



ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA • FALL 2002

Democracy in Latin America

Looking Back, Thinking Ahead

Democracy in Latin America

Successes and Challenges

BY OSCAR ARIAS

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FIDEL CASTRO'S CUBA, THE WESTERN Hemisphere is now exclusively ruled by democratically elected leaders. Democracy has come a long way in Latin America and we can draw encouragement from the region's historic rejection of military dictatorships and bloody civil conflicts (although the one in Colombia continues unabated). Yet, for all of the steps in the right direction, democracy in Latin America still faces many challenges.

Although I am a firm believer in free trade, and hope to see the Free Trade Area of the Americas come into being as scheduled in 2005, I find it disconcerting that economic issues seem to have completely eclipsed discussions of how to strengthen and consolidate democracy and human development in Latin America. Much remains to be done in these areas, and if neglected, problems of poverty and poor governance will certainly come to overshadow any success we have in raising rates of economic growth.

Another challenge for democracy and well-being in Latin America is the legacy of our military history. In Central America, peace agreements have been signed and democratic institutions put in place in the countries that were torn by war in the 1970s and 80s. However, the weapons from those wars have remained in the hands of soldiers and rebels, or have been sold on the street, contributing to atrocious levels of violent crime. Many Central Americans fear more for their safety today than they did during the years of the war.

These problems do not only exist in Central America. Many of the democratically elected governments of South America still do not have their militaries sufficiently subordinated to civilian authority, and we have seen threats and rebellious behavior on the part of a few Latin American militaries that would be unacceptable in mature democracies. One example is the pressure that was put on Chilean president Ricardo Lagos to spend an enormous amount of money on sophisticated fighter jets to "modernize" his country's air force. As long as military chiefs continue to hold undue power within their governments, spending priorities will be out of step with the needs of the people, and democracy will remain threatened by the Damoclean sword of a potential coup d'état.

A further obstacle to democracy is Latin America's ignoble distinction of having greater economic and social inequality than any other region in the world. First of all, wealthy Latin Americans are not doing their part. While European countries such as Sweden and France collect more than 45% of their gross domestic product in taxes, Guatemala collects no more than 9%. Furthermore, many countries went too far in fiscal reform programs during the 1980s and 90s, slashing not only wasteful public spending, but essential spending on health and education as well. Without these basic building blocks, it will be impossible to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are widely shared in our societies.

The world has often observed very high voter turnouts in countries that have recently struggled for, and finally won, democracy, while voter turnout and enthusiasm seems to decline as democracy becomes more established. Sadly, in Latin America, we are seeing rapid losses of confidence in even new and hard-won democracies. Opinion polls

show that many voters believe elections offer a choice between two evils, and that political leaders are generally corrupt. In fact, corruption has been, and continues to be, a disastrous force in our democracies, chasing away both foreign and domestic investment, and, perhaps more ominously, the people's trust in democracy as a valid form of government. At the same time, a lack of democratic tradition shows itself in the strong-arming and legislative standoffs that often keep our governments from producing results. If democratic governments do not provide for the basic human needs of their people, and promote the stability and well-being of their societies, we will all pay the price when those democracies are forcefully rejected in favor of new incarnations of the old totalitarian regimes of both right and left. Their seeds still lie dormant in Latin American soil, and await only the irrigation of widespread discontent with today's elected governments.

Fortunately, not all of the news is bad. A nascent movement of civil society organizations that clamor for transparency and accountability from their governments is beginning to have an effect. A relatively free press and global flows of information are having a positive impact on our social conscience. While judicial systems are still a mixed bag, the "bad apples" are finding it more difficult to intimidate those judges committed to upholding the law. The recognition of human rights is gradually becoming more widespread, and some of the more heinous crimes of our inglorious past are being brought to justice. Leaders who confuse immunity with impunity are increasingly being held accountable, although there still remains much to be done in this area.

In the end, our greatest hope lies in the education of our children, to whom we owe the future. If we are able to get our priorities straight and invest heavily in them today, our children will show us the way to the strong, open, and prosperous societies for which we all hope, not only in Latin America, but around the world.

Dr. Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate, holds international stature as a spokesperson for the developing world.

ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

Volume 11, Number 1

Published by The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies

DRCLAS

John H. Coatsworth
DIRECTOR

Carola Suárez-Orozco
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ellen Sullivan
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

EDITORIAL STAFF

June Carolyn Erlick
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Eileen O'Connor
Jennifer Farmer
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

kellydesign, inc.
DESIGN

P & R Publications
PRINTER

61 Kirkland Street Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone: (617) 495-3366 Facsimile: (617) 496-2802

Email: <drclas@fas.harvard.edu> Website: <<http://drclas.fas.harvard.edu>>

Copyright © 2002 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

ISSN 1541-1443

THINKING ON DEMOCRACY

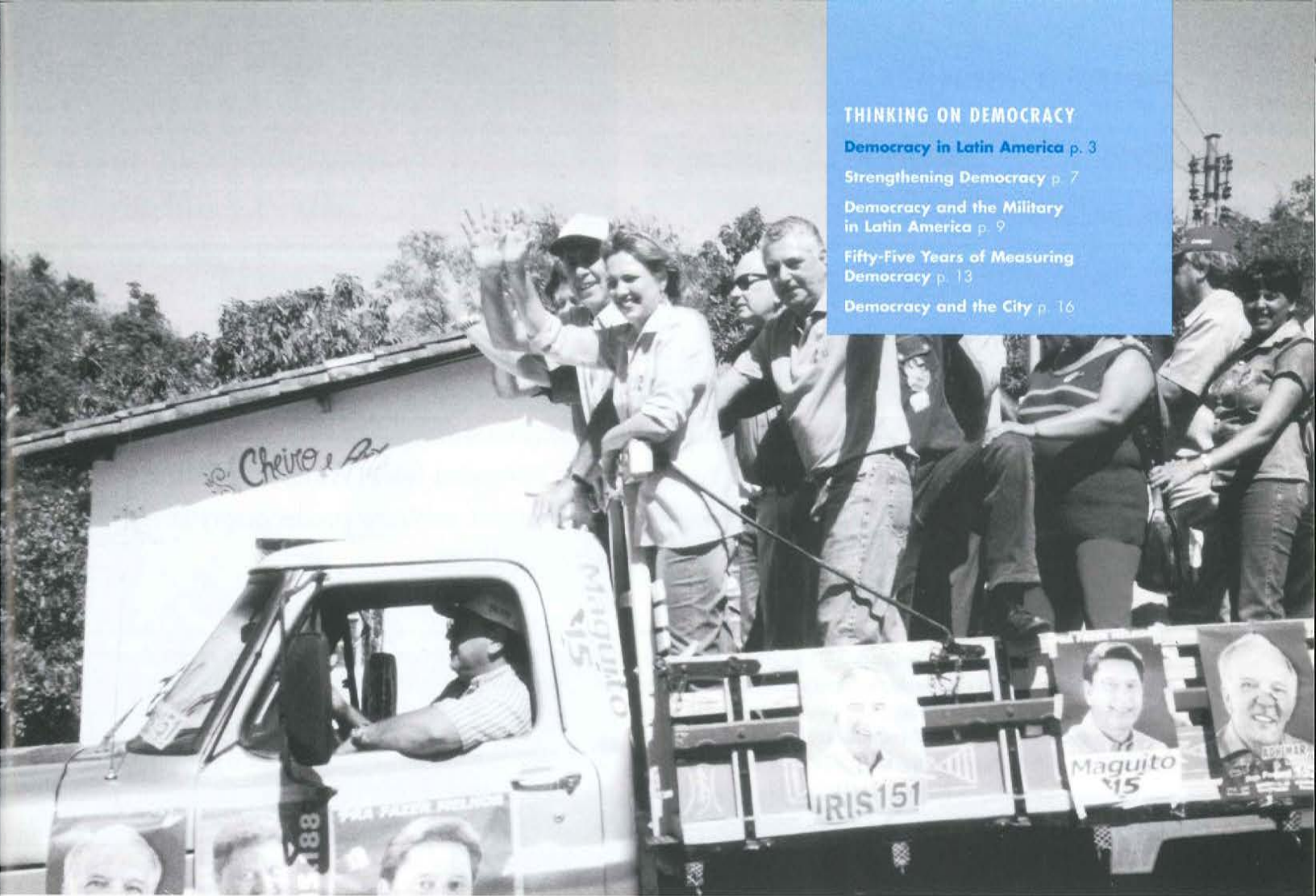
Democracy in Latin America p. 3

Strengthening Democracy p. 7

Democracy and the Military
in Latin America p. 9

Fifty-Five Years of Measuring
Democracy p. 13

Democracy and the City p. 16



Democracy in Latin America

It Can Work

BY JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ARE FACING STRESS THROUGHOUT Latin America and experiencing serious challenges in some countries. The public has had little confidence in political parties and Congress for many years in most countries. General support for democratic regimes and satisfaction with their performance weakened at the beginning of this decade. Public support for incumbent presidents has oscillated more widely but, on average, it has also been low. Latin Americans are grumpy about their democratic political institutions.

They have reason to be. Millions of Latin Americans live in poverty. The terrible economic decline of the 1980s significantly increased the number of people in poverty. Episodes of economic calamity in the 1990s slowed down or reversed progress in poverty reduction. The quality of public education is woefully deficient in most countries; Latin American students perform less ably than their peers in various international tests administered in schools. Corruption plagues many public institutions. "Political vision" is not the phrase that comes to the lips of citizens of many countries in the region

when they comment on the quality of public leadership.

And yet, Latin Americans *ought* to be proud of the demonstrated capacity of their democratic institutions to solve significant problems and out-perform the record of dictatorial regimes. Much of the legitimate unhappiness with government performance results from understandable impatience. Long-standing problems have yet to be addressed successfully, but it would be wrong to think that democratic institutions have been inept problem solvers. Two countries encountering particularly stressful times today should take note of their own histories: Argentina and Venezuela. Both countries are undergoing severe turmoil that strains the social fabric, threatens democracy's survival, injures economic performance, and hurts individual human beings. Each had elements of turmoil in their respective histories. Each failed to solve its problems through undemocratic means. Each performed more effectively through democratic means.

Consider Venezuela in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Military presidents, at times harsh dictators, had always governed Venezuela except for an interlude in 1945-48. Unaccustomed to democratic

practices, Venezuelans seemed ungovernable in the early 1960s. There were repeated military coup attempts. There was substantial political violence associated with university students but also, increasingly it seemed, with other sectors of society. Land invasions in the countryside undermined landlord property rights and alarmed owners of wealth. In the late 1950s, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower was personally unhappy with, and disinclined to help, Venezuela's new president, Rómulo Betancourt. The Kennedy administration switched gears and increased its support for democratic Venezuela but the Cuban government began to support left-wing insurgencies, eventually becoming a principal source of strength for guerrilla insurgents.

Democracy proved effective in addressing many of Venezuela's problems. The armed forces became subordinate to civilian authority. Empowered with the legitimacy of a democratic state, military and security forces defeated insurgencies in the cities and rural areas. Political negotiations—democracy's trump card—brought guerrilla insurgency to a close by the end of the 1960s. Democratic Venezuela carried out a land reform, massively expanded its educational system, developed its health care institutions, and in other ways improved the quality of life of ordinary Venezuelans.

Now consider Argentina in the late 1980s. The value of its cur-

rency was worthless. Inflation rates were extraordinarily high and seemed ready to accelerate further. Incumbent President Raúl Alfonsín, architect of the democratic transition from a cruel and disastrous military dictatorship, had lost credibility as a manager of the economy. Support for legislative and judicial institutions had plummeted. Acts of individual desperation were not uncommon. Military mutinies broke out repeatedly during the second half of the 1980s as officers lashed out, disgruntled over eroding pay, inadequate work-

The recent history of Latin America shows that the politicians of the democratic Left and the democratic Right can and have governed Latin American countries more effectively than their military predecessors at much less cost to public liberties.

ing conditions, and fear of prosecution for human rights violations. The governing Radical Party, though dating its roots to the nineteenth century, seemed about to be killed by angry voters in the forthcoming national elections. Argentina's most probable next president seemed to be a Peronist wild man, a populist of the worst sort, loathed by the nation's elites, feared by international investors and international financial institutions.

Democracy proved effective in addressing many of Argentina's problems. At first, the "wild man" who had become president, Carlos Menem, acted as if he had believed what a number of politicians, policy analysts, and academics had been writing. It was nearly impossible, some said, to simultaneously democratize the country's politics and enact "tough love" market-oriented reforms. Only a democratically elected president, yes, but one who acted as if all public powers had been delegated to him would be able to enact those difficult reforms constitutionally. Like a good pupil, Menem issued a blizzard of decrees, commanding markets to behave as he wished, to no avail. What did carry the day was Menem's subsequent re-discovery of the utility of democratic institutions and procedures, in partnership with his new, bold, and courageous Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo.

The key diagnosis about Argentina's ills was simple: Economic malperformance was a manifestation of something even more serious, namely, Argentines did not trust their government. Nor did international investors, institutions, or the governments of other countries. Democracy, however, has a possible solution to that generalized lack of trust in governing institutions. Politicians should act not alone but through public institutions, not through decrees but through laws,

Editor's Letter

Ellen Schneider's description of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega in her provocative article on Nicaraguan democracy sent me scurrying to my oversized scrapbooks of newspaper articles. I wanted to show her that rather than being perceived as a *caudillo*—a traditional Latin American populist strongman—Ortega had been seen as the moderate representative of the *terceristas*, a softspoken poet-guerrilla known for his jailhouse poem, "I Never Saw Managua When Miniskirts Were in Fashion."

Leafing through the yellowed clippings, I stumbled across one of my articles published in *The Boston Globe* on Christmas Day, 1978, from Caracas, Venezuela. "Venezuela is one of only two South American countries which presently have free, civilian elections. The other is neighboring Colombia."

How much more has changed, I thought, besides miniskirts and Daniel Ortega's image. Of course, even then, back in 1978, we reporters knew democracy went beyond free, civilian elections. Democracy—at the very minimum—was the right to vote, the right to express one's opinions, and the right not to die or disappear for one's real or imagined political stance.

Yet we knew that Colombia and Venezuela were ruled by alternating political parties of the elite and, as I pointed out in that long ago article, that despite the oil boom, more than half of Venezuelans suffered from some degree of malnutrition. Latin America now has elected governments in nearly every country. Despite ever-present authoritarian temptations and continued social inequity, democratic institutions are being created and consolidated.

In these pages, you will find many definitions of democracy and many perspectives on its successes, failures, and challenges in Latin America. Perhaps what all the authors have in common is the vision that democracy is a process, not an election. As author Linda Jo Stern so eloquently states, "Democracy is like friendship—it must be nurtured, accountable and strong."

Jane C. Elick



Previous page: Brazilian campaign truck; this page, left: Brazilian plebiscite; above: polling citizens in Peru

embracing political parties as bargainers and mobilizers of support, instead of shunning them. Argentina's Convertibility Law—controversial in its economic features (especially a decade past its enactment)—was extraordinarily effective in the early 1990s. It may have succeeded at least as much because it was a *law* as because of its economic content. It was an act of Congress, publicly and broadly supported by Peronist politicians, who collectively—in the executive and the legislature—agreed to self-binding procedures as a key guarantee regarding exchange rate and monetary policy. It was the transparent public evidence of collective engagement, of shared leadership, through democratic procedures that saved the day. Democracies can make more credible commitments regarding the economic future than can single individuals, even presidents and economy ministers, if they act alone.

In contrast, the principal *other remedy* to Latin America's ills has failed time and again: military coups. In the name of prosperity and order, and sometimes anti-communism and Christianity, military rulers have suppressed public liberties, violated judicial procedures, repressed social action, jailed opponents, and in some countries committed vile acts of torture and murder. In addition, in the 1970s and early 1980s, Latin American military rulers throughout the region demonstrated that they believed in equal opportunity ineptitude. Virtually everywhere, military dictatorships grossly mismanaged the external debts of their countries, tolerated and at times widened already abysmal public deficits, authorized pharaonic projects that wasted public resources, and presided over a boom in corruption. Some military rulers—in Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala in particular—led their countries to international or

internal war or both, with disastrous results to life, liberty, and property. Business elites gradually discovered that, despite the headaches that democracies often produced, they and their firms would perform better in democracies. And in countries as disparate as Brazil, Peru, or El Salvador, business elites became the partners of surprised democrats from the political center and left.

Some military governments, however, had excellent public relations agents to burnish their credentials as economic managers. General Augusto Pinochet's Chile was one of them. His government did undertake economic measures that in the long run served Chile well, though at human and social costs among the highest in the Americas. Yet the Pinochet government's economic record was less successful than his apologists have claimed. For example, the Chilean government's mismanagement of the 1983 debt crisis was among the region's worst; gross domestic product per capita plunged faster and deeper in Chile than in any other Latin American country of roughly comparable size. Moreover, it is true that the Chilean economy under Pinochet eked out an economic growth rate per capita slightly better than one percent per year in the 1980s, when most Latin American countries showed negative numbers. And yet, democratic Chile since 1990 has grown at a rate four times faster than the record of Pinochet's 1980s, the better of his two decades in power. Democratic Chile's record of respect for public liberties, encouragement of democratic processes, improvement in education and health services, and reduction of poverty is also vastly superior to that of Pinochet's Chile.

Democratic institutions often worked best when circumstances seemed least propitious, as in Venezuela in the 1960s or Argentina in the early 1990s. Consider also the Dominican Republic. Many of its people are poor. Autocrats have governed them most of their history. In the second half of the 1990s, a fiasco seemed in the making. Leonel Fernández was elected president notwithstanding his lack of experience in holding high office. His political party was a rather small minority in both chambers of the Dominican Congress. Strong and disciplined partisanship marked public life and seemed to ensure gridlock. Dominican public institutions were weak, the public skeptical. Stronger, more developed Latin American economies tumbled all around it—Mexico's financial panic and deep economic recession in



Election workers doing the voter registration work, pressing ink on thumbs, and helping with the ballot box in Paraguay.

1995, Brazil's financial panic in 1999, Argentina's inability to come out of recession in the late 1990s.

The Dominican Republic was Latin America's champion economic performer of the second half of the 1990s. It hitched its star to a growing U.S. economy more effectively than its presumably savvier and more developed Latin American neighbors. Among the factors that accounted for this success was the need for Dominican politicians to work more publicly and transparently than hitherto in the nation's history, approximating the rule of law, because Congress and the presidency were held by rival parties. Yes, Dominican public institutions remain weak. Yes, there are instances of mismanagement and corruption. But Dominican politicians during the second half of the 1990s out-did their country's history, creating conditions of stable credibility such as Dominican citizens had never known. They and international investors made the economy grow. Under President Hipólito Mejía, whose party has ample margins in both chambers of Congress, the Dominican economy this decade has continued to out-perform most Latin American countries.

In the late 1990s, democratic Brazil's performance was also noteworthy. Brazil survived relatively unscathed from the widespread East Asian financial panic in 1997 and the Russian financial panic in 1998. It did so because President and Congress worked credibly and effectively to enact measures to address economic problems and thus to demonstrate that Brazil's will to succeed was not just the wish of its talented president but also the collective desire of its wider political community. Brazil stumbled in early January 1999, falling into a short-lived financial panic, when the Governor of Minas Gerais announced that he would not honor the state's debts to the federal government and when members of Congress began to behave as if—with substantial public backing from the International Monetary Fund—they could fail to enact laws that were still essential to ensure the economic future. Brazil emerged relatively quickly from that economic crisis precisely because a workable majority in Congress

returned to cooperative and responsible economic behavior.

Today some on the Latin American political Left bad-mouth democratic institutions as moving too slowly to address problems of poverty, poor education, and lack of health care. The Left should remember that the most likely alternative to democratic regimes would do even less to address those problems and would probably start by repressing the Left.

Today in some countries, honorable democrats support military coups in order to save democratic institutions. What a sad oxymoron! Military coups against constitutionally elected presidents—even bad presidents—weakens public liberties, fracture the texture of civil society, require the violent repression of supporters of the ousted regime, fan social-class warfare, and make it much less likely that a civil future can be built.

Today some on the Latin American political Right are tempted to support military coups in order to safeguard property rights.

The association of military dictatorship with the economic rights of the already powerful is likely to weaken the bonds of political consensus that are a much surer long-term guarantee of property rights. The substitution of the rule of the gun for the rule of law *never* serves property rights well in the long run.

Today some international investors fret over the possible election of some new alleged "wild man" to the presidency in one Latin American country or another. It is wise to remember that Leftists or populists such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso or Carlos Menem did more to set their economies right and set the foundations of prosperity than the mossback losers that international investors seemed to prefer over them earlier in time. At times the political Left can more credibly commit the nation to market-rules in the long run: If the Left supports such rules, the Right will as well. In contemporary Latin America, the political Left may even be the partner of choice to negotiate a Free Trade Area of the Americas, for the Latin American Left is more likely to agree and to adhere to those labor and environmental clauses that a majority of the U.S. Congress is likely to demand for free-trade-treaty ratification.

The recent history of Latin America shows that the politicians of the democratic Left and the democratic Right can and have governed Latin American countries more effectively than their military predecessors at much less cost to public liberties. Today the challenge in Latin America is to remember a simple point: This often troubled and hard-to-govern region performs better for its citizens and the world beyond its borders under democratic institutions and the rule of law. It is time to recall, celebrate, and defend Latin America's effective democratic institutions.

Jorge I. Domínguez is Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs and Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He is the author of many books, including Democratic Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean (Johns Hopkins University Press).

Strengthening Democracy

A Look at the International Environment

BY JOHN H. COATSWORTH

THE CREATION, CONSOLIDATION, AND IMPROVEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC institutions do not happen automatically. Democracy (however it is defined) requires both favorable conditions and a certain amount of luck. Latin America has often lacked both.

Experts usually write about the conditions that favor democracy in purely internal or domestic terms—good economic performance, the absence of sharp social conflicts, interest groups and sectoral coalitions willing to compromise, healthy party systems, well-designed constitutions, among others. Some prefer more tautological formulations—democracy flourishes where people, politicians, or the local culture cherish democratic values.

A different view was taken by the “dependency school” theorists of a generation ago. They argued that outside forces played a key role in shaping the development, including the political development, of less developed countries and regions. In many cases, they insisted, it had become impossible to disentangle domestic interests and pressures from external or international forces. Some of this work cited the U.S. role in encouraging military coups in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s.

Globalization struck just as the dependency school arguments were getting buried under a mountain of sophisticated monographs on the mainly domestic determinants of political outcomes in Latin America. Maybe it's time to take another look. Latin American democracies are now facing grave challenges. If there is any way that external conditions could be improved or external actors moved

to provide more support for democratic institutions in the region, it's hard to imagine a better time than now.

Support for democracy in Latin America is eroding mainly because economic growth for the past two decades has been negligible in most countries. Like voters everywhere, Latin American voters reward good economic results and punish politicians and parties that fail to achieve them with stunning consistency. The only exceptions to this rule that I have found occurred either when bad economic news came after the balloting (such as Venezuela in 1988 and Mexico in 1982 and 1994) or when voters preferred a change of regime and the opposition embraced the successful economic policies of the incumbents (Chile 1990, Mexico 2000).

Since economic performance has been so poor for the past two decades, voters have been throwing out incumbent politicians and parties in record numbers. New parties and fresh faces have pushed aside traditional organizations and their leaders in response to demands for change. In five countries—Argentina, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela—elected presidents have been forced from office in large part because of poor economic policies or results (though the Venezuela coup was reversed) in recent years. In many countries, more and more citizens have become embittered and disillusioned with all politicians and politics. This rising backlash effect has reduced support not only for democracy but also for the market-oriented reforms of the 1990s.

As the world economy struggles to recover from the U.S. reces-



sion, short-term prospects for a demand-driven boom in Latin America's exports are dim. On the supply side, prospects for renewed growth fueled by technological change or investment in infrastructure have been dealt harsh blows by the volatility of external capital flows to most countries. The Asian and Russian shocks in the late 1990s, the Argentine collapse in late 2001, and the sharp fall in stock values over the past two years have made banks, fund managers, and investors in the developed countries as cautious as they were once exuberant.

Brazil is a good example of the convergence of voter discontent and a poor economic climate. Voters wanted more growth, more jobs, and less social and regional inequality. The government's candidate, José Serra, barely made it to the second round in the October 2002 election. Because of the country's economic difficulties, many voters turned to the center-left alternatives Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula") and Ciro Gomes. These opposition candidates emphasized equity issues in their campaigns and both criticized "neo-liberalism," but neither posed any threat to Brazil's basic economic strategy and stability. Despite their moderation, however, foreign investment slowed significantly and Brazil required support from the United States and the International Monetary Fund to avoid an exchange rate and external payments crisis. Lula's victory in the second round was overshadowed by new worries about potential external shocks.

Because the external economic environment is not likely to be helpful in short term, democracy in Latin America also needs the support of major international institutions and actors. The good news is that democracy clauses in international agreements and charters have become increasingly common over the past two decades. This means, for example, that governments that violate democratic norms risk the benefits that come from foreign aid programs, trade agreements, development loans, and membership in a growing list of key international and inter-American organizations. Under Secretary General César Gaviria, the Organization of American States has become especially active in supporting democratic institutions and averting coups.

The bad news is that some key international actors, the United States in particular, see democracy in Latin America as an eminently desirable goal, but it is not the only or even necessarily the most important policy objective in the region. During the Cold War, the United States actively sought or declined to oppose the overthrow of numerous elected governments that failed to conform to U.S. policy or ideological preferences. After the end of the Cold War, the United States changed gears. It signed peace agreements in Central America and largely stepped back from close monitoring and involvement in Latin American politics. The United States also backed OAS efforts to support democracy and avoid a return to authoritarian rule in Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Peru in the 1990s. This post-Cold War approach now appears to be ending.

The new war on terrorism, the old war on drug trafficking, the



Previous page: Children play in Argentina against background of sign protesting repression; above: sign in Ecuador, "If privatization is the cure, why is Argentina in agony?"

renewed commitment to the embargo on Cuba, and a number of other diplomatic and economic priorities are now competing with the U.S. goal of strengthening democracy in Latin America. The U.S. government decided in early 2002 to do away with restrictions on aid to Colombia, imposed on human rights grounds, that had limited military aid to anti-drug efforts. U.S. ambassadors in Nicaragua and Bolivia abandoned their diplomatic portfolios to back presidential candidates in recent elec-

tions. And U.S. policy makers reacted ambivalently to the short-lived coup against President Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.

To complete the destructive symmetry of this renewed meddling, the Bush administration coupled it with explicit and calculated indifference to the growing economic and financial difficulties in several Latin American countries, most notably Argentina. Fortunately, the U.S. government reversed itself in time to avert threatened crises in Uruguay and Brazil, for a time at least.

Despite unfavorable economic trends and the drift toward meddlesome incoherence in U.S. policy, there are some grounds for optimism. Domestically, a large majority of Latin Americans support democratic institutions and want them strengthened. Latin American military establishments have declined in size, given up their self-defined and U.S.-assisted role as guardians of inter-American political purity,

Support for democracy in Latin America is eroding mainly because economic growth for the past two decades has been negligible in most countries.

and suffered a sharp fall in their capacity to seize and hold power. Internationally, the instantaneous, unqualified, and virtually unanimous response of Latin American governments (along with the European Union) to the coup in Venezuela suggests that future coups will risk isolating coup makers from neighboring countries and much of the developed world, if not always from Washington.

In the long run, strengthening democracy in Latin America will require better international (and especially inter-American) economic and political institutions. Better economic institutions are needed to reduce the volatility of capital flows, dampen exchange rate fluctuations, and maximize investor confidence. The hemisphere needs not only a free trade treaty, but also institutional mechanisms that coordinate macroeconomic policymaking, reduce exchange-rate and other risks, and facilitate economic integration and development. Latin America democracy would also benefit from new diplomatic and security arrangements that unambiguously elevate the defense and consolidation of democratic institutions above all other policy goals for all the countries of the hemisphere, including the United States.

John H. Coatsworth is the director of the David Rockefeller Center of Latin American Studies and Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs at Harvard University.



Democracy and the Military

Redefining Missions amidst Multiple Challenges

BY DAVID SCOTT PALMER

ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA today is the unprecedented shift in the nature of politics since the late 1970s. At no time in the history of the Latin American republics have so many countries established and sustained electoral democracies without military takeovers.

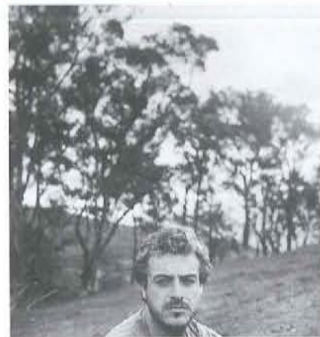
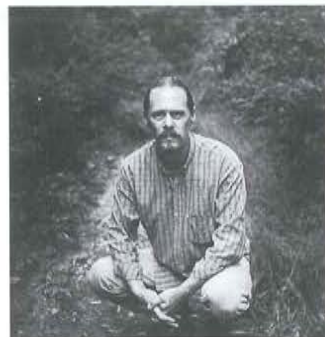
The military coup is no longer an alternative mechanism for acceding to power in the region. There were 19 successful coups in the 1960s in Latin America and 18 in the 1970s, but just seven in the 1980s and only two in the 1990s. The two coups thus far in the new century lasted just hours, both aborted by intense international pressure.

Within a single political generation, electoral democracy has become the norm in almost all of the 20 Latin American nations, imperfect and facing multiple challenges, to be sure, but seen as legitimate by most citizens everywhere in the region. One note-

worthy change is the unprecedented willingness of the military in recent years to remain on the political sidelines in Latin America. How can this extraordinary development be explained?

One answer may be found in the failure by the Latin American militaries, that took power throughout the region during the so-called "Third Wave" of authoritarianism between the 1960s and the 1980s, to accomplish their political and economic objectives. The long-term institutionalized military regimes in place in many Latin American countries during these years found that it was much harder to implement policies than to make plans. Chastened by their experience as well as weakened and divided, most were only too glad to return to the barracks—and stay there. The end of the Cold War certainly has contributed to this process.

Another is the combination of the debt crisis of the 1980s and the "lost decade" of national economic erosion that weakened the



Argentine photographer Julio Pantoja made portraits of the children of the "disappeared," those Argentines kidnapped and killed during the reign of terror by the military government between 1976 and 1983. In the small province of Tucumán, "Operation Independence," as the military anti-guerrilla sweep was dubbed, was responsible for the murder and disappearance of hundreds of citizens.

military institutions through reduced budgets and training. The economic crisis forced them to reassess their historic roles and missions.

From such a reassessment, many Latin American armed forces began to take on a new mission—international peacekeeper. Military and police contingents from 13 countries were serving in the 22 United Nations peacekeeping and other operations in place in 2000. Among the most active were Argentina and Uruguay, with 12, Bolivia and Chile, with six, El Salvador with four, and Brazil and Peru, with three. Such missions can only serve to enhance the professional stature of the armed forces and help to justify their continued relevance in the post-Cold War era.

With the establishment of inclusive mass democracy during a period of economic distress, civilian authorities faced a "guns OR butter" situation. They were under great pressure to increase social expenditures, often at the militaries' expense, thus further weakening the institutional capacity of the armed forces. While the military establishments were not bereft, many were not able to modernize.

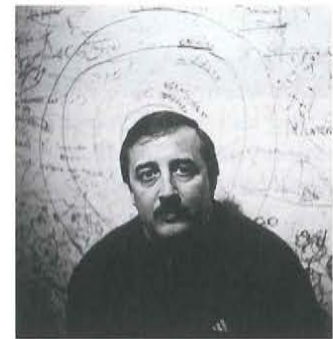
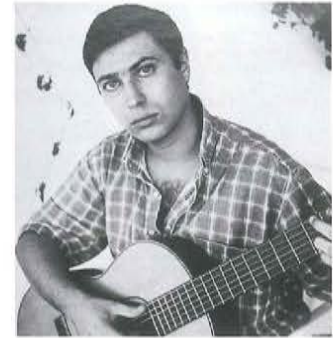
The terms of negotiation for the transition from military to civilian rule in several cases served to protect armed forces interests within civilian rule. In Chile and Ecuador, the military retained a guar-

anteed share of copper and oil revenues. In Brazil, the military tinkered with the electoral mechanisms until it found a formula that provided relative assurance of moderate civilian rule. Chile's military leaders also adjusted electoral provisions to assure selection of sufficient conservative senators to block constitutional change and formed a National Security Board that their members dominated and that was not accountable to civilian authority. In Uruguay, the military protected itself from prosecution for abuses while in power through legal provisions proscribing such initiatives under civilian rule.

Short of military takeovers, the armed forces also influenced politics by building alliances with civilians and influencing politics from within. One example is Peru's use of the principle of civilian control in the 1990s to protect military interests and preserve its privileges.

Haiti and Panama serve to illustrate how egregious military abuse in power can lead to outside intervention and the decision to abolish the military altogether. Such initiatives reinforced a parallel campaign by Nobel Peace Prize recipient Oscar Arias to apply the Costa Rican model of a political system without a military establishment to other smaller countries of the region.

In combination, these explanations suggest an emerging new



dynamic of civil-military relations in Latin America in which the armed forces are coming to accept a different role from that which has prevailed in the region since independence.

The changes over time in patterns of military expenditures within Latin America are also revealing. While many changes within individual countries in response to local or sub-regional security issues, the consistent overall pattern over the decades has been a progressive reduction in the burden of military expenditures as a proportion of central government budgets. These have declined from about 21% in the early 1920s, 19% around 1940, 15% as of 1960, 12% in 1970, and 11% about 1980. The only broad exception to this trend is the 1980s, when overall military expenditures increased by over 40%, largely to develop counterinsurgency and counter-drug capacities, before dropping back to about 10% in 1993 and 9% in 1997. Data for 2000 suggest that this trend is continuing—eight of the 20 Latin American countries reduced their military budgets between 1997 and 2000, three remained about the same, and nine increased.

These recent expenditure patterns, including both police and military, suggest that the armed forces of Latin America no longer in most cases consume a disproportionate share of the budget (Chile, 17.8% in 1997, Colombia, 19.9%, and Ecuador, 20.3%). This trend appears to suggest one of the beneficial effects of democratic

practices and civilian control.

Continued expansion of democratic practice and its gradual consolidation get a significant boost from the unprecedented change in the regional and international context of international agreements, including the 1991 Santiago Accords Organization of American States (OAS) Resolution 1080, the 1997 OAS Washington Resolution, and the 2001 Democratic Charter of Lima. By signing these multilateral accords, Latin American governments have agreed to give up their long-standing principle of non-intervention. They now allow a regional body to determine appropriate measures when democracy is threatened in a member state. The OAS has invoked one or another of these provisions to respond to internal political crises in various member countries, including Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, and Paraguay. The mere presence of these multilateral instruments has also served as a further stimulus for political elites to work out their problems without threatening democratic forms.

The rapid proliferation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), both national and international, has also contributed to the consolidation of democratic procedures. They include civil-military groups and associations of representatives from both sectors that meet regularly to work through issues and foster mutual understanding. NGO presence and advocacy helps to further legitimate the demo-

cratic process and to make government organizations and procedures, including those of the military, more open and transparent.

While civilian democratic rule now prevails almost everywhere in Latin America, specific cases illustrate some of the challenges that individual countries continue to face.

In Venezuela, the election of a military leader associated with a violent failed coup, Hugo Chávez Frias, introduced a new pattern of military institutional involvement in activities historically carried out by civilian or police authorities—such as crowd control, citizen mobilization, and public works. The creation of popular militias, the so-called Bolivarian Circles, is also a distressing development. Chávez and the military have filled the political space left by the progressive discrediting of once robust political parties. In Venezuela, the electoral process rather than the coup has reintroduced the military into politics, posing a new type of threat to the principle of civilian authority.

The case of Peru reveals a second troubling pattern of civil-military relations. This is the systematic abuse by an elected government of democratic procedures and civilian as well as military organizations to ensure continuation in power. Abuses included a unilateral amnesty for the military and police for human rights violations, the thwarting of a referendum on an unconstitutional third successive election of the president, the stacking of judicial and electoral bodies with government loyalists, and the use of computer machinations to change the presidential vote count. The civilian regime also resorted to massive bribery to ensure a congressional majority and manipulated military and police appointments to ensure compliant armed forces and an intelligence service that would serve the government by intimidating the opposition.

Through such measures, the institutional integrity of the military was severely compromised in ways that contributed to its dramatic failure to dislodge Ecuador's forces in the 1995 border war. The intelligence services were also adversely affected. Consumed by tracking the legal opposition, they failed to prevent the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) takeover of the Japanese Ambassador's residence for four months in 1996-97.

Civilian democratic forces regained the upper hand in the dramatic political denouement of late 2000 and brought about the removal of the "elected" regime and the arrest of scores of corrupt politicians, military, and police. However, the damage done to the political and security institutions of Peru will take years to overcome.

Ecuador's recent experience suggests a third pattern. Successive elected presidents were removed by congress and a brief civil-military takeover that only international pressure kept from becoming the first successful coup of the 21st century in Latin America. Ecuador provides an example of sustained electoral democracy, but with a multiplicity of parties and procedural regulations that virtually ensure political immobility in combination with a strong armed forces fresh from the military success of the border conflict with Peru. While civilian rule was quickly restored in 2000, a well-institutionalized military establishment remains a political alternative should the civilians falter again. The weight of OAS, United States, and European Union sanctions is the major force standing in the way of any unconstitutional takeover by the military in Ecuador.

Argentina's sad tale may be the limiting case in civil-military relations. Here the economic crisis of late 2001 and early 2002 led to

the president's resignation and a revolving door of short-term heads of state, with early elections now in the offing. Throughout the crisis the Argentine military, dramatically downsized by elected governments after its debacle in the Malvinas war and its gross mismanagement and human rights abuses while in power between 1976 and 1983, played no role. Here the civilian authorities were forced to try to work out alone some solution to their country's problems that appear to be resolvable only with some accommodation with the international financial community.

Colombia, formally democratic since the late 1950s, reflects a progressive erosion of central government capacity in the face of economic stagnation, major drug production, the breakdown of personal security, and generalized political violence. In this context, the armed forces became less able over time to carry out its basic

A new dynamic of civil-military relations in Latin America is emerging.

mission of protecting the population and the government. Plan Colombia was designed to reverse this trend by providing substantial economic and military assistance to enable the military to increase its capacity to better protect a beleaguered civilian government.

While many of Plan Colombia's provisions are controversial, the resources provided appear to be in the process of accomplishing their goal. The military is now larger and better prepared. Formal democracy continues, though with the recent election of a hard-liner with a mandate to restore peace through military initiatives. In Colombia democracy is trying to survive, and the military at this point is committed to its protection. There is no question in the Colombian case of a military takeover, but concerns remain over the likely dynamics of a military-led initiative to end the violence rather than peace negotiations.

As these specific examples suggest, on balance Latin American democracies remain troubled, but in place. The dynamics of civil-military relations vary widely from country to country, but overall the trend continues toward the continued prevalence of civilian-led government and democratic procedures. In most countries, the military has accepted its role as subordinate to civilian authority and is working to redefine its mission within that context.

Nevertheless, the armed forces of the region continue to have several important roles to fulfill. One is the new focus on international peacekeeping. Another is the protection of borders still in dispute, both land and sea. In addition, natural disasters require the military to take on emergency rescue and civilian support tasks. Finally, counter-drug operations require armed forces initiatives. As a result, military establishments of the region can continue to justify their presence and their significance without recourse to coups. Democracy in Latin America has multiple challenges to overcome, but in most countries the threat of a military takeover is not one of them.

David Scott Palmer teaches Latin American politics and United States—Latin American relations at Boston University. His recent writings include "The Military in Latin America," in Jack Hopkins, ed. Latin America: Perspectives on a Region, 2nd edition (1998), and, with Carmen Rosa Balbi, "Reinventing Democracy in Peru," Current History (February 2001).

Fifty-Five Years of Measuring Democracy

Evaluating the Fitzgibbon Democracy Survey

BY PHIL KELLY

AS ELECTION OBSERVERS IN ASUNCIÓN, we spent our spare time debating about how we would construct a better government in Paraguay if given the opportunity. As we rode from interview to interview in our air-conditioned blue and white Latin American Studies Association (LASA) van in May, 1989, we pondered the crucial elements for democracy. Might they be good leadership, economic prosperity, a mature political culture, better popular education, more experience with democratic processes, absence of major social and ethnic difficulties—or numerous other factors that might lead to and maintain constitutionalism?

Paraguay was holding its first free presidential and parliamentary elections since the military coup several months earlier. General Andrés Rodríguez, the former notorious drug smuggler but current hero who had ousted long-time dictator Alfredo Stroessner, was running well ahead in the presidential polls. He would ultimately win the elections and go on to govern the country for a four-year tenure without seeking re-election. Optimism was in the air. Former exiles, away from Paraguay for years, were returning. Some of them were members of the LASA observer team, including team leader Diego Abente, a professor of political science at Miami University of Ohio, now Paraguayan ambassador to the Organization of American States. Several Paraguayan friends told me how reassuring it was that they could discuss politics in the new, more



Hand-counting of voting results.

15 CRITERIA FOR DEMOCRACY

1. Education level
2. Standard of living
3. Internal unity
4. Political maturity
5. Freedom from foreign domination
6. Freedom of press, etc.
7. Free elections
8. Party organization
9. Judiciary
10. Government funds
11. Social legislation
12. Civilian supremacy
13. Ecclesiastical administration
14. Government administration
15. Local government

open atmosphere without fear of getting themselves into trouble with the post-Stroessner government.

Yet, as the current administrator of the Fitzgibbon survey of Latin American democracy, a unique system of qualitative measurement of democracy developed by UCLA political scientist Russell Fitzgibbon, I was quite aware of how far Paraguay had to go to become democratic. Since 1945, North American faculty had consistently ranked Paraguay near the bottom in the Fitzgibbon democracy comparisons. But, my experiences in being a part of this election brought home to me democracy at close hand—actually, the ideal of constitutional government being tested during that election in a country lacking democratic traditions and with no indications of a successful future. Unfortunately, Paraguay in my opinion has not succeeded in its quest for better government. It seems to have failed in most of the characteristics my colleagues and I discussed during that election observation experience more than ten years ago.

No doubt, my contribution to the team debates evolved from my involvement in the democracy survey, which itself dates back to 1945 when Fitzgibbon asked a panel of ten distinguished U.S. Latinamericanist scholars to rank the twenty Latin American republics according to a set of criteria that he felt would measure the extent of democracy in each of the countries. He gave scholars 15 criteria (see chart) to assess the strength of democracy, and provided panelists with complete definitions for each of the criteria in addition to the survey instrument.

On a five-point evaluation, panelists were to rate the republics separately according to each of the criteria, and the poll results were tallied later in ordinal and interval data form.

Fitzgibbon replicated his canvas at regular five-year intervals through

1970, adding more panelists than his original ten but maintaining the original fifteen criteria. Kenneth Johnson, a scholar of Mexican politics who was a former student of Fitzgibbon's, became associated with the project in 1960 and he assumed sole authorship of the 1975 and 1980 polls after Fitzgibbon's retirement. As the present director of the democracy project, I assisted Johnson in 1985 and administered the instrument alone for the three most recent evaluations, 1991 (one year off schedule because I was a Fulbright lecturer/scholar in Paraguay in 1990), 1995, and 2000. In total, twelve democracy surveys, taken every five years and all adhering to Fitzgibbon's original format, have been conducted since 1945. More than one-hundred panelists contributed to the 2000 survey.

I never met Russell Fitzgibbon, since I began my teaching career near the time of his late-1970s death, but I wish I had. Former students describe him as being that "classical" blend of humanitarian and disciplinarian. Historian David Myers of Pennsylvania State University reminisced to me:

"Fitz cared about his graduate students and went out of his way to give them every opportunity to pursue the career they had chosen. He was intolerant of sloppy scholarship. His criticism was devastating—but never personal. Fitzgibbon did more than any professor in my graduate school career to cure me of any tendency toward unsubstantiated generalizations."

In 1974, Kenneth Johnson and I were researching undocumented Mexican workers in the Southwest. Like Fitzgibbon, Johnson men-

tored students and younger colleagues, so he invited me to participate in the Fitzgibbon democracy survey, first as a panelist, and eventually as co-administrator. Today, Ken has been long retired in Hermann, Missouri, where he enjoys exhibiting and selling his crafted baskets and brooms at country and craft fairs in adjoining states.

All three democracy project directors, Fitzgibbon, Johnson, and I, experimented with the poll; most changes were tried only once

No other surveys of its sort can boast of such longevity and repetition over a time span that has seen so many changes and tentative improvements in democracy and government in Latin America.

and not continued. Fitzgibbon gave certain of the fifteen criteria more weight than other criteria, and he also attempted a "self-assessment as to the respondent's familiarity with both [Latin American] states and the criteria." Both attempts were inconclusive and dropped. Likewise, Fitzgibbon tested for statistical associations between the democracy scales and an assortment of national attributes, but he found none. Johnson composed a separate political scale drawn from five "select criteria" among the fifteen, and he and Miles Williams created a "Power Index" that sought to measure various groups' impact on politics. But again, neither innovation was kept. Nor did a later "Attitudinal Profile" of panel respondents' backgrounds by Johnson and Kelly enjoy long life.

I have attempted several new directions in my current role as sur-

SPECIALISTS' VIEW OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA, 1945-2000

COUNTRY	RANK 1945	RANK 1950	RANK 1955	RANK 1960	RANK 1965	RANK 1970	RANK 1975	RANK 1980	RANK 1985	RANK 1991	RANK 1995	RANK 2000	RANK TOTALS
ARGENTINA	5	8	8	4	6	7	5	11	3	5	4	4	5
BOLIVIA	18	17	15	16	17	18	17	18	16	14	14	14	18
BRAZIL	11	5	5	7	8	10	9	12	9	6	6	5	8
CHILE	3	2	3	3	3	2	11	14	14	4	3	3	3.5
COLOMBIA	4	6	6	6	7	6	4	4	5	8	7	12	7
COSTA RICA	2	3	2	2	1**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
CUBA	6	4	7	15	18	13	7	6	10	12	16	15	10.5
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	19	19	19	18	14	14	13	8	13	11	13	9	15
ECUADOR	14	9	10	10	12	9	14	9	11	9	9	13	10.5
EL SALVADOR	13	14	11	12	11	8	10	16	17	19	17	10	13
GUATEMALA	12	10	14	13	13	13	15	17	19	18	19	19	16
HAITI	16	18	17	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
HONDURAS	17	15	12	14	15	16	16	15	15	17	18	16	17
MEXICO	7	7	4	5	4	5	3	3	6	7	8	6	3.5
NICARAGUA	15	16	18	17	16	17	18	7	12	10	11	11	14
PANAMA	8	11	9	11	10	11**	12	10	9	15	10	8	9
PARAGUAY	20	20	20	20	19	19	19	19	18	16	15	17	19
PERU	10	13	16	9	9	11**	8	5	8	13	12	18	12
URUGUAY	1	1	1	1	1**	3	6	13	4	3	2	2	2
VENEZUELA	9	12	13	8	5	4	2	2	2	2	5	7	6

Source: Fitzgibbon-Johnson Index

vey director. Being an amateur statistician, I utilized a regression analysis procedure in seeking associations between the cumulative survey data and an array of country attributes, finding a predictive "model" in two particular variables, newspaper circulation per capita and tractors per hectare, hence these two variables being tied to democracy. For the 2000 poll I also asked panelists to respond to ranking democracy for the new Caribbean Basin states, although a good number of respondents signaled a lack of familiarity with this region. Throughout my tenure with the Fitzgibbon survey, I have wanted to expand the number and background breadth of panelists and to circulate the survey data as widely as possible.

The most notable legacy of the Fitzgibbon democracy survey is its long life, fifty-five years and twelve different polls since 1945. No other surveys of its sort can boast of such longevity and repetition over a time span that has seen so many changes and tentative improvements in democracy and government in Latin America. Also, this survey is the only panel-of-experts technique for gauging the extent of democracy, as other assessments of democracy rely on census and other secondary statistical data or a variety of subjective measures. As stated by Fitzgibbon, "[Panel] Specialists are likely to introduce desirable nuances and balances which are impossible in the use of cold statistical information, even of the most accurate sort." In addition, the canvass possesses both conceptual and operational definitions of democracy, the former rendered in the fifteen criteria and the latter in the survey method itself.

Of course, the Fitzgibbon approach has some inherent problems. Are panelists indeed familiar enough with political life in Latin America to gauge the depth of democracy in each of the twenty republics? Most likely not. In addition, despite comparisons made among countries over the years, we yet do not know if democracy itself is more grounded of late in the southern hemisphere's political culture. Likewise, are certain "reformist" and/or radical states, such as Cuba and Nicaragua, given higher scale rankings for democracy because the majority of survey panelists reflect a "liberal" bias, as seen in the 1985 Johnson-Kelly Attitudinal Profile? Should the poll be made annually or at two-year intervals instead of the five-year rotation, and might certain of the fifteen democracy criteria be eliminated and/or others given more weight?

Particularly difficult for me is my weakness in the more advanced statistical realms that could yield deeper insight into democracy trends and causes, for I lack sufficient mathematical skill and institutional support to probe much further into analyzing my data. I'd like to invite interested readers for suggestions about this aspect of the Fitzgibbon project.

SUMMATION OF COUNTRY RANKINGS FOR THE TWELVE SURVEYS, 1945-2000

1.	Costa Rica	17*
2.	Uruguay	38
3.5	Chile	65**
3.5	Mexico	65**
5.	Argentina	70
6.	Venezuela	71
7.	Colombia	75
8.	Brazil	93
9.	Panama	124
10.5	Cuba	129**
10.5	Ecuador	129**
12.	Peru	132
13.	El Salvador	158
14.	Nicaragua	168
15.	Dominican Republic	170
16.	Guatemala	182
17.	Honduras	186
18.	Bolivia	194
19.	PARAGUAY	222
20.	Haiti	230

* summation of rankings from 1945 through 2000 surveys

** tied ranking

Much more could be said about democracy in Latin America and in general. Indeed, is democracy the most efficient form of government, the best protector of citizens' rights and of the natural environment, or the most peaceful (the "democratic peace" thesis whereby democracies do not war against other democracies)? Can the concept and practice of democracy be accurately defined and compared? Which type of environment is most fertile for the rise and maintenance of constitutionalism? What role has the United States played in the institutionalization of democracy in Latin America? How might any outside country or regional association like the Organization of American States promote political stability and democracy in the more troubled republics? Such queries understandably are difficult to answer, and obviously they are well beyond the scope of both the Fitzgibbon democracy survey and this article.

Nevertheless, the Fitzgibbon democracy survey project has made a positive contribution to the study of Latin

American government and politics. We know the most and the least democratic states, how these rankings have or have not changed over the past fifty-five years, and certain environmental attributes (for instance, per capita newspaper circulation and tractors per hectares) that could be statistically linked to constitutionalism.

So, our LASA team left Asunción after three weeks of immersing ourselves in a people's historic quest for democracy—in a country where democracy had certainly never before existed. Yet we couldn't stop asking ourselves: do honest elections make a democracy? As the Fitzgibbon survey attempts to systematically measure, free and honest elections obviously help. Democracy is much more than elections, but as invited guests, we had contributed in observing and supporting Paraguay in its electoral experiment on the path towards democracy. And this certainly made our trip one of value.

Phil Kelly is professor of political science at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Director of the Fitzgibbon democracy survey project, he also serves as secretary-treasurer of the Midwest Association for Latin American Studies. A former Fulbright lecturer/scholar in Paraguay, he researches and publishes on both the Latin American democracy and Latin American geopolitics topics. He wishes to thank Luisa Pérez, professor of Spanish also at Emporia State University, for her collaboration and Spanish language translation, available at <<http://drclas.fas.harvard.edu>>.

If you are interested in joining the project as a panelist for the 2005 survey, please contact Phil Kelly at <kellyphi@emporia.edu>.

Democracy and the City

My City, Your City... One City

BY OSCAR GRAUER

WE HUMANS HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CONCEPTUALIZE IDEAS and elaborate thoughts, as well as to construct and fabricate both material and immaterial outcomes, based on those ideas and thoughts. Yet, the process of thought—thinking—is not necessarily an objective and linear process; it also involves passion, emotions, experiences, instincts, and situations or “context.” We understand our context—the immediate surroundings, the world, and the universe—in many different capacities, and we try to convey our understandings to others through several means. Because of these capacities, humans can impact the planet at a scale and magnitude that other creatures do not. To accomplish such goals, communication among people is required.

It is not the purpose of this essay to elaborate on semiotics; however, it is important to introduce that language and words, in our case the words “democracy” and “city,” differ in their meaning depending on the emotional and experiential “context” in which they are set. Furthermore, words and language work only if a group of people share a general understanding—a conceptual basis—of the meaning of these words, and follow certain rules that provide for their understanding. Although those rules tend to be shared by all those who speak the same language, I would argue that words hold many more contextual differences than conceptual similarities. This piece is more about these differences than about similarities.

I had to decide on one of two basic ways to approach this topic in such a short essay, to take either the formal or the informal path. The formal would require a conceptual discussion on the origins and evolution and an understanding of democracy throughout history; and its influence on city development and vice versa, starting with the origins of democracy in Ancient Greece as related to Athens. The informal has to do more with analyzing and interpreting how people understand democracy, how it translates into urban form and vice versa. These few lines pretend no more than skim certain questions on this issue; it is a limited view from within.

Indeed, can we talk about democracy in conceptual terms, or do we have to speak about Democracies? I would argue that nowadays there is not “a” democracy; there are many democracies, and although they seem to share certain principles—what we call democratic principles—they differ from region to region, from one society to another, and from one governmental administration to another within the same society. In this respect, there is a spatio-temporal dimension to the concept of democracy.

We adjudicate meaning to words and, although quite vague, sometimes we can communicate ourselves, sometimes we do not, and there lies the beauty and nuisance of language. We can also adjudicate meaning to other things, like the built environment. However, neither words nor buildings nor urban spaces have meaning in themselves. We can read urban form and listen to what it can say, but it is always up to us to interpret and understand it. Cities and languages have a lot in common; they are both extremely complex,

they can communicate and are also means of communication. It is up to us to “listen” and understand what they have to say.

ON DEMOCRATIC CITIES

Can we talk about democratic cities? Can the term “democracy” be used to qualify urban environments? In rhetorical terms, I have seen the term used quite often. Now, what does it mean? What do people mean by a “democratic city?” Democracy is a way of living; it is an organizational framework that provides for a group of people to perform their lives, according to certain principles and both customary and legally binding rules that govern their behaviors. These principles and rules set the boundaries for individuals and groups of people. If democracy is an “organizational pattern,” and cities also follow organizational patterns, are they related?

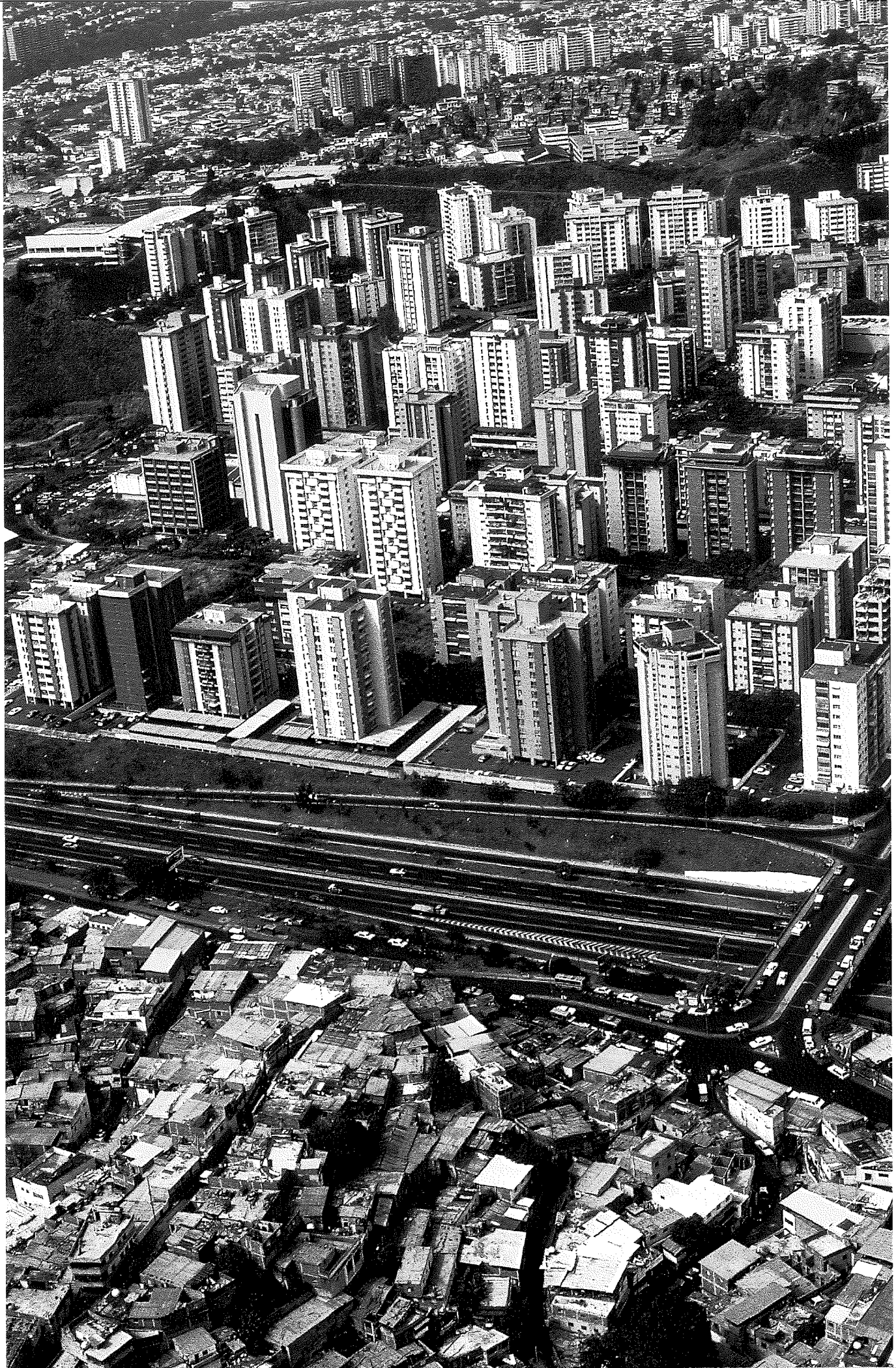
If public spaces—streets, plazas—can be seen as the places where individual and social expressions can be performed, then we can qualify these spaces as the ultimate expression of democracy in a city. Public spaces have been provided since primitive towns were built. Every city has streets and plazas, even though they have been built, layer after layer, under different political regimes. Urban form survives socio-political organizations. They are things, man-made outcomes. Cities survive political regimes; cities prevail over social organizational patterns. Therefore, although urban form does not contain meaning in itself, it provides for understandings and interpretations.

Indeed, the design process involves ideology either tacit or explicitly; we are what we believe in, which includes our prejudices and preconceptions, and it gets expressed through what we do. However, things—urban spaces and buildings for instance—do not convey meanings, and if they do, those meanings dissolve over time and acquire other ones. Those that do not fade become boring; they do not provide for multiple readings and interpretation. They remain static and un-poetic. Certainly, written history provides for learning about their original intentions, but only for those that have the explicit purpose to find out about it. Social organizations, e.g. democracy, can be reflected in urban form, however urban form does not reflect necessarily any ideology. It is the interaction between people and the cities, in a specific moment, that provides for ideologically biased interpretations.

ON URBAN PREJUDICES AND PRECONCEPTIONS

Carlos: ¡Cuidado! no entres allí, no ves que es peligroso? **Pedro:** Why are you telling me that it is dangerous to go in there? No ves que es un barrio? Todos los barrios son peligrosos. Why are all barrios dangerous? Porque sí, todos saben eso. I don't see why you consider this barrio peligroso. It doesn't look dangerous at all, how can you tell? True, most houses need some paint, but no more than the build-

Caracas: Public spaces are the ultimate expression of democracy in a city.



ings in the barrio where we are right now. **Carlos:** It's common knowledge; it shows that you haven't been living in Venezuela since you were a kid. C'mon! en un barrio no hay casas sino ranchos y además éste no es un barrio, es una urbanización, es la ciudad, un barrio no. This is the city; a barrio is not. Don't you know that there are no houses in the barrios? There are only ranchos.

Pedro: I don't get it; do you mean that you are excluding that barrio and all barrios from the city? But it is obvious that they are in the city, this barrio is sitting right there in front of us. How can you exclude it? We are only a few feet away, how can you set it off-limits so clearly? Furthermore, how can you visibly differentiate a barrio from an urbanización? **Carlos:** As I said, everybody knows that if you go in there you will get mugged or killed. The only way to solve the problem is to demolish these damned barrios and build formal housing in the outskirts. They are disorganized and lack urban planning; that is why crime and poverty proliferate. See, each house sits next to the other, built only by the poor, mostly on cerros around the city and ravines. They also lack services and accessibility; they are crowded, and furthermore they were built illegally. **Pedro:** How can you say that everybody knows that if you go in there you will get killed? I am amazed that actually there are different words for differentiating one area from the other! Mostly, you are talking about the process-

If it is true public spaces are the ultimate expression of democracy, then a lot more freedom for all, and therefore to enforce rules, needs to be infused into these spaces.

es of how these two types of developments have taken place, not about the products themselves. How do you expect me to realize it just by looking at them? Let's assume, for a moment that someone can come up with a way to solve the problems you just pointed out. Can the question then become how to integrate them into the city? **Carlos:** As I said, the only way to solve the problem is to tear them down and build new planned communities to house the poor.

Carlos and Pedro are not actual characters; they do not exist. However, most people in developing countries will assume one position or the other. Such a conversation has taken place in the past, is taking place now, and will continue to take place unless we approach the problem from a different perspective. Words like *barrios*, the word used in Venezuela for squatter settlements, (areas built outside the formal legal system invading public or private land), *ranchos* (Venezuelan term for a house or a building within a barrio) and *cerros* (hills where squatter settlements are located) in this context implicitly reject a democratic solution. Carlos is going as far as raising the question of integrating barrios into the city. Still, this position excludes equal opportunities for both areas; it implies that if barrios are to remain they will have to look more like the "formal" city, and less like "informal" settlements. Linguistic differences permeate this imagined, but all too realistic, discussion. Urbanización is the term used in Venezuela that refers to formal settlements, areas built within the formal legal system on acquired land.

In Venezuela, formal buildings and houses sit on colinas, informal ones sit on cerros. Both colinas and cerros translate as hills. This inability to communicate sameness rather than difference establishes

that "I am right and you are wrong" and rules out the possibility of weaving the city fabric together. In reality, most urban dwellers of Latin American cities live within a gray zone between formality and informality, regardless of where they live within the city. There is a mirroring process that is reflected in how people behave and do things in cities in the developing world. In other words, formality and informality have very little to do with barrios and urbanizaciones; there are examples galore of how in both places, people break the law to build their homes.

Explicitly, both worlds fight to differentiate one from the other; implicitly, they are coming closer together. Certainly, most informal settlers do not hold a land title; not all formal settlers hold it either. These are subtle differences most people do not relate. The actual physical forms of barrios and urbanizaciones are very different, the former designed and built mostly by the people themselves, the latter by constructors. As a result, two very different shapes emerge: one looking quite "rational," the other resembling more an "organic" type development, reminiscent of the medieval towns of Europe. To the eye of the common citizen in developing countries, the organic is associated with disorder, crime, and poverty. The question is no longer how to integrate the formal to the informal or vice versa, but how to integrate them together. Actually, the discriminatory terms "squatter settlements" or "informal settlements" are self-defeating descriptions in themselves; they reinforce prejudices that separate and set differences in a part of the world that demands integration.

Therefore, it seems that the task ahead requires first to deal with people's preconceptions and prejudices and then find ways of looking at problems from a different perspective. This requires a conscious decision of bringing these implicit feelings to the front of the discussion and turning them explicit. Slavery was "normal" until humans started realizing that it was not. Pinpointing the problem is always the first step. Such an attitude demands a degree of freedom of thought democracy provides. Cities are playing a leading role in redefining democracy. They have become the arena where discussions, confrontation, and resolution first take place, particularly in their public realm.

ON FREEDOM AND CITY WALLS

Nowadays, the concept of what is public, and particularly how we qualify public spaces, is being revised. The boundaries between what is public and private are blurring. We might have to come up with criteria that define degrees of "public-city" or "private-city." Indeed, the concept of freedom in cities is also being questioned. For instance, freedom of speech, of expressing ourselves as individuals and as a society in city spaces, is being constrained through different means; urban violence is just one example that affects freedom of access to all neighborhoods. (There are urban areas that are off-limits for most people, especially in developing countries, as portrayed by the conversation of Pedro and Carlos).

If freedom is related to democracy, then it is a relative concept. The United Nations, in its latest Annual Report, acknowledged that there are degrees of democracy by ranking freedom of press or respect of civil rights in democratic countries. So, not all democratic soci-

eties share the same principles and values; if they do, they do not share the same meanings. I would argue that the meaning of rules and of the law in many Latin American countries has little to do with the concept as understood in countries such as the U.S.

In Venezuela, for instance, a popular saying goes, "La ley se acata pero no se cumple"—roughly translating as "Everybody acknowledges the law, but nobody obeys it." This cultural outcome challenges democracy since democracy requires legally binding rules that apply equally to everybody. In a country where "compadrazgo," family ties, and friendship are placed at the same level as justice, some end up being more equal than others... and most peo-

ple "interpret" the law accordingly. In this Latin American country, democracy has been seen as the right to vote, and not as a means for ongoing political change. As Venezuelan historian Ramón J. Velázquez once clearly stated: "We believed that by honoring the vote, we honor all the traditional wrongs in Venezuela: nepotism, friend favoritism, speculation, traffic of influences, fraud, and the farce that we attributed to an oligarchic origin of all the preceding regimes. I recall how all Venezuelans in 1945 believed in universal vote as the miracle of national purification." Both today's political parties and the caudillos' 19th century social structures do not differ considerably; the caudillos' followers identified not with

LA VICTORIA

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

Y por qué vives allá?" The taxi driver had been unwilling to drive me home until I convinced him that if I could live in La Victoria he could certainly take me there. His initial reluctance to enter the *población* is not unusual. In fact, many Chileans have a similarly strong visceral reaction to the mere mention of its name. Beyond the rhetoric—which ranges from glorification to condemnation—these responses offer a window into the sharp political divisions of Chile's past, the changing social landscape of its present, and the uncertain evolution of its future.

Founded by *pobladores* forty-four years ago through a *toma de terreno* (land takeover), La Victoria became not only a model for *tomas* throughout Chile but also a touchstone for popular leftist action in a country increasingly galvanized by political mobilization. Communist Party members and University of Chile students organized hundreds of homeless families squatting on the banks of a river on the periphery of Santiago. The group identified a few large plots of land held by wealthy landowners and planned their future community—including roads, a school, a health clinic, and every family's house. On the night of October 30, 1957, the families chose the least protected site, seized the land, and immediately began preparing to defend against the police, who would try to expel them by daylight. After several days of resistance, the *pobladores* declared victory and named their new community accordingly.

The taxi turns onto 30 de Octubre, whose name commemorates the date the *población* was founded. On this same street several months earlier, I had witnessed the annual reenactment of the *toma* as a few hundred *victorinos*, marching to chants of "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido" (the people united will never be defeated), proudly followed in the steps taken by their parents and grandparents. Yet this historical celebration of La Victoria's founding was dwarfed by the cultural celebration two evenings later. More than a thousand residents and visitors from other *poblaciones* crowded the street for a night of musical and dance performances. The program was an eclectic mix of traditional Chilean music, including homages to legendary folk singers Víctor Jara and Violeta Parra, and more trendy groups such as Amerikan Sound, a long-haired Chilean version of the Backstreet Boys. If indeed these two musical styles represent the competing social and cultural traditions of La Victoria's past and its present, the direction of the *población*'s future was clear from the youthful crowd's response to their heartthrob idols.

"Patos malos," the taxi driver mutters as we pass a group of



The house Brian lived in

disheveled-looking young men huddled in the shadows.

In 1983, when *victorinos* took to the streets in the first massive protest against the Pinochet regime, they set off a series of protests nationwide that burst the first cracks in the military government's iron-tight reign. For years, the residents of La Victoria suffered the consequences of their bravery—detention, torture, and several deaths—but remained resolute in their resistance. Ironically, democracy has done what years of repression could not—fractured La Victoria's social solidarity. In one of the world's most free-market systems, the struggle in La Victoria is now an economic one. Within this social and political vacuum, other forces have taken control of the streets. At night, drug dealers stand on the corner of 30 de Octubre and brazenly hawk their wares. While most buyers speed through the *población* in the kind of cars not usually parked on La Victoria's streets, in recent years the *población*'s reputation has gone from famous to infamous.

We pull in front of the house, which appears to be little more than a ramshackle pile of wood, plastic cartons, and scrap metal, where I live with an extended Chilean family of ten. The taxi driver has already asked me to have exact change ready so that he can speed off. I open the door and enter the living room where I find the eldest daughter patiently copying a Pablo Neruda poem to distribute at an event commemorating the Communist poet's birthday. Meanwhile, her younger sister mimics the suggestive movements of the scantily clad Brazilian dancers on TV. I can't help wondering which is La Victoria's future.

Brian Milder has spent the past year in Chile on a Rockefeller Fellowship living in La Victoria and volunteering at the Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team (NESST). A longer version of this piece is appearing in Let's Go Chile and appears here with permission.

abstract ideals but with the leaders themselves, by offering their obedience and fidelity. In return, the caudillos promised special considerations for their followers. This sentiment has remained almost unchanged in Venezuela, proven by the current political situation.

How does this situation translate into city form? In the absence of "lawful law," citizens of many Latin American countries feel that they have to take the law in their hands; everybody pulls in different directions trying to satisfy immediate individual needs. As a result, it is quite amazing, almost unbelievable—maybe like what Gabriel García Márquez calls Magic Realism—that cities tend to work. Existing communities are gated and new-gated communities are being built as exurbia, walled all around to keep the "unruly" others out. New privately owned public space, e.g. shopping malls, are proliferating because there is a need for spaces where rules are acknowledged and complied with, so everybody can feel safe and respect each other. Subways like the ones in Caracas and São Paulo are also examples—in these cases of public services—of people's need to feel that rules apply. In both, people respect and enjoy these public services run by independent authorities responsible for enforcing rules.

In lawless environments, the unruly takes over. The more people enclose themselves in their own urban compounds, the more the public spaces become no man's land. If it is true public spaces

are the ultimate expression of democracy, then a lot more freedom for all, and therefore to enforce rules, needs to be infused into these spaces. Freedom has nothing to do with abuse of a few over others, e.g. violence. Respect for each other and for the city streets and plazas will arise only if rules are enforced citywide. The less the need for segregated cities, the more democratic these cities and their societies will become. Nowadays, if we want democracy to prevail, many urban walls—both material and immaterial—in developing countries will have to come down. The less disaggregating components erupt in urban fabrics, i.e. urban highways, walled communities, the less segregated public spaces will be. A seesawing tension between what we need to do and what we are actually doing characterizes this new millennium. Instead of promot-

ON BEING AND CARING

ing exclusionary "public spaces" and therefore walling our cities within and around, a need for places for aggregating people will have to emerge if we want "democratic cities" to survive.

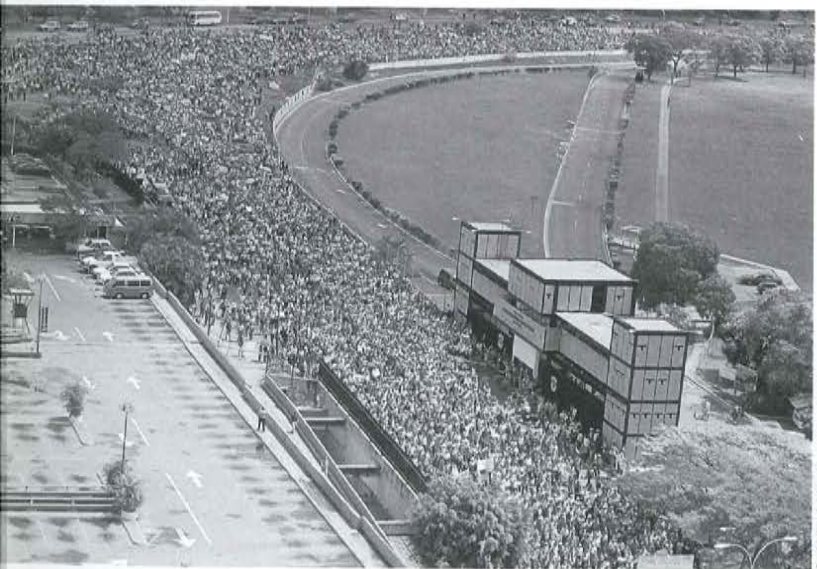
It seems that we are running out of choices. Either we take care of our natural environment or it will take care of us; either we provide for a better quality of life for all, or we will simply continue aggravating the problems instead of resolving them. The more the distance between the haves and the have nots, the more room for confrontation and therefore for isolation. The more each individual, each community, each city, each country, each continent closes in upon itself, the further away we drift from solving our social problems. Most present-day confrontations in this globalized world are fueled by resentment and lack of hope of obtaining the benefits now enjoyed by just a fortunate few. The gap between those who live in poverty and those that do not within cities in developing countries is similar to the gap between the developed and the developing worlds. In both cases, those who have the choice to do something about it are still those who occupy the higher end of the income level spectrum. It is not only a matter of choice, it is a matter of understanding that if "I want to live better, my neighbor needs to enjoy a better quality of life too." Again, either we take care of this problem or the problem will take over.

This is true particularly in Latin America with its unprecedented social confrontation and political unrest that have translated into a questioning of democracy as an appropriate system for highly socioeconomic differentiated societies (i.e. access to services, goods, and education). Violence has invaded the public realm occupying the space that freedom once did. The more we segregate the less democratic a city is. The more we enclose ourselves in our compounds and in our worlds, the less room for social interaction, and therefore for freedom, are left.

When the absurd becomes quotidian it turns "normal," therefore losing its absurd quality. To be able to see what is absurd in the quotidian is a real challenge nowadays. For instance, democratically elected officials have been behaving as guerrilla leaders or as dictators, promoting violence and social confrontation that ultimately have invaded public spaces. In such circumstances, real challenges to democratic values come from every segment of society, defying basic principles that support this political régime. The illegal becomes the rule, and rules are broken right and left.

Transforming what has become "normal" demands a conscious decision to change things. Descartes' "I think therefore I am" does not seem sufficient anymore. "I think therefore I care" seems to acquire more relevance every day. First, the intention needs to arise so the rational can take over. If this is true, "To care or not to care, is the question" in our times.

Oscar Grauer is a Cisneros Visiting Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. He is a professor, founder, and first Chairman of the Urban Design Master Program at Universidad Metropolitana in Caracas, Venezuela. He recently published: Rehabilitación de El Litoral Central, Venezuela/ Redevelopment of El Litoral, Venezuela after directing the team appointed by the Venezuelan Government to manage recovery efforts after the disastrous 1999 floodings.



The April 11, 2002 opposition march to the headquarters of Petroleos de Venezuela used the city as a stage.

are the ultimate expression of democracy, then a lot more freedom for all, and therefore to enforce rules, needs to be infused into these spaces. Freedom has nothing to do with abuse of a few over others, e.g. violence. Respect for each other and for the city streets and plazas will arise only if rules are enforced citywide. The less the need for segregated cities, the more democratic these cities and their societies will become. Nowadays, if we want democracy to prevail, many urban walls—both material and immaterial—in developing countries will have to come down. The less disaggregating components erupt in urban fabrics, i.e. urban highways, walled communities, the less segregated public spaces will be. A seesawing tension between what we need to do and what we are actually doing characterizes this new millennium. Instead of promot-



BUILDING INSTITUTIONS

From Democracy to Rule of Law? p. 21

Corruption and Democracy p. 26

Constitutional Reform p. 30

Legislatures and Political
Accountability p. 32

Education for Democracy p. 36

Children and Democracy p. 39

Art Essay p. 42

From Democracy to Rule of Law?

Police Impunity in Contemporary Latin America

BY DIANE E. DAVIS

VIOLENT EXCHANGES BETWEEN ARMED officials and citizens, heightened fear and physical insecurity, police and military personnel who violate the law or flagrantly abuse their power, and growing popular discontent with states and elected officials who fail to guarantee the protection of constitutional rights and rule of law. Is this a description of a 1960s and 1970s Latin American country caught in the cycle of authoritarianism, "dirty wars," military rule, or guerrilla opposition? Hardly. While somewhat caricatured, this blunt portrayal echoes the present dismal state of affairs in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and many other Latin American countries. Despite considerable democratic progress, many countries are now suffering an explosion of violence,

rising public insecurity, and a deteriorating rule of law, much of it fueled by police impunity. How can we reconcile this troubling situation with the transition to or consolidation of democracy in Latin America? Are democratic concerns being trumped by a preoccupation with the rule of law and the police role in undermining it? How might we think about the relationship among these issues and about the problems of police impunity more generally, not only in scholarly terms but also with an eye to eliminating such abuses and guaranteeing both democracy and the rule of law? These, I submit, are the main challenges facing democratic Latin America today.

Scholars and activists have spent years trying to understand the conditions that

make democracy more or less likely. All too frequently, they implicitly assume that with democracy, the guarantee and protection of individual liberties also would surface. Yet, despite the emergence of more democratic party systems, strengthening of competitive party politics, dismantling over-centralized state structures, and empowering civil society, many Latin countries have seen an escalation of official abuse of power and an attendant abrogation of individual rights and liberties. Democracy, in short, has not bolstered the administration of justice or the creation of a free and secure citizenry. If anything, those countries making the greatest strides in formally democratic regards also are among those hosting some of the worst problems of crime, violence, and (un)rule of

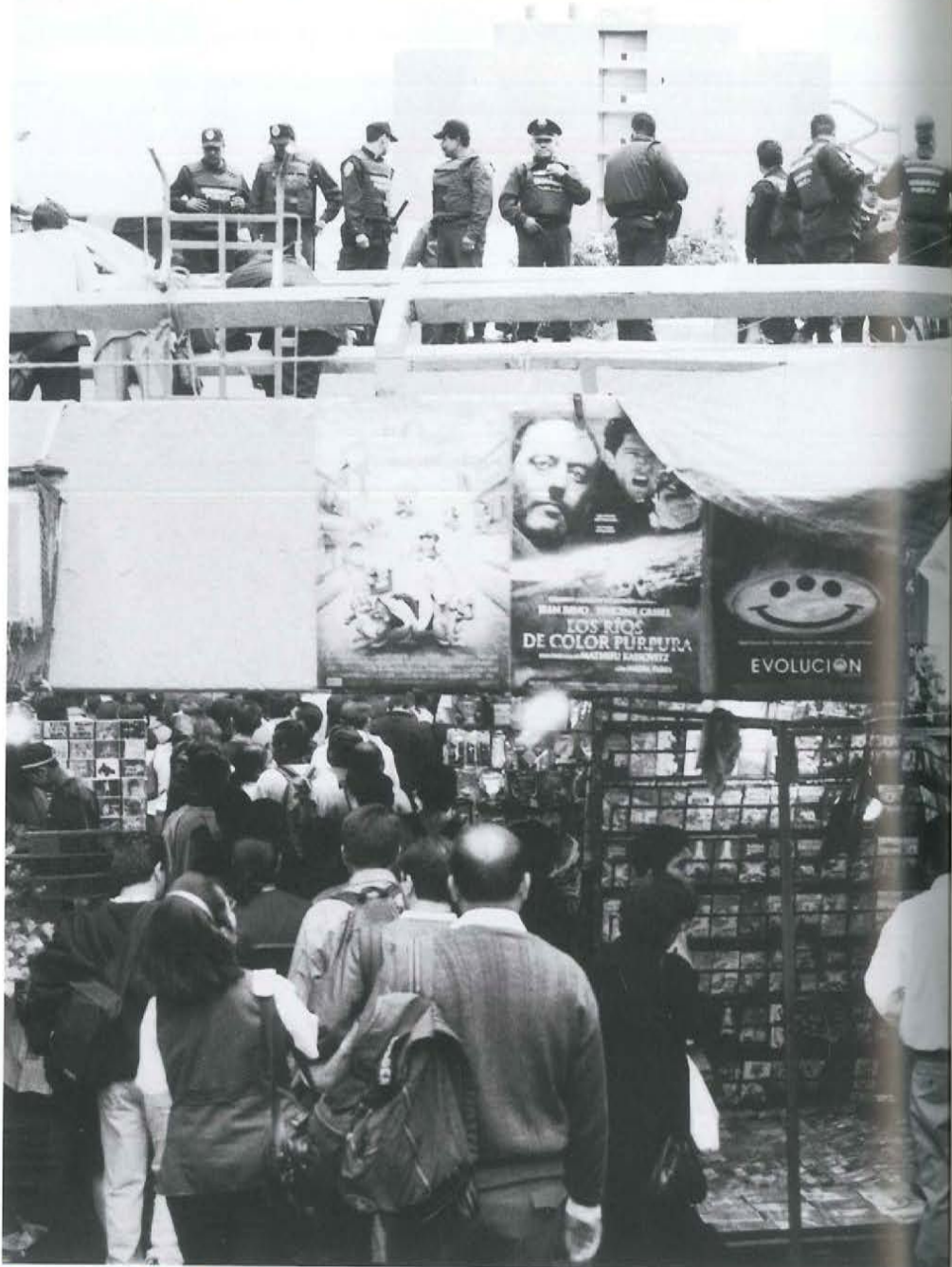
law. This situation, if left unchecked, holds the potential to undermine the fragile new democratic order in contemporary Latin America. At minimum, it diverts attention away from the democratic process itself, as citizens desperately seek to guarantee the most basic conditions of everyday life, such as individual security and freedom from fear.

What makes this new situation so troubling and politically challenging is the fact that it is not merely an explosion in "ordinary" street crime that seems to be sustaining public insecurity. Much of the violence, crime, and impunity in contemporary Latin America can be attributed to the ascendance of relatively well-organized purveyors of armed force. These include not only the mafia and other clandestine "business" groups involved in illegal trade (especially drugs and guns), some of whom are among the wealthiest citizens in these newly liberalized countries, but also institutionally-empowered armed forces in the employ of the state—mainly police, but sometimes also the military. Far too many of these armed forces are working hand-in-hand with criminals, either through their participation in petty crime rings or in bigger-bucks operations like drug trading and gun-running. This partly explains police unwillingness to guarantee the rule of law and proclivities for corruption and impunity. Official impunity, in turn, further drives privatization of policing, which has then contributed to a spiral of violence and unrule of law. Whenever more individuals start bearing arms in private security services, and citizens themselves start to carry guns for self-protection from criminals and police alike, violent "resolutions" to questions of public insecurity become the norm. Violence and insecurity become a vicious circle. The situation deteriorates even further when "public" police begin to compete with "private" police for a monopoly over the means of violence and the legitimacy (vis-à-vis citizens) to use force. "Public" and "private" armed forces will increasingly violently struggle among themselves, as seen in a recent armed shootout in downtown Mexico City, a mere couple hundred yards away from the administrative offices of the newly democratically-elected president and mayor.

Moreover, state decentralization and strengthening of municipal institutions—changes generally heralded as accompanying democratization—mean increasingly less agreement on which publicly armed forces,

if any, should be guaranteeing the public order. In the Mexican case, the one I know best, Federal police often lock heads with Mexico City police, and sometimes the military has been called in to settle matters, generally to the chagrin of the both sets of police forces. At times, the conflict among these different "armed forces" can be traced to the new political situation, the democratization of the capital city in the last several years, itself a positive byproduct of the democratic transition. What a paradox. With different parties coming to power at different levels (municipality, city, state, federal), elected officials and political actors seek to use their own police forces to guarantee public order. Thus, they can gain votes by claiming suc-

cess in maintenance of the rule of law. One unanticipated consequence has been more cutthroat competition among different policing forces, all of them armed. Some of the conflict also reflects an unwillingness to capitulate to the authority of these newly democratically elected officials, sometimes seen as encroaching on the police's own system of power and influence, developed and entrenched itself through years of authoritarian rule through lucrative rent-seeking, corruption, and impunity. If anything, police frequently will do almost anything to prevent the introduction of reforms that might re-establish the rule of law and guarantee that democratic officials prevail. In Mexico City, the democratically-elected Cuauhtémoc Cár-



Previous page: Police disrupt a demonstration; above: police in Mexico City

denas administration's efforts to "purify" the city's police forces by imposing lie detector tests and restructuring beats to make police more accountable to communities were met with organized opposition by the police rank-and-file. They immediately went on "strike" (i.e. stopped policing) in response. Their actions spurred crime rates to accelerate exponentially in a matter of weeks (raising the possibility that police themselves were intricately connected to the criminal world) and forcing public officials to publicly acknowledge that the city's 40,000 member police force was "out of control."

The upshot in Mexico and elsewhere has been a growing militarization of civil society and the emergence of vigilante mentalities. When combined with growing numbers of private security forces and entrenched patterns of public police corruption and impunity, the rule of law, if not democracy itself, runs the risk of being undermined. I invoke the concept of rule of law here not just because the "wild west-type" atmosphere seen in so many localities across Latin America suggests an environment without a rule of law, but also because public and private police—so clearly implicated in undermining the rule of law—are themselves the forces formally entrusted with keeping it. If the keepers are themselves transgressors, what value is the law, even with a formal democracy on the books? And if the corruption of public police continues to drive the proliferation of private police, who will draw the line on the private security forces' behavior, and will democracy or even equality be the principal casualty?

All is not completely hopeless, of course. One positive result is the emergence of new social organizations devoted to the guarantee of public security. Many grassroots groups are now seeking alternative solutions and community practices at the neighborhood level. In this sense, citizens are both building on and reinforcing the democratic practices and advances from years of struggle against authoritarianism. However, citizen participation still seems to bring better results when applied to the equitable and just provision of basic services or questions about electoral and political procedures, than in matters of police corruption. I myself have observed citizen security meetings in downtown Mexico City, convened by the newly-elected PRD government (with its democratic mandate to ensure greater citizen participation in local

governance) whose intent was to bring together residents and police in a democratic dialogue about how to best guarantee public security. The results have been limited, but for obvious reasons. Citizens do not speak frankly about police corruption and impunity in their neighborhood when those very same police are sitting across the table, armed

Democracy has not bolstered the administration of justice or the creation of a free and secure citizenry.

with their note pads and badges (identifying citizens by face, street, etc.). As such, a certain degree of police reform must already be in place before grassroots citizen participation can make a serious difference.

City-wide efforts with a larger scale and scope for action and organization have met with more success, playing an important role in leading the fight against police corruption and impunity. Many high-profile organizations collaborate with private sector businesses. In Mexico, one new organization funded by the private sector, called INCESI, has developed a massive public relations campaign about police corruption, and its efforts have included the publication of names of police officials known to be involved in illegal activities. Organizations like INCESI have considerable clout because of their connections to wealthier elites in society and their independence from government institutions. Several international NGO's and foundations also support innovative programs geared toward the re-organization of police academies and a reform of their curricula in order to foster a commitment to justice and the rule of law even before the police officers make it to the streets. For example, in Brazil, several new programs of police training have been implemented in police academies across the country under the direction of Liz Leeds of the Ford Foundation.

But the power to halt endemic police corruption also rests on civil society's capacity to ensure change in the institutions of policing, including legislative and policy actions for police and justice system reform, as well as citizen complaint mechanisms. Training individual men and women to act on the basis of ethical moral principles may be a good start, but if the institutions police enter upon leaving the academy are corrupt, and the organizational dynamics of everyday police practice reinforce corruption and

impunity rather than a respect for the rule of law, reform can only go so far.

Some good news is that across Latin America, political parties and government officials are identifying public insecurity and unruly rule of law as among their greatest challenges. In Mexico, President Vicente Fox and Mexico City Mayor Manuel López Obrador,

from competing parties on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum (PAN and PRD, respectively), both highlighted these issues as central to their electoral campaigns, and both have called for police and judiciary reform. Yet, the situation does not seem to be improving in Mexico or throughout Latin America in general. The million dollar question is why. The problem may owe partly to the fact that today's officials, policymakers, and activists have such faith in the democratic process that they assume that a strong democracy will eventually eliminate police impunity. One version of this might read as follows: if citizens demand from their public officials tangible results in rooting out police corruption and guaranteeing the administration of justice, public officials will respond with effective reform; and if not, they will be booted out and replaced by those who do.

We are indeed already seeing the strong support for police reform and judicial accountability across Latin America. Yet this vote-with-your-feet attitude may be as likely to produce a revolving door of public officials as a resolution of the police corruption problem, mainly because both public officials and activists have seriously under-estimated the institutional dynamics involved in such efforts. A fascinating new book by Mark Ungar, *Evasive Reform: Democracy and the Rule of Law in Latin America*, suggests why. In his examination of police and public officials in democratic Argentina and Venezuela, Ungar makes a convincing case that public officials' efforts to reform police end up giving police more (and not less) power, partly because the main strategies for police reform by democratic governments usually entail embedding them in the state, where they are affected by budget crises and a weak judiciary, both of which contribute to further abuses of power. Ungar's findings suggest that police reform cannot be effective without a

simultaneous overhaul of the judiciary, which in a democracy is bound to be a long and drawn-out affair that can test the patience of citizens and elected officials alike. And this, in turn, suggests that democracy and police reform (with accompanying judiciary reform) may make slightly uneasy bedfellows. Uneasy, of course, is not incompatible. But the point is neither to underestimate the challenge of police reform in the context of democracy nor to over-estimate the capacity of the latter to guarantee the former.

Eliminating police impunity also remains so difficult because we have failed to examine the historical origins of these problems and to recognize that the institutional dynamics of police corruption in Latin America are linked to the history of state formation and the region's patterns of political and economic development. A contested history of state formation built on a long-standing tradition of civil wars, revolutions (or near revolutions), and ongoing conflicts within and between regions and the "center" has fostered an environment propitious for gratuitous police empowerment in many Latin American countries. Whether these historical conflicts had a class, regional, or cultural character, or a combination of the three, and whether they were fought (or won) under the banner of authoritarian-



Above and opposite: Bolivian protests: Many grassroots groups are seeking alternative solutions.

focused singular attention on the military. Yet recent research suggests that police (and a variety of other "irregular armed forces," including paramilitaries and mercenaries) are among the most significant armed forces in national politics and state formation (see *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation*, edited by Diane E. Davis and Anthony Pereira, Cambridge University Press, 2003). And once we recognize how central police forces have been to state formation, we have the basis to begin understanding how and why police and police institutions across the continent

ally entailed investing in industrial infrastructure in one or two principal cities, initiating pressures for rural-urban migration and unparalleled urban growth because of certain neglect of rural areas. An active and politicized urban working class emerged, along with a large service sector in a few major cities. This further explains why police were brought directly into the picture, albeit in slightly different ways than had the earlier battles over state formation.

Urban police were generally called upon to keep working class activists and strikers in line, so that processes of industrialization could proceed as factory owners desired. When left-leaning labor unions and accompanying nascent party movements gained too much strength, both the state and industrialists sent in police to bash heads both in and off the shop floor. The growing urban population and the burgeoning service sector, for its part, brought a new round of social and political regulations (about health and sanitary conditions, about street usage, about conditions of formal and informal employment, including strikes and work hours, etc.). This further catapulted police to the forefront of everyday life, and they soon marshaled significant personal and institutional power by virtue of their street-level capacity to make or break the livelihood of shopkeepers, butchers, taxistas, and pulque vendors. These urban regulatory practices—brought forth by the sheer volume of persons and activities and vehicles in the cities plus the social reformist commitments of many Latin American governments in these earlier years—spawned the systematic development of practices of police bribery and police corruption.

Citizens do not speak frankly about police corruption and impunity in their neighborhood when those very same police are sitting across the table, armed with their note pads and badges.

ism or democracy, does not alter the fact that achieving and consolidating state power has been an ongoing struggle in most of Latin America up and into the 20th century. No battle on any of these fronts could have been won unless one side monopolized the means of violence. This was usually accomplished by arming forces to guarantee a certain group's ascent to and hold on the state. And to the extent that the seat of the state has usually been the principal city in the nation, those seeking state power frequently cultivated support from police as often as from the military.

Most scholars examining violent battles over state power have overlooked the variety of armed forces involved because they

became so powerful over the years, and why efforts to "purify," reform, or eliminate them are now so difficult.

Another factor that has fortified the institutional salience and power of police is the history of urbanization and state-led industrialization. Just when the challenges of modern state formation seemed to have been met, most Latin American states faced yet another challenge: the struggle to develop their economies. Starting in the period of the World Wars, most Latin American governments undertook serious efforts to rapidly industrialize, taking advantage of global conditions and sometimes building on an earlier tradition of industrialization (as in Argentina and Mexico). These efforts usu-

This "system" occasionally worked as well for urban citizens (with the clear exception of the working class) as it did for the police, industrialists, and the state. The state was ensured that its own police forces would have a steady supply of income without having to direct money away from the already-stretched public coffers. Industrialists would have a quiescent labor force. Police had enough pocket money to counteract their poor wages, and they continued in the employ of the state because without their badges their sources of rent-seeking would dry up. Yet for their part, urban citizens often benefited as well, especially those employed in tertiary sector activities—a very large number in most Latin American cities. Most of the poor and illiterate souls who made their livelihood in low-paying service activities would much rather have lightly greased the palm of local police than paid the state-sanctioned fine, or heaven forbid, appeared in court. This may be just as true today, in the neo-liberal economic environment in

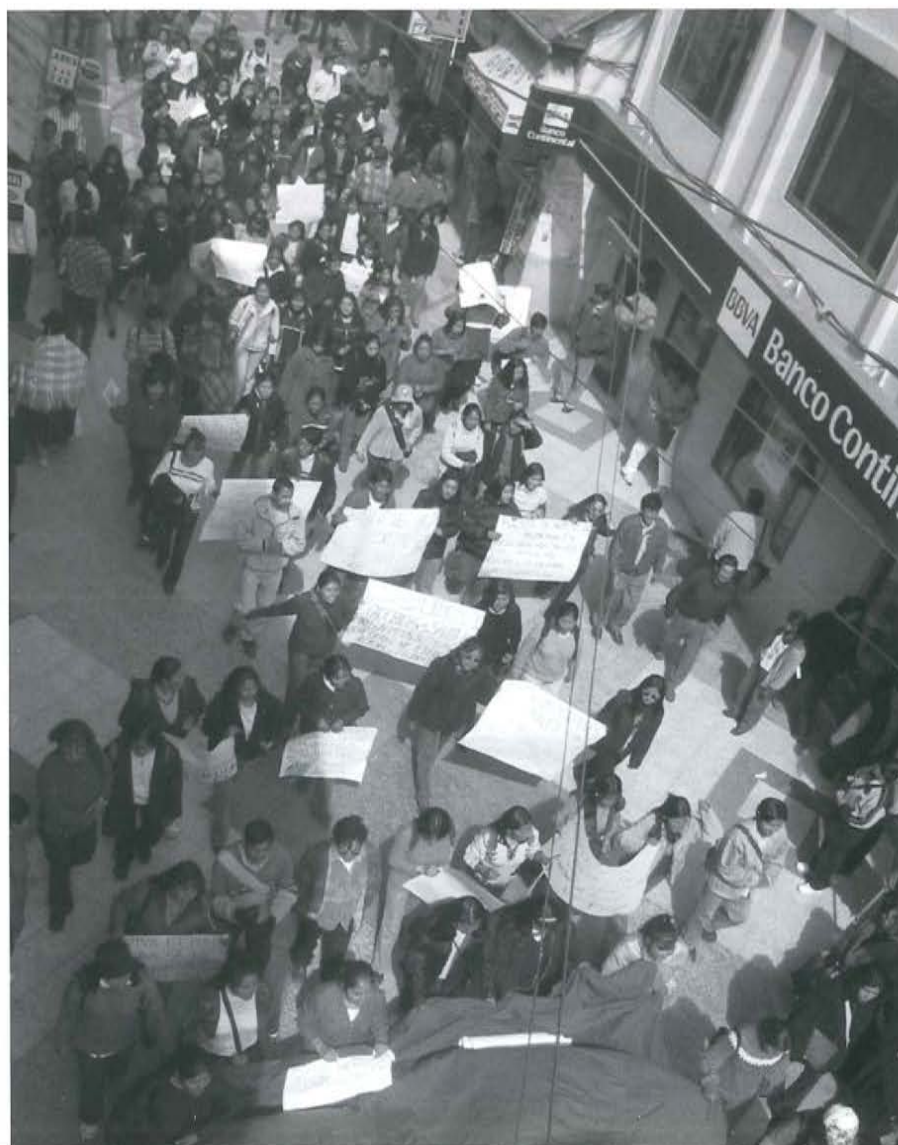
Latin America, in which many citizens are employed in informal or illegal activities where police actions can make or break them, and where declining wage levels mean many live on the margins of existence.

To highlight a certain degree of "functional utility" in petty police corruption is not to condone it so much as to underscore how deeply entrenched such practices have been in the political, social, and economic history of many Latin American countries, and to suggest that these patterns still persist. These origins must be acknowledged and dealt with if any serious efforts at police reform can be made. Just as important, knowledge of the ways that police impunity connects to patterns of political, economic, and urban development could open new windows for further research and policy action on police corruption across the continent. One is tempted to offer the proposition that those countries with the most tortured processes of state formation and the most extensive urbanization are those that now

host the most endemic and entrenched problems of police impunity. And if this is true, it means that in a newly democratized Latin America, those interested in alleviating problems of police impunity and public security should be looking at much more than the tired old programs of community policing, police professionalization, and training. They also should take seriously the historical record and its institutional legacies, as well as how they have led to patterns of police impunity. The realization that there is a demand as well as a supply-side to police impunity might even push some to consider a plea for fundamental reforms in the regulation, servicing, and governance of cities, in the character of the economy and employment, and in social welfare coverage at large as equally powerful means to end police abuse of power.

Alongside the focus on the police and the judiciary, then, large-scale social and economic changes may be absolutely necessary if real police reform is to occur. To be sure, linking police corruption to employment problems and general social conditions clearly ups the ante in terms of the scope and scale of effort, even as it further complicates the task at hand. But complex and deeply rooted historical and institutional problems require analogous solutions, and if we are not up to the task we must be prepared to suffer the consequences.

Diane E. Davis, a 1998-1999 DRCLAS Visiting Scholar, is a professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This essay's ideas and materials are drawn from a variety of her current research projects. Information on police corruption and its relationship to political and economic liberalization comes from a long-term project with former DRCLAS Visiting Scholar Arturo Alvarado titled "Police Impunity and Deteriorating Rule of Law in Mexico," originally funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Information on the violence and political challenges posed by the co-existence of public and private police comes from Davis's two-year project titled "Public versus Private Security Forces and the Rule of Law: The Transformation of Policing in South Africa, Russia, and Mexico," supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. For more information on either project, contact <dedavis@mit.edu>.



Corruption and Democracy

The Peruvian Case of Montesinos

BY LUIS MORENO OCAMPO

DESPITE MORE THAN TEN YEARS OF democratic systems in Latin America, why is it that corruption hasn't decreased in the region? In Peru, videotapes filmed at the National Intelligence Secretariat, controlled by Vladimiro Montesinos, provide dramatic evidence of the clientelistic networks plaguing democratic institutions in Peru. The extraordinary tapes demonstrate how an entrepreneurial and political elite captures democratic institutions and puts them at the service of their interests. The study explains how public institutions work where high-level corruption counterbalances democracy, and suggests explanations for the entire region.

CORRUPTION IN LATIN AMERICA

Regional freedom of press has revealed abuses of power by rulers and entrepreneurs, but demands for the control of corruption have remained unsatisfied. Studies of 102 countries by International Transparency have found that Latin American countries evidence situations of high-level corruption. Chile (ranking slightly above the U.S.) is the only significant exception, while Uruguay,

Trinidad and Tobago and Costa Rica show an acceptable performance.

Corruption in Latin America is organized and systemic, non-isolated and random. This kind of exchange between political, economic and social systems does not respond to a pluralist model, but to the neo-corporative model of democracy where consultation and co-administration entail the basis of the political-economic system.

I intend to analyze these kinds of exchanges by using a rich source which, for the first time, allows for an intimate look into the world of politics existing behind closed doors. The "Vladivideos" consist of video recordings of meetings, mainly of a secret nature, which took place between Vladimiro Montesinos, Fujimori's closest advisor, and a highly varied group of personalities from the Peruvian society. It is the first time there is a source of information to study the corrupt exchange as it takes place. These videos contain a rich source of data on the invisible networks forming the infrastructure of corrupt transactions.

A sample of 110 "Vladivideos" was used to explore the social structure of Vladimiro

Montesinos' personal network and the mechanisms used to create, manipulate and use his "social capital" in order to increase his personal and political power. Although, due to sampling considerations, formal methods of analysis of networks cannot be used, mapping tools will be used to illustrate the scope and the diversity of his clientele network. The qualitative analysis will also be used to show the various forms in which a new institution was built where corrupt transactions were normalized.

The videos register a number of conversations held between Montesinos and a variety of political, entrepreneurial, media and judicial figures.

FUJIMORI'S RE-ELECTION

One of the cases exhibited by the videos is that of Fujimori's re-election. Montesinos had a long term plan to control Peru that included obtaining a third term for Fujimori. To do so he needed to make an amendment to the Constitution through either a 2/3 majority vote in Congress or through a popular referendum.

He knew people were against the reform, so he had to control the JNE (Jurado Nacional

REFORMING INTELLIGENCE IN PERU

AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO PROMOTE CHANGE

In the fall of 2000, Peru was embroiled in one of the most far-reaching corruption scandals in Latin American history. Vladimiro Montesinos, the head of Peru's National Intelligence Service (SIN), was captured on video bribing a congressman from an opposition party to switch allegiance to President Alberto Fujimori. Soon approximately 700 tapes were uncovered from Montesinos' video archives that incriminated Peruvians from all sectors of society—policy-makers, judges, military officials, journalists, and businessmen. This scandal brought to light the web of corruption and abuse of power that surrounded Montesinos, who had used Peru's intelligence apparatus to increase his own wealth and political power, rather than to protect national security. It resulted in not only the flight and subsequent arrest of Montesinos and the resignation of President Fujimori, but also in the dismantling of the SIN, Peru's central coordinating intelligence agency, and a full-scale investigation into past intelligence abuses.

The collapse of the Fujimori government and arrest of Montesinos was an historic moment for Peru's democracy. During the interim

administration of President Valentín Paniagua, a new civilian intelligence coordinating body, known as the National Intelligence Council (CNI), was established to replace the old SIN. This provided an unprecedented opportunity to design a new national intelligence system that functioned within the rule of law, respected democratic values, and guarded against real threats to Peru's security.

But developing a new internal security institution from scratch is no easy task. The new civilian leadership appointed to lead this reform process had little experience in the intelligence business. Budgets were sharply reduced, and files and essential resources were missing. Policy-makers and intelligence officials struggled with how to best define the mandate for the new CNI and put reforms into action.

We hoped to contribute to this difficult transition process by providing recommendations based on experiences and insights of international experts. The Project on Justice in Times of Transition, an inter-faculty program affiliated with Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Law School, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, has learned through its work with political and non-

de Elecciones/National Elections Jury) in order to block the referendum. Montesinos made sure that four out of the five members of the JNE would respond to his dictates. We found evidence in this video sample that at least two of these individuals received compensation or favors for voting according to his directions. To obtain the necessary Congressional majority for the reform, Montesinos negotiated with banks, the media and opposition leaders. By using his judicial contacts, Montesinos ensured the loyalty of the financial entity's authorities.

The heavy sums of money ensure signed contracts are subscribed to guarantee television strategy. In addition to determining programming, journalists criticizing the regime were excluded and any broadcasting of candidates from the opposition was denied. Financial and legal problems made the media vulnerable. He captured Channel 5 by assisting them in a complicated lawsuit through his contacts in the judiciary.

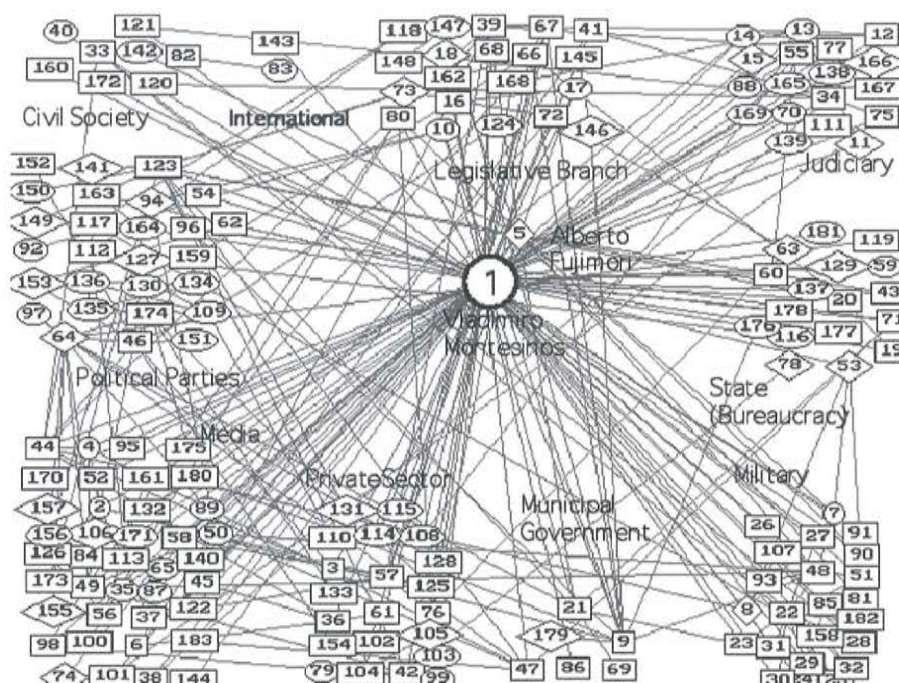
Montesinos summarized in a video his views on press freedom:

Montesinos Torres: We either give them air-time or we eliminate them. For instance yesterday, after that thing of the pact, Andrade (opposition candidate) gave a press conference. No channel aired the press conference. It never existed. He gave the conference. For whom? For the journalists and for those who watched a little bit of the CN. None of the remaining channels aired the interview.

governmental leaders in Guatemala that the value of international exchange of experiences and perspectives about security reform can have a powerful effect. At the invitation of Juan Velit Granda, the newly appointed President of Peru's CNI, we developed an initiative aimed at instilling new energy and ideas into the Peruvian intelligence reform process.

This project was carried out in three distinct phases. First, we contacted experts on intelligence and security from around the world, asking them to provide their feedback on Peru's Law of the Intelligence Services—the first legislation passed to define the mission and parameters of Peru's new intelligence system. Fifteen of these experts responded, sharing their own experiences with reforming intelligence agencies in Argentina, Canada, Guatemala, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, and the United States. They also suggested additions and modifications to the Peruvian intelligence law.

The next step was to draft a formal set of recommendations, which would be presented to Velit Granda and his colleagues in Peru. We gathered a working group of 13 individuals from 7 countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America and convened a meeting at Harvard Law School in May 2002.



The above depicts the network of social relations used for clientele purposes between Montesinos and the individuals who appeared or were mentioned the videos. Each black line represents a political or clientelary support relationship which goes through the various institutions. This clientelary network includes 230 people belonging to political parties, the media, private companies, municipal governments, the armed forces, and other groups.

Montesinos also went after the Congress to attain a constitutional amendment. He needed 80 votes in Congress, but could only count on 67. Thus, he paid Congressmen off and helped with the campaigns of opposition members that they would vote favorably.

For example, the video of opposition

politician Alberto Kouri shows he switched sides because Fujimori provided him with a monthly stipend. Kouri was the first known case of vote-buying, and the one that ended the regime. In the video, Kouri is observed receiving the money and putting it away in his jacket. In another "Vladiovideo," Mon-

Included in this group were three Peruvians—one of whom was a congressman and member of the congressional defense and security commission—and their presence helped ensure that the group's recommendations were grounded in the Peruvian reality.

The process of drafting the recommendations was challenging and time-consuming, as we learned how different each country's experience had been and how difficult it was to prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach to intelligence reform. Still, there were similarities between the heavy-handed internal security services that had used their power to repress citizens and protect the political elite in Argentina, Guatemala, South Africa, and Peru. And the group found that the experiences of Canada and the United States in reforming their domestic intelligence agencies after abuses in the 1960s were also useful for thinking about the reform process in Peru.

After three days of in-depth discussion and numerous revisions, we produced a final set of recommendations that reflected the consensus of the entire working group. This 20-page document highlighted many of the fundamental principles that the group deemed essential to any democratic security service, as well as specific strategies that took into consideration Peru's unique history and internal security architecture. It provided guidelines for developing a domestic intelli-

tesinos says he offered him 5000 dollars per month but that Kouri argued over the amount.

To build up the network generated by Montesinos, we encoded in the system each video transcript, the various encounters as well as any mention on the relationship: enterprises, friends, commercial associations, political associations, etc. We made a sociometric data base on these relationships and we used it to illustrate the scope and diversity of Montesinos' social relations.

Social networks consist of multiple relations formed in all social groups of any size. These connections are formed for a variety of purposes: to exchange information, trust, resources and support, connecting individuals to others and determining available options for action. The distribution of relations in a group also determines how the social activity of such group is organized. Collectively, these relations form a structure that determines the actions of all its members.

Political clientelar relations are defined as a reciprocal relationship between patron and client, defining patron as the person using his influences to assist and protect the client, and the latter provides in exchange certain services to his patron.

Montesinos destroys the autonomy of the various state entities by promoting officers who owe their appointment to him. Thus, they are vulnerable to his requests. A feature repeated in Montesinos' structure of relations

is trust and cooperation based on a personal knowledge ("friends for life," "of the same class," "we studied together").

I brought him here because he's a friend of mine from school. We were classmates at "Colegio Independencia." And what's better than helping friends from my own class? Mainly for two reasons: First, that there is a relationship between us since we were kids; and second, that one trusts. That's what's important, you see?

Reciprocity, the obligation to help after having received a personal favor, is also used by Montesinos to generate loyalty and duty.

Montesinos Torres: We will help her. You give me difficult tasks...

Delgado Parker (owner of a TV channel): But, of course, in return I am at your disposal for anything you like.

The networks create the social capital.

CORRUPTION AND INFORMAL NETWORKS

Both the OECD and the World Bank have used the perspective of the Principal Agent Client (PAC) to study the causes and the operation of corruption. Based on a political economy model, the PAC theory emphasizes the rational behavior of the economy and focuses on the structure of the institutional incentives of political sciences. Corruption occurs when the agent (public employee) takes pos-

session of some public benefit, either financial or of any other nature, and does not remit it to the principal (national state).

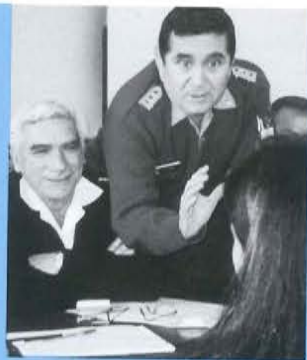
This approach to corruption implies that the agent makes a previous estimation on the profitability. Robert Klitgaard proposes an explanation for the participation in corrupt acts through a "decision tree" whereby the agent chooses from two options presenting different combinations of benefits, costs and possible sanctions (*Controlling Corruption*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press). Three aspects of public bureaucracy affect corruption levels: monopoly, discretion and accountability. The equation proposed by Klitgaard is: M (monopoly) + D (discretion) - A (Accountability) = Corruption. Public policies are then evaluated based on their propensity to increase the competition (thus minimizing the monopoly), to reduce the discretion and to increase the bureaucratic control on the actions of public employees. When the costs associated with corruption increase, corruption decreases over time since agents perceive the threat of sanctions.

However, this perspective depends too heavily on the formal characteristics of the organizations to determine monopoly, discretion and accountability levels. To simplify we could conceptualize these factors according to their formal organizational structure: who directs who or which responsibilities fall under which job positions. Corrupt activities flow through relations that are not defined

gence service that could strike a careful balance between respecting essential democratic freedoms and protecting national security.

In the final phase of the project, the working group selected five of its members to travel to Peru to formally present the recommendations. Delegates from Argentina, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the U.S. presented the group's conclusions during a public forum event at the Peruvian Congress. This event was attended by over 150 individuals—military and civilian intelligence officials, policy-makers, journalists, and members of the NGO community. Challenging questions were raised in response to presentations, and the event generated public discussion on an issue rarely discussed by the Peruvian public.

The trip to Peru provided the international group with a sense of how difficult the process of institutional change in Peru may be, in spite of the democratic opening that has been created since the departure of Fujimori and Montesinos. For example, there is considerable resistance within the military's intelligence agencies to changing the system and minimizing their role in domestic intelligence-gather-



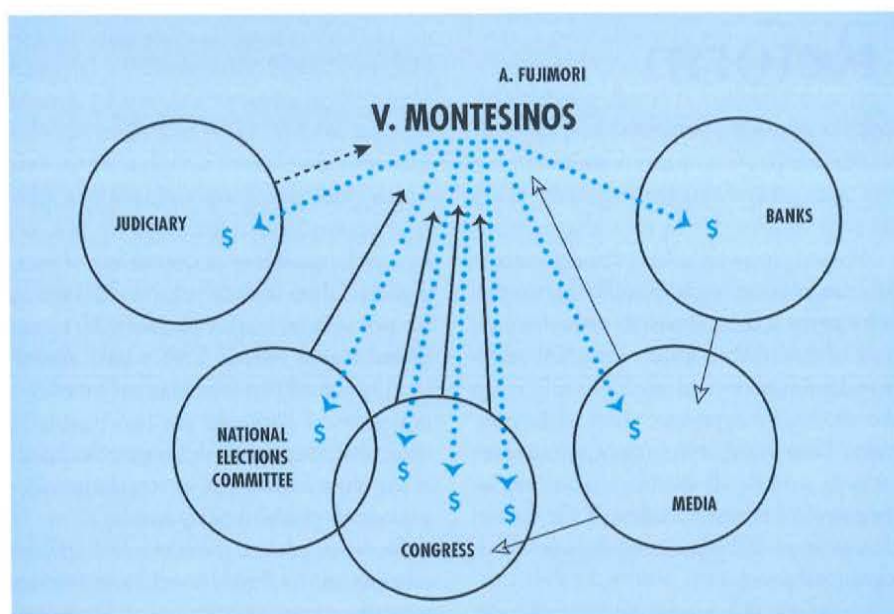
South Africa's Siyabulela Mlombile with Peru's Director of Army Intelligence

ing. Many military officials still believe that an unrestricted collection of information about individuals or groups that the intelligence agencies consider subversive is essential for protecting national security.

On the second day of our stay in Lima, we had a meeting with 75 intelligence officials from the CNI and the three military intelligence agencies. At our request, the participants split into small groups to discuss their reactions and possible objections to our recommendations. One conversation was particularly enlightening. It was the interchange between the director of Peru's army intelligence and Siyabulela Mlombile, our South African delegate, who had spent years as an intelligence agent official

with the African National Congress and subsequently played a role in the post-apartheid intelligence reform process in South Africa.

Mlombile pointed out one of the key points made in our recommendations, which was that the mandate of the military (and its intelligence body) should be solely to protect Peru against foreign threats, while the economic and social development of the country should be left to civilian leaders and institutions.



The above shows the same clientelar network superposed with another resources distribution network, with the flow of economic resources from Montesinos to various groups for illegal purposes.

by the formal organization and respond to a non-formal systemic logic. The assumption that the formal organizational structure determines incentives and opportunities overlooks personal relations as critical to corrupt activities which, due to their illegality, flow through informal channels. If this supposition is correct, the formal structure of the State explains only part of the phenomenon. To understand how corruption works one must understand the structure and function of informal relations (social networks).

In Peru, corruption occurs not due to a lack of bureaucratic controls or to an excessive administrative discretion, but as the result of a political intervention—intentional and systematic—in the State. A complex system of exchange of political resources creates networks of organized corruption that exist despite formal regulations or bureaucratic controls. These social networks are the basis of the institutional continuity that diverts reforms and provides impunity to those involved in corruption.

The “Vladivideos” network reveals the way in which institutions are captured and they explain the mechanisms which enable them to keep a balance in high corruption. Even though it is premature since this article is an advance of a research work in process, the Montesinos case suggests the following:

- The study of corruption cannot be reduced to isolated exchanges.
- Corrupt exchanges respond to a structure of relationships through which a different set of behavioral codes flows.
- Although Montesinos tapes the encounters, the network shows relationships among the various nodes, which predicts its continuity.
- Reform efforts that focus exclusively on formal organizational characteristics will eventually fail. Bad networks can subvert the most carefully organized bureaucracy.
- Destroying bad networks is not enough. Good networks must replace them.

Luis Moreno Ocampo will be a Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor at the Harvard Law School Spring 2003. Ocampo played a crucial role in the trials of the Argentine military related to Argentina's democratic transition in the 1980s. Founder and president of the Argentine Civil Society Organization, Poder Ciudadano, he is also Director of Transparency International for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This perspective was counter to the thinking of the general and many of the other intelligence officials in the room. In Peru, the military is widely regarded as the most highly organized and efficient of institutions, capable of accomplishing more than any of the country's civilian agencies. This attitude permits the military to go beyond its mandate of protecting national security and carry out activities it says are aimed at promoting “development” within the country's borders. Our advisory group feared that such involvement by the military in matters of “development” would be dangerous to citizens' democratic liberties, as well as harmful to the country's civilian institutions.

Given the traditional attitudes that continue to exist within Peru's intelligence community, what, if anything, could our recommendations possibly accomplish? Promoting public discussion and debate was one of our primary aims. Our group knew that it was up to the Peruvians to decide how to craft their new intelligence framework. However, we hoped that the presence of experts from countries around the world that had undergone similar transitions would inspire needed discussion, not only among political leaders and intelligence operatives in Peru, but also among the public.

Our project was also designed to assist Velit Granda with the difficult task of improving coordination of all intelligence activities in

Peru and clarifying the mandate of Peru's national intelligence system. Montesinos had been able to provide leadership over the country's intelligence services by exerting his power through illegal means, such as bribery and extortion. For Velit Granda, a jovial, good-natured person, any successor who intended to uphold the rule of law, coordinating the intelligence activities of Peru's eight highly competitive intelligence bodies would be much more difficult.

The challenge for Peru is to construct an intelligence system that moves beyond the legacy of corruption and spying on ordinary citizens and political opponents to build an institution that functions within the legal framework of the nation. Clearly, this is not easy in a country where corruption is an accepted norm in many national institutions, including the police and the justice system. But if Peru can successfully transform its internal security apparatus into one that protects both democracy and national security, it will surely set a precedent for all of Latin America.

Philip Heymann is James Barr Ames Professor of Law at Harvard University and Faculty Chair of the Project on Justice in Times of Transition. Jenny Ellis, formerly Program Officer at the Project on Justice in Times of Transition, is pursuing a master's degree in public policy at the Kennedy School of Government.

Constitutional Reform

The Best (or Worst) of Both Worlds?

BY CINDY SKACH

"YOU SAY YOU'LL CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION," Beatle John Lennon once wrote. Latin American countries have long been singing this same tune, often blaming their presidential constitutions for the cycles of political and economic turbulence of the past decades. Indeed, presidentialism has not been without fault in many historical incidents of democratic breakdown in the region.

The alternative to presidentialism most often proposed and discussed by practitioners and scholars is parliamentarism—a constitutional type found in stable postwar European democracies, such as the United Kingdom and Germany. But of late, one very intriguing “alternative to the alternative” tends to pop up, as Latin American countries consider constitutional reform *à la française*. Argentina, Venezuela, and Brazil, for example, have all considered the French model at some point during their democratizations.

Why such attraction to the French model? First, the constitution of the French Fifth Republic (1958) has been praised for helping France make a very successful regime transition in the early 1960s. Barely able to pick up the pieces after the turbulent Fourth Republic, still suffering the pain of decolonization, France successfully rediscovered its democracy equilibrium under a semi-presidential constitution. Within a decade, French political parties, once unwilling to cooperate and form stable coalitions, began

Second, semi-presidentialism appears to be a magnificent institutional compromise. Why make a drastic switch to parliamentarism? Latin Americans opting for semi-presidentialism would not have to give up the historically significant office of the president. They could, it is thought, get the best of both worlds: all the benefits of parliamentary government, without the radical change implied by parliamentarism. What a great solution!

Or is it? Looking a bit more closely at its actual structure, one quickly sees that semi-presidentialism is as awkward as it sounds. It is a constitutional type that curiously combines elements of both presidentialism and parliamentarism, and this combination produces conflicting logics. For example, the head of state in this type is usually a directly elected president with substantial constitutional powers. This head of state then shares executive power with a head of government, usually called a prime minister, who is responsible to the legislature.

Under certain party system conditions, a semi-presidential constitution combines the most problematic variety of presidential government (the divided government that Latin America knows well), with the most problematic variety of parliamentary government (the minority government that plagued much of the French Fourth Republic). This yields a nightmarish situation that I've termed *divided minority government*.

injury, the president in this variety of semi-presidentialism is usually also divided against his prime minister (as Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin were in France until recently). These multi-layered, mutually reinforcing political divisions are institutionally structured; they are a consistent consequence of the constitution and its interaction with a country's political party dynamics.

So, what's so attractive about that? Let's continue to the logical conclusion. Divided minority government is particularly vulner-

Divided minority government is particularly vulnerable to institutional conflict and, in the extreme, to democratic breakdown.

to coalesce into a workable system with coalitions that supported not only prime ministers, but also presidents. Given Latin America's history of inchoate party systems and presidents without legislative support, the French about-face is fascinating. Can it be emulated? If the constitution played a role in this dramatic change, isn't such a constitution worth a try in the Americas?

In such a scenario, the president is divided from the legislature (as in the U.S. during Bill Clinton's second term), with all the deadlock and conflict that this division implies. At the same time, the legislature is divided against itself (as in the last years of the Weimar Republic), and may be utterly unable to support any government for a sustained period of time. Adding insult to



able to institutional conflict and, in the extreme, to democratic breakdown. The absence of any clear majority in the legislature can easily lead to an unstable scenario. On one hand, legislative coalitions constantly shift, and the government inevitably reshuffles. On the other hand, there is continuous presidential intervention and use of reserved powers. We witnessed this vicious circle in one of the newest semi-presidential countries: Russia. Under Boris Yeltsin, the greater the legislative immobilism, governmental instability, and cabinet reshuffling resulting from failed majorities in the Duma, the more institutional incentives Yeltsin had to dominate the political process and rule by decree.

The real problems with semi-presidentialism start here. A divided minority government can be a slippery slope to dictator-

ship: a president who relies extensively on decrees and ignores the democratically elected legislature moves the country into a state of hyper-presidentialism, narrowing the decision-making arena to a small number of hand-picked, non-party technocrats. This technocratization of cabinets hinders the democratic principles of inclusion and contestation; it divides the government even further from the legislature; and it cramps parliamentary responsibility. Sound familiar?

So how did France make it? France's experience with semi-presidentialism may have been simply exceptional. France's party system institutionalized relatively quickly within the first decade of the Fifth Republic, evidenced by a steady decline in electoral volatility. Moreover, the strongly majoritarian electoral system in place since 1958

began to encourage two, center-leaning majorities in France. The Fifth Republic's first president, Charles de Gaulle, gradually became less averse to political parties, and even began to lean on them for support. Successive presidents of the Fifth Republic followed suit. These favorable conditions encouraged the coincidental presidential and legislative majorities that kept France out of divided minority government for almost the entire Fifth Republic—and made semi-presidentialism workable.

How likely is it that countries such as Argentina or Venezuela would have such favorable initial conditions for workable semi-presidentialism? The track record to date does not look good. Many Latin American democracies continue to have poorly institutionalized party systems, presidents who continue to present themselves as standing "above" political parties, and proportional representation electoral formulas designed to allow for multiple parties in the legislature. Thus, countries switching to semi-presidentialism will most likely be born in divided minority government and have a difficult time emerging from it.

Yet, as John Carey argues in this same issue, perhaps the tide is slowly changing, as Latin American legislatures become more effective institutions. Should party systems in the region finally consolidate, and if governmental crises continue to be resolved through democratic institutions rather than outside of them, a window of opportunity may open up for constitutional reform. Only then might countries be advised to move gently away from presidentialism, *de jure*, thereby consolidating some of the (still too rare) *de facto* parliamentary-like behavior we seem to be witnessing in the region.

Perhaps constitutional change is necessary in Latin America. But the sequencing of other changes that could support constitutional reform, such as the institutionalization of political parties, the strengthening of legislatures, and the general attitude of political elites, should not be ignored. As even John Lennon cautioned, "You say you'll change the constitution. Well, you know, we all want to change your head."

Cindy Skach is Assistant Professor of Government at Harvard University. She is currently working on a cross-regional study of the complexity of constitutional performance.



Colombian Congress: Latin American legislatures are becoming more effective institutions.



AMILCAR CHALLU <challu@fas.harvard.edu>

Legislatures and Political Accountability

Building Credibility

BY JOHN CAREY

IN MARCH 2000, WHILE RESEARCHING legislatures in several Latin American countries, I found myself in Caracas. This promised to be a quiet stop given that Venezuela was, at the time, without a real legislature. Its Congress had been supplanted the previous year by an assembly summoned by President Hugo Chávez to rewrite the constitution. That body had disbanded once the new charter was ratified. Elections for a new National Assembly would not happen for another four months, and the legislature, such as it was, was an appointed 20-member committee known as the *Congresillo*—the little Congress.

Legislative support staff were still around, however, and largely unoccupied. This presented me with an opportunity to explore my interests in the details of procedure, and in how information about what goes on inside

the legislature gets to those outside. In a control room above the main parliamentary chamber, the technical support staff showed me the elaborate equipment for recording legislators' attendance, speeches and debate, and votes. In the empty chamber, we gave the machines a test run. My request to see records of some actual votes, however, could not be obliged—the machines had never been used.

The voting machines had been installed three years before, and the technicians had stood ready during the last years of the previous Congress, the months of deliberation in the Constituent Assembly, and the occasional meetings of the *Congresillo*. Yet they had never been directed by legislative leaders to record each member vote on a single bill or amendment. As a result, only the bottom-line result—approval or rejection—found its way into the official transcripts.

For those outside the legislative sessions, there was no record of who voted how.

VOTING, RECORD-KEEPING, AND CREDIBILITY

It's hard to imagine U.S. politics without legislative voting records. At every election, each candidate's record is scrutinized—most closely by her or his opponent—and analyzed by interest groups, potential contributors, in campaign commercials and literature, in candidate debates, and in the press. Legislators, in turn, cast an eye toward their next election every time they cast a vote.

Outside the United States, and in Latin America in particular, not all legislatures

Common citizens don't talk about whether presidentialism or parliamentarianism works best, but it affects their daily lives in Latin America.

fit this pattern. The Brazilian and Chilean congresses record most votes and post the records on their websites. Peru began to do the same a couple of years ago, and just this year Argentina adopted the practice for some votes. Mexico and Nicaragua record most votes, but public access to that information is limited. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela record very few votes and access to those that are recorded is spotty.

Even when legislative votes are public, the vast majority of citizens are not watching closely. Most people would probably be hard pressed to think of a less engrossing pastime than examining the record vote by vote. Nevertheless, journalists, civic organizations, and other politicians reliably transfer the record into the public discourse, and citizens can count on learning about anything exceptional at election time.

We are just beginning to learn about how political accountability works in Latin America's democracies. Much of the region adopted civilian, elected government in the 1970s and '80s after periods of authoritarian rule. In the early years after these transitions, scholarly attention focused on whether the democratic experiments would survive. By and large, they have, and attention is shifting to how the relationship between citizens and their representatives operates. Do politicians get rewarded for good performance and punished for bad? What counts as acceptable and unacceptable performance? Are citizens paying attention, and can they get the information they need in order to demand accountability?

The news from many countries suggests that citizens are less than satisfied with the performance of their representatives and the accountability produced by their political systems. Argentina's impromptu citizens' committees (*caceroleros*) and roaming groups of street protestors (*piqueteros*) sum up their attitude toward the whole political class with the slogan "*Que se vayan todos!*"—roughly "Throw them all out!" Elsewhere, public opinion surveys frequently show legislatures near the bottom of the list of public institutions in terms of public trust and confidence.

By itself, making the record public does not guarantee accountability; but voting is the bottom line across legislatures. All legislatures make a wide array of critical policy decisions, and almost all important leg-

islative decisions must be put to a vote.

Without a record of who voted how, it is extremely difficult to hold representatives' feet to the fire for the decisions they make, and for elections to serve as vehicles for accountability. Legislators often would rather not have to defend their actions publicly, but establishing their credibility depends on it.

PARLIAMENTARISM COMES TO LATIN AMERICA

Enhancing the credibility of legislatures is particularly important because legislatures have begun to play an increasingly pivotal role in Latin American politics. Hidden amid the more spectacular recent headlines—of economic meltdown in Argentina and the contagion to Uruguay, of civil unrest and the failed military coup in Venezuela, of the endemic violence in Colombia, and the ongoing corruption investigations in Peru—is a pattern that may mark a fundamental constitutional change in the region's presidential regimes. They have started operating as though they are parliamentary.

Under presidentialism, the chief executive is popularly elected and serves for a fixed

Legislatures have begun to play an increasingly pivotal role in Latin American politics.

term alongside a separately elected legislature. In parliamentary systems, only the legislature is popularly elected and it, in turn, chooses the executive, whose members serve only so long as they enjoy majority support in the legislature. If the executive loses the confidence of the legislature, the cabinet can be removed and replaced at any time by a majority vote.

So much for the political science review. How is this relevant to current Latin American politics? The last few years have seen a number of political crises in the region triggered by precipitous drops in support for presidents: in Ecuador in 1997 and 2000, in Peru in 2000, in Argentina last December, and then in Venezuela this past April. Critics of presidential government point out that these moments can easily become regime crises because there is no constitutional mechanism for removing a chief executive who has lost the ability to govern, as there is under parliamentarism.

Looking only slightly deeper into Latin American history, it is easy to find occasions

where government crises, and conflicts between presidents and legislatures in particular, triggered complete breakdowns of democracy. In Brazil in 1964, Peru in 1968, Chile in 1973, and Argentina in 1976, Latin American militaries stepped in and displaced civilian politicians, imposing long periods of authoritarian rule.

The experience of the 1960s and 1970s suggested that presidentialism, with its rigid separation of powers and fixed terms, was at least partly responsible for ushering in dictatorships. By this account, the trigger mechanism was conflict between the executive and legislative branches, which induced some decisive actor—the military, or perhaps the president himself—to resolve the impasse by casting aside constitutional restraints.

During the hemispheric transition back to civilian, elected government that started in the late 1970s, would-be political reformers in a number of countries pushed constitutional reforms to replace presidentialism with parliamentarism. The idea was greeted with skepticism by incumbent politicians reluctant to change the rules of the

game under which they had come to power. When a 1993 referendum offering Brazilian voters the option of changing to parliamentarism was rejected, the prospects for such a radical reform appeared dead.

So the constitutions still spell out presidential systems. But the ground underneath them has shifted. One change is that Latin American militaries are now unable, or unwilling, to intervene in politics for the long haul. Now, when presidents and legislatures find themselves at a stand-off, neither necessarily holds the option of knocking on the barracks door to ask for help. Another change is at the international level. Latin America's major democracies are now willing to isolate, diplomatically and economically, neighboring governments that breach democratic procedure.

The effect of these changes is visible in how government crises in the region are resolved. In the past decade, there have been thirteen regime crises in which one or the other branch has been removed preemptively. In eleven of those cases, the president

has departed, and the office has been filled, most frequently, with a congressionally chosen successor—precisely the safety valve built into parliamentarism that made it attractive to Latin American reformers.

This norm does not conform to the letter of Latin America's constitutions, which remain presidential. Nevertheless, the practice of presidential replacement by legislatures has not attracted opposition from neighboring governments, as do military coups. Moreover, these moves appear to have come to be understood by Latin American politicians as the new, informal rules of the game.

Consider the approach of Argentine President Eduardo Duhalde as he presented controversial banking legislation in April that caused even legislators in his own Peronist party to balk. In a press conference, the president suggested that, "If the Parliament is not in agreement, it will have to elect another president."

Duhalde was seeking to make the bill an issue of confidence in his government—a strategy taken directly from the parliamentary playbook. He failed in the immediate term. His bill foundered, and he did not back up his implicit threat to resign. However, the mere fact that the president would even present the initiative in such a manner indicates a fundamental change in the strategic political environment—one not reflected in the constitution, but increasingly reflected in practice.

Venezuelan President Chávez has not yet begun offering policy initiatives as matters of government confidence, but after an aborted coup temporarily removed him in April, the anti-*Chavistas* have obsessed over how to make the condition permanent. Meanwhile, splits and instability have reduced Chávez's once-overwhelming legislative coalition to a narrow majority. Seizing on this trend, the opposition now focuses on building an Assembly majority to dump Chávez, despite the fact that the Venezuelan Constitution does not formally provide for a no-confidence vote on the president.

STRONG LEGISLATURES, TRANSPARENCY, AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

What do these developments suggest about the condition of democracy in Latin America? Although breaches in constitutional pro-



Colombia legislature: recording votes?

cedure of any sort are not encouraging, legislative replacements of presidents are generally peaceful affairs, and have a stronger claim to democratic legitimacy than military replacement. In the broad view, stronger legislatures in Latin America would improve overall prospects for democratic performance.

Many countries in the region have historically been characterized by dominant presidents and ineffectual legislatures. However, the best records of democratic governance—Costa Rica and Uruguay—are found in countries where legislatures are viable counterparts to the president. For all their

We are just beginning to learn about how political accountability works in Latin America's democracies.

unwieldiness, legislatures are more inclusive institutions than presidencies, affording some voice to groups shut out of executive office. Systems with stronger legislatures may not make decisions quickly, but they are often able to resolve highly charged policy conflicts through compromise and accommodation. Decision making processes in legislatures also have the potential to be public and visible, providing a measure of transparency often lacking in the executive branch.

It is here that the matter of public voting records assumes prominence—even in some environments where other, more obviously pressing issues command attention. This past August, Alvaro Uribe assumed Colombia's presidency in the midst of escalating violence in that country's civil war, including a mortar attack on the presidential inauguration itself. Uribe is well known

for his promises to take a hard military line against Colombia's rebel groups. Yet the first legislative proposal he sent to Congress was a package of reforms touted as enhancing the transparency of the policymaking process and rebuilding the credibility of lawmakers. The first item in Uribe's list of proposed reforms is that all votes in the Colombian Congress be recorded and immediately made public.

Uribe's proposal may fail in the legislature—and if so, most likely on an unrecorded vote. His priorities, moreover, may be misplaced in the context of Colombia's wider political crisis. Yet the significance he attaches to the

apparently mundane issue of recorded legislative voting is arresting at a time when his country's political institutions are under such severe stress. It may also be indicative of the importance of boosting the credibility of Latin America's lawmakers in a period when the principle of establishing governments through competitive elections appears to have taken hold, but when public disillusionment with the performance of those governments is widespread.

Legislatures have moved front and center in Latin American politics of late, and they are struggling on various fronts to adapt

to the position. Moves to improve transparency in some countries are encouraging and, if not always greeted enthusiastically by legislators themselves, are necessary to reduce credibility deficits. Constitutions remain presidential, but the means of resolving government crises in the region has come to resemble parliamentarism. The crises themselves are troubling, but if their outcomes herald the development of more powerful and more accountable legislatures, we should welcome the trend.

John M. Carey is Associate Professor of Political Science at Washington University in St. Louis, and will be the David Rockefeller Visiting Associate Professor of Government at Harvard during spring semester 2003. He has written extensively on legislative-executive relations in Latin America.

HACIA DEMOCRACY

EDUCATING THE YOUTH OF THE AMERICAS FOR DEMOCRACY

Harvard student organization HACIA Democracy has the ability to go out to the world and touch the youth of our continent. I was a freshman in high school in Panama when I first heard about HACIA Democracy. Participating in HACIA Democracy was a life changing experience; six years later I am still witnessing how the experience positively changed me, my fellow college students, hundreds of high school students throughout the Americas, and most importantly, democracy's future.

HACIA Democracy, an acronym for Harvard Association Cultivating Inter-American Democracy, forms a convenient pun since "hacia" in Spanish means "towards." This describes our objective of building a path towards democracy in a region where much remains to be done to consolidate and strengthen democracy. HACIA Democracy organizes a yearly government simulation conference modeled after the Organization of American States (OAS). Conference delegates, all high school students, represent a country in the OAS committees, a political party in a National Congress, or take the positions of judges and lawyers in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Student delegates are expected to carefully research and prepare a specific position. At the end of the conference, all committees come up with one resolution for each debate topic.

After Panama, I participated the following year in San José, Costa Rica. As a member of an OAS committee, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, I participated in discussions about education, global warming, and foreign direct investment. For five intense days, I was challenged by my peers, my Harvard co-chairs, and by the seriousness of the subjects. By the end of the conference, I had learned to use consensus building and compromise to arrive at tangible solutions to a few of the problems of our hemisphere. I also made great friendships with students from other countries that survive to this day, and discovered I wanted to make public service my vocational goal.

Three years later, as the President of HACIA Democracy, those days in Costa Rica seem very far away indeed. I now understand that the conference's success lies in the organization here at Harvard, which works in a similar way to our conferences abroad. By working together, we learn key elements essential to the democratic process such as multi-lateral negotiations, consensus building, and cooperation.

The HACIA Democracy community is a small but lively network of 22 students who work together for a full year organizing the conference and events at Harvard to create awareness about Latin American affairs. The seven-member Executive Board is responsible for organizing the conference and other events, while staff members co-chair committees during the conference. Staff members do extensive research to write a 15-page bulletin sent to committee members to inform them on conference debate themes.

HACIA Democracy exposes its members to firsthand learning about leadership, democratic institutions, Latin American businesses, and the importance of human resources by developing contacts in the conference country and outreach here at Harvard.

To further our own education about democracy before we start to teach others, former HACIA Democracy president Francisco Flores established the Harvard Democratic Forum, which brings prominent leaders and public figures to discuss hemispheric affairs with HACIA Democracy staff and others. The year-old Democratic Forum has generated discussions between Harvard students and Latin American politicians such as former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo and former Peruvian president Valentín Paniagua.

The host country for next year's conference—our ninth—will be Guatemala, and we are already working with Harvard professors to develop contacts there. One recent and significant change in HACIA Democracy has been expanding conference participation to public high school students through scholarships. We are emphasizing developing contacts and fundraising to ensure more involvement of public high school students in the upcoming conference.

This past year, I worked closely with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education to organize the selection, preparation, lodging, and student transportation of 25 public high school students, all of whom we funded thanks to the hard work of our Business Director. Although the public school students only had one day of preparation, compared to the couple of months the other 200 students received in their private school curriculum, they were



HACIA Democracy committee session.

active, eloquent, and involved. The youngest girl, 13-year-old Gladys, illustrates the transformation of these students as the conference progressed. Very shy at first, probably intimidated by the age and knowledge of the other students, Gladys was soon actively participating, cooperating with ideas for resolutions, at times even leading her fellow delegates in discussion. Public school participation has made the conference finally live up to its ideal of real democratic representation.

Maria Luisa Romero, a junior concentrating in Government, is the president of HACIA Democracy. She hopes to earn a certificate in Latin American Studies from DRCLAS. For further information on HACIA Democracy, contact her at <mlromero@fas.harvard.edu> or visit <www.hcs.harvard.edu/~haciadem/>.

Education for Democracy

Preparing the Next Generation of Democratic Citizens

BY ELEONORA VILLEGAS-REIMERS

THE BREAKDOWN OF SOME DEMOCRATIC regimes in Latin America in the 1970s challenged the widespread belief of many in the region that with education came democracy. This perceived relation between education and democracy was at the heart of the creation of systems of public education. In 1816, Argentine educator Domingo Faustino Sarmiento proposed the creation of "the popular school" so that children of different backgrounds would come together to be prepared as citizens of the newly independent American republics. He also warned that the expansion of education was a necessary condition for effective citizenship. His ideas extended to many countries in the region and were particularly influential in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, the countries with the most established education systems and with the highest education levels. As democracy collapsed in these countries in the 1970s, many questioned the value of education in preserving democracy. This question is of renewed importance today as the shadows of authoritarianism have begun to appear again on the horizon of several Latin American countries.

Even though education by itself cannot directly change the economic, political, or social structures of a country, education can contribute to democracy and democratic citizenship in two specific ways. The first is by offering equal opportunities to children of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In the last century, many Latin American nations have expanded access to school to accomplish this goal, and basic education is free and compulsory in all countries. However, that has not been enough. A second way in which education can contribute to democracy is by preparing citizens who know, understand, and choose democracy by teaching them specific knowledge, skills, and values or attitudes needed to become democratic citizens. While there is a rich tradition in Latin America of developing programs to teach students about human rights, peaceful conflict resolution, and democratic governance, many have been private initiatives

of non-governmental organizations, implemented at a small scale, and of short duration. Government initiatives to teach children about democracy have been limited to courses on Civic Education; but usually these are taught in highly theoretical form, in very authoritarian and traditional styles, and largely disconnected from the students' daily lives and experiences (Villegas-Reimers, 1994). It is worth mentioning, also, that Civic Education without an emphasis on democracy has been successfully used by authoritarian regimes to support their undemocratic organizations and practices. For example, the Citizenship Education curriculum of the former Soviet Union and other countries such as China are good examples of effective Citizenship Education. However, they are curricula that prepare "good" citizens who understand that government is responsible for making decisions and creating rules and regulations, and that their role as citizens is only to obey. That type of education never taught them how to participate in their societies.

A democratic system works effectively when all people are willing and able to participate in the political, economic, governmental, and social processes of their communities and their societies, and when social and political structures are organized based on democratic principles that emphasize respect for individual human rights. While general education and civic education contribute to preparing citizens, more is needed. Citizens must develop democratic abilities and skills, moral values that reflect democratic ideals and principles, motivation to get involved and act, and knowledge of democracy, its principles and practices. Only then can they be fully willing and able to participate in their society's democratic functioning. These skills, knowledge, and values must be taught explicitly in schools and supported openly before the younger generation of citizens can become likely to understand democratic ideals and behave democratically. This is especially true in societies with emergent or so called "fragile" democracies, where democratic processes are not easily wit-

nessed in the everyday media or public practices of a number of social institutions. In such societies, children and adolescents are not routinely exposed to these processes.

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

People in societies that want to prepare citizens to believe in and think and behave like democratic citizens must commit to the explicit and purposeful process of teaching and promoting the development of democratic knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This is known as *education for democracy* or *education for democratic citizenship*. And it is different from (although not unrelated to) *democratic education*, which refers to an education system that has a democratic structure and follows democratic processes; and different from the *democratization of education*, which refers to the opening of access to education to all members of a society.

An effective program of education for democracy teaches and promotes the development of specific knowledge, skills, and values or attitudes that are necessary to live in a democracy.

WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE?

Democratic citizens must develop what John Patrick, a leading educator for democracy in the United States, calls the development of



MAGDA KOWALCZYKOWSKI - cmlowalcz@fas.harvard.edu



Clockwise from left: Kids at a Lima school, Diana Fajardo, who works with PROMESA, an international health, service, and training organization, conducts a leadership workshop in Las Tablas, Hoya Grande, Moroceli, Honduras; Kids organize to protest drug use in Puno, Peru. Every day at noon, children protest along a theme such as HIV awareness, economic justice, or health care.

intellectual capital, and what South African educator Brenda Leibowitz calls civic literacy. That is, they must learn about what democracy is, how societies and governments are organized, how governments function, and about the history of their society. They must also have basic knowledge of economic, political, legal and social structures and systems, of how they work and function. They must know about the constitutions of their countries, and about universal human rights. In this time of international and global awareness, citizens must also know and understand international relations. They must learn how democracy and democratic processes and structures are created; how democracy works and how it is sustainable. Also, they must understand why societies choose democratic principles and organizations. Finally, they must learn and understand that in democracy, everyone's voice must be listened to, that decisions are made by majority vote, and that the rights of the minority are to be respected and protected.

WHAT KIND OF SKILLS?

Individuals can only function effectively as democratic citizens when they have the skills that allow them to participate actively in soci-

ety. They must know how to read and write, so that they can gather complex information, understand it, and participate in arguments and high-level decision-making processes effectively. Only with these skills well developed they will be able to participate in what Stotsky (1999) calls civic participatory writing. They must also know how to engage in true dialogue and processes of conflict resolution and negotiation—what D. Hess calls “discussions of controversial public issues” (*Teaching students to discuss controversial public issues* (ERIC Digest). Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies).

They must learn how to cooperate, think critically and independently, and know how to evaluate pros and cons of alternative solutions to problems.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES

The values of democracy, those of respect and tolerance (both individual and political), responsibility, integrity, self-discipline, justice, freedom, and human rights, among others, are not innate human values. They are learned and must be taught as explicitly and clearly as democratic knowledge and skills are taught. This element of education for democracy is possibly the most controversial and difficult

to plan and implement, as many fear that teaching values should not be part of school curriculum, but of family instruction and practices. However, democracy is founded on specific values that must be explicitly labeled, identified, practiced, and promoted in group settings, not just in the family, so that children learn that values are not just private and personal choices, but also choices that have public and social consequences.

It is inspiring to see the efforts that many emergent democracies, such as countries of the former Soviet Union and South Africa, have made in the past decade to educate their citizens about how to live in democracy. These societies have not only reorganized themselves and their institutional structures and processes to reflect working democracies. They have also developed and implemented strong curricula of education for democracy beginning in elementary schools, as they have realized that younger generations need to be taught how to live in this new system of governance. Many countries in Latin America have also supported the development of curricula at the elementary level that emphasizes education for democracy. Colombia, Paraguay and Mexico, among others, are good examples of such efforts.



Diana Fajardo of the PROMESA team teaches basic skills for the development of a community bank in Cienaga, San Antonio de Oriente, Honduras.

Even in societies with traditionally strong democracies such as the United States, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 have pointed to the importance of supporting and promoting the explicit education of the younger generations to promote their understanding and knowledge of democratic practices. A strong curriculum that approaches democracy from the cognitive, behavioral and emotional point of view and that is planned and implemented in developmentally appropriate ways is possibly the most

complexity as the children move on with in the educational system.

Teaching methods and practices should reflect democratic processes rather than authoritarian styles. Teachers should emphasize debates, dialogue, conversations, and projects that require group and individual work. According to recent scholarly studies, some of the most successful strategies and methods to teach education for democracy include the use of case studies, service learning, experiential learning, and cooperative learning. Other successful methods use literature, international comparisons of cases and/or of constitutions, discussion of controversial public issues, and civic writing (or writing publicly to advocate for a particular issue, candidate, law, regulation, etc.). All these techniques respond to individual needs and yet teach the individual to work in groups, to negotiate, advocate, listen to others, and to explain his or her point of view.

The school organization should be reflective of democratic structures. Students should learn about democratic structures in schools, the first institution with which they

Education by itself cannot directly change the economic, political, or social structures of a country, but it can contribute to democracy and democratic citizenship.

effective way of preparing the next generation of democratic citizens and leaders. These are some suggestions for action:

The content of the curriculum must be carefully examined to include concepts and information necessary to understand democracy. It is not enough to ask children and adolescents to memorize concepts and other pieces of information out of a meaningful context. The curriculum must present an integrated and very practical perspective on democracy, what it is, how it is organized, its history, politics, etc.

Principles of human development should guide the development and implementation of the curriculum so that all activities are planned and implemented in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, democratic principles are very abstract concepts, something that only older children might be able to understand well. However, they can be taught in very concrete ways so that even young children begin to grasp basic concepts and ideas that can then increase in

develop a relationship outside of their families. The structure of the schools should be such that students' voices are listened to and taken into account in meaningful discussions and decisions that affect all members of the community.

The initial preparation of teachers and all processes that support their life-long process of professional development must begin to pay more attention to the role that teachers play in educating the next generation of democratic citizens and leaders. Few countries include in their teacher preparation curriculum education for democracy content, skills, or practices (Villegas-Reimers, 1994). And that needs to be changed as it is well known that in order for education reforms to be effective and successful teachers must be included both as objects and agents of change.

The development of instructional materials that support the contents and practices described above is essential to support the work that takes place in the classrooms.

Education for democracy is already a reality in many countries around the world. In some countries, this type of education occurs in all schools at a national level. In many others, a few schools have smaller projects for some of their students. Both are good signs that it can be done. In addition, a number of international organizations and partnerships that support these efforts are great allies in the process of planning, implementing, and strengthening existing programs (both in schools and in non-formal settings). In a 2000 seminar on the new Indonesian Civic Education, Charles Quigley discussed Civitas International as an example of the new global trends in civic education. Civitas gathers together about 90 centers around the world, including many in Latin America, and sponsors an international program called Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program. The organization also hosts a website (www.civnet.org) that provides information, links to other web sites of interest, and a significant amount of materials and teaching resources. Other good examples of networks of organizations that work for education for democracy in Latin America are *Conciencia* (www.concienciadigital.com), *Participa: Cruzada por la Participación Ciudadana*, and the *Red Interamericana para la Democracia* (www.redinter.org); all are networks of organizations that support and promote the work of civil society in Latin America. Initiatives like these are signs that education for democratic citizenship can be carried out, and that it is a necessary component of the process of strengthening local, organizational, and national democracies.

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers has a doctoral degree in Human Development from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and teaches at Wheelock College in Boston. She has done several studies on values education, civic education, and education for democracy in Latin America, including Civic Education in the School Systems of Latin America and the Caribbean (Working Papers No 3. Education and Human Resources Division, Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development, 1994), cited in this article. She is currently writing a comparative review of the literature on these topics.

Children and Democracy

Focus on Costa Rica

BY MARY "MAYA" CARLSON WITH FELTON EARLS, AND CLOTILDE FONSECA

CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE CITIZENS. It's important to keep that fact in mind, and to understand that political participation in a democratic society involves much more than voting. In our work we emphasize the concept of a participatory democracy in which the public deliberation of citizens (including young non-voters) leads to legitimate lawmaking. We hold that child and adult citizens are both capable and deserving of assuming deliberative roles in the democratic functioning of their communities and nations.

We were initially apprehensive on a recent visit to Costa Rica, one of the first since the establishment of the Task Force on Children and Democracy. We met with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, a commission of three principal magistrates selected by the Supreme Court of Justice to monitor the national electoral process and democratic practices. In this meeting arranged by our close collaborator, Clotilde Fonseca, we presented our proposal to involve elementary students in deliberative programs to address the State of the Nation, an annual process in which adult citizens evaluate the state of their democracy. We were prepared for the Tribunal to express a high level of skepticism about bringing ele-

mentary students into the process of a national democratic audit.

When the Chief Magistrate looked at us sternly and said, "I really have a serious problem with this idea," we knew our program was doomed. But he continued, "Why wait until elementary school, shouldn't your program start with preschool children?"

His comments encouraged our project in Costa Rica, an outgrowth of our decade of observations on children and democracy and the official establishment of the Task Force on Children and Democracy.

When Felton "Tony" Earls and I decided in the early 1990s to design a course on the "Urban Child in Global Perspective" at the Harvard School of Public Health, we came across the remarkable publications of UNICEF based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most universally endorsed of all human rights treaties. From UNICEF we learned the importance of situating our teaching and our research in a CRC framework. Through UNICEF generosity, we visited government and community programs for socially- and economically-marginalized children (referred to by UNICEF as "children in especially difficult circumstances").

We visited Brazil, Mexico, Barbados and Costa Rica, as well as programs in Eastern Europe and Eastern and Southern Africa. We met with children from the circus schools in poor neighborhoods of Rio and elementary school students from San José computer laboratories. We talked with families and other supportive adults.

The Task Force on Children and Democracy, a non-profit organization officially established last year in Massachusetts, grew from concerns developed from our experiences.

We conceive of democracy as embedded in participation and deliberation, with a strong emphasis on the participatory rights in the CRC. These rights include a child's right to expression, the child's right to an opinion given due consideration by adults, access to appropriate information and to freedom of association; all in "accordance with the age and maturity of the child." In our research projects, children are recognized as agents in society, not as immature objects to be excluded from deliberative and other political processes. Being respected members of the public discourse provides young citizens with real life experiences that enable development of language and reasoning skills, especially in perspective taking and critical

LEFT: RACHEL ECKSTEIN, OSTERMAN <rachelsterman@dartmouth.edu>
RIGHT: MAGDA KOWALCZYKOWSKI <mkgowalcz@fas.harvard.edu>



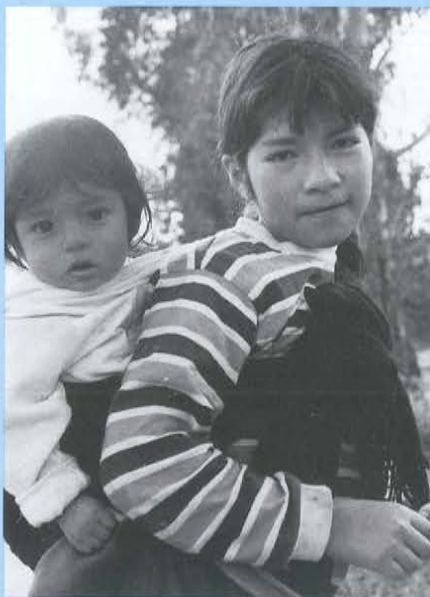
Children and youth are citizens; left: kids in Ecuador; right: children in Peru.

thinking fundamental in an equitable and sustainable democratic society.

The creation of the Task Force follows a decade long process of discovery and synthesis of theory relating to childhood, democracy and human rights. Our field experiences led to an awareness of the importance of obtaining local knowledge through the eyes and the words of children. Our theory and research is now based on a rights and ecological perspective formalized in the mission and goals of the Task Force. As an extra-academic organization, we believe this structure allows us the freedom to set ethical and multidisciplinary standards that exceed those of the academy. The Task Force provides a platform to explore new situations and establish true collaborations with children in the context of both adversity and advantage.

The Task Force aims to foster global cooperation by advancing programs and research to promote child development and well-being. We seek to collaborate with local academic and community organizations to address ecological factors that limit (or enhance) the capacity of children and youth to participate and influence the democratic process in their societies.

The Task Force promotes the engagement of children and youth in identifying the conditions in their communities that are important to them and to their peers, families and neighbors. This is the first step in encouraging and supporting their genuine involvement in analyses of the conditions affecting their well-being, security, social support and resource provisions.



Children are recognized as agents in society: sisters in Ecuador.

seca's Omar Dengo Foundation) is based will enable and facilitate children in Costa Rica to address the contemporary conditions of their democratic society.

Success in Costa Rica should be achieved in such a way that it can impact children in adjoining nations. Although these nations do not have the strong history of democratic traditions as does Costa Rica, the benefits of expanding this effort is twofold. It assists in strengthening democracy through education and schooling, and adds the voice of child citizens to the regional analysis of sustainable human development that the State of the Nation project already pursues through gen-

capacities. The recognition that my two decades of neurobehavioral research were not addressing the contemporary conditions that threatened the development and well-being of children led to my spending a year at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government (KSG) to study the ethics and politics of international development. Clotilde Fonseca and I were classmates in the KSG class of 1992 and were reunited in San José at a UNICEF meeting in 1996. Together with Felton Earls (and Clotilde's husband, Francisco Antonio Pacheco, former Minister of Education under President Oscar Arias) we have exchanged many visits and big ideas in the process of bringing together child rights, citizenship, democratic education and technology.

Earls' experience also complemented mine. In preparing for this article, Earls observed, "As a child psychiatrist and epidemiologist, I've taught and practiced in an academic/clinical setting as well as conducting population-based studies of child mental health. Having worked on issues of child mental health in many parts of the world over a long career, awareness of children as citizens came relatively late and suddenly. I find myself scrambling to correct a deficit derived from restrictions in my training and previous collaborations.

"The Task Force on Children and Democracy has provided a place to work collaboratively to create an ethical and scientific framework that integrates human ecology, social justice, and child development. The Omar Dengo Foundation/Task Force collaboration represents the clearest articulation of our mission and is described below by Clotilde Fonseca."

From a Costa Rican perspective, Fonseca added, "Thus, access to both learning and technology becomes a fundamental precondition to equitable development and a sustainable democracy."

The Omar Dengo Foundation (FOD), a private, non-profit organization started in 1987, has worked closely with the Ministry of Public Education on a large-scale program to introduce computer technology into rural and low-income urban schools throughout Costa Rica that today reaches one out of every two students in national public schools.

This collaboration seeks to create computer-based environments fostering creativity, cognitive development and self-efficacy, and not simply providing technology fluency. Children working in teams create their

The Task Force on Children and Democracy, a non-profit organization officially established last year in Massachusetts, grew out of the concerns we developed from our experiences.

Yet, one could question how political authorities in Latin American countries would judge programs based on the CRC and the concept of a participatory democracy that include children and youth.

In our efforts (which we still timidly restrict to elementary school children), we find strength in the appreciation (and admonition) of the Tribunal in San José. We believe the ethical, political and educational principles upon which the Task Force (and Fon-

uine collaboration with adult citizens.

In forming the Task Force to join ideas of children and democracy, our professional training and research (and service) experience led us to our present collaboration. My early training in psychology and neurobiology was directed towards understanding the social development of non-human primates and how early experience (or early brain damage) affected the maturation of the central nervous system and related sensory and learning



Left: Children wait at a Partners in Health clinic in rural Haiti; right: A woman teacher helps a child, seated at a table with two other children, to draw, in a UNICEF-assisted government pre-school daycare for working mothers in Bolivia.

own products instead of being passive users of commercial software.

FOD's research shows us that students have been empowered by the teamwork and exposure to technology independently of their socio-economic backgrounds. Unless technology is incorporated into educational initiatives, the socioeconomic and digital divides will continue to widen, thereby jeopardizing the human rights and socioeconomic stability of our democratic society.

Recently we began a collaboration with the State of the Nation Project on Sustainable Human Development, along with the Task Force on Children and Democracy, to bridge the gap between social science research and civic action. Since 1994, the State of the Nation Project has involved civil society actors to assess human development indices through suggesting what indices were most important, monitoring how the indices were measured, and in evaluating the quality of available information. When citizens are involved in research on their society, the information obtained is seen as politically legitimate, allowing the outcomes to be accepted as trustworthy by adult society. This program has contributed significantly to the identification of central elements for the country's national and community agenda.

In 1998, the Omar Dengo Foundation and State of the Nation launched a joint project that allowed children in the less developed Guanacaste region to think and exchange views on "the Costa Rica we have and the Costa Rica we want to build." Elementary school students and teachers participated in the National Educational Informatics

Program to address community problems, look for solutions through community research, and formulate computer-based projects through which they presented their views, expressed their concerns and proposed solutions. These, in turn, were presented during the VII Children's Educational Informatics Conference that ODF and the Ministry of Public Education held in 1999. This successful initiative revealed how young kids can be involved in identifying community problems, analyzing and communicating through the use of technology when they work within the context of constructionist learning environments, such as the one developed by Seymour Papert at MIT.

Working with the Children's Task Force and the State of the Nation allowed us to bridge the gap between school-based learning and civic action. It has also made it possible for us to address issues while bridging the digital divide in a framework based on the creation of Internet-based, innovative learning environments focused on capacity building and meaningful appropriation. Our joint project with the Children's Task Force and State of the Nation focuses on perspective taking, deliberation, consensus building and active participation of children as citizens to find solutions and express their views. Furthermore the project focuses on socially and personally meaningful appropriation of technology.

In this sense, the multiple expertise and knowledge that we all bring to this project will allow us to make significant contributions not only to Costa Rican children and society, but to the region and beyond. At a

time when democratic systems are being questioned in many countries and regions around the world, we are convinced that this joint initiative has much to offer.

Maya Carlson, an Associate Professor of Neuroscience in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, is trained in psychology and neurobiology. In the last decade, she has redirected her career from laboratory studies on brain and behavior development in non-human primates and field studies on stress regulation in children to the integration of ethics with the biological and social sciences in the formulation of child social policy.

Felton Earls, a child psychiatrist and epidemiologist, is a professor of Social Medicine at the Harvard School of Medicine and a professor of Human Behavior and development in the Harvard Faculty of Public Health and Child Psychiatry.

Clotilde Fonseca is Executive Director of the Omar Dengo Foundation (ODF). A professor at the University of Costa Rica, where she still teaches poetry and aesthetics, she moved from an passionate interest in literature into work in social development, educational and technology policy—including consultant work for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development. A year (1992) at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard was a good key to making the transition.



Voice of the Children

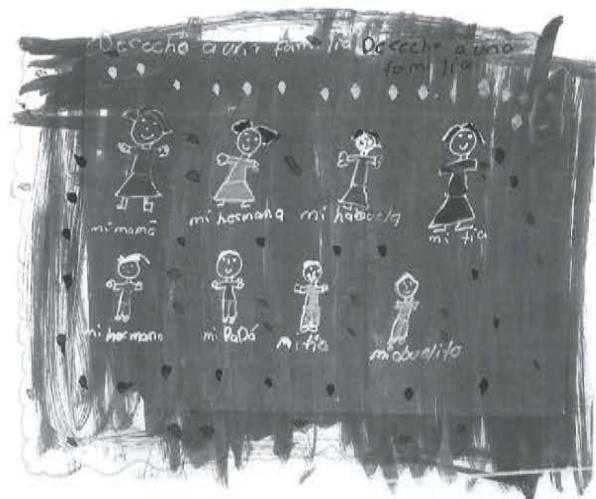
Speaking out about rights

ART ESSAY BY STUDENTS OF LAURA BLACKLOW

LAURA BLACKLOW TAUGHT YOUNG PEOPLE IN GUATEMALA CITY, a Mayan community and a rural Honduran village. The three sites are part of media-based educational organization Fundación de Niños Artistas, formerly known as Out of the Dump (www.forokids.org). Some of the older youths joined with peers from Spain, Western Sahara and England to invent "Loco Coco," a board game based on the Rights of the Child developed by the United Nations' Spanish Voices Project. The younger children, living in fragile democracies where learning about their rights is not a given, were inspired by the game and their studies of biodiversity to create these pictures expressing their visions of the right to housing, health, and protection, including the right not to be kidnapped.

Laura Blacklow, is an instructor in the Visual and Environmental Studies Department, was awarded a Cushman Family Foundation Grant to teach and photograph in Guatemala and Honduras.





COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS

Mexico Transitions p. 44

Central America's Citizens p. 47

Nicaraguan Democracy p. 51

Deciphering Venezuela p. 54

Viewing Political Space
in Brazil p. 59

On Cuban Democracy p. 62

Mexico Transitions

Struggling Toward Democracy

BY MERILEE S. GRINDLE

FOR THREE WEEKS THIS SUMMER, COMMUNAL FARMERS ANGRILY confronted the Mexican government. Protesting against the construction of a \$2.3 billion international airport on their land in San Salvador Atenco, 15 miles northeast of Mexico City, the *ejidatarios* donned masks and brandished machetes and gasoline bombs. They took hostages and seized control of public offices. They pledged that they would fight "*a la muerte*." They blockaded the town. People were injured in melees with police and some were jailed, according to *New York Times* reports. Mexican and international newspapers carried evocative photographs of the protesters amassed in front of a mural of Emiliano Zapata, demanding that the government abandon its plans. In early August, the government announced that it would look elsewhere for land for the new airport.

This scrap of recent Mexican history, redolent with images of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, highlights some of the dilemmas facing the country as it struggles to become fully democratic. The *ejidatarios*—and many observers—celebrated the ability of poor people to stand up to the leviathan, to face down its plans, and to assume control of their own destinies. Others worried that the episode undermined the rule of law and that those who opposed government policies and actions would learn the wrong lesson from San Salvador Atenco: that armed opposition is a good way to get what you want from the political system. Thus, while some enjoyed the victory of David over Goliath, others saw it as a vindication of force over democratic forms of conflict resolution. Many others simply dismissed it as another example of the ineffectiveness of the administration of Vicente Fox Quesada. These different reactions indicate that democratic rules of the game are still uncertain in Mexico.

Although Fox's victory in the July 2000 elections is widely viewed as a triumph of democracy after 71 years of government by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Mexico continues to search for the civil and institutional underpinnings of a democratic political system and a democratic society. Free and fair elections are certainly part of this, but they are only a part. Also needed are new rules of the game about legitimate forms of interest representation, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen concerns. Citizens in Mexico also have much to get used to: political leaders in democratic systems are not always effective in managing power and delivering on promises. In the past, whatever else the PRI system delivered, it almost always produced strong presidents who set national policy agendas and moved them forward with considerable effectiveness. Although this capacity had begun to falter under the administration of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), the Fox administration has demonstrated much

Decentralization shifts power from the capital and gives greater responsibilities to state and municipal governments.



more forcefully that a great deal stands between the will of the president and delivering the goods.

Mexico's ability to deliver free and fair elections has improved considerably since 1988, when many believe that only fraud, coercion, and violence ensured the victory of the PRI. An increasingly vibrant civil society and an equally vibrant free press mark accomplishments in other basic democratic rights. Mexicans are now much more able to criticize their government, organize to influence it, and appeal to new or invigorated institutions to protect their rights. They can now go public with some of the traditional biting jokes that circulate at the expense of political leaders—even the president—and the political system.

Much of this progress has occurred because Mexican citizens have demanded change. The economic crises of the past two decades and subsequent neoliberal policies, the 1985 earthquake, environmental pollution, rural injustice, faltering public services, cultural and gender identity, and citizenship rights are among the factors that encouraged an increasing number of people to organize to protest against the authoritarianism of the PRI. Citizens wanted to try to influence government policies, to demand better public services, and to support other parties in elections. Moreover, the media has become increasingly independent and increasingly critical of government. Opinion pollsters, along with think tanks and research centers that generate options and assessments of public policy, are more abundant. At the millennium, Mexico's civil society had become more active than at any time in the country's history.

Despite great advances, dilemmas face citizens as they attempt to make their democracy work effectively. The old rules of how to affect policy, or at least get what one wanted from government, are no longer so certain; yet, new forms of influence are still emergent. Many organizations have rejected the old formulae of clientelist relationships with the powerful and close association with the PRI as ways to pursue their interests. Currently, many who organize to influence policies and politics are committed to keeping a distance from all parties and seeking negotiation with government rather than deals that lead to cooptation. Citizen groups also need to develop new strategies to go along with more widely shared power relations. For example, because Congress is now much more of a player in policy decision-making, organizations can no longer focus their lobbying efforts solely on the executive. With decentralization of greater responsibilities to state and municipal governments, groups also need to influence decision makers in new arenas of power.

How is the political game to be played in democratic Mexico? Within the legislative committee and caucus system, for example, which among them needs to be influenced when a particular issue is at stake? With decentralization, what level of government is most responsible for resolving a particular problem? More broadly, who has power to make what decisions and what forms of influence are most appropriate for being heard on different kinds of issues? To what extent is influencing public opinion an effective way to reach government and political leaders? And to what extent is confrontation, such as the protests in San Salvador Atenco, a legitimate option in a democracy? Of course, effective strategies for representing interests and policy options to government will become

clearer with time; and new rules of the game are certainly emerging in response to changed political realities and new arenas of power. One of these rules is an uncomfortable one, however—power in democratic Mexico is more fluid, shared, and ambiguous than under the old PRI-dominated system.

Also central to Mexico's more democratic present and future is the accountability of government. Vicente Fox promised more openness from government and has acted on that promise by instructing government ministries to make public information that has long been a monopoly and a source of executive power. Old habits die hard, however. While information is more readily available from many government offices, the system has a long way to go before there is transparency about how decisions are reached and information relevant to actions and services is freely available to citizens.

A major step forward in accountable government, of course, is public access to files about repression of dissent and human rights abuses by government. Recently, Mexicans were treated to a very

In addition to free and fair elections, new rules of the game about legitimate forms of interest representation, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen concerns are also needed.

new experience as former president Luis Echeverría Álvarez was brought before prosecutors to account for government actions against political dissent in 1968 and 1971. Even more impressive has been the opening of records from the 1970s and 1980s about disappearances and military and police actions to quell dissent, torture detainees, and murder suspects. The National Human Rights Commission has been active in efforts to hold government officials accountable and to protect citizens nationally and abroad from repetitions of the abuses of the past. Yet, challenges to accountability in human rights remain. Opening up files and setting up systems for prosecuting abusers have as yet to be followed by actions to impose penalties on abusers. As yet, the ability to hold the military and police accountable for their actions has not really been tested.

Accountability also lags in protecting citizens from crime and ensuring them judicial protection. High crime rates, particularly in urban areas, corrupt and ineffective police forces, and a weak judiciary are daily reminders that institutions that should ensure law and order are not doing so. The demand for protection is obviously not unique to democracies. However, in such systems there is a presumption that governments ought to be effective and accountable to the concerns of citizens. Many national, state, and municipal governments seem to be working to fix faltering public security and justice, according to reliable evidence. However, for many Mexican citizens, life in the streets, in their homes, or in the courts is too uncertain for comfort. And it is still true that the poorer the person, the more likely he or she is to find security and justice elusive.

More generally, the accountability of government needs to be tested in the arena of responsiveness to citizen concerns. President Fox inherited a massive bureaucracy responsible for delivering a wide variety of services. Moreover, state and municipal governments are now

more engaged in the delivery of services such as health and education than they were in the past. Yet, there is evidence that few public agencies have successfully altered traditions of poor service delivery and patronage-laden personnel policies. The Mexican government needs to become more efficient and responsive, and the experience of other governments suggests that this only occurs agency-by-agency and unit-by-unit. The president promised a more responsive government,

JULY 2, 2000

LIVING HISTORY IN ZAPOPAN

ZAPOPAN, Jalisco—The signs were everywhere that the 2000 presidential election would be taking place that summer day. Tattered political posters flapped from just about every light pole. On the streets, people wondered out loud whether Vicente Fox would win and end the 71-year reign of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI). An old man energetically told a crowd of people that no matter who the victor was, one thing was certain: "*el sol sale para todos.*"

When people learned I was visiting from the United States, they began to pepper me with questions: "What are they saying in the U.S.? Who are they favoring?" Many felt that the U.S. government would have a hand in the election and that I surely must have caught wind of its involvement before I left.

The discussion reminded me of when Super-Barrio, a community activist from Mexico City who dresses in a superhero outfit, visited Harvard University in 1996 and announced that he was running for the presidency of the United States because, as far as he was concerned, the U.S. ran Mexico.

At the local polling stations, anxious adults and children made their way through long lines. The adults were there to vote in the presidential election. Those children between the ages of 6 and 17 voted on issues concerning their family, country, and environment in an *Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE)* initiative that sought to teach children and young people civic responsibility. More than one toddler cried when he or she was not allowed to take part in the election.

In the afternoon, I sat in a small living room with a group of local men. We watched *fútbol* on television and discussed politics, as we waited for the returns. The most vocal among them stated that he wished Mexico had a two-party system like the U.S. instead of so many fragmented parties. "*Aquí hay muchos partidos. Entre ellos se matán,*" he exclaimed. I countered that a two party system had its drawbacks. My fellow soccer fans were not convinced. In their eyes, the political grass is greener on the other side of the border.

That night Fox was declared the election winner. Hours later, people spoke proudly about the many world dignitaries who praised Mexico for its peaceful and historic transition of presidential power. Mostly, they quoted President Jimmy Carter, who served as an international election observer, and who characterized Mexico as a "true democracy" that conducted an "almost perfect" presidential election.

Richard Mora is working towards his Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University.

yet has been hampered in delivering it because of a paucity of available executive talent. In the meantime, citizens await the payoff of democracy whenever they visit a government office or expect better services—whether in community schools and local health clinics or in improved garbage collection and police protection.

The president has been regularly criticized for a failure to set priorities and take decisive action in achieving them, for a failure of leadership in a country that has long taken strong executive leadership for granted. Fox, of course, has been hampered by a legislature that is feeling new-found oats and by the PAN's (Partido de Acción Nacional) reluctance to accept his leadership. He doesn't have a majority in Congress. He's also made some very public mistakes. In the summer of 2001, Mexican newspapers—in a reflection of their new-found openness—published ample accounts of extravagant spending on refurbishing the presidential residence at Los Pinos, including buying \$200 towels, a scandal that became known as *toallagate*. His public Catholicism, as evidenced by his kissing the Pope's ring on a recent visit, also raised concerns about the secularity of the Mexican state. His romantic relationship with Marta Sahagun, his press secretary and spokesperson, also raised eyebrows prior to his marriage to her in 2001. It is still an open question whether he will ever recover from this negative publicity to regain credibility for himself and his party. Even with different leadership, however, it is likely that Mexican presidents of the future will never equal their PRI predecessors in political clout.

There is more to a functioning democracy than elections and basic rights. There are legitimate ways for organized groups of citizens to influence government, as well as rules about what forms of protest and influence are off limits. There is generalized knowledge about how best to go about putting pressure on government to affect public policy. There is also much that can be taken for granted in everyday life in a fully functioning democracy: transparency and access to information, a decent level of security, the right to receive legitimate benefits and services, clear rules of the game for what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in government's treatment of its citizens. Citizens in San Salvador Atenco and elsewhere, as well as officials in Mexico City, state capitals, and municipal offices, are still trying to figure out these everyday aspects of democracy.

In a recent publication, Laurence Whitehead suggests that the concept of viability is the best way to measure new democracies ("The Viability of Democracy," in John Crabtree and Laurence Whitehead, *Toward Democratic Viability: The Bolivian Experience* (Palgrave, 2001).) He argues that a viable democracy is one that manages to evolve and survive as unsettled political and economic environments constantly challenge it. This, he asserts, is a more just way of assessing the struggles of newly democratic systems than to hold them to an ideal set of democratic characteristics or to compare them to fully consolidated systems. By this measure, Mexico is doing quite well. By the expectations of many of its citizens, however, the country has a long struggle toward democracy ahead.

Merilee S. Grindle is the Edward S. Mason Professor of International Development at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and a member of the Executive Committee of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. She has just completed a book on the politics of education reform in Latin America, which includes a case study of Mexico.



Central America's Citizens

Beyond Electoral Democracy

BY EDELBERTO TORRES-RIVAS

WHEN AUTO MECHANIC PEDRO PIRIR GOT FIRED FROM THE repair shop where he'd worked for years, his reaction of outrage and shame made him want to complain to the authorities. He'd heard his colleagues discussing something about a new "democratic" era. There was a possibility of protesting injustices in these new times in which people were always talking about rights and equality, they said. For four days, Pedro Pirir tried to file his complaint at the Labor Court in Coatepeque in southwest Guatemala. He finally left, discouraged and disillusioned, convinced that democracy was basically useless. He didn't understand why the Labor Court refused to hear his complaint. He didn't have a lawyer. The Court claimed he couldn't identify himself properly because he didn't have his national identity card, which the repair shop owner had abusively kept. It didn't matter to the court that he had been an excellent worker. It didn't matter that his boss had never given a reason for firing him after he had served so well for so long. His voice could not be heard.

Many recent polls in Central America demonstrate that people have a basic but precise idea of democracy: they associate it with the notion of justice and equality resulting from the new existing state of lawfulness. The new citizen of Guatemala needs to know the answer to the basic question "What is democracy good for?" That's what Pedro Pirir, and thousands of other citizens, ask when faced with

situations in which basic civil and political rights are being tested.

Human rights activists and representatives of the numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating throughout the region have been actively publicizing the rights and obligations established in the new constitutions that have gone into effect in practically every Central American country. They emphasize the civil, social, and political rights of every citizen in the post-authoritarian era, especially at election time.

FREE AND CLEAN ELECTIONS

Elections are nothing new to Central America. During the 44-year dictatorship of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, there were at least eight presidential elections, none of them free or clean. In El Salvador, the military held power with direct control of the executive branch from 1932 until 1979; during this long period, many elections were held, but none of them could be considered democratic since the military never let the government out of its hands. And for a quarter of a century in Guatemala until 1985, there were periodic elections, but the military always won because most of the time the elections were fraudulent. Honduras has not been subject to as much military control, but it was only in 1980 that its traditional two-party system was reinstated. Only Costa Rica has held free and clean elections since 1948, a date considered to mark

the beginning of modern democracy there.

The tradition of military-controlled and fraudulent elections has ended and the institution of competitive, free, and plural electoral processes has begun. Thus, it's natural to assume that with this very basic change in political life, democracy has arrived. Central Americans (limiting Central America here to the experiences of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua) know from direct experience that a whole new period has opened in the national history of each country.

This is a new historical era that started in the '80s and has continued until the present day. And the era is really distinct because of the end of civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. This peacetime environment resulting from the end of war and national reconstruction projects accompanying the Peace Accords gave important momentum to the development of democracies.

Democracy means electoral democracy: this is its basic definition. The act of electing a president and parliamentary or municipal authorities is the principal—although not the only—activity

Democracy, certainly, is not only an orderly procedure to elect governments. It is also a structure of rights and obligations inherent to the condition of being a citizen.

of exerting citizenship. And voters can now cast their ballots in an atmosphere of relative liberty, without the fears or terrors of the authoritarian past, choosing among several parties, even though it's a given fact that there's not much difference between the options. But the most important thing is that people have some vague notion that those counting the votes are doing so quickly and honestly. The vote is free and elections are honest.

THE PROBLEMS OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

However, electoral democracy has several problems, some of them quite serious. The experience of Pedro Pirir, who felt angry and disheartened when he could not obtain legal protection in this new climate of democracy after he lost his job, is the same as that of dozens of men and women who live in conditions of poverty. They

too ask "What is democracy and what's it good for?"

The democracy that is beginning to take hold in this time of transition in Central America adheres to a series of formalities and minimal but indispensable procedures. For example, it incorporates into the old electoral experience the novelty that there are genuinely competing parties. One now doesn't know before an election who is going to win. That's why people in Central America are accepting the notion that democracy is a system to choose one's rulers freely. Candidates can win elections...but they can also lose.

However, after 18 general elections, at present only conservative parties and candidates representing big business and dominant economic sectors have won at the polls. That's the case of the three successive victories by ARENA in El Salvador and the three defeats of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. And, of course, it's also the case of the electoral victories by a variety of rightist parties in Guatemala. Ideological pluralism doesn't have much impact, but it does exist despite the fact that the left has not yet been able to win an electoral victory over the right in Central America. That's why the litmus test for democracy still lies ahead.

Let's not forget that the establishment of democracy in Central America is taking place in societies in which the majority of people live in serious poverty in a rural environment. Even more significant is the fact that very many do not even know how to read and write.

That's to say, they live in a socio-economic context in which there's not much possibility of creating a significant middle class, which is the sociological condition of modernization that always stimulates the growth of democracy. In other words, electoral democracy is always being practiced against the grain, contradicting theory, in an adverse social milieu—where citizens are barely beginning to learn and act on their rights and where the Pedro Pirirs are an immense majority.

WHAT'S EXPECTED FROM DEMOCRACY?

When the exercise of democracy every four or five years in these countries is consumed by the red tape of legal and technical procedures to elect politicians whose faces are only known through television screens, people feel increasingly disillusioned. Why do people lose confidence in democracy and in political life? Extensive polls and

MIXED UP CIVIC LESSONS

THE OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE POOR

I grew up in three "democratic" countries—the United States, Venezuela and Argentina. In a small town about two hours from Buenos Aires, the amusing but very serious Miss Gables taught us about democracy, how it was the one and only way to live and provided everything fairly and justly to all citizens. As a very proper Briton, I found her take on American democracy quite touching. In my high school civics class in Caracas, Señorita Rosario taught us that democracy gave everyone the right to vote, the right to choose representatives and the freedom to do almost whatever we wanted, as long as we "did no harm." Mrs. Sadler reminded me of the same when I returned to the U.S. a number of years later. Nowhere was there mention of the "underrepresented," the people who live outside of the conventional norms of mid-

dle or upper class society, the people who cannot participate in democracy because they cannot read or write, the people who have no monetary resources. Left out of the lessons were how democracy can be interpreted or molded to fit the needs and desires of the majority. Or how democracy can be used as a weapon, as a means to an end.

I have spent the last eight years working in Honduras in small, mountain villages with families working hard to survive. Honduras is listed in the almanac as a democratic country. I think I got my civics lessons all mixed up. I always imagined a strong connection between democracy and access, between democracy and rights, like to education and health care.

One day last month, I met María del Carmen (not her real name).

research carried out in recent years point to a number of factors. First and perhaps foremost is that people have an ideal and naive vision of democracy, probably an incomplete or even false conception.

People expect democracy to supply everything they are lacking. After a long period of military dictatorships, in which nothing was done to improve the life of the majority of people, it is inevitable that the basic reasoning is that with democracy, everything is going to change. Democracy, people reason, will bring more jobs, better salaries and efficient public service, and social justice. When people vote for a candidate they don't know or a party they have no idea about, they are making a bet for their own personal future. The Pedro Piriris are certainly participating in politics, but it is a personalistic participation mitigated by their individual interests.

The perception that a democratic regime very easily favors economic growth fosters this individualist and extra-political notion of democracy. So does the nature of the electoral offerings, because they are filled with promises about change and offers of solutions to all the problems wearing out the common citizen. For example, former Nicaraguan president Arnoldo Alemán and the present governing party in Guatemala offered to end unemployment in the first 120 days of their government, knowing full well that the unemployment index had reached 45%.

Indeed, recent studies by the most well-known international financial organizations demonstrate that the field occupied by poverty in Central America has not decreased. When the hoped-for changes do not take place, and time and again, people vote for candidates who promise a lot and deliver little, the citizen response is vehement complaints and withdrawal from public participation. People stop voting and participating and become an apolitical public, an audience that feeds on finding fault with politics and rejecting politicians, who seem both distant and untrustworthy.

Her hair hung limply in front of her face, dark against her coffee color skin. She said she was 14 years old and the man she lived with had stolen her from her family's house. Now she spends all day cleaning the house, taking care of the chickens and laying with him at night. I don't believe María del Carmen lives in a democracy.

Don Rafael has been working in the fields of Limón since he was five years old; he is 50 now, and looks almost 70. His face is wizened but his humor is wry; he continues to believe that his children's children will have an opportunity to not be poor.

Lourdes M. remembers the days when the community of Chagüite housed U.S.-backed contras in old barns, places where mothers now sternly tell children not to play because there are still arms and mines scattered about. The priority then—as now—in U.S. relations with foreign countries was security, rather than democracy—another mixed up civic lesson.

Democracy begins with the most vulnerable person—the new-



Previous: Children with Honduran flag at inauguration of community health center; above: A new pila for Señora Martínez will help provide clean water for her family. Construction of this pila is part of PROMESA's Salud Familiar program to improve health by improving housing conditions.

THE DEMOCRATIC TASKS AHEAD

Democracy, certainly, is not only an orderly procedure to elect governments. It is also a structure of rights and obligations inherent to the condition of being a citizen that can—and indeed is—useful in organizing the defense of the interests of workers to improve their labor and living conditions. And it is also a structure that makes it possible for justice in the courts, security on the streets, and confidence in the authorities.

Democracy goes beyond its electoral virtues. In order for democracy to become consolidated as a political regime, the institutions that make it up have to be buttressed. Thus, it is important to modernize the judicial system as an independent and efficient power. The worst

legacy of the dictatorships in the Central American region is a weak, corrupt, and incompetent judicial branch. Justice system reform is lagging behind in many countries, particularly in Guatemala and Nicaragua. The consolidation of political parties and a national electoral tribunal is also important; political parties encourage citizen participation and the development of an independent and capable legislative branch. Political party organization is still very volatile in Guatemala, and somewhat so in Nicaragua. And Costa Rica is beginning to have problems along these lines.

A democratic regime ought to resolve the dilemma of the security forces (army, police, intelligence services), making them into technical and professional bodies under the control of civil authorities. Domestic order should be in the hands of a civilian national police force, and intelligence services should fall under civilian rather than military powers. The relations between civilian and military forces in Central America have not yet effectively found a comfortable balance; with the exception of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, the military is still a powerful political actor. Security is a right and an opportunity to strengthen democracy, and yet security is still not guaranteed in Central America.

born child, the young girl, the elderly gentleman. Democracy is like friendship—it must be nurtured, accountable and strong. The country that addresses the rights and needs of its poorest citizens is a rich country indeed.

I hope when my son's children go to primary school that will be their civics lesson.

Linda Jo Stern is the founder and director of PROMESA, an international health, service and training organization. PROMESA is affiliated with Brigham and Women's Hospital, one of the Harvard teaching hospitals in Boston, and Zamorano College in Honduras. Since 1974, Stern has worked in community health as a program director, professor, advocate, direct service provider and executive director of an inner city community health center. She holds an adjunct faculty appointment at Boston University School of Public Health and splits her time between Honduras and Boston. For more information about PROMESA, contact <ljstern@partners.org>.

The existence of radio, television, newspapers, and magazines that are free and independent from control by the state and big business is decisive for democracy. The media can make—or not make—an extraordinary contribution to the regeneration of public life, to sparking pluralistic and tolerant debate, and can transform themselves into a force of control over the actions of the public sector. With the arrival of democracy, the media in Central America have begun to modernize, and journalists are increasingly more professional. The media can provide the means for the “accountability” necessary for an effective democracy. Journalistic investigation has served over the years to carry out permanent denunciations of acts of corruption by public officials. The functions of control and monitoring of governmental actions, however, should not be carried out only by the press. The state has institutions specialized in exercising this control. The legislative branch should watch over the executive; the Constitutional Court, the Comptroller’s office, and the Attorney General for Human Rights are other examples of ongoing inspection of government actions.

And, of course, there should also be horizontal control, the kind of control exerted by political parties and citizens who, as voters, vote against governments that have not carried out their duties well and in an honorable way.

Democracy in Central America still has many institutional and cultural deficiencies. It must be something more than an electoral mechanism, of course, and something more than a political regimen. Democracy is a national social condition; it is a way of organizing society. When it reaches that goal, Pedro Pirir will have less feeling of helplessness, more confidence in democracy, and will be satisfied with his right to work-place justice.

Edelberto Torres-Rivas, a Central American born in Guatemala, is a researcher for FLACSO Guatemala and a consultant in the area of Human Development for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He was a 1999-2000 DRCLAS Visiting Scholar. He is presently working on a book, La Reconstrucción del Orden en Centroamérica.

CIVIC PRIDE

DEMOCRACY AND ENVIRONMENT IN NICARAGUA

“**A** passion for planting trees awoke in me,” Don Juan Morales explained to me next to his numerous wood-burning kilns. I had asked him why he had become a member of the association of brick-makers that built a tree nursery in rural La Paz Centro, Nicaragua. My job last summer was interviewing these brick-makers, trying to determine why most had not become members of this tree association, initiated by a non-governmental organization two years ago to begin to reforest the denuded department of León. I learned that all cared about the environment and all realized that their processes of extracting soil and firewood were harmful to the environment. The most significant difference between those who were members and those who were not was a key component of any democracy—civic pride. Through the interviews, I learned that brick-makers with the most civic pride and those most likely to belong to the tree nursery association were also the wealthiest, those with the most invested in Nicaraguan society.

Don Oscar Berrios, the tree nursery association’s president, was an orator of florid speech who exemplified the civic pride of the members of the tree nursery association. He spoke of the need for everyone to contribute and, in fact, had planted thousands of trees on his land. But, in order to “give air, give energy, protect against floods and diseases,” as he once said, he had to have the land and the motivation. He once described himself to me as “the king of this place.” While he was partially joking, he was one of the most successful brick-makers, nearly as successful as Don Juan Morales. If every tree within 100 miles were cut down and he no longer had fuel for brick-making, he would have to reduce his already-meager living standards. He cared about his community because it was providing him a decent living by Nicaraguan standards.

Don Miguel Hernández, on the other hand, would not be much worse off if he had to stop making bricks. He was typical of the poorer brick-makers who have not become members of the tree nursery association. “We’re too poor to do anything,” he told me

next to his crumbling hut. While he could not plant trees on his own land, he could have promoted the trees to his friends, donated his labor, or arranged for someone else to grow the trees for him. It was not his poverty itself that prevented his participation. Rather, he had no pride in a society which had afforded him so little and in whose future he had so little invested.

At first, I thought that education, rather than wealth, was the determining factor in becoming a member of the association. However, one of the poorest, but also the most articulate and well-read, of the brick-makers convinced me otherwise. Don Rolfino Solís supported environmental protection, but believed that it was the government’s role. “The government got us into this situation and now it must get us out of it,” he told me. Surely, he recognized that his indebted and corrupt government could do little, so claiming that he has no role to play was a poor excuse. He believed global warming, the hole in the ozone layer, and the lack of oxygen caused by global deforestation may cause the extinction of humans. But he lacked the civic pride in his own country to prompt him to counteract the deforestation he helped cause outside his home.

I believe that the best hope for the environment in Nicaragua, identified as one of the global biodiversity “hotspots” by conservation groups, is turning the Don Solís of Nicaragua into Don Oscars. Don Oscar has civic pride because his democracy has worked for him. A functional democracy with a program of economic development that allows Don Solís to buy a second wood-burning brick kiln is what La Paz Centro needs to foster civic pride and awaken in more brick-makers a passion for reforestation.

After studying Nicaragua’s economy, history, and politics spring semester at Harvard in a seminar culminating with a trip to Nicaragua, Zachary Liscow ’05 volunteered last summer for Proleña, an environmental NGO, with a DRCLAS internship grant. His concentration is in Environmental Science and Public Policy. He is also active in Harvard’s Environmental Action Committee. He can be reached at <liscow@fas.harvard.edu>.



ANITA BACA cabaca@expressnews.net

Nicaraguan Democracy

Finding Flaws

BY ELLEN SCHNEIDER

POLITICS IS THE UNOFFICIAL NATIONAL SPORT IN NICARAGUA. More than 90% of eligible voters cast their ballots in last year's presidential election. An outsider would be hard pressed to find a Nicaraguan even in the most rural areas without an opinion about local or national politics. I have heard more elegant and fiery political conviction from a peasant woman walking her barefoot son to his one-room school in Matagalpa than from most print-junkies in the US.

However, the strength of democracy cannot be measured by participation rates alone.

Clearly there is enthusiasm and support for the democratic system throughout Nicaragua and that is worth celebrating considering it is a country that has struggled through civil war and dictatorships for the last century. Nicaragua, although democratic intentions are strong, has a democracy weakened and threatened in several ways by the rampant *personalismo*: individual politicians are more powerful than the institutional structures of government.

During a recent trip by a delegation of Harvard students, Managua Mayor Herty Lewites explained the problem simply: newly elected candidates tend to tear down their predecessors' programs. Who the government is and what it does absolutely pivots on who is elected, rather than a continuous concept of state policy. High voter turnout reiterates the volatility of the system because it *really matters* who is elected. Perhaps cleaning house made sense when political parties catered to antithetical economic systems and constituents, but this is no longer the case. Consider this: the *Obras no Palabras* campaign of Former President Arnaldo Alemán generated schools, community centers, and infrastructure improvements, most uncompleted before he left office. Programs were mostly discontinued under the new administration in an effort to wipe out the corrupt Alemán from the public image. When programs are stopped, destroyed, and completely redirected every five or six years, this obviously hinders strong institutions.

The strength of *personalismo* also inhibits strengthening political parties as their development is second to the personality of their leaders. No where is this more apparent than with the Sandinista party FSLN, historically a populist party prone to agrarian reform and anti-market measures, and its leader Daniel Ortega. The perception of the FSLN and thus its success and failure is completely based on Ortega's image, a roadblock that prevents the party from ideologically conforming to the changing needs of the country. With a stagnant 30% popular support for FSLN in the late 1990s, the party had to modify its ideas to garner support for its presidential candidate. Ortega's camp argued that the ideology of the previous decade would not wholly dictate the platform of 2000. Harvard Associate Professor Steve Levitsky agreed, saying in a November 2001 panel on *Nicaragua's Future After the Election* that a Sandinista victory would have been virtually innocuous to the economy and was not radical enough to warrant the scare it caused in the international and national business communities. Ortega, abandoning his usual military fatigues for what many people called the "Pepto-Bismol" shirt, created a more moderate agenda (focused on small businesses, health education programs, and micro-loans to farmers.) But his Liberal opponents trumped his attempts by playing on people's post-Sept. 11 fears and disseminating a photo of Ortega and Kadafi. Whether Ortega would have posed an economic threat is unclear but the FSLN ideas were not put to the test because Ortega could not escape his past.

When Presidential candidates Ortega and Enrique Bolaños were neck in neck in the polls in the fall of 2001, professors at INCAE, a Nicaraguan business school just outside Managua, studied the influence of public perception. They displayed side-by-side the economic plans of the two candidates. Almost no one could correctly match the candidate with his economic plan. In fact, many participants thought that Ortega's plan was more conservative and erroneously it identified as Bolaños'. Negative perception and misunderstanding



Previous, left: Rally in Wiwili, Nicaragua; previous, right: hanging laundry in Managua; above: students with Mayor Herty Lewites

ing also precipitated a consequential degree of capital flight precipitated by Ortega's 6-point lead in pre-election polls that summer. One of Ortega's most vocal critics, the U.S. Embassy, said they were open to supporting Ortega and had given him good sense of what to do to receive their blessing. According to the embassy, Ortega never complied. When pressed to elaborate on exactly *how* he failed to comply, the Embassy skirted the issue and repeated, with emphasis, that Ortega had failed to comply.

Had they chosen another candidate, the FSLN might have won in 2001. Thus the key question regarding the lack of ideological conformity is whether the FSLN—inextricably tied to the people's perception of Ortega—can shake their image by rattling their leadership.

TITANS AT THE HELM

According to top FSLN aide Antonio Lacayo, Ortega seems to realize that the FSLN needs a new candidate for 2006. The U.S. Embassy, however, is much more skeptical. The Deputy Chief of Mission declared, "Never say, unless someone is dead, that someone won't run again in Latin America." Ortega is the quintessential *caudillo*: another egregious flaw emanating from *personalismo*. *Caudillo* politics combine a cult of personality, power-hungry politicians who bind themselves to even the most ineffectual leaders, and a weak institutional structure. It is the individual politician who won't disappear, won't diminish, is always stacking the deck in his favor, and artfully twists and dodges rules because he can. Since the early eighties, Ortega has remained at the head of the FSLN. In 2000, putting his own desire for leadership over the success of the party, Ortega amassed support in his party and emerged as the presidential candidate because many FSLN members were afraid to go against him. He lost the election (3rd defeat in a row) but remains at the head of the FSLN party in the National Assembly. As we have seen, this has been very detrimental to the Party's success.

Although Ortega has been in politics longer, he is the penultimate *caudillo* compared to former President Arnoldo Alemán. Dubbed *el hombre*, Alemán directly controlled almost all aspects of his presidency from 1996-2001, was a workaholic who rarely slept, and generally knew everything that was happening. Alemán also made himself a millionaire, leaving the presidency with a hefty chunk of the Nicaraguan GDP (about the same percentage as Texas to the U.S.) Unlike the more diplomatic and delegating former President Violeta Chamorro who has retreated comfortably to her museum-like house to direct her

own foundation supporting women in politics, Alemán isn't about to retire from office. Presently he enjoys being the puppet master of his Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC) cronies in the National Assembly. The public hates him, but he's also not going anywhere.

CORRUPTION IMMINENT

Perhaps the greatest problem of *personalismo* is that it generates a breeding ground for corruption and allows politicians to create alliances to gain money and power with no accountability to constituents. The public despises him, but Alemán is not only still in office, he is buffered from jail by the loyalty of his fellow PLC members. Alarming, he will probably avoid criminal prosecution by a narrow margin (53%) when the Assembly votes in September to have his immunity stripped. Individually these men are reckless but when they capitalize on each other's power it is even more detrimental. In 2000, Ortega aligned himself with Alemán to rewrite the constitution in such a way that would position Alemán as Assembly president. In return Alemán decreased the number of votes necessary to pass certain measures to below the number of votes of the FSLN; in other words, Ortega secured more power for the FSLN than the party should have had. Both men also gained immunity from criminal charges, Alemán for corruption, and Ortega from charges of sexual abuse towards his stepdaughter. President Bolaños lost the support of his own party, the PLC, to Alemán in the Assembly. He is unable to accomplish any sort of legislation that might destroy the monopolizing alliances.

Power is not the only fruit of corruption, much more often it is politicians stuffing their pockets with the public's money. The April 2002 IMF Report on Observance of Standards and Codes done in accordance with their lending program complained that the fiscal and budgetary systems of Nicaragua are confusing, lack transparency, and that practice often contradicts what the Constitution stipulates. The decentralization of government and non-transparent budgetary laws make it possible for a mayor, such as Alemán, to funnel millions of dollars into private businesses and investments because accountability to an overhead regulator is very small. While political decentralization is a natural step in the democratization process, it cannot happen without first instilling checks and balances to ensure that fiscal autonomy isn't unjustly abused.

The amount of money that Alemán and his officials allegedly stole was a crippling blow not only to the economy but to public confidence in government. One of the things that Alemán was successful in creating was the north-south highway that parallels the heavily congested Carretera del Sur (southern highway). Until the creation of the new highway, Carretera del Sur was the only way to get from one side of Managua to the other. But Nicaraguans, soured against Alemán, quickly brushed off the new highway as his own treat to his children who needed a quicker way to commute to school and for himself to get more quickly downtown from his home in *El Crucero*, west of Managua. Truth blends with slander, and people become even more frustrated with government.

WHERE THERE'S HOPE

The Latin American polling group *Latinobarometro* found last year that despite dissatisfaction with their government, Nicaraguans retain faith in a democratic system. According to the poll, 63% of the Nicaraguan population prefers democracy to any other type of government, a 4% increase from the 59% in 1996. But perhaps the more

interesting statistic is that the number of Nicaraguans dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country fell 90% from 1996 to 2000, a larger drop than any other Latin American country experienced. With elections becoming more transparent, a quiet military, a developing civil society, and the fight of the current presidency against corruption, on a whole, it is understandable that Nicaraguans are much more pleased with their democracy than in 1996. The steep decline in dissatisfaction could be attributed to the newness of democracy and thus large room for improvements; it should not discount the failures that Nicaraguan democracy still faces.

No panacea exists for the problems facing Nicaragua's democracy; ultimately a solution centers on politicians thinking about government for the good of the country and not as a vehicle for their own power. We might just be watching history in the making as right now President Bolaños is going after Alemán's former administration officials and his family for embezzling money into Panamanian banks.

But while Bolaños's mantra "immunity should not be impunity" extols accountability and decries corruption, it falls short of actually dismantling the *personalismo* system that allows the corruption. One could even argue that attacking Alemán is an attempt by Bolaños to break down the Liberal coalition in the Assembly and regain legislative influence. If he is successful and the Assembly agrees to impugn the former president, Bolaños should take the opportunity to regain support in the Assembly and to push for institutional checks and balances within various levels of government. Limiting the power of the Executive Office would set a good example, but is Bolaños willing to do this or will he prove to be just another beneficiary of *personalismo*?

Ellen Schneider, a 2001 Harvard College graduate, was the DRCLAS Student Services Coordinator. She most recently worked on the successful Mitt Romney for Governor campaign and plans to get a Masters in foreign policy and international affairs.

NICARAGUA SEMINAR TRIP

A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Caudillismo, austerity measures, corruption, foreign capital flows: in the classroom, they were potential essay topics; in Nicaragua, they are a daily reality. During the ten days we spent this summer in Nicaragua, sixteen students, including myself, witnessed perhaps the best existing case study of contemporary Latin American political and economic issues—the topic our fall freshman seminar had addressed. Nicaragua has it all: the unquenchable thirst for power of two dueling caudillos, ex-presidents Arnoldo Alemán and Daniel Ortega; the austere policymaking straitjacket due to massive indebtedness to international creditors; the closed-door pact-making and rigged internal elections of the two largest political parties, the Liberals and the Sandinistas; and the far-reaching corruption exposed daily by the press and the attorney general's office. The motive of our trip was to sort through these issues and to evaluate the country's process of democratization. Is democracy consolidated, on the road to consolidation, or heading in the opposite direction? The answer, we found, was not so textbook-simple.

We had read about Samuel Huntington's "two-turnover test," the idea that a democratic regime requires two peaceful changes of government in order to be considered consolidated. By that rationale, the Sandinistas—the most dominant leftist force—would have to regain power democratically for Nicaragua to be a consolidated democracy. In our interviews, however, we found a variety of opinions on the matter. Most believed that democracy had been consolidated with the free election of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in 1990; indeed, Doña Violeta herself told us, "I consolidated democracy." Jaime Wheelock, the former Minister of Agrarian Reform, argued that consolidation occurred with the country's first internationally supervised elections in 1984 that legitimated Daniel Ortega's presidency. Still others, U.N. Development Program officials among them, said that until there is a fundamental change in the way people think and act politically, democratic institutions will not take root.

In the classroom, we had learned how to determine if an emerging democracy is on the right path; once we were in-country, however, this proved to be no easier. The 2001 election appeared to be a cause for optimism—92% voter turnout (nearly twice that of the U.S.

in 2000) and an internationally-certified fraud-free election day. But polls reveal that the majority of Liberal votes were not in favor of the presidential candidate Enrique Bolaños, but rather against Sandinista candidate Daniel Ortega. This demonstrated to us the persistence of caudillismo and the lack of an issue-based presidential race. A thriving free press gives a sometimes embarrassing degree of transparency to the government, but editors informed us that prohibitive printing costs and high illiteracy prevent wide readership. Bolaños' highly publicized anti-corruption campaign seems to be patching leaks in the government apparatus, but many say it simply detracts from the lack of coherent poverty-reduction policy. The party system appears stable—it has certainly avoided polarization despite stark ideological differences—but U.S. Embassy officials told us that that stability is largely an illusion: it is based upon a pact between the Sandinistas and Liberals aimed at excluding third parties.

We came to Nicaragua expecting easy answers; we left after a week with more questions. We gained a new wariness of the political scientist who oversimplifies a situation to make it adhere to a pattern or who proposes a solution without considering its ramifications. It was easy for us to sit in a classroom and say "Daniel Ortega needs to give up the party reins," but we needed to see in person the ubiquitous FSLN propaganda featuring his name and face to realize how deeply ingrained personalism is in Nicaraguan politics and how synonymous Sandinism is with his visage. It took a trip to the country to recognize that it is naïve to label and quantify democracies or to believe that consolidation occurs overnight. Nicaraguans say that politics is their national sport; you can invent rules from afar all you wish, but you have to go to Nicaragua to truly understand the game.

Aaron Mihaly FAS '05 is a Government/International Relations concentrator pursuing a Certificate in Latin American Studies. He was one of the student organizers and leaders of the Nicaragua Seminar trip. He has traveled and worked extensively in Latin America as a health volunteer in rural Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua; as a humanitarian aid worker in Cuba; and most recently as a public policy intern in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Deciphering Venezuela

A Historical and Contemporary Perspective

BY ANA JULIA JATAR

When the people rule, they must be rendered happy, or they will overturn the state

—Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

VENEZUELA, OFTEN DESCRIBED AS THE REGION'S MOST STABLE and successful democracy, is now in a political quagmire testing the endurance and stability of its system. What have been the forces pushing the country into crisis? How democratic is Venezuela today?

Venezuela's elected president, Hugo Chávez, won free democratic elections with 56% of the votes in December 1998 and was reelected with 60% of the votes in December 2000. In spite of these unquestionable electoral results, his popularity has been collapsing since July 2001, driving opposition to the streets in protest against a government they consider illegitimate. Last April 11, thou-

sands marched to the presidential palace demanding his resignation in a climactic development after a series of civic protests. Late that evening, after a bloody afternoon, President Chávez's resignation was announced by his highest ranking general. A transitional government was formed but was immediately rejected by the same people who had marched the day before. They, together with Chávez followers, considered it unconstitutional. After 48 hours, President Chávez was back in office. And yet the crisis continues, political unrest increases, and polarization deepens. Venezuela's democracy confronts one of its greatest challenges in history.

There are two basic paradigms to analyze the current political situation in Venezuela:

PARADIGM 1: The Chávez government is just another chapter in Latin American history in which a leftist, popular president is confronted by a selfish elite unwilling to give up its historic privileges for the benefit of the majority.

PARADIGM 2: Chávez is an authoritarian revolutionary who is being constrained by a traditionally democratic civil society.

In other words, is the conflict being triggered by self-interested groups cornering a popular president or is there a majority fighting to save democracy from President Chávez's authoritarian desires? As often happens, reality has more nuances than any particular form of interpreting facts. Though I think that paradigm two is a better description of what is happening in Venezuela today, it falls short of explaining what caused Chávez's initial popularity and his electoral success. Therefore, if there is truth to both positions, what happened in the process to change so dramatically the country's mood?

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOOD

Here is where the nuances begin. In 1998, angry and frustrated with traditional political parties, citizens rejected everything that "looked, sounded or smelled" like an old politician. Venezuelans in a "revolutionary mood" knew what they didn't want so Chávez based his campaign on their anger and hate. The angrier he sounded, the higher he went in the polls. In fact, Chávez got a *negative mandate*. He was elected to eliminate traditional political parties, to eradicate a corrupted leadership and to destroy the *ancien regime*. Unfortunately, not too many people worried about what would come next.

Another less obvious cause for this revolutionary mood could be the country's economic performance and its political interpretation. From 1977–1998, per capita income in Venezuela fell to 1950 levels. Corruption was seen as the underlying cause of the economic mess, hence the attack on the political class.

Chávez postponed the economic agenda and barged ahead with a radical political reform. He destroyed the old leadership and changed the constitution. The idea of electing a Constituent Assembly to give birth to a new leadership was attractive and popular at the time. Also, since the writing of the constitution promised to be open and participatory, transparency was not an issue then.

Through these constitutional changes, Chávez accumulated more power than any other democratic president in the history of the country. But Venezuelans were still in their "revolutionary mood" so they did not worry about the creeping dangers of the emerging authoritarianism and the lack of checks and balances which emerged in the process.

The atmosphere began to change when President Chavez reoriented his confrontational and autocratic attacks onto social institutions such as the Church, the business community, the trade union movement, and the press. In addition, his praise for socialism and Castro's Cuba as a model for Venezuela and his attempts to restrict private property rights left many Venezuelans with doubts about the new regime. In other words, Chávez's downfall began when he decided to use the blank check given to him by voters in a "revolutionary mood" to lead a leftist revolution for which he does not have the political support. Before going into the details of this change, let's take a brief look into the past.

A BIT OF HISTORY: THE SHAPING OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Venezuelan society is democratic to its bones. Among the rights Venezuelans treasure most is the freedom to say what they please, to do what they want, to choose their leaders, to protest against

them and to vote when the time comes. Venezuelans have enjoyed a democratic system since 1959 after the fall of Perez Jimenez's dictatorship. They have learned the advantages of democracy through decades of actual practice. When President Chávez offered Venezuelans a revolution similar to the Cuban "Sea of Happiness," opinion polls showed a decrease in popularity resulting from his close relationship with Castro. Instinctively, Venezuelans know the trade-offs between equality and freedom, and they cherish the latter. In different surveys in 1963, 1980, 1990 and 1999, 70 to 77% favor a democracy over any other system. Venezuelans also enjoy voting. Although abstention levels have been increasing in recent presidential elections, only between 7% and 18% of eligible voters stayed away from the polls from 1958 to 1988. Venezuelans enjoyed more than twenty years of stable and effective democracy, with the biggest political parties in Latin America and the largest electoral participation. Between 1958 and 1981 important social reforms were made while the economy grew about six percent yearly.

In 1958, Venezuelan elites and political parties first banded together to consolidate democratic institutions and avoid further military intervention. For the sake of democracy, political parties developed pacts and agreements to respect each other's differences, adhere to the will of the voters and ensure inter-party consultation on relevant matters.

However, the left was shut out of these pacts and agreements. Some have argued that party leaders excluded the left in order to reassure elements in business, the church, and the military who feared communist uprisings in Venezuela. The core agreements—all political in nature—supported channeling citizen participation through democratic means. The left and President Rómulo Betancourt's government often clashed over what constituted "legitimate political means" in democracy. By excluding the communists, the two mainstream political parties—the social democrats (AD) and the Christian democrats (COPEI)—were also making a statement about what they considered valid democratic ideals. Betancourt's foreign policy also emphasized the collective defense of democracy, while the Venezuelan left was less open to negotiation, because it believed that a Cuban-style

Venezuela's democracy confronts one of its greatest challenges in history.

revolution was possible in Venezuela. After 1960, the left moved towards violent insurrection.

In the 1970s President Rafael Caldera reopened channels of institutional participation for leftist parties and encouraged a national dialogue, dubbed the *movimiento de pacificación*—pacifying movement—oriented towards incorporating guerrillas into the democratic game. While in the rest of Latin America the left was crushed by right wing dictators, the democratized Venezuelan left began to widen its influence inside the country, especially in the universities and military academies. In the early 1980s, Hugo Chavez was one of those attending military training. At the same time, Venezuelan democracy started to show signs of fatigue.

In the 1980s, traditional political parties failed to renew their leadership (the constitutional rule of allowing reelection only after five years has been blamed). Younger generations also felt shut out of the political game. The winding down of the oil boom left frus-

trated Venezuelans with unfulfilled social demands. After all, in 1981 oil tax revenues were US\$2,000 per capita (in 2002 dollars) while during the last decade it has oscillated between US\$250 and US\$600. Venezuelan democracy weakened as a result of a lack of political leadership and vision in a process of irreversibly declining oil revenues and increasing impoverishment.

In 1992, Chávez, a paratrooper, orchestrated two military coup attempts against democratically elected President Carlos Andrés Pérez. The consequences of these political events signaled the end of the democratic system created in 1959 but fortunately Venezuelans found a way out without breaking the constitutional thread. Chávez was incarcerated only to be offered a generous 1994 presidential pardon during the Caldera government. In spite of having plotted against the constitutional order twice, he was freed without any political restriction that would disqualify him from running for office.

In 1993, the two parties together could not persuade 46% of the electorate while only five years before they had attracted 92% of the votes. Rafael Caldera won the presidential elections with only 32% of the votes provided by "el chiripero" (small cockroaches), an alliance of small political organizations and civil society groups. For many, the 1993 elections signaled the end of the two-party system. In 1994, the year Chávez left jail, more than 62% of Venezuelans believed that existing political parties "were good for nothing;" 64 % believed that "political parties were essential," but 80% confessed "no interest in politics." The message was clear for whoever wanted to hear it. Venezuelans wanted democracy, but were disenchanted with traditional political parties and their leadership.

Riding on the country's revolutionary mood in 1998, with a highly antagonistic style and a confrontational discourse, a relatively unknown Chávez got elected with 56.20% of the vote, with 36% abstention. His main mandate was to provide a radical political reform including the election of a constituent assembly to write a

system (FPTP) and proportional representation in a new way. As in FPTP, seats were assigned to candidates with the larger number of votes. However, as in proportional representation, the number of seats allocated to each state depended on the population of each state, with electors required to vote separately for each seat in the state. This made the voting process very confusing. In Caracas and other populous states, voters had to choose more than twenty delegates from lists in excess of one hundred. Also, the generalized abhorrence for political parties gave way to the total elimination of party symbols and affiliations: any relation between a candidate and a political party was disallowed. This favored well-known candidates or those with ample campaign resources. Government candidates had the advantage of financing from public funds. Moreover, the government party alliance, "Polo Patriótico," distributed a list with the identifying number of the candidates they favored, so voters *did not have to look at names but just check the numbers representing their candidates* in each electoral circumscription. These lists were called "Kinos" after a popular lottery game in Venezuela.

Thus, this mechanism led to a big atomization of the opposition. With only half of the votes, the government alliance got more than 93% of the seats (119 of 128). Thus, immediate and serious doubts arose about the representative nature and legitimacy of the Constituent Assembly. Between July and December 1999, the Constituent Assembly not only wrote the new Constitution, but also assumed legislative responsibilities, dissolving the Congress elected in 1998. Important vacuums were left for the transitional regime. To build a bridge between the two constitutions, the Constituent Assembly decided to self-nominate a commission or "Congresillo" to write the terms of the transition. A new Attorney General and "ombudsman" were elected, as were new members of the Electoral Power. The Congresillo appointed Supreme Court Justices, violating the conditions established in the new Constitution.

In December 1999, the new Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela was approved by 71.23%, with 56% abstention. The structure of the Venezuelan State was dramatically changed to five powers instead of three.

Besides the traditional Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers, the Electoral and Citizen Power were created in order to deepen democracy and make it more "participatory." The name of the country was changed to Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The presidential term was extended from five to six years with immediate reelection; the names for the Congress and the Supreme Court were changed to National Assembly (NA) and Supreme Tribunal of Justice (STJ) respectively. With new names and also new structures—the NA for example would have only one chamber instead of two—the five powers had to be elected under the new Constitution. Unfortunately, as we have just discussed, this constitutional mandate was violated, generating doubts about the whole process.

Paradoxically, the new constitution introduced the concept of civil participation (traditionally called participative democracy). Political participation extended to elections, referenda, popular consultation, open town councils, and recall elections for elected public officials, including the president. The new Constitution even gives the Venezuelan citizens the right to rebel. For this reason, the bias, lack of transparency and participation which characterized the transitional period were seen as a mockery to the democratic

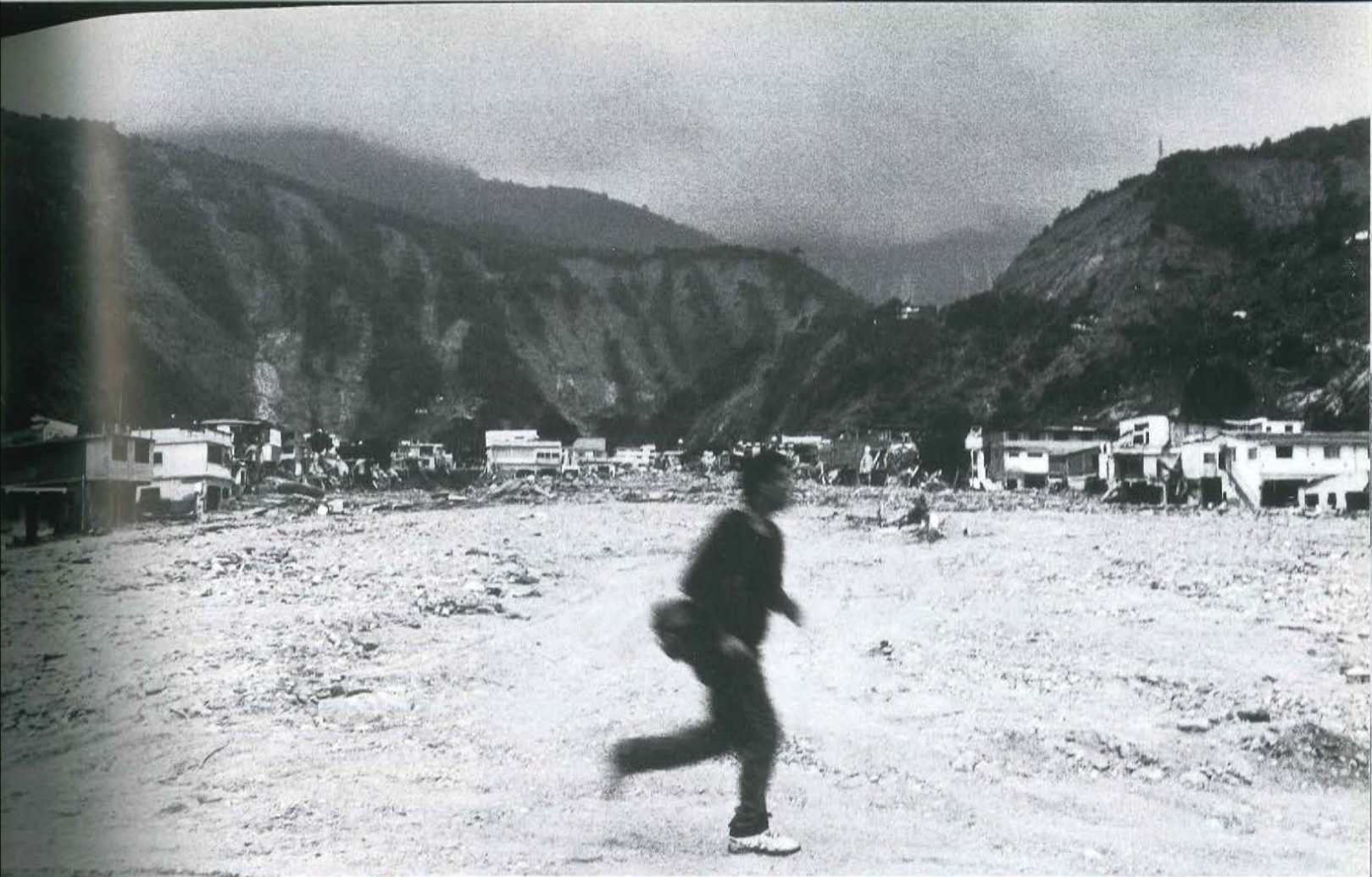
Venezuela is now in a political quagmire testing the endurance and stability of its system.

new constitution for the country. According to constitutional specialists, the former 1961 constitution needed only minor amendments to allow the needed changes, but the constituent assembly became an end in itself. During his inauguration, Chávez swore on what he called a "moribund" constitution. The old constitution, symbol of the *ancien regime*, had to go, and so it did.

REVOLUTIONARY EUPHORIA AND CREEPING ILLEGITIMACY

While almost everybody wanted a new constitution, not too many thought about the destabilizing effects of a whole new set of rules and regulations. While almost everybody wanted more political participation, not too many thought about problems of minority representation, electoral fatigue or illegitimacy. Venezuelans wanted to participate, and so they did. Between 1998 and 2000, they went to the polls at least six times, four elections and two referendums. Unfortunately, elections and referendums don't guarantee a better democracy. In the Venezuelan case, this soon became obvious.

Let's begin with a key element in the process that would help to explain what happened. The Constituent Assembly was elected using a novel system. It mixed characteristics of first-past-the-post



Previous: National Guardsmen confront demonstrators demanding Chávez' resignation; above: The economic devastation caused by flooding put many Venezuelans in a revolutionary mood.

aspirations of Venezuelans. In spite of all these justifiable doubts about the legitimacy of the process, Chávez's popularity was still running high, but soon the mood would change

THE MORNING AFTER: THE PEOPLE TAKE THE STREETS.

By March 2002, opinion polls found that Chávez' popularity had fallen to 30%. Accumulating violations of the constitutional order created an increased sense of authoritarian rule and arbitrary power that would generate a growing opposition. Without a system of checks and balances in place, the opposition, mistrusting formal protest channels, decided to take to the streets. At the same time Chávez followers also went to the streets to show support. With marches and countermarches, civil society had not only become more politically involved, but deeply divided.

Several issues exacerbated this increased polarization: an intrusive educational reform, a perception of rampant corruption, and the creation of the so-called Bolivarian Circles.

The creation of these government-financed "non-government organizations" aroused suspicion among the opposition who believe they are paramilitary organizations intended to defend the Bolivarian Revolution with guns. For others the Bolivarian Circles are grass root organizations created only to help the poor.

Another issue was the 2001 election of new authorities in the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), mandated by the new Constitution. However, the candidate supported by Chávez lost and a traditional leader from Acción Democrática got elected. Chávez, claiming fraud, asked the Electoral Council to disallow the

results of the elections while qualifying the new CTV authorities as illegitimate and calling for the creation of a Bolivarian Confederation of Workers. Elected CTV President, Carlos Ortega responded "if the president wants war, he will have it."

In November 2001, tensions were exacerbated when Chávez, using special powers given to him in the transitional period, approved more than 48 laws by decree. Some of the resulting laws generated weakened property and states' rights. Raising serious concerns about the real possibility of establishing a socialist system, the Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (FEDECAMARAS) immediately called for a national day of stoppage on December 10th. For the first time in democratic history, the trade union movement and the business associations were in agreement to back a national strike. Around 80% of business did not open on December 10, 2001. More than the actual text of the practically impossible-to-find texts of the 48 laws, what infuriated Venezuelans was the antidemocratic manner in which they were approved. Regardless of the content, Venezuelans had not changed the bad democracy they had before for this one. Corruption and lack of transparency were precisely the plagues of the past they wanted to get rid of. Now this government was bringing them back with a vigor never seen before.

One by one, Chávez confronted all institutions: the Church, the military, the decentralized governments and their police, increasing opposition. In the international arena, he also developed a controversial position. Chávez has confronted capitalism and challenged U.S. policy, siding with guerrillas, Cuba, and Arab rogue states.

LEADING TO APRIL 11

In February, he turned his fury on the oil company, *Petroleos de Venezuela* (PDVSA), one of Venezuela's dearest symbols of meritocracy and efficiency. He removed its board of directors to appoint more loyal and less capable people. Immediately, PDVSA management complained and threatened with a strike, asserting that these appointments violated an important principle: promotion should be based on performance and not party loyalty. For the first time in the history of the oil industry, workers supported upper management by supporting the threatened strike. In response, the president, on April 7, on national television, fired the protesting upper management. PDVSA retaliated with a strike. Soon, the labor unions, the business community, the media and the civil society decided to support the April 9 strike. The government attempted to restrict television's ability to transmit news. When the government television station broadcast images conveying the strike's failure, private channels decided to break the restrictions and show what was really happening. Around 80 percent of the businesses were closed and civil society took the streets to back PDVSA.

The strike was a success and continued until Thursday, April 11, culminating with a march of around one million people asking for the President's resignation in order to find a constitutional way out of the political crisis. Article 350 of the new constitution grants the Venezuelan people the right to rebel against any government or authority which violates the democratic principles.

The march was fired upon by snipers who coldly aimed at people's hearts and heads. Eighteen people died and more than a hundred were injured. Chávez ordered tanks to take to the streets. This tipped the top brass of the military to ask the president to resign. Chávez requested a plane to leave for Cuba, but members

of the military command wanted him to stand trial for his crimes. Business Association chief Pedro Carmona was appointed as interim president and he dissolved all powers by decree. This led to a negative reaction from opposition leaders and civil society who joined Chávez supporters in their staunch rejection of Carmona's decree. The military also reacted and the "institutionalist" forces (those who oppose any violation of the constitution, including Chávez' 1992 military coup attempts) asked Carmona to withdraw the decree and respect the constitution. In the process, a majority of the Armed Forces opted to bring Chávez back.

It is hard to understand what explains this turn of events. What is clear is that April 11 seriously questioned Chávez's legitimacy, and he has been unable to end political instability. The opposition is adamant about his departure and is now able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of protesters.

In an extremely heated environment, the Supreme Justice Tribunal decided in August against considering the military high command in violation of the constitution during the events of April 11. This has opened the door to myriad accusations against the president for allegedly ordering the violence against peaceful marchers. Chávez now only has a very precarious simple majority in the National Assembly, with the moderates showing signs that they are willing to negotiate the transition to a post-Chávez rule.

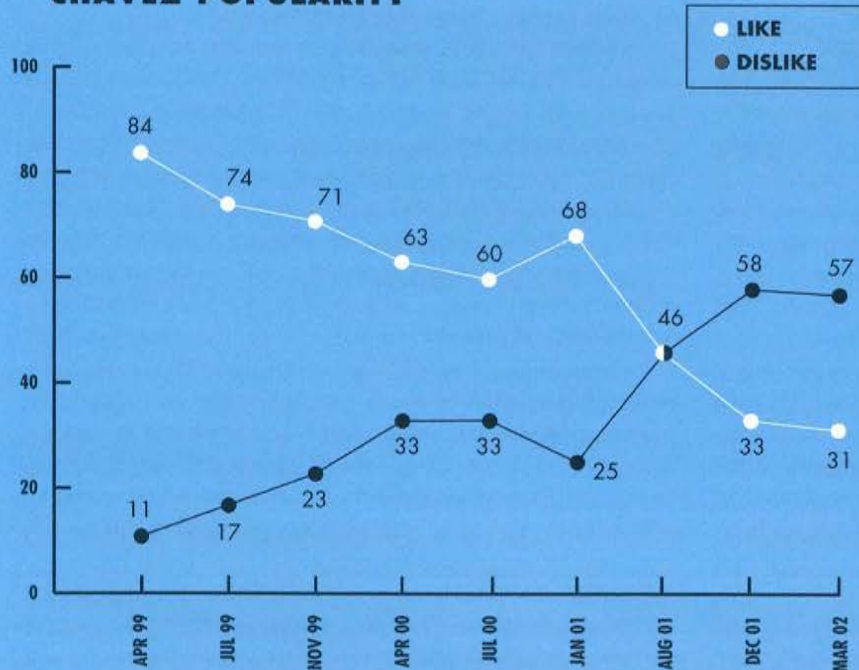
CONCLUDING REMARKS

After two decades of frustration with a political leadership unable to reverse the economic downturn and to respond to political demands, Venezuelans—in a revolutionary mood—elected President Hugo Chávez with a mandate to destroy the old political system. Venezuelans went to the polls more than ever in history, but institutions which underpinned democracy weakened. As *formal* power became concentrated in the hands of President Hugo Chávez, Venezuelans found *informal* mechanisms to constrain the government.

Paradoxically, Chávez is now confronting the same revolutionary mood that initially got him into power. He accomplished the *negative* agenda by kicking the rascals out but has failed to make any dents in the reduction of corruption or in turning the economy around, let alone progress on formalizing democracy. It may very well be that the same revolutionary mood that got Chávez into power would force him to step aside.

Ana Julia Jatar is a DRCLAS Visiting Scholar from Venezuela, researching the causes for the decline of the Venezuelan political system. She was a Senior Fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington where she followed Venezuela and Cuba. Jatar authors a regular column in the Venezuelan newspaper El Nacional and hosts a radio show from Boston on Latin American policy issues.

CHÁVEZ POPULARITY



Source: Analisis del Entorno Sociopolítico Venezolano; Alfred Keller, May 2002

Viewing Political Space in Brazil

Through a Central American Lens

BY JACK SPENCE

IN A SÃO PAULO VOLKSWAGEN FACTORY last year, two veteran workers began arguing about their rival soccer clubs (Palmeiro v. Corinthians). The dispute apparently became so disruptive that Management fired the pair, alleging that their dispute was disrupting the automobile plant. By that afternoon three thousand workers had folded their arms, and an assembly of the swing shift was planned to see if they would continue the work stoppage.

A neophyte in observing Brazilian politics, it occurred to me that this immediate and broad kind of response could not have happened in any of the three war-torn Central American countries I have been studying since the early 1980s. Of course, Central America has nothing like the huge São Paulo auto complex. And though football claims many fanatics in El Salvador and Guatemala, there is something delightfully Brazilian about this particular dispute, a nation where one can observe pick-up soccer games on any flat surface at virtually any hour of the day or night. The dust up at Volkswagen may have been due, in part, to an economic downturn exacerbated by electricity shortages. Several thousand VW workers were about to go on a forced, unpaid "holiday." (And Brazilian soccer was at a particularly low ebb. A Chilean team had defeated Palmeiro damaging Brazil's chances in the Mercosul Cup.) So tempers were short.

Despite these particular Brazilian features, the essential difference with Central America is that trade unions in large Brazilian sectors have been able to carve out more effective political space than in these Central American countries—even in Nicaragua where the conquest of the Sandinistas soon brought with it a huge increase in trade unionization. In Nicaragua, the electoral defeats of the Sandinistas, an economy devastated by two wars, high unemployment, and corruption and infighting all weakened the unions. The development of electoral democracy did not bring stronger trade unions in El Salvador and Guatemala. Although courageous efforts were made during the war years, repression took a severe toll on leaders. After the wars, a hostile legal climate, lingering violence, and powerful anti-union foes all prevented strong unions.

The Volkswagen soccer incident only made page ten news in the *Dinheiro* section of the *Folha de São Paulo*. Of greater moment was a highly publicized battle running in September 2000 between the Landless Workers Movement (MST), President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and the Governor of Minas Gerais, Itamar Franco. The MST is perhaps the largest organized social movement in recent Latin American history. For nearly ten years, its members have been invad-



Soccer and politics mix in Brazil.

ing large farms that they claim are vastly underutilized. The MST claims membership of 500,000 and has successfully invaded farms in virtually every Brazilian state. Success means gaining eventual legal recognition under a constitutional claim that agricultural lands must be made economically productive, and then using some of the proceeds from production to keep the MST growing. Most invasions are not highly publicized, at least in the national press, but in this instance they threatened to invade a farm belonging to a relative of Cardoso.

The plot thickened when Franco, no friend of the MST, was slow to send out the state police to protect the farm. Franco and Cardoso became bitter rivals after the former, as then President of Brazil, appointed Cardoso to head the Ministry of Finance, a position that Cardoso turned into a successful launching pad for the Presidency in 1992. In 2000, Franco was a presidential hopeful and a maverick who sought the spotlight. When Cardoso moved to dispatch federal forces to protect the farm Franco, in mock horror, positioned 500 state police and an armored vehicle in front of the governor's palace while he gave interviews inside portraying this federal invasion as a coup against states rights. This was high stakes, high political theater on the part of all the actors with a backdrop of not-so-far distant Brazilian military rule by coup.

Again, as in the Volkswagen case, a grassroots group has been able to occupy significant political space on a national level in Brazil during the years of democratization, but not in Central America. Despite histories of rural insurgencies beginning in the late 1970s, none of these Central American countries has an organized movement of the rural poor remotely similar in size and effectiveness



Exploring citizenship at the MST.

to the MST. In fact, Central American rural peasant organizations have been rather quiet in the last ten years. There have only been very occasional protests over agrarian debts in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and a few recent peasant land invasions in Guatemala—the country with the highest land inequality and a poverty and debt-enforced system of migratory labor.

It might be argued that such rural groups have not emerged in El Salvador and Nicaragua in recent years because those countries each had significant agrarian reforms in the 1980s. But the Sandinista's agrarian reform has been largely rolled back by privatization of state farms and by anti agrarian reform invasions staged by former owners and anti-Sandinista war veterans. In El Salvador, most agrarian reform cooperatives have hung on, and at war's end, more land was distributed through a land purchase scheme for war vet-

The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva "Lula" underscores Brazil's strong labor movement and broad political space.

erans and several thousand families who had occupied lands in war zones. But land shortages and inequality remain as high as before the war, despite large-scale migration to cities and to the U.S.

The Cardoso-Franco skirmish illustrates, in overly dramatic fashion, the ample political space in Brazil created by its federal structure. In Central America the "states" or departments are little more than historical boundaries that constitute no more than multimember electoral districts. The extent to which those elected see themselves, or are seen by others, as representing their department is minimal, if not entirely invisible. Rather, their loyalty is owed to the political party that put them high enough on the its list of candidates to be elected.

Municipal governments are more meaningful than departments in Central America, but by comparison with Brazil their budgets, which have increased markedly in recent years in El Salvador and Guatemala (from one percent of the national budget in El Salvador to six percent) are miniscule compared to Brazilian municipalities.

These elements of Brazilian federalism combine with an election system of "open list" proportional representation (in which voters may vote for the party list or they may vote for one candidate on the party's list) to create a political dynamic vastly different from Central America. In Brazil, the party is more beholden to a proven vote getting candidate; in Central America, the candidate is beholden to the party.

Party line voting in the legislatures is the norm in Central America. In Brazil, not only is party line voting much less common, but also party-switching seems to be a national sport—though considerably less popular and more arcane than football. Pork fat projects grease the system. Aimed at the voting bases of key legislators, they are used by the executive branch to win votes on important legislation and by the legislators to build electoral coalitions with various mayors, their state's governor, or other of their constituencies such as ethnic or church groups.

Critics have argued that these features make for "inchoate" parties in Brazil, parties that don't really represent or make coherent policy making organizations. "Pork" is not a term of flattery in the literature on democratization. On the other hand, three of the six major parties in Central America are quite "choate," but are each dominated by one individual—Alemán and Ortega in Nicaragua, Rios Montt (of the FRG) in Guatemala. A fourth, ARENA in El Salvador, rotates leaders but is famed for its tight, top down management of party affairs and legislation. And the party "system" in Guatemala has been considerably more inchoate than that of Brazil. The major winners in the first rounds of elections in the late 80s and early 90s have sunk beneath the surface of the political waters, and it is not at all clear that the same fate does not await the two current major parties in Guatemala.

In an era of neo liberalism, the four countries are similar in having significant left of center parties with socialist roots. The FSLN in Nicaragua, since losing in 1990, has finished a strong second.

The FMLN emerged with the largest number of deputies in the 1998 elections, but the rightist ARENA has retained a working majority and the presidency since 1989. The URNG in Guatemala finished a distant third in its first electoral outing. The Workers Party (PT) in Brazil is the fourth largest, but has challenged for the presidency three times and

may well win it this year. Its victories and efficient, honest government in many large cities and the aforementioned strength of municipal governments have given it governing and administrative experience lacking in the Central American leftist parties. Containing many currents of leftist thought, the PT has been able to avoid one person party rule, as with Ortega in Managua, and the kind of debilitating fissures and struggle for power that have held back the FMLN in El Salvador and the URNG in Guatemala.

Do these Brazilian instances of broader political space—strong grassroots organizations, strong local governments, more open political parties, broader choices for voters—mean that Brazil, evolving more or less contemporaneously with the Central American countries from long periods of military dictatorship, has gone further through the transition to and consolidation of democracy than the three Central American countries?

Critics could question whether the MST land invasions, or even

the work stoppage or the dismissal of the workers at Volkswagen, were in accord with the rule of law. They might also point to Brazilian high levels of corruption and low levels of accountability. But despite spectacular corruption cases in 2000 and 2001, involving sums of money that would make the voracious Alemán administration in Nicaragua green with envy, Brazil has also strengthened government prosecutors and enhanced their independence and investigative powers. (It must be noted that in recent weeks the new Bolaños administration in Nicaragua attacked the corruption of the Alemán administration with unprecedented aggression, but Alemán enjoys immunity.) In Brazil the Senate impeached one member—a first—and forced the resignation from the Senate of two successive Senate Presidents. One of them, Antonio Carlos Magalhães is described as the second most powerful senator in Brazilian history (and another bitter rival of Cardoso).

But the question of which country has evolved further in its transition to democracy, or which is more democratic, is itself problematic. Recent assessments of countries in transition have registered disappointment about a host of problems in creating democratic institutions, once elections have settled in. In the last few months long articles in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have worried that electoral democracy and open markets in the last 15 years in Latin America have failed to become broadly popular or to achieve stability because poverty and inequality have remained high. I do not dispute these findings and have contributed to similar analyses about these Central American countries. But this line of thinking tends to “grade” each country against either an ideal standard or the standard of the “advanced democracies.” As such it tends overrate the “advanced” countries, to underappreciate the complexity of the task, and to be ahistorical.

First, the advanced democracies, or at least the most prominent one in this hemisphere, have their own dirty laundry, much of it recently prominent. Several months before the critical 1990 Nicaraguan election, I was visiting as an election observer, one of a group that would grow to several thousand foreigners. At a picnic of Nicaraguans, after introductions, one said, “I hope to see you in the U.S. soon.” I inquired if he had a scholarship, and he replied with a smile that he hoped to be on a team of Nicaraguans to observe elections in Texas or Chicago. There is of course no comparison between the standards of that 1990 Nicaraguan election and the display put on in Florida two years ago (and 35 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act). Sophisticated Brazilians noted the irony that it was a member of Chicago’s Daley family member on television defending Al Gore’s rights to a fair election in Florida. Millions of Brazilians who took to the streets in the waning years of military rule to protest a scheme of indirect presidential elections could hardly be favorably impressed with the continued quiescence in the U.S. over what Yale political scientist Robert Dahl terms “the undemocratic blemish” of the electoral college. Good governance extends to economic regulatory policy. While U.S. representatives have visited Brazil and Argentina urging sound economic policy, they have shared headlines of economic giants that have run amok to the ruin of employees and shareholders and the enrichment of CEOs—including, among others, Enron, Tyco and World Com.

Many of the differences between Brazil and Central America, can be traced to the size and complexity of Brazil rather than to policy choice. Thus, contrasting Brazilian examples are also available. After submitting his resignation to avoid impeachment, Magalhães



FROM VEJA MAGAZINE

JULIO BERNARDES/WEBPHOTO

To guarantee the security of his palace the governor called the Crowd Control Battalion of the Military Police.

could return to Bahia, which he has ruled like a fiefdom. Although Bahia’s population is larger than Guatemala’s and Brazilian trade unions and the MST are strong, in broad reaches of the rural north-east, working conditions and poverty are on a par with what is suffered by the indigenous highland populations in Guatemala.

Other differences emerge from the different historical trajectories, not better policy choices in one place than another. In Brazil, repression during military dictatorship was far less severe, and the dictatorship itself began 30 years after the militaries took over in Central America. Those who died by political violence numbered in the hundreds in Brazil and in the tens of thousands in each of the tiny Central American countries. It took civil wars to break the hold of the traditional militaries, wars that shred the social fabric, decimated political organizations, and were as devastating as the Civil War in the U.S. The development of political parties on the left in Central America has been complicated by the fact that each began as military, clandestine organizations and had to make a difficult transition. (ARENA is also affected by its roots as a paramilitary organization.)

This is not to suggest that any of these countries are stuck in their histories and face a pre-determined future. Who could have predicted ten years ago that peace negotiators in Guatemala would have, however flawed the eventual peace treaty, created a vast improvement in human rights conditions (though they are hardly optimal)? Who knew that dissidents from the historic Sandinista movement would be cheering for the anti-corruption efforts of Bolaños, the most vociferous anti-Sandinista of the 1980s, or in Brazil, Magalhães would be forced from the Senate in shame? Democratization is a complex historic practice put in place by actors who can suffer reverses and enjoy surprises in contested arenas; it is not a blueprint awaiting a construction firm.

Jack Spence is the President of Hemisphere Initiatives, a research group that since 1989 has published analyses of post war political processes in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. He is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Boston and is currently the Associate Dean of its College of Arts and Sciences. He spent sixteen months in Brazil in 2000-2001.

On Cuban Democracy

Cuba and the Democratic Culture

BY RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ

WHEN MY DAUGHTER PATRICIA WAS A LITTLE GIRL, SOME peculiar cartoons, dubbed from Russian into Spanish and set in the African jungle, captivated her. The main characters were a philosophical monkey, a tiny elephant, and a monster named Tusa-Kutusa who hardly ever appeared on screen. At the story's end, the elephant ate some magic herbs and immediately grew to the right size, prompting the Hispano-Soviet monkey, swinging from his branch, to exclaim, "I already told you. There's no such thing as a small elephant."

My daughter can still recite complete verbatim dialogues from that cartoon, engraved faithfully into her memory from childhood, that very short moment in life that accompanies one always. The saga of Tusa-Kutusa, the prophetic monkey, and the Soviet elephant are part of her infancy, not mine. Nevertheless, there is something in the ironic certainty of the monkey, who indulges in what former Marxist philosopher Roger Garaudy would have called "boundless realism," that sticks with me until this very day: "Small elephants, there's no such thing."

Can a democratic system be developed on an island 90 miles away from a superpower that has relentlessly besieged it? Is democratic and pluralistic socialism, one that might include a loyal opposition, imaginable next door to rampant capitalism? Is it conceivable in a country subject to U.S.-based financing and promotion of its own brand of "democracy"? The realistic monkey would not have hesitated in his response to these questions. I want to pause here, however, to examine these queries from a different angle. It's not that I am in total disagreement with such a realistic focus, but because the problem of democracy is rarely examined from the very real perspective of Cuban civil society and political culture.

HAS CUBA EVER BEEN PERCEIVED AS DEMOCRATIC?

If the U.S. political system is our point of reference, it's obvious that Cuba contrasts sharply with its institutions and prescriptions.



Left: Fidel and Raul Castro; right: the million-man march in Havana

The Cuban system is one-party, the North American is two-party. We do have universal, direct, and secret suffrage, from local elections to those for the National Assembly. We do not have competing political parties nor do we have U.S.-style electoral campaigns. Cuba has some legal restrictions on freedom of expression, organization, and movement—restrictions that do not exist as such in the United States. Many more differences exist between the two societies, their political systems and civic cultures. These other factors are directly related to freedom and pluralism, as well as the development of a democratic culture, and are barely mentioned in reference to Cuba.

Historically, even when deep class divisions were rampant, Cuban social relations were perceived as less exclusive and more porous than those in the United States. A North American visitor to Cuba in 1907 observed, "to the American at home, the negro as a social, political or even industrial equal is an affront, an offence, nothing less; to the Cuban, he is not" [...] "It is because [in Cuba the negro] is not everywhere confronted and made hard in thought and feeling by cold or resentful signs of contempt from the white man." (Lt.-Col. R.F. Bullard, "How Cubans Differ from Us" (*Century*, November 1907).

Other visitors from the North have considered that we Cubans have never had the capacity "to work out a republic and a constitution on a basis of universal suffrage;" thus, a republic could only be an imperfect experience in Cuba "with frequent lapses from the democratic ideal, with the accompaniment of a continuous commotion" and "under the somewhat indefinite but nonetheless effective suzerainty of the United States." (Sydney Brooks, "Some impressions of Cuba" *NorthAmerican Review*, June 1914).

The perception that we Cubans are more socially egalitarian, open in our cultural habits, and yet less capable of governing ourselves democratically, is older than what one might imagine.

We also have tended to look at the question of liberties in the United States through a different lens. "What's this about not being



ALL PHOTOS (THIS STORY): ANDREW KLEIN <ajklein@fas.harvard.edu>

able to smoke a cigar anywhere in this university, not to mention getting accused of sexual harassment if you just tell a department secretary that her dress is pretty; you can't even drink a beer in the park without being considered indecent," exclaimed a friend from Pinar del Río after visiting an illustrious East Coast university. Although from an U.S. puritanical viewpoint, my friend would be expressing "macho preferences of a tobacco addict," I suspect that most Latin and Caribbean visitors to North America would share some of his feelings about these limitations.

Many of us Cubans might agree with those pre-1959 visitors who observed that the republic alternated between dictatorships and corrupt governments, with a constant U.S. interference in domestic politics. And since the founding fathers of our independence in the 19th century to my friend from Pinar del Río, we do not identify with the North American version of democracy and civil liberties. Our present political system has (also) been a result of that history and perspective.

HAVE DEMOCRACY AND ITS PRACTICE CHANGED?

As my colleague the cigar aficionado likes to remind me, the defects of world socialism aren't necessarily included in the script, but have very often been a consequence of the *mise en scene*. Social justice, equality and freedom are basic values embedded in the socialist political culture, as well as national sovereignty, popular mobilizations, solidarity, and the right to work, to education and health care. Perhaps a political analyst or legal expert could tell us that these are premises, properties, or expected consequences of a democratic system, as would be the routine alternation of power—but they do not constitute *democracy* itself as a political mechanism. Democracy is identified with—the experts would surely say—the real popular capacity to propose and freely elect their government representatives and to change them if they do not respond to citizens' interests. Democracy as a system would have to *represent* popular power, although it would also have to ensure real citizen *participation*. Hence, regardless of any specific institutional form, if we call democracy a system in which power is constructed and legitimated by citizen representation and participation, we can affirm that Cuba has developed that system, with both advances and setbacks.

In the last ten years, the course of Cuban democratic develop-

ment has been influenced by three main factors: the economic and ideological crisis precipitated by the crumbling of Eastern European socialism; the reforms in the 1990s to confront this crisis; and the effect of renewed North American hostility with its eagerness to subjugate the country. These factors have acted directly on the domestic consensus, on the former linkage between the State and civil society, and have helped to create a differentiated space for the production of ideas, and political activity.

What is more democratic in Cuba today than ten years ago?

In relative terms, Cuba is further ahead in its democratic civic culture than any other society I've known.

Power is more geographically decentralized within a system that is still highly centralized. Local governments have greater say in decisions and problem-solving. Social development policy is more closely linked than ever to community work.

The generational change of leadership is highly apparent in all the provinces, governed by young people and, in some cases, women and blacks. The Central Committee of the Communist Party also reflects this new composition. Likewise, only three historic figures remain in the Political Bureau from 1965: Fidel and Raul Castro and Juan Almeida, Council of State vice-president and the highest ranking black leader in the country. The average age of the new members elected in 1997 was about 50 years old.

The 1992 constitutional reforms diversified types of property and established a more direct electoral system for the National Assembly. This representative body only meets two times yearly, but its commissions (equivalent to congressional committees) meet frequently in all the country's provinces to examine problems and make decisions.

The freedom to travel outside the country and to come and go for personal or work-related reasons is greater than ever after 1962. A growing number of citizens have received authorization to temporarily reside outside the island and be able to return—with the exception of those who go to the United States.

The space for debate, criticism, and public dissent has expanded. Racial discrimination, intergenerational differences, the crisis of moral and ideological values, the migratory wave of the 1990s and its motivations, the visions of way of life in the capitalist world, free-



Left: voting for constitutional modification; right: Collection of signature ballots collected in favor of making Cuba's brand of socialism constitutionally untouchable. 7,412,721 Cubans signed the petition, over 98.7% of the population voting age, which was a response to Bush's speech at Westpoint and Project Varela's 11,000 signatures calling for a referendum on Cuban-style democracy and human rights.

dom of expression, civil society and pluralism are debated in institutional public forums, in magazines, novels, theatre pieces, and films that circulate throughout the country.

Gradually, the information available to Cuban citizens is increasing. Television carries more information from foreign sources than before. In spite of economic limitations and administrative restrictions, Internet use by institutions, organizations, and even individuals has been expanding. Thousands of Cubans use e-mail and thus communicate more widely with the rest of the world.

What limitations on democratic development remain? Political system institutions do not work as well as they should. For example, according to the powers given to it by law, the role of the National Assembly in the discussion and treatment of national problems is not critical in terms of the State's decision making. The representation of young people, women, and blacks in the political leadership is still insufficient. Public opinion laments the informative pabulum provided by the mass media, and its ineptitude in reflecting public grievances. It's also questioned why administrative restrictions on the travel of Cuban citizens to and from the island still remain. The mechanism to nominate candidates, particularly to the higher representative bodies, could also be improved.

Many of the political arguments for these restrictions have to do with the persistent meddling by the United States in Cuban domestic affairs, including its proactive sponsorship of opposition groups, its stated intention to use informational, academic, and cultural exchanges to destabilize the socialist system, and its eagerness to dictate the terms of the ongoing transition to force Cuba on a capitalist track. These policies have had a counterproductive effect on democracy in Cuba. To the degree in which they have used the democratic banner to their own ends, they have slowed economic and political reforms. Yes, Cuban socialism would be more democratic if the U.S. hostility would lapse. It's worthwhile to ask though if Cuban socialism has been weakened in relation to the United States because of democratic development and economic reform in the past ten years. Can these and some other future developments be postponed until these U.S. policies disappear? If indeed they would ever disappear entirely someday.

The advances and shortcomings of democratic development in Cuba can be illustrated through the theme of participation. The system has achieved a very high percentage of citizen participation—mainly through consultations and mobilization. Even during the crisis, many proposed laws and economic policy measures were discussed in work places, schools, unions, and neighborhood meetings. Mobilizations to support them or to put a constitutional change to a referendum (as happened in June 2002) have been massive. This participation is less in regards to decision-making and to people's control over real policies. In spite of the decentralization and the diversification in Cuban society and its economy, the centralist-style bureaucratic mechanisms keep weighing on the system, emphasizing an essentially administrative concept of control.

Cubans on the island are not asking themselves if the system has established rules of political succession or whether citizens have the right to vote. They're not asking if elections are granted periodically or if the majority would vote or not for Fidel Castro or for socialism. There's no public outcry to allow organization of a multitude of political parties. The real problems—reflecting other contradictions—arise from a different social and cultural framework.

TO WHAT DEGREE DO WE HAVE A DEMOCRATIC CULTURE?

Possibly the most conspicuous contradiction arises from the primary democratic condition of the revolutionary socialist ideology, the guarantee to free and complete access to education and culture.

Education is still today a top issue in the domestic political agenda. Even in the most marginal of neighborhoods in Cuban cities, the great majority of children attend school until at least the ninth grade. More than half a million Cubans have graduated from the university. In spite of the discontent created by the crisis, a greater level of culture permits a thoughtful civil society today. This right to think implies a capacity to reasonably appropriate and criticize the values of a socialist political culture, including that of democracy. The more educated and cultivated new generations are surely more capable than their parents of improving the socialist system and making it more democratic.

In relative terms, Cuba is further ahead in its democratic civic culture than any other society I've known. Democratic civic culture in Cuba is expressed when people say what they think and stand up for their rights and needs, despite the existence of an administrative structure of control (which is not that of a police state). That democratic civic culture is certainly larger and deeper than its institutional expression. My professor friends at certain private universities would rarely challenge the head of a department or a director, as I've seen happen in all the Cuban academic institutions with which I've collaborated. Recently, I went to Jose Martí Airport to say goodbye to a Caribbean researcher, who saw me argue with a policeman about a parking regulation. My colleague was so concerned that he called me at home a few hours later, convinced that something had happened to me. "Here in my country you might spend a night in jail for what you said to the policeman," he said. Many Cubans believe that the day the government had to use the police or army to massively repress its citizens, there would be no socialism to defend.

In spite of those huge differences with other societies in the hemisphere, I think that we have our own problems, especially when we consider that the scope of a democratic culture cannot be reduced to the ballot box, the assemblies, and government bodies. For example, Cuban education, although universally accessible, in my opinion, is still rigid in its curriculum and authoritarian in its teaching style. Some might say that the schools reflect the vertical ideology of the system. I disagree because I remember private and public schools before 1959, and their style was not more democratic. Our family relations are also not exactly democratic. I believe that in order to consolidate a democratic culture, we must transform our educational and familial habits and the style of our social organizations, our mentality and the way in which we go about our daily lives.

Can a political system based on democratic socialist ideas possibly be fully developed, even if the society upon which it is built is not? Here, I'd say the wise monkey is right: "There's no such thing as a small elephant, is there?"

Rafael Hernández, one of the first DRCLAS Visiting Scholars in 1995, is editor of the Cuban magazine Temas. Senior researcher at the Juan Marinello Center in Havana, he is co-editor with DRCLAS director John H. Coatsworth of Culturas Encontradas, co-published by DRCLAS and the Juan Marinello Center in 2001. He directed the North American section of the Cuban Center for the Study of the Americas from 1978-1996.

Between Pacifiers and Power

Forced Maternity Leave for Mayors

BY MAGDA HINOJOSA

WHEN JACQUELINE VAN RYSSSELBERGHE was informed last November that she would have to leave her post as mayor of Concepción, one of Chile's largest and most important cities, she fought back. She had not been accused of corruption; she had not accepted a different political position. Her "crime" was giving birth to her fifth child earlier that month, a baby girl named Magdalena. By law, van Rysselberghe was being obligated to take a nearly four-month-long maternity leave.

The labor law provides Chilean women with a generous 18-week long maternity leave paid for by the state. Municipal workers, including elected officials like van Rysselberghe, are provided this same maternity leave. Article 181 of the labor law states that women have the right to six weeks of maternal leave before they give birth and 12 weeks after childbirth. Chilean women are further protected by Article 186 of the law that prohibits employers from firing pregnant women and makes it illegal to fire a woman who has taken maternity leave for up to a year after she has finished this leave. Article 187 prohibits pregnant women from doing any heavy work or taking on a night shift.

The issue of whether women mayors should be given a choice regarding maternity leave has divided women in Chile and united women officeholders. It highlights women's true incorporation into the democratic system. Mayors of both the right, like van Rysselberghe, and of the left are joining forces to change the law.

Since Chile's democratic transition, three municipal elections in 1992, 1996, and 2000, have given women slight gains. Today, 12 percent of mayors are women, compared to 7 percent in 1992. The percentage of women councilmembers has risen too, from 12 percent to 17 percent. We can also expect a subsequent increase in cases like that of van Rysselberghe since many of the women entering local politics are of reproductive age.

Nevertheless, women who worked tire-



COURTESY OF JACQUELINE VAN RYSSSELBERGHE



Jacqueline van Rysselberghe: a choice regarding maternity leave

lessly to guarantee the right to maternity leave are uncomfortable with the idea that a woman could refuse such leave, as doing so could leave the door open for all sorts of employer abuse. And yet many of these same women have difficulty with a law that could potentially prohibit women's electoral opportunities due to their reproductive choices, or that defines who should care for a newborn child.

The issue goes beyond that of fair gender representation in a democracy; it also becomes a question of equal access to political processes. One reason the mayor of Concepción wanted to avoid taking her maternity leave was political. Of the seven councilmembers of Concepción, none belong to the Independent Democratic Union, the mayor's party. Taking her maternity leave would have meant allowing these same councilmembers to choose her replacement, and as she argued, her replacement would be of a different political position.

Van Rysselberghe made it known that she would take her maternity leave if she could choose her own replacement. She argued for an amendment to municipality laws that would allow mayors to have the option of

foregoing maternity leave or allow women officeholders to choose their replacements.

However, many women's activists see the challenge as a step backwards. Adriana Deplane, minister of SERNAM, the women's ministry, publicly opposed allowing van Rysselberghe and women like her forgo their maternity leave, calling such an option dangerous for all women. Deplane argued that changing the law so that van Rysselberghe could avoid maternity leave would be a step backwards for Chilean women and a bad legal precedent.

Even the Chilean Pediatric Society got into the fray, formally expressing its concern over the case of van Rysselberghe; they argued that children's immune systems and intellectual development would be improved by taking maternity leave. The group intends to present a study to the government explaining its wish to see maternity leave extended to six months.

Pictures of van Rysselberghe bottle-feeding her baby with her other children standing by while she sat behind her desk in her municipal office soon spread through the Chilean news, although she is not the first woman mayor wishing to opt out of the

right to stay home with her baby.

The mayor of Maule, Fresia Faúndez, gave birth to her fourth child in 2001, but did not face the same political opposition. Four of the five councilmembers were of her political coalition, the Concertación, though only one of these was a fellow member of the Christian Democratic party. But when, Faúndez asked for only one day of leave from her administrative duties following childbirth, she too was forced to take a full 12 weeks.

Cristina Girardi of Cerro Navia, part of greater Santiago, tried to opt out of her maternity leave in 1997, and so did Miriam Rodríguez of Chépica. The motivations for refusing to take her maternity leave are not immediately obvious in the case of the popular mayor of Cerro Navia, a member of the PPD, whose seven member council is composed of six members of her own political coalition. Rodríguez, a member of the Socialist Party, however, faced serious opposition within her own council, since three of the five councilors were of the right and neither of the other two members were of her own party. The reasons for choosing to take or forgo maternity leave are potentially political, but undeniably these are also quite personal. The legal jumble that could ensue is not.

Could a woman mayor near the end of her term give birth and expect to take 18 weeks leave from her position and return even after a new mayor has been elected?

Article 186 of the law preventing employers from firing pregnant women does not seem applicable to elected officials. Reelection in this case would be the opposite of firing a mayor, but we certainly wouldn't expect that Chilean democracy would allow a situation in which voters were obligated to reelect pregnant mayors or mayors who had recently given birth. It would also be ludicrous to suggest that evening meetings scheduled violate the labor laws. Thus, it becomes evident that new legal statutes must be written up that adequately address the concerns of elected women officeholders.

Having a baby doesn't make a woman incapable of carrying out her duties, as van Rysselberghe proved when she showed up at work with baby in tow and tried to convert the office next door into a pseudo-nursery. Faúndez wanted to take just one day off from her duties, also indicating that she thought herself capable of juggling the demands of a newborn and her executive position.

Women in congress are exempt from laws concerning maternity leave, perhaps because legislating would be problematic if senators and deputies were absent from session for over four months at a time. But women in local-level politics are increasingly taking on more responsibility, as decentralization has given municipalities many functions that were once in the domain of the national government. The office of mayor has grown in importance,

with mayors and former mayors increasingly playing a role in national politics.

More importantly to issues of women's representation, forced maternity leave could give party leaders a reason to discriminate against all women of reproductive age, fearing that during maternity leave their seat will go to the opposition. Or fear that voters might express their concern about women taking maternity leave, these party leaders might refuse to back the campaigns of women who have taken maternity leave or are pregnant. Taking mandatory maternity leave may give voters the impression that women aren't dedicated to their political careers and undermine women's possibilities. Watching an uphill battle forged by a pregnant mayor on this issue might convince other women to stay out of politics. Being part of such a battle might influence the reproductive choices of women like Jacqueline van Rysselberghe.

Magda Hinojosa, a Ph.D. candidate in Harvard's Department of Government, is on a Fulbright fellowship in Chile conducting her field research on women's representation in local level politics, and eating alfajores. Though her research is on political party processes, and not on maternity leave, everyone from chatty cabdrivers to university professors insisted on speaking to her about the topic. She can be reached at <hinojosa@fas.harvard.edu>.

Women, Religious Practices, and Democracy

Gender, Social Change, and the Catholic Church

BY MARIA JOSÉ ROSADO-NUNES

"I didn't used to be the way I am now. I wasn't aware of the situation. It was in the Church that I learned that poverty is not the will of God but the result of politics." Calmly, poor women from peripheral neighborhoods of the Brazilian city of São Paulo tell their stories. "My house was always spic-and-span. Meals were always ready on the dot and the floors sparkled. That was before I began to participate in church. Then there were meetings

every day. I didn't have the time anymore to clean house the way I used to. I would make the beans quickly then run off to church. During the Cost of Living Movement [a social movement against price increases] just imagine—I, who had never spoken before any group other than my husband and children, went to speak to a group of 5,000 in downtown São Paulo. I was so nervous that the priest gave me a little sip of cachaça to get my nerve up."

TESTIMONIES SUCH AS THIS BY DOÑA Odete are indicators of the Catholic Church's work with poor communities. Some analysts consider the Brazilian Church as the most progressive in Latin America. During the 1960s and 1970s, there were pronounced Church actions against the military regime. Sociological studies have documented that intense social mobilization during this period was sustained, to a large

degree, through the support of bishops, priests, and other Catholic clergy. This mobilization was inspired by the religious discourse known internationally as Liberation Theology and carried out in the pastoral practice of grassroots religious communities.

Although women were not involved in developing this theology, the participation of lay and clerical women was nonetheless fundamental to its implementation in pastoral practice. Whether as leaders or simply as participants, they sustained the everyday work of the communities and were also politically active. Poor, semi-literate women stood up to mayors, governors, and even went to the nation's capital to hand a petition to the President. Many of these women, by their own accounts, had never been outside of their neighborhoods or cities. Housewives from the poorest sectors of society took to the streets. Women mobilized politically in public spaces, in the name of motherhood, in the name of precisely that which confined them to the domestic sphere, much as they had in Chile and Argentina with the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. This process, in the analysis of feminist social scientists, was dubbed "the politicization of maternity." In the case of Brazil, this politicization and mobilization largely took place under the aegis of the Catholic Church.

Under the military dictatorship, an interesting and curious alliance formed between the feminist movement and the Church. The development of the Brazilian feminist movement must be understood in the context of its opposition to the authoritarian military regime. Similarly, an important part of the Church hierarchy publicly assumed a firm position against the military regime. At the same time, because of its religious nature and its historical ties to the State, the Church was able to maintain a dialogue with the military government, thus helping to save the lives of many people labeled "subversive" or "terrorist." During that period, the Church functioned as a protective shield, an umbrella that sheltered people of disparate ideologies.

This political action gave the Church great credibility in left-wing political groups, to which feminists were also tied and in which many of them participated. Sectors of the Church, the left, and the feminist movement became allied. For example, they rejected the family planning proposed by the State, all from the same perspective: the problem of poverty is a structural one that cannot be resolved



JENNIFER BURTNER <jburtner@gad.harvard.edu>

Feminism: Under the aegis of the Catholic church?

through population control measures. Such an alliance among groups that differed in many real ways served as a form of protection against the repressive forces of the State.

It is true that the necessity of this alliance placed limits on the power of women to define which issues the movement should tackle. But on the other hand, it permitted feminist movements a greater degree of influence, given the wide social penetration of the Catholic Church in Brazilian society.

Beginning in 1980, however, with the birth of democratization, feminist demands came to explicitly include supporting women's autonomy over their sexuality, including the right to choose to end a pregnancy. The Church immediately reacted.

Under the military dictatorship, an interesting and curious alliance formed between the feminist movement and the Church.

It is clear that any alteration in the patriarchal system of family organization or any attempt to invest in the autonomy of women in the area of sexuality and reproduction is threatening to the bases of belief and arrangement of the Catholic Church.

Even the ecclesiastical sectors considered the most politically progressive become cautious, to say the very least, when discussing

positions that seem to go against Catholic principles in the area of sexual morals. The Church would create an important "infrastructure of mobilization" for women, fundamental to the existence of an extensive "mass audience" for Brazilian feminism. But even the most progressive wing of the Church maintained conservative opinions with respect to women's rights. Many clergy and progressive Catholic theologians maintained doctrines that were in opposition to, if not overtly hostile to, feminist demands for sexual autonomy, changes in the family, and reproductive freedom. The problem is that these issues present challenges to Church authority over the private life of the faithful. But Catholic intransigence may eventually have propelled feminists into more radical discursive positions over themes considered untouchable by their former allies in the Church, such as divorce, contraception, abortion, sexuality, and others that came to be at the heart of the feminist agenda.

To the extent that the women's movement adopted a more radical platform, its divergences with the Catholic Church became clearer and clearer. The truth is that women, much more so than men, had been submissive to the Church and had tended to obey its teachings. This has gradually changed during the process of feminist emancipation. Research on individual and religious behavior has shown how this has diminished in opinion-making, even among the economically inactive and the poorest sectors.

This was what happened, for example, with women leaders of grassroots religious communities (CEBs) on the urban periphery of São Paulo. One of the effects of Church action among these women was a confrontation with feminist ideas. A sur-

prising meeting arose from apparently opposing matrices of thought and action: Christianity and feminism. Curiously, women community leaders came to demand their rights "as women." Their demands in the area of sexual morals and reproductive rights led to conflicts with the Church. Having incorporated a feminist matrix of thought, they did not find in the Church

the possibility of discussing what they referred to as their "issues." Thus, they created spaces independent of the Church for discussions and sharing their experiences "as women." In the CEBs they were not able to discuss domestic violence—which touches the family nucleus, a fundamental area the Catholic social project—or health issues such as reproductive rights and abortion.

Having learned with the Church to struggle for social rights, they came to affirm their individual rights as feminists. They demanded recognition of their autonomy, their capacity to determine the direction of their own lives. *"I think like this,"* says one, *"that women have to feel that they have control over themselves, [...] that they are not the property of a man. [...] We are not objects. [...] In the Church you learn that you have to serve God, that you must give to others. But [the Church] doesn't teach women to also give to themselves, that they should think of themselves."*

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND DEMOCRACY

NORTH/SOUTH PERSPECTIVES

The post-dictatorial cultural transformations of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay bring to the fore gender and sexuality as critical to discussion and reflection on the development of democracy. Family codes, abortion, divorce, adoption, inheritance laws, the role of the Church, sexual rights are all at stake. Awareness about issues of social tolerance and pluralism regarding women and sexual minorities in these societies is increasing, as reflected in recent studies on public opinion. Without dismissing the many problems and prejudices that remain, the apparent change in public opinion bears in important ways on the prospects for more truly participatory democratic cultures.

To facilitate such a discussion, Harvard Professors Bradley Epps and Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante, with Raquel Olea and others from the Universidad de Santiago, are organizing a conference/workshop to take place in Santiago de Chile, from August 20–22, 2003. The event will bring together scholars, critics, writers, and performance artists from both the United States and Latin America (primarily Chile, but also Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Peru) who work on issues of gender and sexuality in the fields of literature, visual arts, and cultural critique.

"We aim at once to deepen and to expand the on-going dialogue on the North/South locations of theoretical and critical discourses," commented Epps. "There are arguably few areas of inquiry as morally, politically, and culturally charged as that of gender and sexuality. Taboos, prejudices, and biases obtain in insistent yet variegated ways in both the North and the South. That said, the study of gender and sexuality tends to be informed by academic trends from metropolitan centers of power and knowledge, a phenomenon that doubtless merits examination." For Cárcamo-Huechante, "contemporary literary and cultural production of the region constitutes a fascinating discursive arena in which new cultures of gender and sexuality are registered and imagined."

Among the participants will be Sylvia Molloy, Raquel Olea, Diamela Eltit, Pedro Lemebel, Carmen Berenguer, Francine Masiello, Daniel Balderston, Diana Sorensen, Jean Franco, Nelly Richard, Olga Grau, Licia Fiol Matta, and Guadalupe Santa Cruz.

For further information, contact **Marcela Rentería** <renteria@fas.harvard.edu>.

During the 1990s, the Catholic institution moved in a clearly conservative direction. Liberation Theology and the pastoral practice of religious communities lost force. The relationship to the feminist movement became weaker and the Church resumed restricting women's rights. The conservative Catholic lobby in the Brazilian Congress has protested bills for laws that directly consider women's interests in the area of health and reproductive rights.

An ongoing study of elected women officials has shown how the church uses its vast expanse of parishes and communities, a unilateral capillary network, to work against legal bills that support women's interests in the area of sexuality and reproductive health. Bishops and priests threaten future terms of elected officials who have favored bills to increase services for women victims of violence or the legal right to the voluntary interruption of pregnancy.

Thus, it may be said that changes in the pastoral discourse and practice of the Catholic Church of Brazil in previous decades do not alter the anti-liberal and anti-democratic "hard core" of Catholicism. Its internal structure remains patriarchal through the support of an entirely male and celibate clergy from which lay practitioners, especially women, are expropriated. Its lack of acceptance of individual moral agency based on individual autonomy is clear. This particularly affects women. Catholic political-social engagement led the church to become the most important social institution in the defense of human rights and in the restoration of democratic freedoms, strengthening its base of credibility. However, the aftershocks of demands for democratization of the State did not penetrate the institution of the Church itself. The Church did not re-think its own institutional structure. Its critical actions were centered solely in external processes.

All these dynamics indicate the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of Catholicism's ability to incorporate the values of modernity on which women's demands are based: egalitarian, democratic social relations; freedom of thought and expression; and individual autonomy. The modern, democratic ethos is seemingly incompatible with the system of thought and organization of the Catholic one. There is a rejection of ideologies affirming the importance of individual autonomy and democracy or the exercise of rights, in particular those of women. This is not merely a contemporary phenomenon restricted to "conservative sectors" or "fundamentalists" within Catholicism. It is something inherent in the historic forms of Catholicism. As a result, the question arises of whether there are indeed real possibilities for incorporating women into the Catholic Church.

Maria José Rosado-Nunes has lived and worked with Christian communities in Brazil's poorest areas; she is the founder and coordinator of Catholics for the Right to Decide in Brazil. A professor of sociology of religion and feminist theory at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, she will be a Robert F. Kennedy Professor at Harvard spring semester. She will offer two courses: Feminist Sociology of Religion and Feminist Analysis of Religion and Modernity at the Harvard Divinity School.

New Executive Director

CAROLA SUÁREZ-OROZCO IS THE new Executive Director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

Suárez-Orozco is also the co-Principal Investigator of a longitudinal, interdisciplinary study of Central American, Chinese, Dominican, Haitian and Mexican youth examining their adaptation, conducted at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Suárez-Orozco received her undergraduate degree at UC Berkeley in development studies with an emphasis on Latin America, and her Ph.D. was in clinical psychology. Suárez-Orozco has published widely in the areas of cultural psychology, academic engagement, immigrant youth and identity formation.

She replaces Steve Reifenberg, who is now Program Director for the DRCLAS Chile Regional Office.



Battro Named to Pontifical Academy

ANTONIO M. BATTRO MD, Ph.D has been named to The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the oldest science academy in the world, established by Galileo 400 years ago. Battro, Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor of Latin American Studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a leading scholar in the fields of educational technology, cognitive and developmental psychology, and neuroscience.

Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, he received his medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Paris. Battro is a pioneer in

the field of computers in education in Argentina and Brazil, and is active in the use of digital technologies in the development of neurocognitive potential.

The Academy, an independent body within the Holy See, enjoys freedom of research. The Pontifical Academy of Sciences promotes the progress of the mathematical, physical and natural sciences and the study of epistemological problems.

Pope John Paul

II is expected to give Battro the insignia of his appointment during a Solemn Pontifical Audience of the next Plenary Session this month in Rome.



Summer Course in Cuzco

AT SIX THIRTY IN THE MORNING, the chilly streets of Cuzco are busy with traffic and vendors, filled with people trying to reach their workplaces as well as a good number of partygoers yet to return to their hotels. At least that's what I heard repeatedly over breakfast from a number of Harvard students who woke up early every morning to jog around Inca palaces and Colonial churches that abound in the former capital city of the Incas.

Despite its high altitude, difficult geography and harsh winter, Cuzco is ebullient with life in the months of June and July, when our group—eleven students, two Harvard professors (Jose Antonio Mazzotti of Romance Languages and Literatures and Jane Mangan of History) and two teaching fellows—spent five intense weeks of “on-site studying” the first time such a Harvard summer school course has been offered for credit. During that time, the students attended two classes (one on Andean History and one on Andean Literature) while living and visiting the very sites described in the *Crónicas*

of the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century and the novels of José María Arguedas in the late 1940s.

Thus, the group traveled to Lake Titicaca, the mythical place of origin of the Incas; to *Sacsayhuaman*, the religious site turned fortress by the last important Inca uprising against the Spaniards; to Tipón and the summer palace and thermal baths of the Inca. In Cuzco itself, we held classes at the Cathedral, the Plaza de Armas, the House of Inca Garcilaso, the Barrio de San Blas, the Inca Palace of Manco Inca, and the Temple of the Sun (or the *Koricancha*) where students could appreciate the dramatic architectural “overlapping” (the attempt of erasure and replacement of buildings that Spaniards practiced in the early seventeenth century) of the Church of Santo Domingo over the Incan *Koricancha*. Our trips ended with our two-day visit to the fabled lost city of *Machu Picchu* in the Sacred Valley, where students trekked the last ten miles of the Inca Trail. Besides using Spanish daily, students were also required to



Class meets on a hillside in Cuzco.

attend conferences in the language as well as to read and write in Spanish.

Program director Mazzotti conceived the idea for the original course as a new type of study abroad program where students would not solely improve their Spanish skills but also be given the opportunity to learn *in situ* the culture, art and history of a

particular Latin American region, in this case, the Andes. Students concurred. One is quoted as saying, "There is no better way of understanding the history of the Spanish *conquista* in the Andes or understanding the resistance of the Andean culture than by witnessing the architectonical transformation of the Koricancha and spending time in small

Quechua-Spanish bilingual communities outside the city."

Student free time was divided between restaurant hopping (Peruvian food is exquisite), shaman readings, water rafting, and lots of salsa dancing in the many cosmopolitan clubs around the Plaza de Armas. At night we all grouped together at our favorite pub, "Los Per-

ros," caught a movie, read and chatted over *mates de coca* and fresh mint teas before heading home through the city's safe and quiet streets.

José Falconi, a graduate student in Harvard's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, was a Harvard Cuzco Program (2002) TF.

Harvard Study Abroad

It's Getting Easier!

THE FACE OF STUDY ABROAD at Harvard is changing. Last May, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) adopted a new study out of residence policy. The administration now views study abroad itself as a meaningful supplement to a Harvard education. No longer must students prove they have found a "special opportunity" not available in Cambridge. Language study is encouraged but not required, and students can choose pre-approved study abroad options or design their own. The result, says DRCLAS director John Coatsworth, who also chairs the FAS Faculty Committee on Study Out of Residence, is a great deal of flexibility. "A mathematician can study in Budapest without knowing Hungarian, or a student can study the tropical biosphere in the jungle where there are no language teachers, if he or she so chooses."

DRCLAS and the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures can help students tailor a study abroad experience to their personal needs and interests. With a grant from DRCLAS and the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Spanish

preceptor Johanna Liander traveled to Chile and Argentina this summer to investigate study abroad options. In addition to identifying programs in language, literature and culture for her own department, Liander also pinpointed strong curricula in such disciplines as political science, economics and natural sciences.

DRCLAS already boasts a database of up to 300 study abroad programs or universities in Latin America, which students can search by country or interest. Liander's findings will further the DRCLAS goal of becoming familiar with six to twelve universities in each country. Then, she says, "we can tell a student to study physics at university X,

that it is possible to go abroad without a major struggle."

In the coming year, the Committee on Study Out of Residence will work with Harvard departments and centers to find viable programs for their students, just as Liander did for Romance Languages and Literatures, DRCLAS, and the University as a whole. "I hope we can

A mathematician can study in Budapest without knowing Hungarian, or a student can study the tropical biosphere in the jungle where there are no language teachers, if he or she so chooses. —DRCLAS director John H. Coatsworth

"I hope more faculty members do what I did," Liander says of her trip, "because there is a massive initiative to encourage students to go abroad from all departments. Many of my students interested in Latin America are not concentrators, and I hope we can provide even more information to them in the future."

Liander spent 18 days visiting 14 sites at 12 universities, striving to obtain a sense of their strengths and the distinct types of opportunities they could present to Harvard students.

theatre at university Y, and for Latin American literature go to university Z."

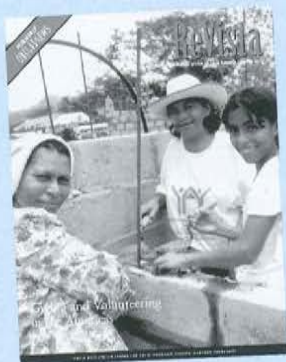
At every institution, the administrators, faculty and students were "very willing and able to help, and positive about the prospect of developing a relationship with Harvard," Liander reports. She sees her trip as "an important step for Harvard to identify strengths in various universities abroad so that we can provide students with a variety of experience options." However, she notes, "first we have to make students aware

make study abroad experience closer to extraordinary and unique, and set the standards for how other universities think about study abroad," Coatsworth says. "We will continue to help individual students find the one place in Latin America where they will be best treated and learn the most about what they want to study."

Eileen O'Connor concentrated in Romance Languages and Literatures and graduated Harvard in 2000. She is now working with ReVista.

Letters to the Editor

GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING IN THE AMERICAS SPRING 2002



Hola June,
La revista está muy cheveré, con su nuevo título y formato (y más amplia, cierto?). Me imagino que te habrás dado cuenta que la persona que sale en la foto sobre Opción Colombia no soy yo. Fue como raro y chistoso ver a un desconocido llamarse Enrique Chaux y mostrando "local crabs" de una zona que no tiene crabs, ni playa cerca de donde sacar esos crabs!!

Bueno, pues si acaso pudiera haber rectificación en la siguiente edición, sería bueno para aquello de la identidad.

—ENRIQUE CHAUX,
UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES,
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Enrique Chaux, who received his doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education last year, found himself a victim of mistaken identity in the Spring 2002 issue of ReVista on Giving and Volunteering in Latin America. Here are the photos:



Left: Not Enrique; right: Enrique

Congratulations on the great *ReVista* edition on philanthropy. It's really an important document. Not only is the layout great but the quality of the information is really good. Certainly anyone interested in beginning to work on the topic will necessarily have to look the *ReVista* up.

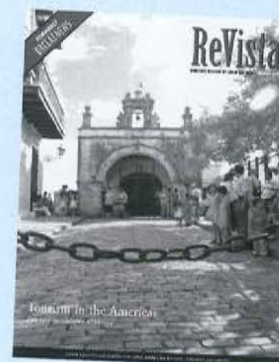
—SALVADOR SANDOVAL
PRESIDENT, BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY;
FORMER DRCLAS VISITING SCHOLAR

Thank you, Salvador!

TOURISM IN THE AMERICAS WINTER 2002

Dear June,
Here's a little historical perspective on 'favela tourism': in the 1930s and 1940s favelas became 'obligatory stops' for foreign intellectuals visiting Rio. Early visitors included Blaise Cendrars, Rabindranath Tagore, the Italian futurist poet Marinetti, and Paul Morand. Even Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir paid a visit. In fact, as early as 1927, a Rio newspaper was saying that "rediscovering" favelas was all the rage (sort of weird since they didn't really exist until the early 1900s). And way before then, in 1832, Charles Darwin paid a visit to the ruins of a runaway slave community on the outskirts of Rio, sort of a 'pre'-favela. So who says 'favela tourism' is new?!

—BEN PENGLASE,
DOCTORAL STUDENT, ANTHROPOLOGY,
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Dear Ms. Erlick,
I'm a German student working on my thesis in Chile right now. I'd like to write about the current situation of the indigenous people in Chile and possible ways of improving their situation economically. It will be a thesis in the field of business administration with emphasis on the Chilean indigenous economy.

I got to know that there are several so called "ethnotouristic sites" in Chile, i.e. tourists can spend a certain time with the Mapuche, Aymara or Rapa Nui (just to name a few) and get to know their culture, way of perception and rituals.

I would like to gather some more information about ethnotouristic sites. I thought that maybe you know some more about persons or organizations that I could contact.

I would like to thank you very much in advance!

SINCERELY YOURS,
CHRISTOPH STRASSER
<BOSSABEACH@WEB.DE>

If anyone has contacts for Christoph, please e-mail him directly.

CONTACT REVISTA

Letters to the editor are welcome in English, Spanish or Portuguese! Please send your comments, suggestions and complaints to: June Carolyn Erlick <jerlick@fas.harvard.edu> or DRCLAS, 61 Kirkland St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA



GUEST INTRODUCTION

**Democracy in Latin America:
Successes and Challenges** *by Oscar Arias*

2

THINKING ON DEMOCRACY

Democracy in Latin America *by Jorge I. Domínguez*

3

Editor's Letter *by June Carolyn Erlick*

4

A Look at the International Environment

by John H. Coatsworth

7

Democracy and the Military *by David Scott Palmer*

9

Fitzgibbon Survey: Measuring Democracy

by Phil Kelly

13

Democracy and the City *by Oscar Grauer*

16

La Victoria *by Brian Milder*

19



BUILDING INSTITUTIONS

Police Impunity in Contemporary Latin America

by Diane E. Davis

21

Corruption and Democracy *by Luis Moreno Ocampo*

26

Reforming Intelligence in Peru

by Philip Heymann and Jenny Ellis

26

Constitutional Reform *by Cindy Skach*

30

Legislatures and Political Accountability

by John Carey

32

Hacia Democracy *by Maria Luisa Romero*

35

Education for Democracy *by Eleonora Villegas-Reimers*

36

Children and Democracy *by Mary "Maya" Carlson*

with Felton Earls and Clotilde Fonseca

39



ART ESSAY

Voice of the Children *by Laura Blacklow and her students*

42

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS

Mexico Transitions *by Merilee S. Grindle*

44

Living History in Zapopan *by Richard Mora*

46

Central America's Citizens *by Edelberto Torres-Rivas*

47

Mixed Up Civic Lessons *by Linda Jo Stern*

48

Civic Pride *by Zachary Liscow*

50

Nicaraguan Democracy *by Ellen Schneider*

51

Nicaragua Seminar Trip *by Aaron Mihaly*

53

Deciphering Venezuela *by Ana Julia Jatar*

54

Viewing Political Space in Brazil *by Jack Spence*

59

On Cuban Democracy *by Rafael Hernández*

62

GENDER AND DEMOCRACY

Between Pacifiers and Power *by Magda Hinojosa*

65

Women, Religious Practices, and Democracy

by Maria José Rosado-Nunes

66

Gender, Sexuality and Democracy *by Bradley Epps*

68

COMINGS & GOINGS

New Executive Director

69

Battro Named to Pontifical Academy

69

Summer Course in Cuzco *by José Falconi*

69

Harvard Study Abroad *by Eileen O'Connor*

70

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

71



Harvard University
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies
61 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PLYMOUTH, MA
PERMIT NO. 55