

DEMOCRATIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA

The Emergence of Institutional Forms of Participation

Leonardo Avritzer

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

The Dubious Link: Civic Engagement and Democratization. By Ariel C. Armony. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. 312. \$60.00 cloth.

Militants and Citizens: The Politics of Participatory Democracy in Porto Alegre. By Gianpaolo Baiocchi. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. Pp. 248. \$70.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

La disputa por la construcción democrática en América Latina. Edited by Evelina Dagnino, Alberto Olvera, and Aldo Panfizzi. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006. Pp. 536. Mex\$260 paper.

Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transition, and Mapuche Demands for Rights in Chile. By Diane Haughney. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. Pp. 320. \$59.95 cloth.

Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America. Edited by Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Pp. 351. \$65.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper.

Latin American Social Movements: Globalization, Democratization, and Transnational Networks. Edited by Hank Johnston and Paul Almeida. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. Pp. 280. \$82.50 cloth, \$26.95 paper.

Democracy and Public Management Reform: Building the Republican State. By Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 336. €54.00 cloth.

Democracia y ciudadanía: Participación ciudadana y deliberación pública en gobiernos locales mexicanos. Edited by Andrew D. Selee and Leticia Santín del Río. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2006. Pp. 256.

Citizenship in Latin America. Edited by Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006. Pp. 329. \$55.00 cloth.

Debates on Latin American democratization entered a second phase at the moment when social scientists stopped to discuss the danger of a return to nondemocratic practices and accepted that the virtues as well as the problems of democracy in the region had to be approached on their own terms. Phenomena such as delegative democracy, informal institutions, and the impact of neoliberalism in the construction of democracy moved to the forefront of academic debate. A second crucial aspect marked the beginning of this second phase: an important change in perspective on the divide between civil society and the state. Authors working in this area stopped looking to the state as the embodiment of all vices and to civil society as the embodiment of virtue, and started to realize that the construction of democracy involves a much more complicated process of state and civil society collaboration. In addition, neoliberalism and a reduction of the size of the state in Latin America also brought additional elements to analyses of the construction of citizenship, state fragmentation, and the position occupied by social actors. Classical actors such as labor and state bureaucracy reduced their influence in the region's politics at the same time that historically marginalized actors such as blacks and Indians were considered anew. Thus, Latin America is today experiencing a process of democratic construction in which old certainties no longer work. This triple process of change in perspective is redefining important theoretical questions about the construction of democracy: What is civil society in the region and how does it interact with the state? How can citizenship be constructed beyond the classical paradigm of civil, political, and social rights? What is the role of informal institutions in the construction of democracy in the region? How can participation generate a new democratic paradigm? All the books reviewed here attempt to answer these questions and to put forth a new concept of democracy for the region.

The changing nature of democratization is the point of departure of five of these recent books: *La disputa por la construcción democrática en América Latina*; *Citizenship in Latin America*; *The Dubious Link: Civic Engagement and Democratization*; *Latin American Social Movements*; and *Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transitions and Mapuche Demands for Rights in Chile*. These books acknowledge that transitions to democracy are over, that elections take place regularly and that democratic consolidation does not adequately express the problems of constructing democracy in the region. Dagnino, Olvera, and Panfizzi argue for two new elements in the analysis of democracy: civil society heterogeneity and political dispute among different political projects (17). These two elements create a new way of dealing with democracy, in which we are invited to look into details of state and civil-society organization. Armony engages in a comparative study of associations in the United States, Weimar Germany, and Argentina to

argue that there are both democratic and nondemocratic associations in a democratic political order. Haughney sites the issue in a similar manner, stressing the tension between democratization and neoliberalism. As important as the democratic background in which the demand for indigenous rights in Chile took place is the tension between rights and economic interests in the new Chilean democracy. Tulchin and Ruthenburg summarize this issue in terms of citizenship construction. For them, democratization changes the lens through which democracy is analyzed. In the case of new Latin American democracies, citizenship—"the key component of meaningful democratic society" (4)—has not been sufficiently analyzed. Many of the authors in *Citizenship in Latin America* propose a framework for understanding the tension between rights and the state, or between rights and economic order. Disjunctive democracy, a concept proposed by James Holston, seems to be the best expression of the dispute over citizenship analyzed throughout the collection.¹ In this sense, we have a clear framework for a second phase of Latin American democratic debates: a framework in which tensions between civil society and the state, between neoliberalism and democracy, and between rights and democracy put themselves at the forefront of analysis of the construction of democracy in the region.

La disputa por la construcción democrática en América Latina is an important book for all those interested in democratization in Latin America and how it changed the configurations of state and civil society. The authors have several main arguments. First, that democratization led to a shift from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous concept of civil society. Until the transition to democracy was complete, civil society was considered a homogenous analytical category in opposition to the state. This analysis made sense in the overthrow of an authoritarian state but could not encompass the multiple ways in which a democratic civil society interacts with the state. Dagnino, Olvera, and Panfizzi express this change of critical perspective in proposing the heterogeneity of civil society, that is, the acknowledgement that some social actors are more democratic than others, and that social actors engage in different political projects. Second, the authors propose to analyze democracy in terms of the dispute over political projects. For them, there are three major projects in dispute today in Latin America: authoritarian, neoliberal, and participatory. The authoritarian project, the weakest of the three at this point, is characterized by not recognizing the legitimacy of civil society and by the de facto nullification of political rights (51). The neoliberal project is characterized by adapting both the state and civil society to the new moment of capital-

1. James Holston, "Citizenship in Disjunctive Democracies." In *Citizenship in Latin America*, edited by Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 83.

ist accumulation. And, last but not least, the participatory project is characterized by its concept of the radicalization of democracy through the incorporation of new forms of participatory and deliberative democracy (53–54). Dagnino, Olvera, and Panfacci provide us with a general framework to understand most of what is going on in the political field in Latin America: social movements, civil society associations, and changes in the pattern of state action can all be understood in terms of the double tension between the neoliberal and the participatory democratic projects. Most of the books reviewed in this essay can also be understood through this framework. The difference lies in the way most authors understand the role of social movements, civil-society associations, and informal institutions in this process.

Haughney's *Neoliberal Economics* can be analyzed together with Johnston and Almeida's *Latin American Social Movements*, insofar as both focus on neoliberalism as the key element in tension with democracy after the end of the transitions. Johnston and Almeida state that "with some exceptions the major mobilization campaigns witnessed in Latin America over the past decade have focused on economic issues" (6). They go on to state that the mobilization of social actors in the region has largely consisted of popular protests against neoliberal policies. They are right to claim the centrality of these issues, at least in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador. However, it is also important to show that many new forms of struggle in regard to identities have emerged in this process. Javier Auyero's chapter about new protests in Argentina sets the correct tone for this analysis in Johnston and Almeida's collection. For him, protests in Argentina express "de-proletarianization" and, even more, the pluralization of the country's moral politics, through which there is a redefinition of what is and is no longer legitimate. In this sense, although the protesters in Argentina are poor, and although economic policies have triggered many contentious situations, Auyero also provides a much broader redefinition of the morality of collective protests at the local level.

Haughney portrays this double face of social mobilizations in her analysis of the Mapuche people's struggle for rights in Chile, in which economic issues continue on the agenda but intertwine with new identity issues. She shows how the Mapuche have been struggling both to constitute an identity and to define this identity in terms of collective rights to their property. In regard to the first point of their agenda, there seems to be no great conflict between the *concertación* government and the Mapuche. Haughney explains that "the 1993 indigenous law [in Chile] recognized the cultural diversity within the Chilean nation" (7). However, when it came to the relationship among neoliberalism, economic modernization, and the Mapuche's right to collective property and the preservation of their land, a sharp conflict emerged between the *concertación* government and indigenous social movements. This conflict evolved around the

Bío-Bío dam projects of the country's electricity company ENDESA. These projects have been rejected by Mapuche social actors, by the World Bank, and by the state agency (Comisión Nacional por el Derecho a la Identidad, or the National Commission for the Right to Identity) created by the concertación to be in charge of the preservation of Indian land and culture. The response of the concertación government was to behead the agency, to look for loopholes in the law, and to go ahead with the projects (128–130). Based on Haughney's discussion, the Mapuche case seems to represent a pattern in the new Latin American democracies: there are today in Latin America innumerable advances in legislation on rights and citizenship. Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia have all broadened rights in both social and cultural terms in the aftermath of democratization. However, when rights collide with economic development and big business interests, the latter prevail.

The case analyzed previously poses one of the most important questions on the agenda of new Latin American democracies; namely, what is citizenship in Latin America today? The book by Tulchin and Ruthenburg aims to respond to this question. Its essays—by important scholars who have worked tirelessly on issues such as urban politics, associations, and political institutions—collectively argue that “the market cannot guarantee rights . . . without the firm disciplining hand of political authority” (44). In this, they share a common perspective with the three other books discussed previously. Many among *Citizenship in Latin America's* chapters engage in discussion on why political authority is too weak to enforce the rule of law and civil rights. James Holston calls this combination of electoral democracy and the systematic violation of civil rights “disjunctive democracy.”² His analysis may be extended to the social, associative, and cultural aspects of democracy. In certain cases, ethnic plurality is disrespected; in other cases, cultural plurality is not sufficiently strengthened. In the end, the result is the same: democratization in Latin America has increased participation and claims for rights. Many new dimensions of citizenship have been included, but we see throughout the region a clash between neoliberalism and strong political and economic interests on the one hand, and the attempt to enforce rights, citizenship, and participation on the other hand. This dispute over political projects is still under way and will determine the shape of new democracies in the region. To understand how it works, it is necessary to analyze what is occurring on the institutional side in the region.

The remaining four books in this review help us understand this institutional side of new Latin American democracies. These works—Baiocchi's

2. James Holston, “Citizenship in Disjunctive Democracies.” In *Citizenship in Latin America*, edited by Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 83.

Militants and Citizens, Selee and Santín's *Democracia y ciudadanía*, Helmke and Levitsky's *Informal Institutions and Democracy* and Bresser Pereira's *Democracy and Public Management Reform*—inaugurate new approaches to informal political institutions using a perspective best expressed by Helmke and Levitsky, who define informal institutions in a much broader way than does conventional literature as “socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels” (5). As Helmke and Levitsky explain, informal institutions can be of four kinds: complementary, competing, accommodating, or substitutive vis-à-vis other official institutions. The case studies provided by their contributors reveal the strong and weak points of this approach. Peter Siavelis throws light on how such institutions helped stabilize Chile after it returned to democracy with a weak congress, an extremely strong executive, and the fear that a return of the military could be triggered by conflicts in the political system (7). The informal institution devised to minimize the risk of such a return was the *partido transversal*, “a consistent group of leaders who defined themselves . . . as leaders of the *concertación* rather than leaders of their own parties” (45). Siavelis convincingly shows the need for this institution and the role that it played in keeping the new Chilean democracy stable in circumstances in which the *cuoteo*, the allotment of offices among coalition parties, could not have worked alone. Other case studies in the book, such as Scott Desposato's analysis of electoral markets for ideas and goods in Brazil, are less convincing. Desposato points to clientelism in Piauí and to its nonexistence in São Paulo, and concludes that “the Piauiense legislators should focus their effort on negotiating with the government deliverable goods and legislators in São Paulo should dedicate themselves to advance policy agendas” (63). The difference between these states is perhaps more subtle, with clientelist politicians in São Paulo being more reflexive and unwilling to reveal their practices to many researchers with whose agenda they are familiar. All those who know São Paulo's politics would consider the research agenda advocated by Desposato very unconvincing. Overall, this reviewer's feeling is that the focus on informal institutions has one advantage and one main flaw vis-à-vis the formal-institutions framework that it criticizes: the advantage is that it calls attention to the fact that not all formal processes (e.g., presidentialism, party fragmentation, and legislative-executive relations) exhaust the analysis of political systems; the disadvantage is that authors still focus on components of an elitist political system and often operate within the same framework that they seek to criticize. The informal-institutions approach should pay more attention to the many processes occurring at the level of civil society and social accountability, which are included in the definition of political institutions but have thus far not generated research examples.

Together, *Militants and Citizens*, *Democracia y ciudadanía*, and *Democracy and Public Management Reform* help us focus precisely on this interaction between civil society and new institutions, and thus to think about how to adapt Latin American political institutions to the new challenges of democracy. *Democracia y ciudadanía* poses this question, investigating the norms that currently help construct a participatory and deliberative concept of local government, with many articles on the attempts at innovation by local governments in Mexico. The article that best illustrates these attempts is Enrique Cabrero's essay on local deliberations and processes of participation. He distinguishes among these according to their intensity and rightly shows that most experiments in Mexico are low-intensity experiments. These are most often headed by the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) and most of the time involve consultation instead of deliberation. In only 12 percent of cases are there experiments in public deliberation. Thus, in Mexico one finds spaces for public deliberation that social or political actors have so far not fully taken over. These consultation experiments also point to a new pattern in new democracies, showing that it is necessary to change the public administration to bring civil society closer to government. Bresser Pereira similarly poses a fundamental question to all those interested in the transformations of the state brought about by democracy. He shows that the control-and-command administration that exists in most Latin American countries does not fit the new democratic times, and that public management reform helps place government under the supervision of politicians and civil society, an act without which the democratic drives for a new inclusive state would be lost.

All the books discussed to this point set into context the work that best expresses recent changes in democracy in Latin America, Baiocchi's *Militants and Citizens*. Baiocchi's point of departure is a concept of institutions similar to the definition of Helmke and Levitsky, in that he sees them as socially shared rules, both official and nonofficial. However, his book represents an important step forward by analyzing the emergence of a new political institution in Brazil: Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting. He shows that, in practice, institutions are made up not only of political actors but also of state and civil-society actors and practices. Patterned relationships among cultural, social, and political practices challenge old political configurations and create new political forms. By explaining Porto Alegre's experience in this way, Baiocchi helps us go beyond the framework of most of the books analyzed in this review. Democracy is not only the place of professional politicians or of informal institutions constituted by politicians but also a place in which patterned cultural relations between civil society and the state take place.

In the case of Porto Alegre, Baiocchi focuses on new routines that empower civil-society actors and make participation a regular element in

city politics. He shows how, from a tradition of more independent civil-society associations and grassroots political parties, there emerged a new way of making budgets in Porto Alegre. For Baiocchi, participatory budgeting should be understood as “part of an overall pattern of recognition of societal demands by the state, and of all the ways in which various segments of civil society . . . interact with the state (formal, informal settings, meetings, protests)” (19). Thus, empowered participation may become one of the results of a process with bottom-up participation. Baiocchi shows all the elements that become part of this new routine, from a new concept of state-civil society interaction, to a new concept of the public space, to a new way of doing politics. The result, he says, is a new political culture that expands the ways in which one can be a citizen (139). Thus, Baiocchi shows that democracy implies the construction of new institutions and the interaction between old and new ways of doing politics.

Baiocchi’s analysis of Porto Alegre helps us see how to go beyond old patterns of building institutions in new democracies. However, it also shows that Porto Alegre’s experiment cannot give a full answer to many of the issues raised in this review. Porto Alegre does not give an answer to the issue of de-proletarianization that Auyero raised in Johnston and Almeida’s book on Latin American social movements, because, at the same time that democracy thrived in the city’s neighborhoods, urban violence and unemployment were also on the rise. Porto Alegre’s experiment also does not give a good answer to the political integration of cultural minorities and majorities, as attempts to integrate Indians or gender issues into participatory budgeting in Brazil have also faced strong opposition from social and political actors. Perhaps the success as well as the limitations of Porto Alegre point toward the issues of the new agenda of democratic studies in Latin America, namely, how to integrate cultural minorities more fully into new (formal and informal) institutions and how to make collective forms of protest effective against economic change. These are the issues that seem to be in the background of the process of constructing democracy in Latin America. In the near future, both academics interested in democracy and social actors interested in deepening democracy will face these issues.