industrial, commercial, and financial sectors (Zeitlin and Ratcliff 1988) and where large landowners were restrengthened by Pinochet's restitution of land expropriated by the Unidad Popular government, the relative decline in the importance of agricultural production has reduced the political salience of landlord interests in maintaining a cheap labor supply as an obstacle to democratization. In Peru more than economic development has been at work. The land reform carried out by the military government under President Juan Velasco eliminated landowners as a class.

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