

**The following chapter is in *Democratic
Governance & Social Inequality*.
Joseph S. Tulchin and Amelia Brown,
editors. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner
Publishers, Inc., 2002.**

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Democracy and Consolidation in Contemporary Latin America: Current Thinking and Future Challenges¹

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Latin America is currently undergoing profound economic and political transformations. Economically, it is the most unequal region in the world, and its patterns of inequality were exacerbated during the 1980s and only modestly improved in some countries during the 1990s as most countries in the region underwent dramatic market-oriented economic reforms. Politically, the democratic transitions of the recent past have affected the largest number of countries in the region's entire history. Yet, the result to date has disappointed those who expected a rapid transition from democratic transition to democratic consolidation, while confounding others who expected that recurring economic crises and sustained inequalities would inevitably result in a pendular swing back to authoritarian rule. Indeed, as detailed in the first section below, the resulting pattern for Latin America has been one not of sustained movement toward unrestricted political democracies, but of many countries oscillating around mixed kinds of modestly or marginally democratic regimes, with some improving and others deteriorating.

Building on older debates with regard to conceptualizing democracy, confrontation with this empirical reality has led to further debates about how to understand the nature of political democracy in the region and regarding the concept of (and the prospects for) democratic consolidation. Drawing on the work of various authors, in a second section below I identify an expanded conceptualization both of political democracy and of democratic consolidation and indicate that what follows from this is logically a consideration of a multiplicity of components required for consolidation of political democracy, beyond those that might be viewed as tightly linked to procedural elements of democracy at the regime level. The most helpful analyses, in my view, are those that delimit these components to those focused

particularly on the state, its relationship to civil society and its impact on relations within it.

This selective review of the literature is employed both to underscore frustrations with a narrowly electoral unidimensional classification of the region's contemporary democracies and highlight the value of moving beyond it, in order for scholars to best grapple analytically with key issues confronting these countries. As I argue in a third section, from this review one can extract elements crucial for the establishment of a comprehensive framework within which to understand the contemporary challenges to democracy in the region. Many of the components identified as central for consolidating liberal democracy evolved in the industrialized democracies in a more gradual, sequential manner. This is now not possible for Latin American countries, even as the consequences of their own particular historical evolution and contemporary challenges must be considered. Thus, as the apparent persistence in many countries of electoral democracies with illiberal tendencies has continued, explanations have tended to shift away from more proximate domestic factors such as the mode of transition. Instead, explanations focus more on the historical legacy of the evolution of structural and institutional factors, particularly related to the state and the rule of law. They also consider the variegated consequences of globalization, particularly those associated with three issues: international rejection of outright reversion to authoritarianism; socioeconomic tensions and associated political effects generated by globalization; and transnational influences expanding global understandings of what democracy is. The concluding section provides a brief summary and explores pessimistic and optimistic scenarios one might plausibly imagine for the region.

Unexpected Patterns

During the past seventy years in Latin America, one can observe two historical cycles with regard to democracy (considered at least in the minimalist sense of electoral democracy): one from the late 1920s to the late 1950s (with a subcycle in the late 1940s) and another from the late 1950s to the late 1980s and continuing to the present. Each began with a predominance of civilian regimes, many of which succumbed to military rule only to return subsequently to rule by civilians, though the number of countries involved was greater in the more recent period. Prior to the 1990s, the most auspicious moment for democracy in the region occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The pendulum swung sharply back in the 1960s in the aftermath of

the Cuban Revolution and this time the nature of dictatorship changed in qualitative terms. Between 1962 and 1964 eight military takeovers occurred, and these were followed by many more in the subsequent decade. Military coups in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Chile, and Uruguay inaugurated bureaucratic authoritarian or other military regimes that sought to rebuild the institutional order, either in direct response to threats from the left or in an attempt to preempt that threat. During the 1970s, depending on the year, there were from twelve to sixteen authoritarian governments in Latin America, most of them intent on modernizing and transforming their societies by excluding not only the old politicians but the citizenry as well.²

Then, in the 1980s, in the throes of the worst economic crisis since the 1929 Depression, the most dramatic political reversal took place on the continent since the 1930s. During the period 1988-1991, for the first time in the history of the continent, presidential elections were held in every single country except for Cuba, although some of the electoral processes were problematic.³ Political democracy, although limited and constrained even in terms of a minimalist conception of this definition in several countries, appeared triumphant on the continent as the last decade of the century began. This shift in the region ran parallel to a broader international trend toward democracy. The number of states that the Freedom House annual survey rated as "free" (an approximation of political democracy), grew from forty-two in 1972 to fifty-two in 1980 to sixty-five in 1990 to eighty-one in 1997 (Diamond 1999:26).⁴ At the same time, simplistic renditions of an "end of history" argument suggested that international legitimation of democracy also presaged its consolidation.

However, there are reasons to believe that optimism about this latest "democratic wave" must be tempered, both worldwide and in Latin America. As the number of states rated as "free" grew, so did the total number of countries, such that the percentage of free countries first fell from 41.5 percent in 1991 to 37.9 percent in 1993 before increasing to 42.4 percent in 1997; in turn, the percentage of partly free countries in those years fell from 35.5 percent to 33.2 percent to 29.8 percent, respectively.⁵

In Latin America, Freedom House measures during the period from 1980 to 1999 also provide an indication of a more mixed record that is first one of considerable progress, then of partial retrogression, followed by slight improvement (see Table 6.1).⁶ Transitions to democracy in the late 1970s and the 1980s in the region are evident by the increase from three countries rated "free" (with added scores between 2 and 5) in 1977 to six in 1980 to eleven in 1985 and 1988. By 1990, though the number of countries rated "free" declined slightly

to ten, the number of countries in the categories just below (scores of 6 or 7) jumped from one to seven; indeed, 1990 also had the lowest (most democratic) mean score (5.9) reported in Table 6.1 during the time period from 1977 to 1999. The average "Polity IV" measures reported in Table 6.1 suggest a similar overall pattern of dramatic improvement followed by a leveling off at a less than fully democratic level, even if with slightly more progress during the 1990s than indicated by the Freedom House scores.

These indicators help us to understand why scholars of the region have been straining to come up with descriptive "adjectives" (see Collier and Levitsky 1997) to highlight the reality of democracies with deficiencies, as the vast majority of these regimes have not moved smoothly to an equilibrium point high on the democracy scale. Although neither the two indices nor country specialists may well concur on the placement of individual countries in a given year, two trends appear clear from this imperfect exercise. One is that there has been considerable movement in year-to-year scores indicating political systems in flux; another is that by the end of the 1990s, there was an oscillating convergence around more mixed kinds of modestly or marginally democratic regimes.

Movement in Freedom House year-to-year scores can be observed in Table 6.1. As the table highlights, the pattern is one of apparent retrogression from 1990 to 1995 (decline in the mean score for the region from 5.9 to 6.8), and then of partial and uneven improvement from 1995 to 1999 (mean score of about 6.3). The only two countries that consistently scored between 2 and 4 during the 1990 to 1999 time period were Costa Rica and Uruguay, and Chile and Panama were the only countries that consistently scored at least a 5 during this time period. Two others, El Salvador and Mexico, showed improvement during this period. In turn, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela experienced some decline. And a larger group of seven countries, according to these indicators, experienced decline and then at least some improvement: Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Paraguay reflected no change in its status as a semidemocracy, and Cuba and Haiti both remained below the score of 7 during this time period. In other words, during the 1990-1999 period, there was considerable movement in the democratic status of these countries as measured by these indicators.

According to Freedom House, average scores also remained relatively low on the democracy scale. The combined scores for political rights and civil liberties for the four years 1996-1999 have been averaged and countries ranked by them in Table 6.2. Once again, the table illustrates how Costa Rica and Uruguay stand apart from other

Table 6.1 Summary Freedom House and Democracy Scores for Latin America, Selected Years

Scores	1977	1980	1985	1988	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Free (2-4)	2	3	5	6	6	3	3	4	3	5
Free (5)	1	3	6	5	4	3	4	5	8	4
Partly Free (6-7)	2	3	1	1	7	7	10	7	6	6
Total	5	9	12	12	17	13	17	16	17	15
Mean FH score (n=20)	9.1	8.1	6.7	6.5	5.9	6.8	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3
Mean Pol IV score (n=20)	12.0	10.3	8.1	7.8	6.0	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.7

Source: Freedom House and Polity IV data sets.

Notes: FH = Freedom House; Pol IV = Polity IV.

Table 6.2 Latin American Countries, Average Scores, 1996-1999

Average Score	Countries (lower average scores first, then alphabetical)	
	Freedom House Indicators	Polity IV Democracy Score
Liberal democracy (2-3)	Costa Rica; Uruguay	Costa Rica; Uruguay
Between liberal and electoral democracy (3.01-5)	Bolivia, Chile; Panama	Bolivia; Ecuador, Panama; Nicaragua; Brazil, Dominican Republic; Chile, Venezuela; Guatemala
Electoral democracy (5.01-6)	Argentina, El Salvador; Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras; Nicaragua, Venezuela	Colombia; Argentina, El Salvador; Haiti
Electoral democracy (6.01-7)	Brazil; Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay	Paraguay; Honduras
Electoral democracy (7.01-8)	Colombia	Mexico
Between electoralist and authoritarian (8.01-9)	Peru	
Authoritarian (>9.01)	Haiti; Cuba	Peru; Cuba

Source: Freedom House and Polity IV data sets.

Notes: Cutoff points based on Freedom House combined political rights and civil liberties indicators (ranging from a combined high, more democratic, score of 2, to a low of 14). Polity IV scores, which range from a high, more democratic, score of 10, to a low of 0, were standardized to Freedom House range and reversed in sign.

countries in the region—as liberal democracies (to be defined below). Three others, Bolivia, Chile, and Panama, have average scores that might place them as between liberal and electoral democracy. The bulk of Latin American countries are clustered in the next two categories, on the boundary between the "free" and "partly free" categories: eleven of the region's twenty countries have average scores between 5 and 7. Below these are found Colombia, and, even lower, Peru. Even during this four-year period, fourteen countries had some change in scores, three quite sharp. As Table 6.2 indicates, employing the Polity Democracy scores, countries in the region tended to have somewhat higher overall average scores, though Costa Rica and Uruguay continued to stand apart. And, within the Polity data set, fourteen of these countries had some change in scores during this time period, three of them quite substantially so.

This overall pattern both of transition away from authoritarian rule combined with partial and uneven movement toward unrestricted democracy, although not without historical precedent for many of the countries in the region, has demanded scholarly attention because of its unprecedented regional scope, sustained nature, and (for some) distance from initial more hopeful expectations. In a search for understanding, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on the contrast between the broader historical context and evolution of Latin American and current Western European democracies in a context of expanded understandings of democracy and expectations about what it should deliver. One result has been a renewed debate around key concepts.

Re-Elaborated Concepts and Multiple Components

Contemporary trends of democracy in Latin America have led to renewed debates both about how to conceptualize political democracy and about the meaning and utility of the concept of democratic consolidation. They have helped force a rejection of an evolutionary view from transition to consolidation and have also highlighted inextricable ties between the two concepts. A once standard view in the comparative literature, which has increasingly been called into question, is that to determine if democratic consolidation has occurred in a particular country, "it is necessary first to ascertain whether the country's new political regime is fully democratic, and then to determine whether that democracy is consolidated" (Gunther, Diamandouros, and Puhle 1996:152). In contexts of clear and sharply delineated transitions from unmistakably authoritarian to "fully" democratic regimes,

this may be a reasonable strategy.⁷ For, implicit in this notion, as Felipe Aguero has noted, is that democracy was attained first, at which time a process of consolidation would begin, and that therefore "the democratic nature of post-transition regimes ceased to be problematic" (Aguero 1998:9).

However, as the previous section has demonstrated, Latin America in the 1990s is better characterized by the unexpected reality of what one might term the unconsolidated persistence through time of regimes and states that are variably but rarely strongly democratic. In at least one case, Chile, there appears to be a regime that is consolidated, but with constraints regarding its democratic nature. As countries in the region have not clearly evolved from a transition to (unproblematic) democracy to a consolidation of this democracy, scholarly attention has shifted to ask about the connections between the kind of democracy a country maintains, the likelihood of its persistence, and whether it can be "deepened." This has led to inextricable links across the conceptual debates around political democracy, consolidation of democracy, and the "deepening" or improving of democracy.

Let us look first briefly at debates surrounding the appropriate conceptualization of political democracy. Among some scholars there has been a gradual trend toward accepting a more expansive—if still largely procedural—conceptualization of political democracy. In their acute analysis, Collier and Levitsky (1997) clarify the critique of electoralist conceptions as well as an emerging consensus around an "expanded procedural minimum" definition of political democracy (which builds on Dahl's influential formulation in *Polyarchy* [1971]). Drawing from literature on Latin American cases, they also highlight the extent to which analysts have generated "diminished subtypes" from these conceptions.

Thus, for a substantial group of scholars, there has been a continued acceptance of the value of a conceptualization of political democracy focused on procedural issues rather than substantive outcomes and which does not conflate democracy with social and economic dimensions. At the same time, there have been fruitful debates regarding how to expand beyond the limits of narrow types of procedural conceptualizations.⁸ These debates have led scholars to pay much more attention to a broader set of institutions and factors than those simply associated with free elections. These include a coherent state, effective and democratic accountability and rule of law, and civilian control over the military, sometimes as part of their conceptualization of political democracy and other times in their analysis of democratic consolidation. For example, Larry Diamond draws a distinction

between electoral democracy, intermediate conceptions, and liberal democracy, which extends beyond both of the former.⁹ Liberal democracy requires, first, the absence of reserved domains of power for the military or other actors not accountable to the electorate, directly or indirectly. Second, in addition to the vertical accountability of rulers to the ruled (secured mainly through elections), it requires the horizontal accountability of officeholders to one another; this constrains executive power and so helps protect constitutionalism, legality, and the deliberative process.¹⁰ Third, it encompasses extensive provisions for political and civic pluralism as well as for individual and group freedoms—of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration, and petition—so that contending interests and values may be expressed and compete through ongoing processes of articulation and representation, beyond periodic elections. Freedom and pluralism, in turn, can be secured only when legal rules are applied fairly, consistently, and predictably across equivalent cases, irrespective of the class, status, or power of those subject to the rules. Under a true rule of law, all citizens have political and legal equality, and the state and its agents are themselves subject to the law (for more on the relationships between democracy and the rule of law, see O'Donnell [1999]). Thus, liberal democracy understood in this way extends beyond the political regime to consider elements of the state as well. This makes explicit what was present by assumption in several earlier procedural conceptualizations of democracy based on the European experiences with democracy.

Similarly, there have been debates surrounding the concept of democratic consolidation. Based on a fourfold regime classification similar to Diamond's (authoritarianism, electoral democracy, liberal democracy, and advanced democracy that has achieved certain socioeconomic objectives), Schedler (1998) has pointed out that "democratic consolidation" may be considered as deterring a negative outcome (preventing democratic breakdown to authoritarianism or preventing democratic erosion from liberal to electoral democracy), as a process that enables a more positive outcome (completing democracy by moving from electoral to liberal democracy or deepening democracy from electoral or liberal democracy to advanced democracy), or in terms of organizing liberal democracy's "partial regimes." Yet another reaction has been to eschew the term for various reasons, replacing it as the main "dependent variable" with one or more alternative terms in ways that sometimes replicate discussions around consolidation while avoiding potential teleological implications of the term. In the end, even though scholarly consensus on the meaning or usefulness of "democratic consolidation" is unlikely, I believe

one can identify a partial conceptual convergence around what I term (borrowing from Collier and Levitsky [1997]) an expanded academic conception of the term (or others similar to it) that is useful in analyzing contemporary trends of democratization in Latin America.

Those who rely on more minimalist procedural conceptions of democracy (typically electoral democracy or some variant) and compare countries in the region to their past, especially their most immediate past, tend to end up with more positive overall evaluations. They emphasize particularly that these democracies have persisted and have survived, more of them for a longer period of time, than in any previous period of Latin America's history, "in the face of daunting challenges and what initially seemed to be long odds" (Mainwaring 1999b:102; cf. Aguero 1998:4-8). For most countries in the region, a principal contemporary challenge to democracy has been economic. Yet, contrary to past experience, with the exceptions of Haiti, Peru, and Ecuador, severe economic crisis during the 1980s and 1990s has not been associated with breakdown, even as many countries have been able to enact far-reaching market-oriented reforms.¹¹ Furthermore, in this most recent "wave" of democratization, several Latin American countries—including Paraguay and many in Central America—have experienced either their first or their most sustained experience with democracy, even if limited. Indeed, for nearly all the countries in the region, their longest uninterrupted period of democracy is the one that began for them in the late 1970s or the 1980s (the exceptions are Chile and Uruguay). Yet, typically even scholars who provide these more positive assessments recognize the limitations and shortcomings of democracy in the region; one way they do so is by shifting their object of study from political democracy or democratic consolidation to elected regimes and their endurance or survival (e.g., Mainwaring 1999b:102, 106).¹²

Not surprisingly, those scholars who do focus on democracy incorporating such elements as respect for democratic procedures and basic human rights and civilian control over the armed forces and compare the regimes in Latin America to more established democracies in other regions, have a less sanguine prognosis. For example, Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens (1997) present a three-part classification of democracy as formal, participatory, and social, in which the latter types presume by definition all elements of the former one (s) plus first additional elements related to full participation across all social groups and then to greater socioeconomic equality in outcomes. They present three key causal factors related to the balance of class power, the state and state-society relations, and transnational structures of power, and conclude that Latin America in the

recent period overall has made only modest advances in formal democracy while facing "mounting obstacles" in terms of participatory, much less social, democracy (p. 337).¹³ And, building on the concept of "liberal democracy" mentioned earlier in this chapter, Diamond discusses the "[h]ollow, illiberal, poorly institutionalized democracy" of Latin America and other third-wave democracies (1999: 31-49, quote on 49).

An alternative approach is developed in some of O'Donnell's articles. In these, he begins by accepting a more limited conceptualization of political democracy as polyarchy. However, he then establishes a new distinction between countries that satisfy these minimal criteria yet do not possess other characteristics linked to state institutions and accountability issues associated with what he terms representative democracies (1994) or formally institutionalized polyarchies (1996a), concepts that closely approximate liberal democracies as discussed above. Countries that satisfy only the minimal criteria may nevertheless endure as democracies, though of a diminished type: in O'Donnell's nomenclature, as delegative democracies or as informally institutionalized polyarchies, in which deficiencies at the conceptual level of the state set them apart from other types of democracies.

There is of course no necessary link between different conceptions of political democracy and use (or acceptance) of the term democratic consolidation. Yet, typically, scholars who conceive of democracy in minimalist terms as electoral democracies are more likely to dismiss consolidation as an unimportant or meaningless concept (e.g., Przeworski et al. 2000:101-103), or to consider consolidation as simple persistence through time. For example, Gasiorowski and Power (1998) argue that consolidation, rather than implying simply the survival or the persistence of a democratic regime, implies "that qualitative changes have occurred in the country's political institutions and practices that make breakdown unlikely—though not impossible—in the future" (1998:5, web version). However, in order to generate sufficient comparable data across countries, when it came time to operationalize the concept for their quantitative analysis they ultimately relied on regime indicators that did not really reflect whether qualitative changes exist or not: surviving a second election, or surviving an electoral alternation in power, or simply democratic persistence for twelve years or more. As a consequence, a relatively larger number of Latin American country cases were deemed to be consolidated than would be by area scholars or based on other types of indicators. For example, based on their second criterion, Latin American countries that were considered consolidated in the 1990s included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Peru (until 1992), Uruguay, and Venezuela.

In turn, those whose conception of democracy is closer to liberal democracy tend to have a more stringent (or expanded) view of what is required for consolidation or formal institutionalization. Yet, developing clear benchmarks to determine the existence of qualitative changes in institutions and practices has turned out to be difficult; similarly, in part due to perceived strong feedback mechanisms, scholars have not always clearly disentangled benchmarks or defining elements from causal factors from consequences of consolidation. Linz and Stepan, for example, define a consolidated democracy as "a political situation in which, in a phrase, democracy has become 'the only game in town'" (1996:5), and provide behavioral, attitudinal, and (partially overlapping) constitutional benchmarks for this phrase. However, they then go beyond their initial benchmarks to present "five interacting arenas" that they argue must be present for consolidated democracy to exist, placing them even more distant from a minimalist conception of either democracy or consolidation.¹⁴ In this way, while they begin with a fairly standard procedural definition of political democracy, the shift in analytical attention to what is required for consolidation to exist vastly expands the factors considered necessary for the realization of a "consolidated democracy." They note that "no modern polity can become democratically consolidated unless it is first a state," and then focus on five crucial arenas necessary for democratic consolidation. They argue that three of them, "a lively and independent civil society, a political society with sufficient autonomy and a working consensus about procedures of governance, and constitutionalism and a rule of law ... *are virtually definitional prerequisites of a consolidated democracy,*" while underscoring the importance as well of the other two, a functioning state apparatus and an institutionalized market economy (quotes from Linz and Stepan 1996:7, 10, emphasis added; see also their definitions of democratic transition and consolidation on pp. 3-7).

In their work, Linz and Stepan consider only four country cases in South America. They argue that of these only Uruguay may be considered a consolidated (if risk-prone) democracy; Brazil was the furthest from being consolidated, and Argentina could not yet be considered consolidated. Chile was the most interesting case, because in their analytical scheme it had not yet had a successful democratic transition even though it appeared to be consolidating: thus, when the antidemocratic elements of the Chilean constitution were removed, Chile could likely have simultaneously a successful transition and consolidation of democracy (1996:150, 215).¹⁵ This view has the merit of logical consistency within their definitional scheme and of reflecting the complex ambiguous empirical reality of the constraints on Chilean political democracy, but it also means that consolidation

in this case must wait for the democratic transition to conclude rather than follow as a consequence of it.

Diamond, in turn, argues that since the principal *consequence* of consolidation is the stability and persistence of (liberal) democracy, there is a need to establish a conceptual foundation (the defining element) separate from this to avoid tautology: this foundation rests on broad and deep legitimation of democracy across all significant political actors at both the elite and mass levels that can "only be fully understood as encompassing a shift in *political culture*" (1999:65). He then provides indicators of what this means for norms and behaviors at the level of elites, organizations, and masses. On the basis of these factors, with regard to the Latin American cases, by and large he also concludes that only Costa Rica and Uruguay may be considered as consolidated.¹⁶

In order to avoid charges of teleology or to sidestep other conceptual problems perceived with the term consolidation, a growing number of scholars are avoiding it for other concepts. Some authors, to permit positive analysis of a larger set of countries, shift their focus of analysis from consolidation to more minimalist criteria such as electoral regimes or democratic survival (Mainwaring 1999a, 1999b), or formal or partial democracy (Panizza and Barahona de Brito 1998). In doing so, they have either avoided discussion of consolidation or acknowledged that the vast majority of the countries in the region are not consolidated. One exception here is Przeworski et al. (1996:50), who argue that consolidation (understood as greater likelihood of survival the longer a democracy has persisted in time) is an "empty term" because level of development remains a better explanation for survival than age of regime. Yet, this critique does not speak directly to the arguments presented above that consolidation refers to more than simply persistence through time. Nor does their dichotomous view of democracy enable scholars to address as effectively the contemporary situation in the region, in which the "empirical gap" between democratic and civilian nondemocratic regimes in some countries in the 1990s (e.g., the Dominican Republic, Mexico, or Peru) may not have been as great as when the military ruled in open authoritarian fashion, or in which more generally the existence of electoral democracy in most Latin American countries nevertheless hides significant differences of interest to scholars.

Others have focused on particular democratic deficits—that is, more to issues of the quality of democracy—analyzing the absence of "democratic authenticity" (Conaghan 1996), or "disjunctive democracy" and the need to extend democracy to the social sphere (Holston and Caldeir, 1998), or the need for "democratic deepening" (von

Mettenheim and Malloy 1998), or "democratic citizenship" (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998). A growing number of these and other scholars have explicitly criticized the concept of consolidation. The issues raised include the term's ambiguity, excessive globalism, difficult empirical application, tendency to short-change considerations of democracy for those of stability, teleological nature, and incomplete view of political democracy and of democracy more broadly. Lowenthal and Dominguez argue that it is both premature and misleading to focus on "consolidating" democratic governance because it is "still incipient, inchoate, fragile, highly uneven, incomplete, and often contradicted" (1996:6-7).

Another type of criticism comes from O'Donnell, who has argued that a large number of countries in contemporary Latin America have what might be termed informally institutionalized polyarchies, some of which have lasted for many years. Analyzing them in negative terms for "what they lack" to become "formally institutionalized" or "consolidated" (i.e., more like European democracies) should be replaced by analysis that still condemns them normatively but is "nonteleological, . . . nonethnocentric, [and] positive" (1996a: 46-47). Yet, the distinction he draws between informally and formally institutionalized democracies is quite similar to the one between electoral or illiberal (e.g., Zakaria 1997) and liberal or participatory democracies. And, seeking "improvement" of the former, that is, closer approximation to the latter, comes close to framing the issue in terms similar to those of scholars cited above (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997; Diamond 1999).

Other authors have made similar criticisms. Aguero (1998:8) and Aguero and Stark (1998:273) argue that the concept of consolidation as employed has often applied an inadequate, incomplete notion of political democracy, overlooking more substantive aspects of expanded procedural definitions. In an effort to determine the stability and endurance of particular regimes, scholars employing the consolidation concept have sometimes skirted the question of how "incomplete, contradictory and disjointed" these regimes are (Aguero and Stark 1998:373). They argue that the most important problems facing the countries in the region today have less to do with regime stability and more to do with the "depth, quality, and consistency" of democracy (Aguero 1998:10-11). Thus, they also reject a dichotomous view of democracy, preferring to see it less as a point of arrival and more as an ongoing, nonlinear process of institutional and symbolic construction (Aguero and Stark 1998:373).

Ultimately, for Schedler (1998:101), there are so many conceptions of consolidation that it is "an omnibus concept, a garbage-can

concept, a catch-all concept, lacking a core meaning." And, depending upon how the term is employed, the categorization of cases will of course be widely disparate (cf. examples drawn above from Gasiorowski and Powe [1998] and Diamond [1999]). I concur with Schedler that it is still useful to preserve the term, and I am sympathetic to the solution he proposes, employing the term to mean "securing achieved levels of democratic rule against authoritarian regression," describing a regime that is expected by relevant observers to last well into the future. However, at least in this article (Schedler 1998), this argument remains underdeveloped, especially with regard to the conception of democracy to be employed, and to what relationships across which factors are defining elements or indicators, or instead are causal factors or consequences of consolidation.

One analytical consequence that flows logically from the empirical reality that confronts us in Latin America (as well as in other areas of the world), as well as from these re-elaborated, expanded concepts of liberal democratic consolidation or of formally institutionalized democracy, is a concomitant focus on an increased number of components viewed as necessary in order to approximate these types of political democracies. These have expanded considerably beyond those that might be viewed as tightly linked to procedural elements of democracy at the regime level. Although, as before, there are some significant differences in language and in emphasis across various analyses, there is one key commonality I seek to draw out and to build on. All of them expand, though not always in carefully delimited ways, the set of components we must consider in understanding the weakness of contemporary Latin American democracies and the possible solutions.

For example, Linz and Stepan (1996:62-64) list five broad necessary conditions or minimal components for the completion of the transition to and the consolidation of a democratic regime: (1) the rule of law and freedom for civil society; (2) the autonomy of political society and the trust and legal conditions required for it; (3) the presence of constitutional rules to allocate power democratically; (4) a state bureaucracy (including a judiciary and a military) acceptable and serviceable to democratic government; and (5) sufficient autonomy for the economy and economic actors to assure the pluralism of civil society, political society, and economic society. Diamond (1999: 74-77), in turn, lists three generic and equally expansive components that must be established by all new democracies if they are to consolidate. One he terms (unfortunately, as many other authors mean something different by this) "democratic deepening"—making the formal structures of democracy more liberal, accountable, representative, and

accessible. A second is "political institutionalization," especially relating to the construction of political parties and a party system that combine and balance institutional strength and stability with adaptability, strong legislatures, an effective judiciary, and civilian democratic control over the military. A third is "regime performance," understood broadly to mean issues such as material progress, security, freedom, and order (some of which, of course, may be in tension with each other).

It may be more useful for analytical purposes to circumscribe these components to key aspects associated with rule-of-law democracy, permitting one then to consider the role of other factors in helping to realize them. This may be found, for example, in the expanded research agenda for which Agüero and Stark call. They argue that their agenda would rethink the "decoupling" of procedural and substantive versions of democracy, and would be more interdisciplinary, yet would also seek to develop clearer hypotheses in the shift toward research on the more qualitative dimensions of democracy. This, they argue, would bring benefits that would "far outweigh any loss of parsimony in our research agendas" (1998:374). Their edited volume highlights in particular three key areas for future research: the representation of societal interests and citizen participation, affecting mechanisms of accountability; the rule of law and its links to transformations of the judiciary; and issues related to organized force and violence, particularly in terms of the military and civil-military relations (p. 11).

Although criticizing what he terms the illusion of consolidation, and insisting on the polyarchic (minimally democratic) nature of most current Latin American regimes, O'Donnell has also focused on a wide set of components necessary in order to attain more formally institutionalized polyarchies. He has argued for a desirable combination of democracy, liberalism, and republicanism, as "[d]emocracy without liberalism and republicanism would become majority tyranny" (1998:115). In turn, when state agents are involved directly or indirectly in human-rights violations or violations of basic rights of due process, what he terms the liberal dimension of democracy suffers. And, when public officials do not subject themselves to the law or pursue their private interests over their public duty, the republican dimension suffers (p. 118). Most insistently, he has asserted the key problem is the "severe incompleteness of the state, especially of its legal dimension." And, this has in fact increased following recent democratic transitions, under the weight of socioeconomic crises, antistatist policies, and the construction of national-level political coalitions with politicians from "privatized" areas, highlighting vast regional disparities in

the extension of basic democratic rights (O'Donnell 1999:314-315). In addition, although explicitly rejecting an identification of democracy with high levels of socioeconomic equality or welfare, he argues that there appears to be a strong link from sharply unequal social structures to the weakness of political and civil rights in the region (p. 322).

This review has raised more issues than can be resolved here. However, I do believe it has underscored some important partial convergences across a number of authors adopting what might be termed an expanded academic conception of democracy and its consolidation (or alternative term), upon which future work analyzing contemporary Latin American politics can build. There is also an overlapping categorization of country cases: for example, in spite of scholars' different terminology, countries in the region such as Costa Rica and Uruguay stand apart from the others in most of these analyses. These convergences are more consequential than whether scholarly consensus regarding the term consolidation or its meaning is fully achieved, as long as scholars are both clear in their conceptualization and consistent in its usage.

In my view, research now needs to focus more carefully on why so many countries in Latin America are currently persisting or surviving as "electoral democracies or regimes," "unconsolidated democracies," or "informally institutionalized polyarchies," rather than unmistakably advancing toward "consolidation" or "formally institutionalized polyarchies." Similarly, research should focus on the extent to which and the mechanisms through which even this limited democratic progress is at risk if these countries do not begin to assume more of the characteristics of liberal or rule-of-law democracies.

In carrying out this research, the most useful conceptions of democracy are ones that accept the importance of procedural elements narrowly associated with electoral issues, but that expand on them to incorporate those associated with what we can term liberal or rule-of-law dimensions of democracy, in areas *within the state* such as "horizontal accountability"; *between* the state and society, such as equal application of the rule of law; and, regarding the state's ability to extend its legal authority to transactions *within society*.

More work is required in specifying and in providing appropriate measures and indicators of the differences between and the possibilities of a shift from electoral (or informally institutionalized) democracy to consolidated liberal (or formally institutionalized) democracy. We are only part of the way toward specifying clearly the attitudinal, behavioral, and institutional elements that comprise a qualitative change in political patterns relating to a shift toward a greater role for formal institutions and an acceptance of the democratic and legal

"rules of the game" that is not instrumental, much less toward determining how countries have evolved and might evolve in that direction.

In part because "democratic consolidation" is often used "loosely" in the political and policy world, I believe there is a utility to careful academic work based on what I have termed the expanded academic conception of the term. At the same time, it is almost certainly true that at this level the concept remains quite abstract and multidimensional. Therefore, much important empirical research should be carried out in a more disaggregated fashion with more clearly specified referents to aspects of the state and the rule of law, political institutions and political parties, and civil-military relations. At the same time, the risk remains that this type of work will generate partial parallel explanations focused on a discrete set of factors, in literatures that do not fully engage with each other.

Democratic Governance in Latin America: Toward a More Comprehensive Framework

The new realities of the region and new understandings both about the emergence and evolution of political democracy itself and about the region's historical evolution and current circumstances have generated valuable analytical efforts to understand these changes in a comprehensive fashion. Yet, should one focus more on the unmistakable advance of political democracy in the region compared to its past, or on the partial retrogressions experienced by several countries recently?

Not surprisingly, different emphases have led to different causal orderings. Focusing on the survival of electoral regimes in the region, Mainwaring (1999a, 1999b) concludes that structural transformations of modernization over the past several decades,¹⁷ ideological depolarization, the revalorization of political democracy in the region following the bitter experience of authoritarian rule, the decline in the attractiveness of the Cuban model, the end of the Cold War, and international (especially U.S.) and growing regional support for democracy are all important. Those, in turn, who focus more on the declines in democracy in the region or the lack of progress address such factors as the nature and impact of sustained socioeconomic crisis and market oriented reforms, the ways these have encouraged unequal distributions of power within society, the region's continued high levels of inequality (among the highest in the world), the inadequacy of political representation, and how already weak liberal elements of a democratic rule of law have deteriorated further, with dramatic consequences for

public order, civility, and security (among others, many of the articles in Oxhorn and Star [1999] and in Mendez, O'Donnell, and Pinheiro [1999]).

In my view, an explanation of the region's overall patterns should ideally address both the advances as well as the retrogressions. In Latin America today, one needs to explain why so many seemingly diverse countries—in terms of such features as their historical trajectories with democracy, nature of political institutions and party systems, and socioeconomic structures—appear to have converged around similar types of weak democracies, why there has been some deterioration (in some cases with subsequent partial improvement) in terms of democracy in others, and what explains the few exceptions.

All I can do here is to present a framework within which these seemingly puzzling outcomes can be studied. In understanding successful transitions to electoral democracies and the near absence of consolidated rule-of-law democracies in Latin America over the recent past, explanations must build on an analysis of the region's different historical evolution and sequence of critical events, understanding the mode of transition primarily as features inherited from the previous authoritarian regime (cf. Hartlyn 1998b). And, in understanding both the persistence of electoral democracies, and the current nature of their challenges, one must consider the variegated consequences of globalization, of which I will highlight: the impact of dramatic international (1) political changes, (2) changes in socioeconomic models and demands, and (3) understandings of democracy on state structures, societal evolution, and political attitudes.

Much more work needs to be done to understand the complex set of historical factors that evolved and combined to make liberal or rule-of-law democracy (as opposed to simply electoral democracy) possible in the industrialized democracies. These appear related to such factors as the type and extent of social inequality and the nature of their capitalist development and consolidation of their national states, processes that evolved very differently in most Latin American countries. To the extent that arguments about political democracy purely at the level of regime type—based on the successful experience of countries in Western Europe or the United States—presuppose or ignore these elements relating to the state and the democratic rule of law, then, as many of the scholars above have noted and begun to do, these assumptions need to be clarified, made explicit, and the very different patterns and sequences observed in Latin America need to be "brought back in" to the analysis.

One example can be drawn from a classical argument about historical sequences favorable to political democracy. Robert Dahl argued

that the most favorable path to polyarchy was one in which political competition preceded the expansion of participation. The result was that "the rules, the practices, and the culture of competitive politics developed first among a small elite, and the critical transition from nonparty politics to party competition also occurred initially within the restricted group" (1971:33-36). Yet, this argument alone is too narrowly focused. Prior to this must be the establishment of a national state, and prior to and alongside it must be the practice of constitutional liberalism and the rule of law, respect for basic civil rights, and not just the political right to vote in free elections. Although several countries in the region approximated Dahl's favorable sequence or key aspects of it (such as Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay), many did not. Furthermore, there are parallels in other countries in the region (e.g., Colombia in the context of a much weaker state) to Bolivar Lamounier's admonition that in Brazil this seemingly beneficial pattern was somewhat overshadowed by a state structure that was excessively strong vis-a-vis civil society, fostering clientelist rather than citizen ties while also perhaps yielding an excess of elite conciliation (Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999; Lamounier 1999).

A related observation may be made about the weakness of mechanisms of public accountability in the region. Practically since independence for many countries in the region, there was an early choice for an institutional design derived from constitutional thinking, with features such as representative institutions and a division of powers, rule of law, and political freedoms. Indeed, no other institutional arrangement has been able to gain full legitimacy in the region. Yet, the other reality is that in many countries these liberal democratic constitutions were often distorted, perverted, and manipulated, as constitutional hypocrisy and discretionary power often comfortably coexisted. Thus, the issue today is not necessarily to create new institutions, but the equally difficult challenge of overcoming historical patterns of abuse and manipulation to infuse these formal political institutions with meaning, substance, and predictability (Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999:23-25). Although there may be many historical roads to electoral democracy, it is not totally clear what implications each may have with regard to consolidating rule of law democracy.

Another set of factors crucial in explaining current patterns of political democratization in the region relates to the contemporary impacts of globalization, and their domestic correlates. Of the many effects of globalization, I want to highlight three that I believe are especially important in terms of understanding current political trends in the region and the associated scholarly attention on the challenges of and factors conducive to the consolidation of rule-of-law democracy.

One is that international forces and governments have all supported rejection of any return to outright authoritarianism, encouraging at least minimally electoral democracies. They have done so both in the absence of perceived security threats and in the absence of the legitimacy of any other model alternative to democracy in the region. The United States has played an important role in sustaining a political ideological floor for democracy, understood in an electoral sense. Similarly, at times neighboring countries and regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States and Mercosur, have also. They have played this role in some countries in circumstances of socioeconomic or political crisis that in other time periods might well have led to successful military coups. Thus, this international pressure is widely recognized as a crucial factor in explaining the persistence of current regimes in several countries in the region. Some quick examples would include the fact that attempted coups or an *auto-golpe* were beaten back in Paraguay and in Guatemala, and that saber rattling in Peru during the Alan Garcia administration (1985-1990) or in Colombia under President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) were met with a clear message of opposition from Washington. U.S. pressure was important in moving the Dominican Republic toward free and fair elections in 1996, after the highly questionable results of 1994. And, U.S. and other international pressure played an important role in delegitimizing the increasingly more fraudulent electoral process in Peru in 2000 through which President Alberto Fujimori sought his reelection. Similarly, these international forces played an important role in Fujimori's ultimate resignation from office and the scheduling of new democratic elections in April 2001.

Yet, even this floor is wobbly and insecure. During 1999, the Haitian president ruled by decree as the term of congressional representatives had expired and the country had extreme difficulty in setting the date for new elections. And, when these elections were finally realized in 2000, their fairness was sharply questioned. In Ecuador, international pressure was insufficient to prevent a coup that ousted President Jamil Mahuad in January 2000, though it did force the short-lived military-civilian junta to cede power to the vice-president. Unlike the traditional image of the conservative coup, the military overthrow in Ecuador was driven by mass mobilization, especially by indigenous groups, and the military plotters were populists who identified with the rejection of the government's controversial economic austerity and reform program.

This points to the fact that, at another level, international economic currents have played a different role, with profound consequences on the state, society, and political institutions of Latin American countries,

helping us to understand some of the reasons for their "low quality."¹⁸ The international system and associated societal changes and balances of power induced within countries are imposing severe structural constraints on the kinds of economic models that Latin American states can follow, and thus on the kinds of economic goals that can be successfully pursued through political participation. Even as the quality of state institutions in many Latin American countries has suffered, so have patterns of inequality both prior to and after the initiation of stabilization and initial reform efforts; for many countries, the same can be said for poverty levels, though these have improved somewhat in several of them over the last few years. To the extent international investment and other capital flows continue to be disproportionately distributed throughout the region, a "diverging" impact upon the countries of the area may more clearly be felt over the years ahead even as international aid flows may help some countries to rebuild more than others. It is also clear that new patterns of production are generating more diversified linkages to the global economy that cut across national boundaries and constrain what national economic policymakers can hope to act upon even as economic integration schemes open up additional sets of opportunities and constraints beyond the scope of this chapter.

In perhaps exaggerated fashion, Lechner has argued that market oriented (neoliberal) policies have put an end to the "primacy of politics," to the ability of political processes to regulate and conduct policies of modernization. The painful paradox, however, is that this does not mean that countries can do without politics: strategies to dismantle the state are successful only where they are carried along through sustained political intervention (Lechner 1997:13, 19). The dramatic separation of "politics" (*lo politico*) from "policy" (*la politica*) (Garreton 1999) induced by these changes has led to dramatic challenges for states and to political institutions such as political parties, as the economic effects of globalization have helped generate new patterns of social inequality in the region. Empirically, but in an uneven process throughout the continent, the state and the sphere of politics no longer have the same kind of importance as they once did as dominant forger of identity and organizer of conflicts or as an arena or locus of conflict and decisions, even as the impact of the kinds of parties, campaigns, constitutional designs, and electoral rules that a country possesses continue to be important but in different ways than before (Garreton 1993:7-12).

A central question, as I have argued previously, is whether the state in Latin America, from having been overcommitted during the earlier era, will emerge underengaged with society or reconstituted

and able to provide effective responses to societal problems and demands (Hartlyn 1998a). For example, crime rates have increased dramatically in the region. Latin America had the highest median homicide rates in the world since the 1970s, yet these increased dramatically in the 1990s, such that Latin America as a region has four times the rate of other major world regions except Africa.¹⁹ Nowhere is the decline in state coherence and capacity clearer than in Colombia, where drug trafficking provides significant revenues to both guerrilla forces who control areas of the country where coca is cultivated and to paramilitary groups associated with drug traffickers and linked to elements of the state security forces. Indeed, large parts of the country's territory are effectively outside of state control, levels of political violence and human rights abuses remain notoriously high, and over a million people may be internally displaced refugees from the violence. Given the weak institutional capacities of the judiciary and the police, this is taking place in a context of almost complete impunity for any crime, combined in 1999 with the country's worst economic recession since the 1930s (Hartlyn and Dugas 1999). There is a reasonable fear that the proposed infusion of large-scale U.S. military assistance, rather than enhancing state coherence, inducing the guerrillas to negotiate, and reducing the supply of drugs from the country, would instead provide additional resources for violence to further escalate (Human Rights Watch 2000).

Although the severity of Colombia's problems set it somewhat apart, the other Latin American countries also are experiencing acutely the inevitable tension between governability—which seeks to maximize consensus and efficient decisionmaking—and democracy whose exercise involves the expression of multiple interests and conflict. One of the key ways democratic regimes have moderated this tension—indeed we could say a requirement for consolidated democracy—is to have strong political institutions and parties in a coherent party system. In the dilemma between governability and democracy, these are intended to serve as channelers of demands and forgers of compromise. In previous decades, one risk that occurred in several countries was that political institutions became instruments of polarization in society (perhaps the most dramatic example was Chile in the early 1970s). However, the greater risk in the region today is that political institutions, under the weight of globalization and their perceived incapacity to address domestic demands, will be circumvented by plebiscitarian leaders or avoided by alienated voters, in either case potentially becoming irrelevant at great cost to democracy.

In several countries, institutions and parties have experienced widespread repudiation as politicians have been perceived as corrupt

and inept, and blamed for their inability to solve their country's major problems. Fujimori's success in carrying out his 1992 *auto-golpe* in Peru—indeed, his ability to sustain himself in power until 2000, in the process overseeing the destruction of the country's previous political parties and further weakening the country's democratic state institutions—provides one example (McClintock 1999). There is also the dramatic presidential victory of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela in December 1998, decisively trouncing the country's two established political parties. At one level, Chavez's victory reflects a greater democratization of Venezuelan society, as well as a popular response to the country's dramatic socioeconomic problems. Yet, there are good reasons to fear that the outcome will be less one in which Venezuelan democracy will be further democratized and more one in which the possibility for a more institutionalized and accountable democracy is reduced (see Levine and Crisp 1999).

In other countries, the impact on political institutions has not been as severe, pointing to the fact that the consequences of the economic forces associated with globalization on democracy are complex. In the short term, they have tended to weaken state capacity and key organized groups in civil society. Yet, as Lamounier (1999:180) has argued for Brazil, and has also been true in some other countries in the region, because the worldwide economic agenda has narrowed the country's perceived room for choice, ideological antagonisms that used to be rampant around highly controversial issues such as trade and financial opening, inflation, and privatization have lessened. This has meant that recent elections in countries such as Argentina and Chile are not polarized around fundamental questions regarding the socioeconomic model that should be pursued. And, to the extent that globalization and regional integration provide international pressure for more accountable and transparent public institutions, they may help strengthen the efforts of domestic forces seeking to enhance a democratic rule of law. However, as these pressures have tended to focus more on issues of property rights and contract enforcement than on other areas central to democratic advancement, their impact may be limited.

Finally, there is also a third consequence of globalization that helps us to understand the need for scholarly focus on liberal or rule-of-law democracy. Paradoxically, even as globalization has weakened many social actors and helped to induce new forms of social inequality, it has also helped provoke or strengthen expanded views regarding the kinds of rights to be expected and demanded under democracy—what Garreton (1999) terms the "normative expansion" of citizenship in the region—with regard to issues such as gender, ethnicity, the environment,

and local power. Understandings of democracy today are deeper and more extended, though also more fragmented.

The effects are evident in the multiplicity of social movements and demands, or in the many constitutional and legal reforms extending special rights to indigenous groups, or providing for quotas for women candidates to public office in numerous countries throughout the region. Eight constitutions in Latin America now contain language recognizing "the multiethnic, pluricultural, and/or multilingual nature of their societies" (Van Cott 2000:265). By 1998, women held an average 15 percent of legislative seats in Latin America, up from 4 percent in 1970, and nearly all Latin American countries had established women's agencies in recent decades (Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999:32). Effects are also evident in the enactment of political and fiscal decentralization in such countries as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela, though with quite mixed results as the devolution of power to the regions has not automatically enhanced participation or responsiveness.²⁰ The effects of globalization enhancing perceptions of citizenship are to be celebrated and encouraged as a real opportunity to deepen democracy, even as they also represent a profound challenge for the countries' political institutions and parties.

Conclusion

Although the return of outright military regimes in the region now seems unlikely, it is not difficult to conjure up a plausible, pessimistic scenario for democracy in Latin America. Illiberal, unconsolidated democracies lacking an effective rule of law and hybrid regimes could perdure in many countries in the absence of domestic threats to the established order and with the continued presence of a broad but not very demanding international ideological hegemony in favor of democracy.²¹ In most of the region, more or less genuine electoral competition and alternation would be overshadowed by the failure of all major political parties, and of state institutions in all sectors and levels, to engage and respond to vast segments of the public, who in turn would become increasingly alienated from and distrustful (even disdainful) of formal democratic institutions. Delegative, populist, and neopatrimonial presidents would override the quest for horizontal accountability and a rule of law, and thereby eviscerate the vertical dimension of accountability as well. Unable to mobilize a policy consensus or any viable, coherent vision of a more just and dynamic country, parties and politicians would flounder in governing, failing to generate sustained economic growth, much less to relieve poverty

and inequality. The current situation is not this bad for the region as a whole, and of course several countries clearly do not fit this description. At the same time, it is questionable whether such a "lowlevel equilibrium" of democracy in Latin America would be viable indefinitely. And even if it were viable, it is hardly desirable.

A more optimistic scenario would see the forces of globalization fostering effective regional integration throughout the continent, strengthening both vibrant market economies and political democracy while helping countries to put aside old enmities. Emerging from the painful processes of economic restructuring and second-stage reforms would be states that may be smaller in size and more modest in their goals and their reach, but also more accountable and bound by legal norms. Such states would be more efficient and more capable in what they do: implementing targeted programs of poverty alleviation, improving basic public education and health, effectively regulating private economic actors to limit market abuse, and administering justice fairly both within the state and within society. Although many issues may no longer be channeled through the state or processed by political means, political parties and institutions would reemerge as important forums for mobilizing, articulating, aggregating, and compromising interests, and for responding to an invigorated civil society. Reform-minded forces in party politics and civil society would join together to rein in corruption, increase transparency, improve human rights protections, expand access to power, and subordinate the military—all by enhancing the political institutions of democracy within a context in which all key actors endorsed and accepted the democracy and legal "rules of the game."

Whatever the precise terminology employed, the challenge confronting most of Latin America today is to consolidate rule-of-law democracies in countries where democracy remains still, in too many respects, superficial. As I trust this exercise has suggested, there is better understanding at least at an intellectual level of what is meant by and what is required for this to be achieved. If the challenge of political institution building and reform is important, the reform of stagnant, centralized, and corrupt state structures does not happen merely on initiative from above. Even with skilled and democratically enlightened leadership, democratic reform requires pressure from below and encouragement and support from outside, in the regional and international environment. However, to improve and help consolidate democracy, civil-society actors must not only remain committed to democratic ends and means, protesting and criticizing where necessary; they must also learn to engage, cooperate, and even ally with political parties, governmental institutions at all levels, and one another.

Increasingly, as they become integrated into regional and global markets, and as the prospect of a hemispheric free-trade zone draws nearer, Latin American democracies find themselves lodged in an external setting that discourages overt authoritarian regressions. However, the focus of the research above has been to underscore the significant difference between the persistence of troubled or ineffective democracies and alternative, more hopeful futures.

Notes

1. Helpful comments by Ralph Espach, Christina Ewig, and Evelyne Huber are gratefully acknowledged, as is research assistance by Hyung-min Kim and Steven Wuhs.

2. For a review of democracy in Latin America from 1930 to the late 1980s, see Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994).

3. For a review and analysis of these elections, see Cerdas-Cruz, Rial, and Zovatto (1992).

4. Freedom House ranks countries on separate scales for political rights and civil liberties, in which 1 is the highest score and 7 is the lowest. Countries with combined scores on these two scales of 2 to 5 are rated "free," a useful if imperfect proxy for democracy. As is true of all subjective measures of political democracy, those by Freedom House are not problem-free (for one extensive critique, see Munck and Verkuilen 2000). Studies evaluating these scores during the 1970s and 1980s have concluded that during this time period they tended to rate more highly countries in some regions (including Latin America) than in others (Bollen 1993:1223) and also countries that were "Catholic and monarchies, and not Marxist-Leninist" (Bollen and Paxton 1998:475). And, to complicate matters even more, in the late 1980s and in the 1990s Freedom House scores may have become stricter than in the earlier period (see Diamond 1999 and Mainwaring 1999a:12). To the extent we are making comparisons more within the Latin American region and in the post-Cold War era, these sources of bias may be less problematic, though still apparent (for example, in terms of Freedom House scores for Nicaragua during the 1980s compared to Brazil). In any event, below I also report scores from the "Democracy" variable of the Polity IV data set. The overall correlation between the two data sets for twenty Latin American countries during the 1972-1999 time period is extremely high: .940. Yet the correlation is .965 during the 1972-1989 time period, when both indices reflected high numbers of authoritarian regimes moving in more democratic directions, but only .439 during the politically more ambiguous and difficult to categorize 1990-1999 time period. At the country level over the entire time period, there are three cases where correlations are less than .15 (El Salvador, Mexico, and Colombia) and two additional ones where they are less than .50 (Dominican Republic and Guatemala). And, it is the case that for Latin America as a whole, Polity IV sees a more authoritarian region than Freedom House in the 1980s, and a more democratic one in the 1990s (see Table 6.2).

5. Freedom House data cited from Diamond (1999:26); countries whose combined scores on the political-rights and civil-liberties scales fall between 6 and 11 are ranked "partly free" by Freedom House.

6. For purposes of this chapter, I have considered Latin America to be the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of the region plus Haiti (a total of twenty countries).

7. For a thorough review of dichotomous versus graded measures of democracy and a reasoned defense of a pragmatic choice regarding concepts based on the goals and context of research, see Collier and Adcock (1999).

8. The next several paragraphs draw from the "Preface to the Second Edition" in Diamond, Hartlyn, Linz, and Lipset (1999).

9. Diamond 1999:7-15. For some, the term "liberal democracy" may suggest an excessively narrow focus on individual political and civil rights that is not a necessary part of the conceptualization. A more accurate, but also more awkward, term that I will occasionally employ below is "rule-of-law democracy."

10. As Diamond notes, for the political quality of democracy, the most important additional mechanism of horizontal accountability is an autonomous judiciary, but crucial as well are institutionalized means (often in a separate, autonomous agency) to monitor, investigate, and punish government corruption at all levels. On the concept of lateral, or horizontal, accountability and its importance, see Sklar (1987, 1996), O'Donnell (1994, 1998), and Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner (1999). Sklar terms the lateral form "constitutional democracy" and emphasizes its mutually reinforcing relationship to vertical accountability.

11. Most prior breakdowns of democratic or semidemocratic regimes in the region took place in periods of economic crisis and were associated with them (exceptions include Venezuela in 1948 and Colombia in 1949; see Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens 1992:210).

12. In a related work focused on democratic survivability in the region, Mainwaring notes he is not arguing that most of the region's democracies are consolidated (Mainwaring 1999a:1).

13. With regard to their definition (in which social democracy presumes the existence of political democracy), a more expanded analysis would need to address the fact that in several Latin American countries advancement to ward greater socioeconomic equality took place more during authoritarian periods than during democratic or semidemocratic ones and the implications for all three types of democracy that follow from this different evolution.

14. One may arrive at different conclusions with regard to specific cases depending on whether one focuses on their conceptual definition or their interacting arenas, as Aguero notes (1998:8).

15. They are careful to note that consolidated democracies can break down in the future, but they argue this should be due to a different dynamic. Furthermore, there can be many types of "low-quality" to "high-quality" consolidated democracies (Linz and Stepan 1996:6-7).

16. Not surprisingly, there is a gap then between cases categorized through this much stricter set of indicators and categorization based exclusively on Freedom House scores. For example, earlier in the same book, the Chilean case is categorized as a liberal democracy based on its Freedom House scores (along with such country cases as Argentina, Panama, Venezuela, El Salvador, and Honduras, whose classification here would also be challenged by many scholars). Yet Diamond also acknowledges that in Chile there are severe constraints imposed on civilian control over the armed forces, antidemocratic features such as the designated senators enshrined in the constitution, and low legitimacy for democracy expressed in public-opinion polls, all of

which make it doubtful Chile satisfies several key components specified in his original definition. Cf. Diamond (1999:11-12; 33).

17. One of the strongest empirical relations consistently found in the comparative literature is that between per capita GDP and democracy. Employing a minimal definition of democracy and a worldwide data set, Przeworski and Limongi (1997:170-171, quote on 167) find that "once established, democracies are likely to die in poor countries and certain to survive in wealthy ones." Yet, of the ten times that countries with incomes above \$3,000 (1985 PPP in U.S. dollars) experienced democratic breakdowns, seven of them were in Latin America: Argentina (five times), Chile, and Uruguay. Given this, it is not surprising that Mainwaring (1999a:21) reports low correlations between Freedom House scores and per capita income for Latin America, as low as .10 for 1979 (when countries such as Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay were authoritarian) and with correlations in the .40 to .51 range from 1989 to 1996—the latter indicating an important relationship, though with scores lower than found in studies incorporating other regions.

18. This is not to argue that some kind of economic stabilization and market-oriented reforms were not necessary, nor that initial conditions nor continuing domestic policy decision did not matter, but to underscore in broad brush terms the consequences of the policies that were implemented. For a critical discussion of the claims of both defenders and critics of neoliberalism, see Haggard and Kaufman (1995:309-334), although it may underplay somewhat the role of international constraints on domestic policy choices.

19. Inter-American Development Bank (2000:13-14). Median homicide rates are employed, rather than average rates, to avoid the bias that could be introduced by extreme cases.

20. This is not the place to analyze the partial, uneven, and sometimes even counterproductive consequences of some of these efforts; for a brief discussion, see Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz (1999:15-33); see also Hum (1998), Van Cott (2000), and Yashar (1996).

21. These paragraphs draw on Hartlyn (1998a) and Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz (1999).