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Democracies in Contemporary South America

Convergences and Diversities

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In an opinion article entitled "Can We Govern?" the Washington columnist David Broder highlighted the fact that "governments in democratic societies around the globe are notably weak these days." He then went on to cite the examples of Japan, Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Canada as well as the United States. Citing Bill Brock, he noted how "the virtual erasure of national boundaries to the flow of capital and the location of manufacturing and service facilities lessened governments' ability to control their national economies." Broder noted how three major governing institutions--parties, Congress, and the presidency--were extremely weak, while interest groups and the news media appeared to be growing in power. Because interest groups and the media are not oriented toward constructing consensus, one of the central intended goals of political institutions, this situation was severely complicating the ability of nation-states to address important problems and generate effective policy.¹

The vast implications of changes in the global economy and the difficult challenges of governance are also familiar themes in contemporary

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Latin America. However, the seeming similarity of some of these issues should not obscure their very different analytical significance in a region seeking to construct or reconstruct democratic institutions in a context of severe social inequalities, while also confronting or emerging from often severe state and economic crises. The challenges in Latin America are even greater than those in industrialized countries. Changes imposed on them by the global economy come on top of the exhaustion of the model of import-substituting industrialization, the debt crisis, and the fiscal collapse of the state--the collapse in the region's more industrialized countries of what Marcelo Cavarozzi has termed the state-centric matrix.² Democratic governance confronts difficult questions of how to build consensus to confront seemingly intractable economic problems in countries with often profound historical legacies of weak democratic institutions. Similarly, many of these countries face basic questions regarding the appropriate roles of state institutions. In some countries, following extended crises, occupants of the presidential office have taken considerable power upon themselves, often with the acquiescence of large sectors of the population, to enact significant neoliberal economic reforms; thus, governance has come at the cost of open debate and democracy. At the same time, Latin American social groups, especially popular ones, appear weaker and more disarticulated, though there are some countertendencies.

Latin America is undergoing a broad transitional process--actually, a set of partially linked transitional processes--with socioeconomic and cultural dimensions as well as political ones. These processes involve decomposition and destruction--of state and societal institutions, groups and forms of behavior--as well as (in many cases still unclear or uncertain) recomposition and restructuring, generating often contradictory trends. It is still not apparent which phenomena are peculiar to the transition phase and which will be longer lasting, thus making meaningful, broad comparative statements even more difficult.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the implications of these complex transitional processes with regard to politics are profound. Empirically, but in an uneven process throughout the continent, the state and the sphere of politics no longer have the same importance they once did as the dominant forger of identity and the organizer of conflicts, or as locus of conflict and decisions--even as the parties, campaigns, constitutional designs, and electoral rules continue to be important, but in different ways. Social conflicts and actors are more complex and diversified, often with their own international ties and ramifications.³ They are no longer fused to overarching goals or to political and economic actors, as they have been in many countries in the region in the past. One analytical consequence is that the old "master" paradigms, modernization and dependency, and the

newer one of neoliberalism, all of which in different ways highlighted the central importance of socioeconomic and cultural factors, have not been replaced by other single-focused paradigms and are unlikely to be. There is a growing recognition that there are multiple causal interactive logics, within and across political, societal, and economic dimensions.⁴

Indeed, it is not surprising that in a thought-provoking review of democratizing tendencies in the region at a conference held in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, in 1988, Laurence Whitehead underscored "the impressive diversity of national experiences."⁵ He chose to explain the seeming diversity across Latin America on the basis of the quality of political leadership; inflation; drug trafficking, crime, and associated corruption; social and political polarization (leading to guerrilla violence and "dirty war" responses); and economic crisis caused by the external debt.

In 1994, there is some evidence of a convergence at the level of types of regime on the continent: "up" from the harshest types of authoritarian rule but also "down" from unrestricted democracies, with few unambiguous cases of democratic consolidation. Furthermore, one could argue that the existence of significant international forces and influences impose severe constraints on the nature and kind of economic and social welfare policies that governments can enact. The continuance of democratic regimes, even if some remain limited or even contrived, suggests that national experiences are likely to be structured within a narrower set of political and economic options than in previous decades, especially the 1970s.⁶

Yet, in disentangling these apparent convergences, diversities and occasionally unexpected "movement" by countries, as well as some explanatory factors for them, emerge. The factors Whitehead enumerated can be regrouped to emphasize two in particular: a) international factors, which through their contradictory political and economic effects help explain some aspects of the "convergence" phenomena in Latin America; and b) the nature and extent of challenge to state coherence and the rule of law, including the impact of social and political polarization, drug trafficking, inflation and economic crisis, and restructuring policies.⁷

Furthermore, there is another factor of central importance, foreshadowed by Broder, that should not be overlooked in explaining the "diversities" within "convergence." This one relates to historical continuities and discontinuities regarding political institutions, particularly political parties, party systems, and constitutional arrangements. Underscoring the importance of this factor is the belief that one should reject mechanistic explanations of politics, in terms of its being "explained" by other social or economic phenomena. To the extent that democracy depends upon channeling conflict and building enduring institutions that can generate

consensus and encourage compromise, the parties, party systems, electoral laws, and constitutional structures are essential. Strong parties and party systems favor democratic rule, but only with the appropriate mix of appeals and with party organization that is neither too loose nor too rigid. And presidentialism in Latin America has been problematic, especially in the context of multiparty systems (and even more so if they are weak and fragmented parties). At the same time, one should also reject mechanistic explanations from politics. A specific institutional configuration will not necessarily ensure democratic consolidation. Multiple factors affect democratic prospects, and in some cases tensions across social groups, conflicts, and economic and social crises may be especially intractable or unresolvable.⁸

To make this chapter more manageable, I will focus on the seven South American countries with the most democratic experience on the continent since 1930 (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela).⁹ Like the work by Whitehead cited above, this is written in the spirit of a review essay rather than as a test of formal hypotheses; the comparative analysis remains incomplete. Much more detailed work would be required to clarify the differential impact of different factors and the importance of different sequences of interaction across factors and events in the various countries.

Optimism with regard to the evolution of democratic patterns in Chile and Uruguay appears based in part on the relative absence of economic crisis, the strength of their state structures, and the significance of past patterns of democracy and how structural changes and political learnings over time have modified them. At the same time, without reform of the constitutional structure of those countries, there are reasons to believe that serious future challenges to their democracies could arise. Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, which also had transitions from military rule in the 1980s, have all experienced declines in the quality of their democracies over time (in the first two instances) or actual breakdown and partial reequilibration (Peru). In the short term, there is unlikely to be dramatic improvement, though based on issues of presidential leadership the situation would appear a little more hopeful for Brazil. Venezuela, the only consolidated democracy of the seven countries in 1980, has moved toward partial deconsolidation and fragmentation of its party system. In Colombia, significant democratic political reforms have been combined with remarkable political party continuity and economic restructuring, but also with state crisis and profound internal violence. As a consequence, Colombia's overall democratic evolution, historically constrained, has also deteriorated over this past five- to ten-year period.

Conceptualizing Democracy

In this paper, the meaning of democracy will be restricted to a procedural definition, making possible a debate of how different countries in Latin America exemplify different degrees or types of democracy, and the implications that different features of the state, of the regime, and of political and party institutions have for democracy. At the same time, it is clear that within each country the meaning of democracy will remain contested and debated.

"Democracy" or "political democracy" incorporates three critical dimensions.¹⁰ The first, to use Robert Dahl's term, is contestation. In a democracy, the government is constituted by leaders who successfully compete for the vote of the citizenry in regularly scheduled elections. The essence of contestation is the acceptance of the legitimacy of political opposition, the right to challenge incumbents and replace them in the principal positions of political authority. Contestation requires state protection for the freedom of expression and association and the existence of regular, free, and fair elections capable of translating the will of the citizenry into leadership options. Particularly significant for political contestation is the development of consolidated party systems, in which the interaction among parties follows a predictable pattern and their electoral strengths remain stable. Parties promote distinct programs or ideologies, sponsor individuals for elected office, and serve as critical links between civil society and the state.

The second dimension is constitutionalism, or respect for the constitutional order, embodied in constitutional documents and practices, often in contravention to the strict application of the principle of majority rule. It is in this sense that contemporary democracies must be understood as "constitutional democracies." A constitutional democracy, while guaranteeing the right of the opposition to challenge incumbents by appealing for the support of a majority of the citizenry, defines and restricts the powers of governmental authorities. It also places limits on the hegemony of electoral majorities and their representatives, with a view toward protecting the rights and preferences of individuals and minorities, the options of future majorities, and the very institutions of democracy itself. These institutions and rules vary and include such provisions as restrictions on presidential reelection and the partial insulation of judicial, electoral, and security organs from elected leadership. They also include the use of qualified legislative majorities and complex ratification mechanisms when fundamental changes in the nation's constitution and basic laws are at stake. Finally, they make provisions for power sharing

and minority representation, an essential element for the protection of the opposition and encouragement of the concept of a "loyal opposition." In practice, constitutional democracies diverge on the degree to which contingent majorities or their representatives are constrained by constitutional and legal restrictions.

The third dimension is inclusiveness or participation. By definition, democracies are based on the concept of popular sovereignty. As democracies evolve, the constitutional provisions for citizenship broaden to include larger proportions of the adult population, through the elimination of restrictions on suffrage based on property, literacy, gender, race, or ethnicity. Changes in formal rules, including residency and registration requirements, and the effective involvement of the population in politics through the expansion of parties and movements, lead, over time, to full inclusiveness.

A constitutional democracy may be viewed as consolidated when contestation and respect for the constitutional order are widely accepted and citizenship and effective electoral participation have been extended to all adults possessing minimum qualifications. This definition of democracy is often supplemented by a concept of citizenship that incorporates formal equality (universal suffrage) and legal protection from abusive state power. It also includes notions of material satisfaction and education sufficient for participation to be deemed meaningful rather than manipulated. One need hardly underscore how often these elements are problematic in Latin America.

What factors appear to help the process of consolidation? Analysts have focused on a vigorous and active civil society and a functioning, viable economy. Yet, what has been clear across much of Latin America recently for somewhat differing reasons (following an excessive faith in simplistic neoliberal prescriptions and the harsh reality of economic restructuring, or brought about by the consequences of ignoring the realities of international economic constraints or the impact of drug trafficking) is that what is of central importance is a functioning, coherent state that is democratically controlled and a "political society" that is institutionalized and relatively autonomous, involving political parties, leaders, and actors.

Patterns of Democracy in Latin America Today

Over the past seventy years in Latin America, one can observe two historical cycles with regard to 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. Both 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 has been greater more recently. Prior to 1990, the most auspicious moment for democracy in the region occurred in the late 1950s. The pendulum swung sharply back in the 1960s in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution, and at that time the nature of dictatorship changed in qualitative terms. Between 1962 and 1964, eight military takeovers took place. Military coups in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Chile, and Uruguay would also inaugurate bureaucratic authoritarian or 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 there were from twelve to sixteen authoritarian governments in Latin America at any one time, most intent on modernizing and transforming their societies by excluding not only the old politicians but the citizenry as well.

Then, in the 1980s, in the throes of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the most dramatic political reversal took place on the continent since the 1930s. Over the period between 1988 and 1991, for the first time in the history of the continent, presidential elections were held in every single country except for Cuba.¹¹ For the first time in its history, all of the countries of the region with the exception of Cuba were led by elected presidents according to constitutionally prescribed provisions, however circumscribed the democratic nature of many of these regimes and problematic the electoral processes that brought some of them into office.

Political democracy, although limited and constrained in several countries, appeared triumphant on the continent as never before in the history of the region as the last decade of the century began. This current 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 42 in 1972 to 52 in 1980 to 76 in 1992.¹² At the same time, simplistic renditions of an "end of history" argument suggested that international legitimation of democracy also presaged its consolidation.

However, by 1995, it was clear that optimism about this latest "democratic wave" had to be tempered, both worldwide and in Latin America. As the total number of countries listed by Freedom House grew from 183 in 1992 to 191 in 1995, the percentage of free countries fell from 42 percent to 40 percent, and that of partly free countries from 36 percent to 32 percent.¹³ In Latin America, we can point to both dramatic and ongoing processes that underscore the fragility of democracy in the region. Dramatic negative events in the early 1990s--a successful coup in Haiti,

failed coup attempts in Guatemala and Venezuela, an auto-golpe in Peru--were followed by the reinstatement of Aristide to power in Haiti in 1994, and the reequilibration of a form of very restricted democracy in Peru. Yet other worrisome events occurred, such as military challenges to Chilean authorities and continued political assassinations in Colombia. Furthermore, more gradual but no less significant processes were evident in numerous countries related to problems with ongoing human rights violations and even basic electoral processes.

Shifts in the measures generated by Freedom House of political rights and civil liberties over the period from 1980 to 1994 provide another indicator of the progress and then stagnation in democratic progress in Latin America and the Caribbean. Transitions to democracy in the 1980s in the region are evident by the increase from seven countries with a population greater than one million that were rated "free" in 1980 to thirteen countries in 1987: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela (scoring 2-4) and Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Peru as more restricted democracies (scoring 5) (see Table 1). However, in the period from 1987 to 1994, there has been movement both "upward" and "downward," toward a somewhat greater convergence of more mixed kinds of semidemocratic regimes. Between 1987 and 1994, Chile, Panama, and, to a lesser extent, Paraguay and Nicaragua had moved "upward" from the most authoritarian categories. However, there was also considerable movement "downward" toward the middle level of categories. According to these rankings, nine countries (instead of thirteen) were "free" in 1994, with five of those nine

Table 1. Freedom House Scores of Latin American Countries with Populations of over One Million*

Category	1980	1987	1994	
<i>Free (2-4)</i>	Costa Rica (1,1)	Costa Rica (1,1)		
		Trinidad and Tobago (1,1)		
	Venezuela (1,2)	Argentina (2,1)	Costa Rica (1,2)	
		Venezuela (1,2)		
	Ecuador (2,2)	Uruguay (2,2)	Chile (2,2)	
	Trinidad and Tobago (2,2)	Dominican Republic (1,3)	Trinidad and Tobago (2,2)	
		Jamaica (2,2)		
		Brazil (2,2)	Uruguay (2,2)	
	<i>Free (5)</i>	Colombia (2,3)	Colombia (2,3)	Argentina (2,3)
		Dominican Republic (2,3)	Bolivia (2,3)	Bolivia (2,3)
Jamaica (2,3)		Peru (2,3)	Ecuador (2,3)	
		Ecuador (2,3)	Jamaica (2,3)	
		Honduras (2,3)	Panama (2,3)	

<i>Partly Free</i>			
(6-11)	Belize (3,3)	Guatemala (3,3)	Brazil (2,4)
			El Salvador (3,3)
			Honduras (3,3)
			Venezuela (3,3)
	Brazil (2,4)	El Salvador (3,4)	Columbia (3,4)
	Mexico (3,4)		Dominican
			Republic (4,3)
			Paraguay (4,3)
	Peru (5,4)		Guatemala (4,5)
	El Salvador (5,4)		Nicaragua (4,5)
	Guatemala (4,5)		Peru (5,4)
	Honduras (6,3)		
	Nicaragua (5,5)	Nicaragua (5,5)	Haiti (5,5)
	Panama (5,5)	Panama (5,5)	
	Paraguay (5,5)		
	Argentina (6,5)	Chile (6,5)	
	Chile (6,5)	Haiti (5,6)	
	Haiti (6,5)	Paraguay (5,6)	
<i>Not Free</i>	Cuba (6,6)	Cuba (6,6)	
(12-14)	Uruguay (6,6)		Cuba (7,7)

Sources: *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1987-88* (New York: Freedom House, 1988) and *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1993-1994* (New York: Freedom House, 1994). Inspiration for the table comes from Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America," 1993 manuscript (note 12). *Combined Freedom House scores: political rights (high of 1 to low of 7) and civil liberties (high of 1 to low of 7)

listed as restricted democracies (scoring 5). The list in 1994 now excluded Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela, but it added Chile and Panama; furthermore, Argentina and Jamaica fell within the democratic category and Guatemala also declined further in both political rights and civil liberties. Another way of indicating the movement toward the middle is by noting that, in 1987, eight countries had very low (democratic) scores and six countries had very high (authoritarian) scores; in 1994, that had fallen to four countries with low (democratic) scores and one with a high (authoritarian) score (see Table 2). Although we may quibble with individual placements of countries or the inevitable simplifications of the exercise, these rankings illustrate the general trends we are currently witnessing in the region.

The primary conclusion is that if over the last several years there has been movement away from the harshest types of authoritarian rule, there has also been a decline in progress toward unrestricted political democracies. The existence of "movement" across categories suggests that there has been difficulty as well in consolidating *restricted* democracies.

Table 2. Summary Scores for Latin America, Selected Years

	1980	1987	1992	1993	1994
Free (2-4)	4	8	5	4	4
Free (5)	3	5	6	4	5
Partly Free (6-9)	7	3	8	11	12
Not Free (10-14)	8	6	3	3	1
Total	22	22	22	22	22

Source: Table 1.

The seven countries of South America with the greatest experience with democratic rule since 1930--Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, and Venezuela--exemplify this more general regional pattern. From 1980 to 1990, the first five of these countries underwent democratic transitions from military rule, with Chile being the last country to do so, in 1990 (although with significant constitutional restrictions remaining). With the enactment of the 1991 constitution, it could be said that Colombia underwent an important transformation in a democratizing direction, as numerous restrictions on effective contestation were finally removed.¹⁴ Venezuela also carried out a number of more modest political reforms during this period. Yet, except for Chile and Uruguay, the other countries all had worse scores on civil liberties in 1994 than they had in 1987, and three of them (Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela) had worse scores on political rights as well (see Table 1).

The International System: Sustaining a Political-Ideological Floor for Democracy? Collapsing or Helping to Rebuild the Socioeconomic Roof?

At the international level, discussion can focus on economic, political, and security dimensions. At the level of politics and security, current international trends favor democracy in the region, though clearly less than was the case for southern European democratic transitions. Ideologically, there is no other model of rule competing with democracy in Latin America. The Cuban revolution, which had such a profound impact on actors across the entire ideological spectrum, inspiring or strengthening guerrilla movements, counterinsurgency doctrines, liberation theologies, and reformist impulses, no longer serves as a model. With the end of the Cold War, the central goal of "stopping communism," sometimes complicated by a "dual track" of U.S. civil-military diplomacy, has molded toward a consensus around promoting democracy. This has permitted

multilateral, if still somewhat timid, international actions seeking to "defend" democracy in the hemisphere.

At this political-ideological level, the United States and other international actors have played positive roles in these seven countries. They have helped to limit "slippage" to outright military authoritarianism more than actively to enrich democracy. One could mention the support of the National Endowment for Democracy for the opposition forces in the 1988 plebiscite vote against Pinochet, discussions with the Peruvian military during the Alan Garcia administrations, and pronouncements surrounding the 1993 elections in Venezuela. At the same time, it is clear that there are limits to and ambiguities concerning these actions, as is evident in the evolution of relations between the United States and the Fujimori administration in Peru. Concerns for democracy and human rights in U.S. policy toward Peru have been balanced by desires to continue working with the Peruvian government on antinarcotics issues and to show support for the government's sweeping market-oriented reforms.¹⁵ The "constitutionalization" and hybrid authoritarianism of the Fujimori government following the April 1992 constitutional breakdown showed responsiveness to international political pressure; in a different international context, given the severity and nature of the crisis in Peru (or in other countries), the response might well have been a coup d'etat or more overt authoritarian rule.

With regard to the military, the situation in Latin America remains decidedly mixed for the fundamental reason that it is not obvious what an appropriate professional role for them should be that would facilitate their removal from active involvement in domestic politics. There is no clear international organization or externally oriented mission for the Latin American militaries, and involvement in international peacekeeping missions or regional defense efforts is not a fully equivalent proxy.¹⁶ To the extent that the military retains an active role in internal security or in combating drug trafficking (sustaining or increasing their budgets and size), the risk of more extensive military involvement remains acute, and current problems of human rights violations by state agents may be added to the challenges of addressing past ones. Historical legacies of entrenched prerogatives and privileges will be difficult to dismantle, whether because of the military's continued presence following a democratic transition (including, in the case of Chile, constitutional guarantees) or because of civilian abdication of responsibility for internal security matters.¹⁷ As J. Samuel Fitch notes, it may be unavoidable to have Latin American militaries play an active role in internal security. Civilians must "take seriously their responsibility in internal security," including enforcing norms and doctrines regarding the rights of combatants and noncombatants

appropriate for democratic regimes. Democratic leaders must "develop a basic consensus with respect to the missions to be assigned to the armed forces," and those leaders must work to integrate the military within democratic regimes by generating new institutional mechanisms if necessary.¹⁸ The extension of military missions into involvement in noncombatant domestic roles, such as in civil engineering projects, providing disaster assistance or relief, or doing environmental work, has clear risks for the civilian leadership and does not eliminate the need to address difficult issues related to budget, force size, and professional identity. Probably the most negative U.S. role in terms of this dimension has been played in countries like Colombia and Peru, where particularly in the mid to the late 1980s there was an emphasis on "militarizing" the war on drugs. At the same time, the United States and other international actors have discouraged military coups, although the reluctance of powerful domestic societal actors or of political leaders to support such actions have also been important. In sum, although a "floor" is being sustained, it appears to be a wobbly one.

If international political-ideological currents generally favor democracy, it is clear that international economic currents have not played a similar role in the region. The international system and the kinds of 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 pursue--and thus on the kinds of economic goals that can be successfully pursued through political participation. Even as the democratic quality of many Latin American countries has suffered, poverty and inequality both prior to and after the initiation of stabilization and initial reform efforts have increased. This is not to argue that some kind of economic stabilization and market-oriented reforms were not necessary, but to underscore that those that were implemented almost certainly increased poverty (see Table 3).¹⁹

Although the impact of international economic ideologies, forces, and flows must be factored in, initial conditions and continuing policy decisions

Table 3. Poverty and Extreme Poverty in Selected Countries, 1970-1992

	<i>Households under the Poverty Line--</i>		<i>Households under the Extreme Poverty Line-</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Argentina				
1970	8	5	1	1
1980	9	7	2	2
1986	13	12	4	3
1990	na	16*	na	4*
1992	na	10*	na	1*

Brazil				
1970	49	35	25	15
1979	39	30	17	10
1987	40	34	18	13
1990	43	39	na	22
Chile				
1970	17	12	6	3
1987	38	37	14	13
1990	35	34	12	11
1992	28	27	7	7
Colombia				
1970	45	38	18	14
1980	39	36	16	13
1986	38	36	17	15
1990	na	35	na	12
1992	na	38	na	15
Peru				
1970	50	28	25	8
1979	46	35	21	12
1986	52	45	25	16
Uruguay				
1970	na	10	4	na
1981	11	9	3	2
1986	15	14	3	3
1990	na	12	na	2
1992	na	8	na	1
Venezuela				
1970	25	20	10	6
1981	22	18	7	5
1986	27	25	9	8
1990	34	33	12	11
1992	33	32	11	10
Latin America				
1970	40	26	19	10
1980	35	25	15	9
1986	37	30	17	11
1990	39	34	18	13

Source: Comision Economica para la America Latina (CEPAL), Panorama Social de America Latina, 1994 (Santiago: CEPAL, 1995), 158-59.

*Buenos Aires only

also matter. In contrast to the "transition" Latin American countries (with the partial exception of Chile), governments in countries like Spain in the post-Franco era benefited from inheriting low levels of public domestic debt and modest levels of public expenditures as well as a

coherent, functioning state apparatus.²⁰ Table 3 provides estimates for poverty and absolute poverty rates for the seven South American countries. What they show is that only two countries, Uruguay and Colombia, had urban poverty rates in the 1990s that were lower than or the same as what they had been in 1970. Even as Chile, Argentina, and, to a lesser extent, Venezuela showed declines in poverty rates from 1990 to 1992, Colombia showed an increase. Urban poverty rates in Argentina and Chile in 1992 remained twice what they had been in 1970. In Venezuela they were one and one-half times what they had been in 1970, and in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru they remained tragically high, ranging from 38 to 45 percent of the population. As CEPAL notes, economic growth, declines in rates of inflation, increases in employment and in average wage rates (and in some cases of the minimum wage) helped the poorest groups in countries like Argentina and Chile in the past several years more than redistribution; only in Uruguay did distribution help decrease poverty.²¹ In Chile, the one country of the seven that is most clearly past the difficult stage of implementing economic restructuring, these socioeconomic constraints are evident in the kinds of strategies that the democratic governing coalition has been implementing. For example, its successes in alleviating poverty have been based primarily on employment generated by economic growth (especially in the low-wage sectors) rather than on governmental redistribution of income or assets. The Chilean socialists have sought to downplay welfare-type transfer payments and instead target social investments that give the poor more access to education, training, and other benefits to ease their integration into the market economy.²² In sum, these constraints may be seen as limiting the policy options and goals of actors within these countries and paving the way for continuing social and political tensions.

The kind of response that national leaders construct can have a significant impact on how international investors respond, on enhancing the lives of those integrated into the new model, and in terms of how those "left out" of the new economic model respond--even if overall constraints limit the extent of poverty alleviation possible, at least in the short and medium term. This underscores the argument of Acuna and Smith, that "inferring politics from economics is bad methodology . . . especially under Latin America's current highly constrained economic conditions."²³

Therefore, if the international system has provided a "wrecking ball" for the "economic roof" in several Latin American countries, it must be recognized that the roof had been eroding over many decades and in some cases had been actively dismantled from within by the choice of domestic policies. Furthermore, the nature and pace of the dismantling of the old roof and construction of the new one also has had substantial short-

term effects. Over the next decade, the nature, height, and diversity of "roofs" will continue to be determined by the complex interaction of international and domestic actors and institutions. To the extent that international investment and other capital flows continue to be disproportionately distributed in the region, a "diverging" impact upon the countries of the area may more clearly be felt over the years ahead, and international aid 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, which cut across national boundaries and constrain what national economic policymakers can hope to act upon even as economic integration schemes open up additional opportunities and constraints. At the same time, democratic consolidation implies more active participation by an engaged citizenry and more effective accountability of elected officials. In seeking a viable path through these contradictory demands, the state and political institutions will remain key domestic actors.

The State: From Overcommitted to Underengaged or Reconstituted?

The "crisis of the state" visible in most of these South American countries over the 1980s and early 1990s was an uneven combination of several factors. One was associated with fiscal crisis linked to debt, the collapse of the old import-substitution industrialization model, and the need to respond to the challenges of the new global economy. Another factor has been the inability to provide the basic functions of order, security, and justice. A third has been the question of greater access to the state by individuals in the context of the other two crises, usually combining aspects of state decentralization with democratizing and decentralizing reforms. As governments in several countries reasserted control over economies in sharp decline and reestablished a minimal sense of political order, state capacities also began to increase in certain, albeit still limited, respects. Indeed, although disputes still range about the appropriate scope of state action, there is now widespread recognition that a viable, reconstructed state is essential not only for democracy but for sustaining a healthy economy as well. As Joan Nelson has cogently argued, the market-oriented agenda of reforms, by itself, lacks a plan for strengthening the state that disintegrated under the weight of past policies and economic processes, and such a plan is crucial for both the market economy and political democracy.²⁴

Variations among countries in state coherence and the rule of law are correlated with democracy, though not reducible to it. The link between

these issues and the quality of democracy is drawn concisely in the *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993*:

Periodic elections and transfers of power have not automatically led to an improvement in the quality of democracy experienced on a daily basis by the majority of citizens. Impunity for serious human rights violations committed by state agents is still appallingly pervasive; for the most part, military and police forces are accountable to courts and to civilian authorities on paper only. The courts fail miserably in providing citizens with a fair and impartial forum for the resolution of private disputes, and even more miserably in protecting them from abuse at the hands of the state, or in redressing those abuses.²⁵

Not surprisingly, where historical legacies of state coherence are present and where conjunctural socioeconomic or Hobbesian state crises have not taken place, democracy has had greater chance of success. Comparative review suggests that it is a more difficult task for a democratic regime to build a state than it is for such a regime to transform an existing, functioning, even if authoritarian, state in a more democratic direction. The Chilean democratic regime is almost certainly better off with its state (with all of its authoritarian constraints) than is the Colombian regime with its weak state. Countries such as Spain and Portugal had lean but powerful and activist state apparatuses (not only in terms of bureaucracies but also in terms of penetration) before they were democratic, and that helps explain their democratic evolution, including the extension of citizenship.

The two major immediate causes of diminished state coherence in the region have been economic crisis on the one hand, and drug trafficking and guerrilla violence on the other. Where stabilization and adjustment have been both delayed and chaotic, the extent of state destruction has been considerable. It further weakened the ability of states to deliver basic services, collect taxes, and retain personnel with the necessary skills and morale, although the level of the crisis appeared most severe in Peru. As Guillermo O'Donnell and others have suggested, after complex fits and starts, effective stabilization and restructuring emerged as viable only when the crisis appeared to have reached "the very bottom" (his examples were Chile under Pinochet, Bolivia under Paz Estenssoro, and Argentina under Menem).²⁶ This also helps to explain the initial successes of Fujimori in Peru, as well as the failure of Carlos Andres Perez and the initial reluctance of Rafael Caldera to institute market-oriented economic reforms in Venezuela. Perez sought economic reforms in an autocratic fashion as his Argentine and Peruvian counterparts, but in a context of less severe crisis in which the population largely blamed the international system

and corrupt politicians for the severity of the crisis.²⁷ Severe economic crisis has also tended to exacerbate issues related to the judiciary, the rule of law, and protection from crime as well as from arbitrary treatment by state officials, leading to the growing "privatization" of security for those who can afford it. This secular decline in the functioning of the state, on top of more dramatic state failures, has clearly impaired democracy.

Many authors have emphasized that initiating market-oriented reforms, especially in a context of severe crisis, usually requires concentrated executive authority, whereas sustaining, deepening, and consolidating them may well require a broader, more accountable, and more institutionalized political process. However, no Latin American country has yet successfully to achieve both consolidated market-oriented reforms and democracy, and the powers granted to executives to address state crises have made movement to more institutionalized practices difficult. The first two kinds of state crises (socioeconomic and related to the rule of law) have been linked in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and even Venezuela, weakening the state and encouraging a kind of plebiscitarian, neopatrimonial, "delegative democracy" (in contrast to representative-institutional democracy), as O'Donnell has highlighted.²⁸ As he notes, a perverse cycle was generated in which the fiscal crisis of the state and privatization led to decreased state autonomy, to corruption, fragmentation, and colonization of the state, helping in turn to feed the disaggregation and disorganization of society. Indeed, although privatization should reduce patronage and opportunities for corruption, in the short term, decisions both about who will purchase the state assets and how the revenues generated by them will be spent have actually fed these processes in several countries. Argentina and Peru in the mid-1990s, where incumbent presidents Menem and Fujimori were reelected, highlight how voters may well reward leaders who put a stop to economic decline, restoring order and the functioning of at least parts of the state. Those leaders, in turn, ably manipulated the fear of a return to chaos to achieve reelection, blocking more institutional processes from proceeding, at least in the short term, processes that appeared necessary both for economic reforms to proceed and for democracy to strengthen and consolidate.

In this context, Colombia stands out as quite anomalous in comparison to the other six countries, because a series of substantial market oriented economic reforms were enacted in the absence of an economic or foreign exchange crisis. This anomaly is in part explained by a previous anomaly: Rather than an "over committed state" or a "state-centric matrix," as in most of the other countries considered here (although in the case of Peru only after the Velasco reforms, if then), in Colombia the

state has always been quite weak, and many significant social and economic processes were not processed through it. At the same time, Colombia's economic policy had been marked by moderation and prudence for many decades, which had permitted it to avoid the heavy indebtedness and the severe stabilization programs that afflicted so many of its neighbors. Colombia has undertaken a surprising amount of restructuring with a weak state. It is easier to restructure if there is "less distance to go" in terms of moving to market-oriented practices, and if the strength of societal actors favoring it is high (financial conglomerates are heavily diversified, and many have strong export-oriented interests). It was also true that in spite of the fact that the Colombian state underwent a severe decline, important sectors of the economic policymaking bureaucracy retained both high technical competence and high morale.²⁹

Colombia, however, symbolizes a second kind of challenge to state coherence and to the rule of law, one generated by guerrilla violence and by the reaction and counter reaction to state efforts to control drug trafficking, which led to a spiral of incredible violence and to the collapse of the country's judicial apparatus. Even as one set of reforms has been oriented toward moving the country away from the straitjacket of coalition rule, another set of efforts has been directed at enabling the state to carry out some of its most basic, sovereign functions.³⁰

Not surprisingly, where there is a confluence of both kinds of state crises--economic and "Hobbesian"--the risk to the state and to the regime is even greater. Considering Peru in 1980, one would have never imagined the set of circumstances that would come together so tragically as to induce the spiral of decline that the country entered into. At the same time, democratic breakdown in 1992 did not lead to a full-blown authoritarian regime but to the establishment of a hybrid authoritarian democratic neopatrimonial regime dominated by Fujimori. Fujimori has been able to control inflation, resume growth, and reduce terrorist violence; he sustained his popularity (since eroded) through the use of resources generated by privatization and other state revenues, among other tactics. The state that is emerging from the earlier chaos is not necessarily democratic or eager to extend the rule of law; rather, it is leaner and more efficient but also more centralized and militarized.³¹

Thus, in many countries the processes both of economic crisis and of stabilization and adjustment critically weakened Latin American state capacities while often concentrating government power in the hands of the president. Even now, as countries such as Argentina and Peru have moved beyond the worst moments of crisis and state capacities are reemerging in such areas as revenue collection and the ability to maintain order, key issues remain with regard to state linkages to citizens in ways

that matter not only for their economic well-being but also for citizenship and democracy. In this regard, the Freedom House indicators are tragically eloquent in highlighting the decline in respect for civil rights from 1987 to 1994 in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. The immediate causes for the decline in the indicators reflect some common themes around issues such as the politicization, corruption, or manipulation of the judiciary, media intimidation, or abuse of executive authority. In Brazil, Peru, and especially Colombia, overall levels of violence and the inability to control abuses by state agents are also important.

The collapse of the "overcommitted" state threatens an "underengaged" state because of a combination of lack of vision, resources, and human capacity. The rule of law does not require democracy, though it may well facilitate democracy, just as democratic regimes not only require a functioning rule of law in order to become consolidated but also seek to deepen and extend it. In Latin America in the mid-1990s, degree of stateness and of extension of the rule of law and the extent to which the criteria of political democracy are satisfied were most clearly correlated positively in the cases of Uruguay and Chile and were in a joint if uneven process of decline in Venezuela and Colombia. In Colombia, there has been a remarkable (but declining) divergence between its seemingly stable political and party patterns and the weakness of state institutions and the rule of law in the face of powerful, undemocratic social actors and uncontrolled elements within the state. Argentina and especially Brazil showed more divergence between a greater respect for political rights and a growing absence of the rule of law. The Peruvian case provided an example of a state emerging from chaos that would not necessarily reconstitute itself as democratic or be eager to extend the rule of law (beyond seeking to enhance contract enforcement and property rights).

Political Institutions: Compromise or Polarization? Inclusion, Marginalization, or Alienation?

International and state factors are clearly relevant in explaining the convergences and diversities throughout Latin America and in the experiences of the seven South American countries. As important as these issues are to the stability and the quality of democracy in those countries, political parties and political institutions and their changing roles and impact also have their own independent effect.

There is an inevitable tension between governability--which seeks to maximize consensus and efficient decision making--and democracy--whose exercise involves the expression of multiple interests and conflict. In this context, two kinds of arguments can be highlighted. One is that a

key way 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. The contrast cited above between Chile and Uruguay on the one hand (whose democratic transitions led to "representative-institutional democracy") and Argentina, Brazil, and Peru on the other (which became instead examples of "delegative democracy") has already anticipated a historical argument about the deep roots and central importance of political institutions and the difficulty of building them in a context of crisis. The recent Latin American experience suggests that countries can sustain party systems in the context of crisis but that it is difficult to forge one, though Venezuela is a partial exception to the first of these generalizations and Argentina appeared to be a partial exception to the second one until the most recent set of elections highlighted growing party fragmentation.

A stable party system may be said to exist where a country's major parties are institutionalized; adopt a coherent but not necessarily unchanging position vis-à-vis the state and society; effectively incorporate all relevant groups in society, including economically dominant groups, employing a mix of ideological, programmatic, and clientelistic appeals; and where the interactions between or among those parties occur with an expected regularity and with electoral strengths within more or less understood parameters. Parties that rely purely on ideological or programmatic appeals may encourage an excessive sectarianism and polarization in society (for example, Chile in the early 1970s). Those that rely almost exclusively on clientelism or specific material or instrumental benefits may ultimately breed excessive corruption and cynicism about the political process, encouraging some social groups increasingly to employ means outside of electoral channels to express their political demands while alienating others (for example, Colombia from the late 1970s). Parties that appear too undifferentiated and too undemocratically centralized in their leadership patterns may also generate significant discontent (such as Venezuela from the mid-1980s).

A second argument is that the dilemma of governability vs. democracy is more difficult to resolve in Latin America in a manner favorable to democracy because of presidentialism. The historical experience of these seven countries also suggests that in presidential systems democracy is much more likely to be successful where such a stable party system revolves around two or two and one-half parties. Chile is a partial exception.³² Conversely, those countries with shifting party loyalties, inchoate party systems, and greater electoral volatility are less likely to be on the road toward democratic consolidation. It is not surprising to witness in a context of severe crisis and vast changes that the expression of

demands and frustrations is channeled through new parties and movements, especially in countries with two parties (particularly Venezuela, and to a lesser extent Uruguay; Colombia again is a partial exception). But, to the extent that more parties emerge, it becomes more difficult to achieve consensus and for the executive and the legislature to agree on policy. When presidentialism and multipartyism are combined, as Scott Mainwaring notes, the "desire of elites and citizens to compromise and create enduring democratic institutions" become the central pillar of support for democratic stability; it would be better if institutional mechanisms could reinforce those desires.³³

It is in situations in which a society's multiple interests are represented by a large number of parties, particularly where those parties are strongly ideological, that a parliamentary system would appear to be of particular assistance in potentially mitigating explosive political conflict. In presidential systems, cohesiveness and centripetal competition are much more likely to occur in a two-party system. However, those two parties are more likely to be of the "catch-all" nature; they may rely more strongly on clientelist and brokerage claims, and they may tend to collude with each other in excluding other parties and interests while either becoming excessively centralized (as in the case of Venezuela) or factionalized and incoherent (as in the case of Colombia). In this context, seeming stability at the electoral level may well disguise the fact that parties are not adequately representing societal interests, and conflict is likely to express itself through other, often violent, means. Societies with potentially explosive conflicts may well be better off having them expressed in the political arena through a multiplicity of parties than through what may be perceived as an extremely constrained two-party system. In that case, a parliamentary system would be preferable to presidentialism because it has more incentives and mechanisms with which to encourage coalition building and compromise.

Comparisons of historical experiences with party systems to contemporary circumstances suggest both the ability of consolidated party systems and parties to adapt (though as everywhere around the globe, with difficulty) to new economic challenges, social demands, and campaign technologies and the difficulty of constructing strong party systems where none previously existed. Thus, as we might expect based on past patterns of strong party institutionalization, Uruguay and Chile appear consolidated-democratically in the case of Uruguay, semidemocratically in the case of Chile. In the two countries, "political learning" and moderation by strong, coherent party actors appear to be important factors in explaining these patterns, though both also possess problematic, political-institutional arrangements. Brazil and Peru are the two countries in this

group with the weakest parties and party systems, and both have significant contemporary problems with regard to democratic consolidation. However, Peru in 1997 is weaker in terms of its parties and party system than expected from historical projections, whereas Brazil may finally be emerging from a dramatic period of party instability. Argentina remains approximately in the intermediate position it was in historically, though in part because of contradictory trends--on the one hand, the country's "stalemated" party system has ended with the dramatic changes in the Peronist party, but, on the other hand, in the mid-1990s the country moved away from consolidating a stable two-party system.³⁴

Venezuela presents the most apparent anomaly. In a context of decentralizing, democratizing reforms and economic crisis, Venezuela underwent a process of partial democratic deconsolidation, punctuated by two failed coup attempts in February and November of 1992 and the forced resignation of President Carlos Andres Perez in May 1993. That was followed by apparently "realigning" elections in December 1993 and a fragmentation of its two-party system (which appeared beginning in the 1973 elections). Colombia remains a difficult case to categorize because surprising party continuity (eroded in part by party factionalism leading to new parties in some cases) has been juxtaposed with serious challenges to its state institutions, continuing human rights violations, and the absence of the rule of law. At the same time, in spite of a weak state presence, Colombia cannot be categorized as a delegative democracy, and there have been democratizing reforms and processes (particularly following enactment of the 1991 constitution).

The extent of the link between historical patterns and contemporary outcomes may be partially illustrated by a review of electoral volatility rates (changes in shares of votes by parties from one election to another) in these seven countries. As Michael Coppedge argues, changes in party vote shares may be viewed as desirable if they reflect the "gains and losses of parties engaged in healthy competition for the loyalty of the voters." They may be undesirable if they reflect more the "proscription of parties, boycotting of elections, the splintering of political parties, fragmentation of the party system, and the lack of consolidation of the regime."³⁵ One simplistic hypothesis would be that as a consequence of the debt crisis and economic restructuring, one would expect substantially greater volatility in the region over this past decade than previously. However, Coppedge's analysis of legislative elections in eleven Latin American countries over the twentieth century highlights how problematic that argument is. This is because Coppedge found that average volatility per decade in the region has changed only slightly from one decade to another from the 1930s to the 1980s. Furthermore, as has been widely be-

lieved, he confirms that electoral volatility in Latin America, on average, has been much greater than in Europe and that much of it is due to the "undesirable" features of changes in vote shares more problematic for democratic consolidation. Of the countries of interest here, Uruguay and Colombia had low levels of electoral volatility, similar to those of European countries. Venezuela had volatility rates close to the Latin American average. Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and (to a lesser extent) Chile had extremely high average volatility indices, far above the Latin American average.

More recent trends in electoral volatility in the region point to the mix of continuity and change across the seven countries (see Table 4). Data in the table indicate a continuation of past historical patterns of low volatility in Uruguay, but a decrease in volatility in Chile (overstated in the table because the calculation is based on seat allocation and not votes). Colombia and especially Venezuela show an increase in volatility.³⁶ Peru shows continuity in the fact that elections continue to be marked by remarkably high levels of volatility (the highest of the seven countries), whereas Brazil showed first a pattern of somewhat higher than expected volatility and then a decline to levels of volatility that were still high. Argentina has the most irregular pattern, showing first a relative decline and then an increase in volatility with the emergence of the Frente Grande as a new opposition voice, as disgruntled voters increasingly turned away from the Radicals.

In turn, each country faces certain risks because of the mix of political-institutional arrangements it possesses. Uruguay may well have consolidated its democracy, as Linz and Stepan argue. Yet, as they also insist, Uruguay remains "risk-prone" to breakdown because of a combination of continuing economic malaise, lack of democratic control over the armed forces, and what Gonzalez and Gillespie call "the potential for a politico-institutional stalemate [that] keeps pace with the increasing fragmentation of the party system."³⁷ The country's party system was almost equally divided into thirds in the past election, and it might well have fragmented more if not for the apparent party loyalty of older voters and the relatively old age profile of the population (in Colombia, the most analogous case to Uruguay, extremely high abstention rates especially among the young may serve as a functionally alternative prop to the traditional party system). There is evidence of "political learning" about the value of democracy among political actors across the political spectrum. In the short term or even the medium term, given moderate, prudent leadership, especially in the presidency, there is no necessary reason to forecast a breakdown, especially in the current international conjuncture. Yet, the continuation of presidentialism, fractionalization of the major parties,

Table 4. Recent Trends in Electoral Volatility: Selected Latin American Countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Elections</i>	<i>Volatility Index</i>
Argentina	1983-85	19.1
	1985-87	23.8
	1987-89	9.7
	1989-91	16.5
	1991-93	10.9
	1993-95	28.5
Brazil	1986-90	38.6
	1990-94	19.9
Chile	1989-93	12.1
Colombia	1982-86	12.0
	1986-90	11.4
	1990-91	21.9
	1991-94	18.0
Peru	1980-85	50.0
	1985-90	51.6
	1990-95	55.3
Uruguay	1984-89	13.4
	1989-94	13.1
Venezuela	1978-83	11.6
	1983-88	6.9
	1988-93	42.3

Sources: Dieter Nohlen, ed., *Enciclopedia Electoral Latinoamericana y del Caribe* (San José, Costa Rica: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 1993); Scott Mainwaring, "Parties, Electoral Volatility, and Democratization: Brazil since 1982" (Paper presented to the nineteenth International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, DC, September 1995); Claudio Fuentes, personal communication; Gary Hoskin, "The State and Political Parties in Colombia," ms. dated April 1995; Michael Coppedge, personal communication; Luigi Manzetti, personal communication. The research assistance of Eduardo Feldman in calculating the indices is gratefully acknowledged.

Argentina: 1993 based on incomplete, unofficial results, 1995 based on results for presidential election; Brazil: based on seats, not votes; Chile: based on seats, not votes; Colombia: Conservative and Liberal factions each treated as one party; Venezuela: 1993 based on results for the presidential elections. Results based on presidential elections tend to increase volatility rates somewhat.

Volatility index: $V = 1/2 \sum |P_{i,t} - P_{i,t-1}|$, where $P_{i,t}$ is the percentage of the vote won by party i at time t and $P_{i,t-1}$ is the percentage of the vote won by party i at the time $t-1$, the previous election. This difference is calculated for all parties, added together, and divided by half. V ranges from 0 to 100, and may be viewed as the percentage of the national vote that is gained or lost in the aggregate by all parties from one election to the next. See Michael Coppedge, "(De)institutionalization of Latin American Party Systems" (Paper presented to the convention of the Latin American Studies Association, Los Angeles, September 1992).

and the fragmentation of the party system with the continuing emergence of the Frente Amplio is a recipe for legislative impasse and short-lived policy coalitions (electoral reforms that might mitigate these possible negative outcomes were approved in December 1996).

Chile also reflects elements of continuity and change. At one level, there is an apparent continuity of electorates and parties in the Right, Center, and Left. Yet both the structural and constitutional context of the 1990s is completely different from that of the 1960s and 1970s, even as many of the parties of the center and center-left have revalorized political democracy and accepted the economic model, in the context of a constrained transition and a fear of authoritarian reversal. With a strong ideological Right, a military with high prerogatives, continued constitutional constraints on full democracy, and a society that is both organizationally weaker and more fragmented, a new model of party-society relations is emerging.³⁸ If previously the risk in Chile was one of an excessive ideologization and polarization of politics, it was also the case that, for many, political activism was "ethically guided." Now there is a danger of going to the other extreme: having a politics that seeks to avoid conflict as it is more pragmatic, more consensual, and less confrontational--but at the risk of ignoring larger questions about how to improve society and replacing broader ethical concerns and goals for societal change with pure personal interest and the potential for corruption.³⁹ Thus, the politicoinstitutional context remains problematic, but to date the broad consensus on policy goals and the strength of the consociational *Concertacion* pact has facilitated governance; the problem of presidentialism and multipartism has been "solved" by means of an overarching pact between the Center and the Left. Yet, it is unlikely that the alliance can be long term, or that it should be. In that case, the extraordinarily strong presidency inherited from the Pinochet constitution may become problematic from the perspective of deepening democracy in the country. And political institutions may serve more to foster alienation than compromise.

As already noted, in terms of the style of democratic institutionality, Brazil, Peru, and Argentina have provided the greatest contrast to the cases of Uruguay and Chile; in those three countries, political institutions have often been marginalized, short circuited by direct, plebiscitary appeals and executive decrees. The neopatrimonial features of these countries' current regimes were clearly facilitated by the absence of structured parties and party systems interacting with socioeconomic and state crises. Further highlighting the role of short-term political maneuvering over long-term institutionality (and building upon numerous past precedents in the region, but this time with the added element of majority support),

in Peru and Argentina popular incumbent presidents arranged constitutional reforms permitting immediate (and thus their own) presidential reelections. Thus, the most recent round of presidential elections in these three countries highlights how voters rewarded economic stability, voting for continuismo (indirectly in Brazil and directly in the other two cases), albeit in conditions strongly manipulated by the governing parties.⁴⁰ The preceding crisis-ridden terms of Collor in Brazil and Fujimori in Peru both starkly illustrated the problems of presidentialism in weak, fragmented, multiparty systems--including executive-legislative impasse and plebiscitarian and authoritarian actions by the president. In the other five countries, it is almost (but after Italy, only almost) unimaginable to have an extra-party or very weak party figure elected president (such as a Fujimori or a Collor). In Brazil and Peru, having a president elected in a second round rather than in the congress (as in Bolivia) may also have enhanced the president's plebiscitarian role and decreased effective coalition building with the congress. In Brazil in 1989, for example, Collor's party received 5 of 81 seats in the senate and 41 of 502 seats in the chamber, while he received 30 percent of the popular vote in the first-round presidential election and 53 percent in the second round. Cardoso won a convincing 54 percent of the vote in the first round and sought to build a broad-based coalition that would provide him with majority support in congress. To what extent political leadership can effectively shift a country down a more institutional road in the face of contrary incentives is currently being put to the test in Brazil. In Peru in 1990, Fujimori's party received only 17 percent of the vote for chamber seats, and he was elected president only in a second-round election by a deceptively high vote of 62.5 percent. Five years later, Fujimori won a sweeping electoral victory in the first round (64 percent) and his party and movement also carried legislative elections providing him with solid legislative support for his second term (67 of 120 seats). Just as dramatically, the four dominant parties of the 1980s (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance [APRA], Accion Popular, Popular Cristiano, and Izquierda Unida) combined received only seventeen seats in the new congress.⁴¹ Fujimori's openly antagonistic attitude toward parties and political institutions does not bode well for the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Argentina has witnessed many critical changes. To highlight one, business groups that previously "vetoed" the Peronists now trust them, whereas they largely distrust the military that previously helped them to block the Peronists from coming to power. And, as in Uruguay and Venezuela, a new party has emerged protesting neoliberalism and the corruption of the governing neopopulist leaders. Unlike Brazil under Collor or

Peru under Fujimori prior to 1992, though, the neopatrimonial features of Argentina under Menem were not the result of lack of support for the president in the congress (which is one factor helping to explain the different fates of Collor and Menem).

These neopatrimonial delegative democracies have illustrated a surprising, if fragile, affinity between neopopulism and neoliberalism.⁴² Although neoliberal technocrats have had a different core constituency than neopopulists, they also seek bases of support within the urban informal sector and the rural poor from among those who had been largely excluded from the previous economic model. In addition to surprisingly sharing an overlapping social base of support, these types of policymakers and politicians both prefer policy to be enacted by authoritative executives from above--thus, neopatrimonialism and economic reform by centralized, decree-making overlap. To the extent that neoliberal policies lower inflation and enact programs to alleviate poverty, neopopulists may retain a popular base of support. Ultimately, however, the neoliberal goal of rules set either by a free market or neutral procedures (and with a bias toward internationally competitive firms) may clash with neopopulist efforts to retain discretionary power, patronage, and clientelism. Only in the context of more institutionalized party systems would this tension appear more likely to be resolved, which brings us back to our starting point, the weakness of party systems in these countries.

Is the type of delegative democracy more or less represented by these three countries, then, one that can endure (O'Donnell), or are these more "transition phenomena" (Cavarrozi)?⁴³ The bundle of neopatrimonial attributes this concept captures is found in countries that either had similar regimes in the past or that had little or no prior democratic experience; they are also countries that had weak party systems (though maybe a strong party) in a presidentialist context. For these countries, the confluence of state and socioeconomic crises reinforced these historical attributes. Alfonsín, for example, may have been capable of taking significant steps toward promoting greater institutionalization of politics in Argentina if socioeconomic crisis and hegemonic aspirations had not helped to undo his presidency. Yet, we now see that "second-wave" neopopulists are more accepting of the constraints imposed by the international system. The overlap of social bases and desired strategies of neoliberalism and neopopulism have led to surprising affinities between the two and to personal successes for leaders such as Menem and Fujimori, although it is doubtful they will be able to sustain their popularity over time. Nevertheless, the ability of Menem and Fujimori to sustain their grip on power suggests that this type of politics may survive beyond a simple "transition" period,

although in some cases only after "corrections" such as Fujimori's *auto-golpe*. Yet inherent contradictions would appear to preclude democratic consolidation without profound modifications.

Of the seven countries we have been discussing, Venezuela and Colombia are the two that appeared on the surface to have the best fit between presidentialism and a two-party system. Their differing kinds of parties and electoral systems, however, combined with socioeconomic and state problems previously indicated to impact significantly on the quality of their democracies. The Colombian party system has factionalized, incoherent, "irresponsible" parties with weak penetration of civil society; as the crisis unfolding since President Ernesto Samper's inauguration surrounding the role of illegal campaign contributions by drug traffickers illustrates, the problem is more the ability of societal groups--many of them undemocratic--to penetrate the parties. Yet, Colombia has avoided becoming a "delegative democracy." Although one could not argue that Colombia's current problems of governability are directly due to presidentialism, the initial rigidity of its pacted transition in 1958 and of the power-sharing arrangement between the two major parties, which was so difficult to overcome, is associated with it. And, in the context of its democratizing 1991 constitution, if new parties do emerge to challenge the hegemony of the traditional parties, the dilemmas of presidentialism previously identified may more clearly affect the country.⁴⁴

The Venezuelan party system was very hierarchical, with strong penetration of organizations in civil society--a *partidocracia*. There is a clearer connection between the nature of the parties and their National Front agreement and subsequent crisis in Colombia than in Venezuela, where it seems more that a socioeconomic crisis following the end of a poorly planned and employed oil bonanza became a political crisis and then a military one. The election of Caldera in 1993 as a minority president at the head of a new party that broke away from the established Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI) party has raised for Venezuela issues previously discussed about the dilemmas of governability versus democracy, especially in the context of presidentialism in a multiparty system. The Caldera presidency will also be a clear test of whether having had an institutionalized party system precludes a turn to delegative democracy, or whether a context of sufficient socioeconomic and state crisis and of party fragmentation, regardless of historical legacies, is sufficient.⁴⁵

In the dilemma between governability and democracy, political institutions and parties are intended to serve as channelers of demands and forgers of compromise. Unlike what has occurred in several countries in

previous decades, political institutions today do not appear to be instruments of polarization in society. The greater risk in the 1990s is that they will be circumvented by plebiscitarian leaders or avoided by alienated voters, in either case potentially becoming irrelevant, at great cost to democracy. Although historical legacies matter, the role of political institutions and the possibilities for democratic consolidation in the region will be determined by responses to current challenges.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

If Broder's observations that began this paper are relevant for the United States, with due weight given to the significant differences in contexts, he has identified problems that are even more acute for Latin America. Individual countries in the region, while seeking to enhance international structural opportunities in a difficult context and to reconstruct the state, must also continue to find creative ways to strengthen the political institutions critical for generating consensus within democracy if they are to consolidate democracy. As we have seen, the ability of political institutions to do so in most countries is challenged not only by significant conjunctural factors but also by historical and institutional issues related to the "fit" across constitutional structures, party systems, and electoral codes.

From the above discussion of issues related to the international system, the state, and political institutions, one can draw ideal-type pessimistic and optimistic scenarios for the region. Pessimistic scenarios (though not the worst one could imagine) would be that forms of restricted, nonconsolidated democracies perdure--without institutionalization--as the international "legitimacy" of democracy remains unchallenged in the region and in the absence of domestic "threats" to the established order that would provoke military intervention or societal pressure for such an intervention. The international system would place severe constraints on economic policies and options, particularly with regard to redistribution (though not necessarily in terms of poverty alleviation). The state, battered by debt and fiscal crises and withering away under neoliberal reforms, becomes underengaged from a desperately needy society both in terms of ensuring a modicum of the rule of law and of promoting socioeconomic growth with equity. Parties and political institutions, instead of serving as arenas of discussion and of compromise, or even of presenting ideologically and ethically charged and potentially polarizing visions of society and of policies, instead become marginalized from the alienated, distrusting public as neopatrimonial rulers govern.

Optimistic scenarios, in turn, would see the current international circumstances as particularly propitious not only for democracy, but also for market-oriented reforms and for advances in regional integration throughout the continent. Emerging from the traumatic process of economic restructuring will be a state that may be smaller in size and more modest in its goals and its reach, but more efficient and more capable in what it does do, which includes meting out justice, implementing targeted programs of poverty alleviation, as well as instituting ambitious programs in education and in health. And, although many issues are no longer channeled through the state or processed by political means, political parties and institutions reemerge as important forums for debate, discussion, and compromise, responding to an invigorated civil society.

Countries are unlikely to fit neatly into either ideal type; none is likely to approximate the rosy scenario, though the diversity of national experiences is likely to lead countries to array across the spectrum, even if the most likely apparent outcome is that a larger number of them cluster toward the more pessimistic scenario.

Notes

1. David S. Broder, "Can We Govern?" *The Washington Post*, January 31/February 6, 1994, National Weekly Edition.

2. See Marcelo Cavarozzi, "Beyond Transitions to Democracy in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, no. 3 (October 1992): 665-84. 3. There are numerous examples. For an analysis of the rubber tappers in Brazil, see Margaret Keck, "Social Equity and Environmental Politics in Brazil: Lessons from the Rubber Tappers of Acre," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (July 1995): 409-24. For how Ecuadorian indigenous groups, with the assistance of international NGOs, are pressing a lawsuit against a petroleum transnational enterprise in the United States, see Glenn Switkes, "Ecuador: The People vs. Texaco," *NACLA-Report on the Americas* 28, no. 2 (September-October 1994): 6-10.

4. These themes are nicely highlighted in Manuel Antonio Garretón M., *La faz sumergida del iceberg: Estudios sobre la transformación cultural* (Santiago: CESOCLOM, 1993), esp. 7-12.

5. Laurence Whitehead, "Generalidad y particularismo de los procesos de transición democrática en América Latina," *Pensamiento Iberoamericano* 14 (July-December 1988): 309.

6. For an analysis that emphasizes that international influence is not a constant and that the international environment was far more economically permissive in the 1970s, see Barbara Stallings, "International Influence on Economic Policy: Debt, Stabilization, and Structural Reform," in *The Politics of Economic Adjustment*, ed. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Politically, of course, the 1970s in South America were marked by various kinds of military regimes, with the exceptions of Colombia and Venezuela.

7. A third, the quality of political leadership, will largely not be dealt with here, but I also concur that it is an important and sometimes overlooked factor. 8. Substantial changes have taken place in the social structures of Latin American countries and in the forms and types of organization of social groups. Similarly, there are important differences in the evolution of civil-military relations across countries. A more complete analysis would incorporate a direct analysis of these issues as well.

9. For a historical review of these countries (and of Costa Rica), see Jonathan Hartlyn and Arturo Valenzuela, "Democracy in Latin America since 1930," in *Cambridge History of Latin America*, Volume VI, Part II, ed. Leslie Bethell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99-162.

10. The debt to Robert Dahl's influential work for the first and third points in this characterization of democracy is obvious. See Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). The definition of democracy that emphasizes the importance of competition for political leadership as a critical element stems from Joseph A. Schumpeter's pioneering work, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1942).

These four paragraphs are taken from Hartlyn and Valenzuela, "Democracy in Latin America," 100-101. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.

11. For a review and analysis of these elections, see Rodolfo Cerdas-Cruz et al., eds., *Una tarea inconclusa: Elecciones y democracia en America Latina, 1988-1991* (San Jose: IIDH-CAPEL, 1992).

12. Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America: Degrees, Illusions, and Directions for Consolidation," prepared for the Inter-American Dialogue, November 1993 (draft), for data on 1972 and 1980. For 1992 and subsequent data, see Freedom House Survey Team, *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1993-1994* (New York: Freedom House, 1994), 8. 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.

13. Ibid. Countries whose combined scores on the political rights and civil liberties scales fall between 6 and 11 are ranked "partly free" by Freedom House.

14. As Pilar Gaitan notes, this unprecedented process of political transformation in the country (unprecedented because of the origin and nature of the political and social actors that played important roles and the democratizing goals and intentions) was neither a democratic foundation, nor a democratic restoration, nor was it based on a *ruptura*. See "Algunas consideraciones acerca del debate sobre la democracia. Los partidos frente a la crisis política: El caso colombiano," unpublished manuscript, Bogota, February 1994, 5-7.

15. For a critical review, see Coletta Youngers, "After the *Auto-golpe*: Human Rights in Peru and the U.S. Response," Washington Office on Latin America, July 1994.

16. As Linz and Stepan argue, the situation in Southern Europe was different. Although Greece and Portugal had been NATO members as authoritarian regimes, in the 1980s NATO membership for them and for Spain facilitated missions and identities that enhanced military professionalism without involving intervention in domestic political or social processes. See Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 219-20.

17. For an interesting analysis of the historical roots of their embeddedness in constitutional texts in Latin America, see Brian Loveman, *The Constitution of Tyranny: Regimes of Exception in Spanish America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993).

18. See his "Democracy, Human Rights, and the Armed Forces," in *The United States and Latin America in the 1990s: Beyond the Cold War*, ed. Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz, and Augusto Varas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), esp. 201-3.

19. For a useful, critical discussion of the claims of both defenders and critics of neoliberalism, see Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 309-34, although it may underplay somewhat the role of international constraints on domestic policy choices. It is not simply that there might be international "punishment" and domestic capital flight for wrong domestic policy choices, but sometimes, as following both the debt crisis in 1982 and the peso debacle in December 1994, the "tequila effect" of investment withdrawals may occur simply for being in the wrong "region" of the world.

20. See Haggard and Kaufman, *Political Economy*, 311-12. In addition, for Portugal and Spain, entry into the European Common Market meant significant transfers of income rather than the outflows that marked much of Latin America from the onset of the debt crisis until the end of the 1980s; these European countries also never had to deal with the dramatic surges of inflow and then outflow of capital that followed for countries like Mexico and Argentina in the early 1990s.

21. CEPAL, *Panorama Social de America Latina* (Santiago: CEPAL, 1994), 13.

22. Kenneth Roberts, "Rethinking Economic Alternatives: Left Parties and the Articulation of Popular Demands in Chile and Peru" (Paper presented to the eighteenth International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Atlanta, March 1994), 14-15.

23. Carlos H. Acuiua and William C. Smith, "The Political Economy of Structural Adjustment," in *Latin American Political Economy in the Age of Neoliberal Reform*, ed. William C. Smith et al. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 19. I also agree with them when they argue subsequently that "divorcing politics from economics is also bad methodology" (p. 23), though in the end I might focus somewhat more on the political dynamics and institutions that they mention.

24. Joan Nelson, "How Market Reforms and Democratic Consolidation Affect Each Other," in *Intricate Links: Democratization and Market Reforms in Latin America and Eastern Europe*, ed. Joan Nelson (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 19-20. She also notes the need to develop agreement on the extent to which and the ways in which inequality generated by market processes will be mitigated. International financial institutions have begun to pay increased attention to issues of state rehabilitation.

25. Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Watch World Report* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992), 69, cited in Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America," unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, 24.

26. Guillermo O'Donnell, "The State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems (A Latin American View with Glances at Some Post-Communist Countries)," in Smith, ed., *Latin American Political Economy in the Age of Neoliberal Reform*, 175.

27. For an excellent, more comprehensive analysis, see Louis W. Goodman et al., eds., *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

28. For O'Donnell: "Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office. The president is taken to be the embodiment of the nation and the main custodian and definer of its interests." In "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (January 1994): 59-60.

29. For a more favorable review of Gaviria's economic liberalization measures, see Miguel Urrutia, "Colombia," in *The Political Economy of Policy Reform*, ed. John Williamson (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1994); for a more critical one, see Jose Antonio Ocampo, "Economia y Economia Polftica de la Reforma Comercial Colombiana," *Serie Reformas di Politica Publica No. 1* (Santiago: CEPAL, 1993).

30. For an extensive, excellent review of the nature of the "state crises" in Colombia and the efforts to respond to them, see Ana Marfa Bejarano, "Recuperar el estado para fortalecer la democracia: Alcances y limites de la reforma del estado en un contexto de crisis: El caso colombiano" (Paper presented to the convention of the Latin American Studies Association, March 1994).

31. See Bruce Kay, " 'Fujipopulism' and the Liberal State in Peru, 1990-1995," *Duke University of North Carolina Working Paper Series*, no. 19, December 1995.

32. In a two-party system, each of the parties would be expected to be able to win a presidential election, even if one of the parties usually gains presidential office. In a two and one-half party system, there would be a third party that receives some consistent percentage of the vote and maintains a minority presence in the legislature but that is not considered a significant contender for the presidency.

33. Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination," *Comparative Political Studies* 26, no. 2 (July 1993): 223. See also Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

34. For a useful analysis of the stalemated party system and the "impossible game" of party politics it generated in Argentina, see Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

35. Michael Coppedge, "(De) institutionalization of Latin American Party Systems" (Paper presented to the convention of the Latin American Studies Association, Los Angeles, September 1992), first quote from p. 1, second from p. 17.

36. They also show an increase in abstention rates. Colombia has always had high abstention rates (over 60 percent five times in elections for the chamber of deputies since 1958), but the estimated abstention of 67 percent in the 1994 legislative elections was the highest since 1958, followed by the 65 percent rate of the 1991 election. In Venezuela in 1993, the abstention rate was nearly 40 percent, a dramatic increase from past presidential year elections.

37. Luis Eduardo Gonzalez and Charles Guy Gillespie, "Presidentialism and Democratic Stability in Uruguay," in Linz and Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 247.

38. Mary Alice McCarthy, personal communication with author, Santiago, Chile, August 1995.

39. Garreton, *La faz sumergida del iceberg*, 7-12.

40. For a sympathetic view of Cardoso that still makes clear the active nature of government support for his campaign, see Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva,

"Plato in the Tropics: The Brazilian Republic of Guardians," *Current History* 94 (February 1995): 81-85; on Fujimori's abuse of incumbency and how other features of the new constitution gave him even further advantages, see David Scott Palmer, "Peru's 1995 Elections: A Second Look," and other articles in the same issue of *LASA Forum* 26 (Summer 1995): 17-20.

41. Fujimori's percentage appears more decisive than in fact it was because based on the new constitution it consisted of the valid vote only, excluding the 17 percent blank and spoiled ballots (as well as the 28 percent who abstained from voting); under 1995 election rules, Alan Garcia would have won with 69 percent of the vote in 1985, not the 46 percent he received. See Palmer, *Peru's Elections*, 19.

42. This paragraph is based on Kurt Weyland, "Neo-Populism and NeoLiberalism in Latin America: Unexpected Affinities" (Paper presented to the convention of the American Political Science Association, New York, September 1994).

43. See O'Donnell, "The State," 157-80; and Marcelo Cavarozzi, "Politics: A Key for the Long Term in South America," 127-55, in Smith, ed., *Latin American Political Economy*.

44. For a more extensive discussion of presidentialism in Colombia, see Jonathan Hartlyn, "Presidentialism and Colombian Politics," in Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 294-327.

45. At least one Venezuelan specialist has argued that Caldera's strengthening of the executive's power and weakening of the rule of law in the country mean that Venezuela has already become a "delegative democracy," even as he sees the emergence of a hybrid democratic-authoritarian regime in the country that could be long lasting. Although Caldera has found support from the antiPerez faction of Accion Democratica (AD) in congress--"the product of fear, of the realization that the democratic system is in real danger"--he has also simply overridden it by executive decree when necessary. See Anibal Romero, "'Rearranging the Deck Chairs on the Titanic': The Agony of Democracy in Venezuela" (Paper presented to the nineteenth International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, DC, September 1995), 22.