



POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN  
BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN CONE  
-A REVIEW ESSAY-

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reviews some recent analyses of political parties in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, noting that, for the first time ever, a substantial corpus of important works on this subject has emerged. The central theme is that parties have historically related to the state and civil society in markedly different ways in these four countries. Parties have been fundamental political actors in Chile and Uruguay, but have been less important in Argentina and Brazil. Because parties have not always been central actors in the Latin American political process, many accounts of politics in the region assumed that differences between parties and party systems were relatively unimportant. This paper argues, to the contrary, that parties and party systems are of fundamental importance in understanding the political processes of the four countries in question. The differences in the nature and function of parties help explain different patterns of authoritarian rule, as well as differences in the transitions to democracy and the dilemmas and opportunities facing the new democratic governments in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo reseña análisis recientes de los partidos políticos en Brasil, Argentina, Chile y Uruguay, señalando que, por primera vez, ha emergido un corpus sustancial de obras importantes sobre este tema. Su tema central indica que los partidos se han relacionado con el estado y la sociedad civil en formas marcadamente diferentes en estos cuatro países. Los partidos han sido actores políticos fundamentales en Chile y Uruguay, pero han tenido menos importancia en Argentina y Brasil. Como los partidos no han sido siempre actores centrales en el proceso político latinoamericano, muchos estudios sobre éste han asumido que las diferencias entre los partidos y los sistemas de partidos son relativamente poco importantes. Este ensayo argumenta, sin embargo, que los partidos y sus sistemas son de una importancia fundamental para entender los procesos políticos de los cuatro países en cuestión. Las diferencias en la naturaleza y función de los partidos ayudan a explicar las características diferentes de los regímenes autoritarios, las diferencias en las transiciones hacia la democracia, y los dilemas y oportunidades que confrontan los nuevos gobiernos democráticos en Argentina, Brasil y Uruguay.



From the late 1960s until recently, political parties received only secondary attention among scholars writing on Latin America. There were three main reasons for this neglect. First, strong executives and the weakness of most congresses led to a situation in which parties were generally overshadowed by the personality of a strong leader. Throughout Latin America a presidential system with a powerful executive prevailed. Except for Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay, parliaments were generally circumscribed in their powers and activities, thus weakening the primary arena where parties are prominent in debating the public agenda and in formulating policy. Parties were viewed as institutions of dubious importance in many countries. Partisan politics was often seen as involving squabbles over minor fiefdoms, fought more to assure individual power than to further the "national interest."<sup>1</sup> This pervasive discrediting of parties had as a side effect the delegitimation of scholarly work on parties.

Second, during the late 1960s and first half of the 1970s in the context of a "new" and often unprecedentedly harsh authoritarianism in many countries, the influence of parties was severely limited. The authoritarian regimes either banned or sharply limited partisan activity. Many party leaders were killed, imprisoned, or exiled, enervating the party opposition. Nowhere except in Brazil did parties and elections play any serious role in political life under authoritarian rule, and in Brazil this happened only after a decade of military rule. Thus, even more clearly than had been the case under democratic rule, parties were at most secondary political actors. For extended periods of time, the most important opposition actors (where there was any visible opposition) were the Catholic Church (especially in Brazil, Peru, and Chile) and an amalgam of social movements, rather than parties.

Finally, and related to the first two factors, this period witnessed the ascendancy of modes of analysis that gave little weight to political institutions--dependency analysis, class analysis, and political economy. Allowing for considerable heterogeneity of perspectives and of sophistication, there was a tendency to see parties primarily as representatives of different classes and class factions. Many intellectual currents even saw liberal democracy as a bourgeois façade for class domination. Even the more sophisticated accounts downplayed the importance of parties as political actors in their own right. Political analysis gravitated around the military regimes, the impact they had on civil society, and the internal tensions they faced.

Since the late 1970s, political and intellectual currents have changed, and parties have received more scholarly attention than ever in the past.<sup>2</sup> The most important contributing factor behind the renewed attention given to parties lies in the political process itself. A number of countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican

Republic, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay have undergone transitions to democracy.<sup>3</sup> During the transitions, parties once again became important actors, articulating many of the opposition's demands. As elections were called, parties regained their position as the primary means of political organization. Even where parties were weak, they served as channels of recruitment of the political elite.

In a liberal democratic system, parties are a privileged form of political representation, even though other forms are certainly available. Where parties are weak, channels of representation are usually underdeveloped, making difficult the representation of large sectors of society, especially the poor. With the return to democracy, Latin American intellectuals and politicians have been acutely aware of this fact, and consequently the nature of the parties and the party system has become a salient issue.

The current interest in parties also reflects changing intellectual tides in the region, and among Latin Americanists as well. The last wave of authoritarianism was so terrible (especially in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay) that intellectuals rethought the importance of liberal democratic institutions. Since the second half of the 1970s, the construction of liberal democracy has been viewed as a necessity, even among those who are dissatisfied with the inadequacies of liberal democratic institutions (Lamounier 1981; Pakenham 1986). Along with this valuing of democracy has come a new intellectual interest in the institutions that it comprises, including parties. Dependency theory, class analysis, and Marxism have entered into relative eclipse, while the analysis of political institutions has received more attention.

In this review essay, I discuss some of the most important recent contributions on political parties. The discussion is organized primarily according to country. This is not simply a convenient way of ordering a vast array of material. One of my fundamental arguments is that the roles of parties in the four countries differ in profound ways, notwithstanding the common proclivity to generalize about parties throughout Latin America as a whole. For example, the major Brazilian parties are exceptionally ideologically malleable, while Chilean parties have been marked by sharp ideological cleavages. Parties have been fundamental political actors in Chile and Uruguay; conversely, they have been relatively secondary actors in Argentina and Brazil. Because parties have not always been central actors in the political process, many accounts of Latin American politics assume that differences between parties and party systems are relatively unimportant. I argue, to the contrary, that the specific characters of parties and party systems are of fundamental importance in understanding the political processes of the four countries in question. The differences in the nature and functions of parties help

explain different patterns of authoritarian rule, as well as differences in the transitions to democracy and in the dilemmas and opportunities facing the new democratic governments in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. I return to this point later.

### Brazil

Nowhere in Latin America have parties been the subject of so much recent scholarly attention as in Brazil. This fact is startling when one considers the paucity of good research on parties until the mid-1970s, as well as the traditional role of parties in Brazil. Brazilian parties have historically been relatively secondary actors in the political system; they have not been leading actors in formulating policies, nor in articulating and representing different interests. Parties and even party systems have had ephemeral existences. None of the current parties with more than 4% of the congressional representatives (PMDB, PFL, PDS, PDT) existed before 1966, and only two (PMDB and PDS) existed before 1979--and they had different names. Conversely, only one of the three dominant parties of the pre-1964 period (the PTB) still exists--and it does so under a different guise, and as a minor party at that.

Compared to the other three countries discussed in this essay, Brazilian parties stand out for their gelatinous character. Parties, like political life more generally, have been very dependent on the state. Brazil reverses Chile's historical pattern: here, a strong centralized bureaucracy emerged before the creation of an effective parliament and, over time, that bureaucracy continued to dominate and overshadow parties and parliament. Liberal theory widely assumes that parties are expressions of civil society, organized to represent interests within the state. In Brazil, parties have more often been creations of the state. It is stunning that there were no major national parties in Brazil between 1889 and 1945. Two of the three main parties that functioned between 1945 and 1964 were directly created by Getúlio Vargas, president between 1930 and 1945 (and dictator for the final eight years of that period) and later from 1951 to 1954. Moreover, as Lima (1983) has shown, even by the end of the populist period (1964), parties were not truly national in character; regional and familial cleavages were paramount.

In comparative perspective, Brazil stands out as an extraordinary case of party underdevelopment. A country with the eighth largest economy in the capitalist world is still characterized by parties with ephemeral existences, weak identities, and uncertain futures. Among the countries analyzed here, Brazil's democratic prospects appear relatively favorable if we compare economic situations--but particularly dim if we compare political institutions. Unless parties are capable of winning popular confidence, acting with

autonomy vis-à-vis the executive, and becoming stable enough for a system of democratic accountability to be established, prospects for constructing a consolidated democracy are poor indeed (Hagopian and Mainwaring 1987). Thus the issues involved in party development are of central importance not only for scholarly analysis, but also for the country's future. Recent discussions of parties in Brazil are generally cognizant of this fact and have explored a wide range of questions related to party development: the origins of party underdevelopment, the historical development of parties before 1964, the function of parties during the recent military government (1964-1985), and the nature and prospects of the new parties.

As Carvalho (1980), Chacon (1981), and Souza (1968) all show, the underdevelopment of political parties is nothing new in Brazilian history. From 1889 until 1945, there was almost no political competition between parties; rather, competition followed familial and personal rivalries. Sharp restrictions on suffrage, which actually declined drastically after 1881, limited political competition, thereby weakening the potential role of parties. By 1930, there were well established political parties (that last as major actors until this day) in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay; this was not true in Brazil. Excellent recent works by Casalecchi (1987), Hagopian (1986), and Lewin (1987) have underscored the extent to which oligarchical families controlled what limited party life existed between 1889 and 1930.

Until the end of the *Estado Novo* (1945), state leaders and regional oligarchs deliberately worked against the creation of strong national political parties because such parties would have undercut their autonomy and power. This anti-party bias also occurred in the first decades of the political life of the United States; George Washington and most of his contemporaries felt that parties reflected private concerns and interests at the expense of some public good (Hofstadter 1969, Chambers 1963, Lipset 1967). In Brazil these anti-party proclivities were not seriously challenged until after the end of the Vargas dictatorship.

Between 1930 and 1945, Getúlio Vargas was president of Brazil. Until 1943, when he realized that party support would be essential if he was to retain power in the post-war period, Vargas was viscerally anti-party in his orientation. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that party development remained retarded during these years. What is more difficult to explain is why parties remained relatively secondary actors between 1946 and 1964 when Brazil had a political regime that, despite shortcomings in terms of both participation and competition (see Dahl 1971), was democratic by most criteria. Usually the existence of competitive elections with mass suffrage over a period of almost two decades stimulates the formation of parties with clearly differentiated programs and



clienteles, and with a reasonable degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the state, but this was not the case in Brazil.

Explaining the roots of party underdevelopment is the central concern of Maria do Carmo Campello de Souza's pioneer Estado e Partidos Políticos no Brasil (1930 a 1964) (1976). Criticizing those who had seen the predominant qualities of Brazilian parties as defects emanating from the nature of the country's political leaders, she argues that the problem derives above all from the relationship between parties and the state. She states her main argument succinctly: "The existence of a centralized state structure before the emergence of a party system constitutes, in itself, a difficulty for the institutionalization of the party system and a stimulus to clientelistic politics" (p. 36).

One of her key arguments is that the way the political system of the 1930s institutionalized power subsequently conditioned the future evolution of the parties. In her insistence on the decisive importance of historical patterns in the formation of state and parties, Campello de Souza is similar to Arturo Valenzuela on Chile (1985), and compatible with Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Brazil historically had sharp regional cleavages that made it difficult for the federal state to exercise firm control over the vast national territory, but federal and state executives dominated the political system. In the 1930s, the bureaucracy was consolidated in a system with strong corporatistic features, and the central government established its power over centrifugal regional tendencies. Vargas was forced out of office in 1945, but the corporatist structures of the Estado Novo were left largely intact. The state-centered political system that kept parties at the margins of political life did not undergo fundamental changes.

Lamounier and Meneguello's brief but excellent study, Partidos Políticos e Consolidação Democrática: O Caso Brasileiro (1986), also attempts to explain the chronic underdevelopment of Brazil's political parties. Where Campello de Souza focuses primarily on congenital defects of the post-1946 system, they pay more attention to its later crisis. Lamounier and Meneguello begin their work by contrasting the prevalent Marxist view (see Gramsci 1957) that parties are the political expression of a determined group or class to the argument (Schumpeter, 1950) that parties are created by professional politicians to serve their own ends, without necessarily reflecting specific ideologies or a cohesive set of interests. They hold that Schumpeter's understanding of parties is more accurate when applied to the Brazilian case. This argument suggests how much party development in Brazil has differed from most of Western Europe and Chile, where party formation reflected clearly defined social cleavages (class, religion, ethnicity, region) (see Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1970, pp. 72-144).

Lamounier and Meneguello argue that in the post-1946 period, three factors worked against the evolution of parties into more central political actors. First, power was centralized in the federal state, which continued to overshadow the parties. Second, extensive clientelism prevented the articulation of group or class interests, thereby weakening the representative character of the parties. Finally, in part because of electoral rules, professional politicians engaged in practices that maximized individual flexibility and minimized the strength of the parties.

Brazil's party system underwent decisive changes in the years before the 1964 coup. The congenital weakness of the 1946-1964 party system, however important it may be, does not explain these changes and the way they weakened the democratic system. As Santos (1987) has shown, one of the key changes was a marked fragmentation of the party system, with a decrease in the electoral strength of the two largest parties. In her analysis of the PSD (Partido Social Democrático, or Social Democratic Party), the largest party from 1946 until 1964, Hippólito also analyzes the crisis of the party system. She argues that changes within the PSD--specifically, the emergence of a more progressive, more ideological, and less flexible faction--helped undermine the political center and led to what Sartori calls polarized pluralism. Her analysis, which emphasizes problems that emerged in the party system, thus differs considerably from that of Souza (1976), who emphasized congenital defects of the post-1946 party system. Both, however, see problems in the party system as central to the demise of democracy. In this sense, both emphasize the fundamental importance of political variables, rather than explaining the breakdown of democracy in terms of the exhaustion of import substitution industrialization.<sup>4</sup>

In Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, at least one major party encouraged the coups that led to the demise of democracy. In all three cases, party leaders believed that alliances with the military would enable them to obtain positions of power in the new governments. In all three cases, this expectation was largely frustrated, even though in Brazil some politicians who supported the coup assumed powerful posts in the new government.

The story behind why the UDN (National Democratic Union) came to support the 1964 coup in Brazil is well told in histories of the party by Maria Victória Benevides (1981) and Isabel Picaluga (1980). Created in 1945 in opposition to the Vargas dictatorship, the UDN was the only one of the three major parties between 1945 and 1964 that was not an offspring of the Vargas regime. The UDN was characterized by a trenchant opposition to populism that led it to support a coup in the name, ostensibly, of fostering democracy. It synthesized the contradictions of Brazilian liberalism: despite its appeals to liberal principles, the party was highly elitist and ultimately supported the end of Brazil's

democratic interregnum. These "liberals" helped undermine the very institutions that are the essence of liberal democratic politics.

What do political parties do under military regimes? Here again we find meaningful differences among the four cases in question. In Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, parties were officially banned; congress was closed; and there were no elections. In Brazil, in contrast, parties functioned legally throughout virtually the entire military period; congress was generally open; and there were regularly scheduled elections. Only in late 1965, when the first elections held under military rule did not turn out as the government hoped, were the old parties abolished.

Two general comments about this situation are in order. First, for many years analysts tended to treat the existence of parties, congress, and elections in Brazil as a meaningless façade. The entire history of the process of liberalization and democratization in Brazil shows that however enervated these liberal institutions were, they assumed considerable political importance. The existence of parties, congress, and elections both set the Brazilian authoritarian regime apart from the other three and had major implications for how political liberalization occurred. Second, it is not an accident that it was the Brazilian regime that allowed for the existence of these institutions. Because parties were far more malleable in Brazil than Argentina, Uruguay, and especially Chile, they were more susceptible to being controlled. This is, in part, why the Brazilian military government did not systematically set about destroying political parties and closing congress. Many opposition leaders were persecuted and prosecuted, but the government ensured that an opposition party existed during the entire military period.

Throughout Latin America, military rule created new problems for leaders of political parties. The nature of the problems, however, varied considerably according to country. The dilemmas for the party opposition in Brazil were unique because opposition party activity was legal though circumscribed, because elections allowed the opposition to conquer more spaces and gain visibility through campaigns, and because congress gave it a space to voice dissent. Brazil was also unique in having an official government party, ARENA (Aliança Renovadora Nacional). ARENA was clearly subordinate to the military government, but in comparative perspective, one of the distinctive features of the Brazilian military regime was that it was able to help organize a political party that could compete in elections--especially when the electoral rules were designed to favor that party.<sup>5</sup> This competitive ability of the PDS helped many politicians affiliated with the military regime to remain in positions of power in the democratic government.

The opposition party, MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro), was created after the military regime extinguished the old political parties in October 1965 in the face of

unexpected electoral defeats in the states of Minas Gerais and Guanabara. Largely because the military regime was not willing, then or later, to impose a radical rupture with democratic institutions, it decided to create a two-party system. The ARENA would be a loyal government party, while the MDB would be a (presumably) meek opposition party. Over time, however, the MDB grew so much that it forced the government to change electoral laws several times. In 1979, the government decided to to unilaterally impose the dissolution of the MDB and restored a multiparty system.

Thanks to Maria D'Alva Gil Kinzo's dissertation (1985), we now have an excellent study on the MDB and its relationship to the authoritarian regime. Kinzo notes the distinctive character of the Brazilian authoritarian regime when contrasted to the other southern cone military regimes of the period. She calls it a "hybrid regime," i.e., one which incorporated some authoritarian and some democratic traits. Particularly important among the "democratic" characteristics was the institutional framework of political life. In contrast to the other "bureaucratic-authoritarian" regimes of the southern cone, the Brazilian regime never effected a radical break with democratic political institutions (Linz 1973; Lamounier 1979).

Kinzo notes that it was only through the regime's initiative that the MDB stayed alive. At several key points, MDB leaders, overwhelmed by the difficulties they faced in structuring an opposition party in the midst of considerable repression, considered dissolving the party. When the MDB became so weak as to lose credibility as an opposition party with foreign governments, the military lent it a hand. For example, when the MDB was created in 1966, it initially lacked the number of senators needed to achieve representation in Congress. The military responded by encouraging some senators to join the MDB rather than ARENA.

The MDB faced difficult ongoing dilemmas.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, it needed to protect itself and avoid repression. This was no easy feat, especially between 1968 and 1977; dozens of MDB politicians were stripped of office and of their political rights. On the other hand, the party needed and wanted to be an opposition party; otherwise, there was no reason to exist. Moreover, when the MDB became too conciliatory, it lost its credibility as an opposition force. Kinzo argues that the MDB's devastating defeat in the 1970 elections resulted in part from the party's timid discourse and practices during the two previous years. While conveying the dilemmas and difficulties the MDB faced as a result of functioning in an authoritarian regime, Kinzo's study demonstrates that the regime was also shaped somewhat by opposition forces. In this sense, her argument is a persuasive challenge to other scholars (Dreifuss 1981) who have seen the regime as largely a result of the military's ideology, independent of the nature of the opposition.<sup>7</sup>

Kinzo captures one of the great paradoxes about the MDB: a party created by the regime forced the military to change its strategy and ultimately undermined the military government. Because this regime retained some institutions of liberal democracy, there existed the possibility that these institutions could prompt changes in the regime. And this is exactly what happened: the party created by the regime defeated the government party in the 1974 elections, prompting manipulations in the electoral laws that would govern the 1978 elections. These new laws would again prove inadequate as a means of containing the MDB's advances, leading the government to extinguish the MDB in late 1979. However, the MDB proved more resilient than the government expected and remained largely intact in the newly established PMDB. Ultimately, in 1985, with help from other opposition parties and defectors from the regime, the PMDB defeated the PDS in the presidential succession.

Without political parties, representative democracy as we know it is unthinkable. Parties are the primary organization through which people and factions of different beliefs compete for power. But democratic consolidation requires more than the simple existence of parties. Parties must effectively compete for the popular vote; otherwise, popular sectors will have marginal representation in the political system. Established elites may easily influence political leaders through other channels, such as personal contacts or the ubiquitous threat to remove capital if economic policy is disconcerting. But popular sectors face numerous other obstacles to political participation (lack of political knowledge and resources, social discrimination, etc.). Where they are not represented in the electoral system, they tend to be generally excluded from politics. Political parties are also central in establishing a system of democratic accountability. Parties stand on ideas and policies, and a central component of representative democracy revolves around providing the electorate with a choice between competing ideas and policies. Where parties are weak and have an ephemeral existence, this kind of choice between ideas and policies is undermined. At best, the choice is between personal leaders who themselves may not be tied to any particular program.

This is why democratic consolidation requires the establishment of political parties that offer competing choices, that really compete for the popular vote, and that afford the relative stability necessary for democratic accountability. Where parties fail to meet these criteria, at best a tenuous democratic government can survive. Democratic consolidation involves more than this survival; it involves constructing political institutions that allow for participation and provide competition over a meaningful period of time (see Hagopian and Mainwaring 1987). For these reasons, the construction of political parties that really

compete and offer different alternatives is a central task if Brazil's democracy is to become consolidated.

Once again, Brazil's party situation differs considerably from that of the other three countries we analyze here. In Argentina and Uruguay, the two dominant parties are well entrenched and have established strong identities in civil society, despite the fact that they are not radically different on a left to right scale. In Chile, once a transition to democracy occurs, the major parties of the pre-coup period will likely once again be the dominant parties. To be sure, the party situation has some troublesome aspects in all three countries (as discussed below), but the existence of parties that have well established profiles and compete for the popular vote is indisputable. In Brazil, the dilemma is more basic: whether such parties can and are being constructed. At present, it is difficult to tell how many of the extant parties will remain or become major parties--such is the state of flux of the party system. It would not be surprising if Brazil followed Spain's path in the 1975-82 period, of the decline of some major parties and the rise of others. (On Spain, see Linz 1980 and Share 1986.)

One of the factors that has undermined party competition and helped sustain elitist forms of domination in Brazil has been pervasive clientelism. Rather than providing mass entitlements, politicians have generally attempted to win popular support by providing personal favors. Competition is then reduced to personalistic rivalries among those politicians who compete for votes in a given region; it has no programmatic basis. Personal favors and clientelism exist in all political systems, but the extent to which they undercut broad based competition in Brazil is exceptional. Chile, too, is known for extensive clientelism (A. Valenzuela 1977), but in Chile this clientelism coexisted with intense competition at all levels of the pre-1973 political system.

What are the prospects for challenging this anti-competitive clientelism? According to three recent studies on the subject, they are not good. Hagopian's rich, provocative dissertation (1986) argues that the authoritarian regime did not lead to the permanent eclipse of traditional political elites, who continue to dominate Brazilian parties and politics. In analyzing the political machine that governed the state of Rio de Janeiro during virtually the entire authoritarian period, Diniz (1982) provides a fine analysis of mechanisms of patronage and clientelism. Cammack (1982) argues that clientelism has become more predominant than even before. All three studies lead to pessimistic conclusions about the potential for change in Brazilian parties. Sadek de Souza's dissertation (1984) reinforces the idea that change within Brazilian political parties is difficult; she calls attention to the fact that even in the most industrialized part of Brazil, where union activism is very strong and where the PT (Workers' Party) was born,

traditional, and indeed at times downright conservative, politicians and politics still prevail. Cardoso (1981), conversely, was at the relatively optimistic end of the scale regarding party development. Writing on parties and the popular classes, especially in the state of São Paulo, Cardoso argued that the MDB was likely to break with past party traditions and form a party more linked to popular interests.

One of the central problems in party development in Brazil involves responsiveness to popular demands. Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay have traditionally had the most egalitarian socio-economic and political systems in Latin America. In contrast, Brazil's political system has been highly elitist, and the socio-economic system highly inegalitarian. Prospects for change are dim unless some political parties actively advocate popular issues. In view of this situation, it is not surprising that the leftist Workers' Party has attracted considerable attention. Created in 1979, the importance of the Workers' Party (PT) goes far beyond its rather limited electoral base. (The PT elected 8 federal representatives of 548 in 1982 and 16 of 559 in 1986.) Friends and foes have perceived the PT as one of the most important innovations in recent Brazilian politics.

Margaret Keck's stimulating dissertation, "From Movement to Politics: The Formation of the Workers' Party in Brazil," traces the PT's formation, dilemmas, and evolution from 1979 until 1985. One of the salient questions in relation to the PT is how much it can influence the political system as a whole. Keck analyzes this issue at considerable length, and her conclusion that the PT faces major difficulties is compelling. Brazil's highly elitist political culture, the difficulties of the labor movement in overcoming corporatist mechanisms that have shackled it in most regions of the country, the fact that the industrial labor force is a smaller percentage of the economically active population than was the case in the European countries during the formation of mass labor parties, and the profoundly conservative nature of Brazil's transition to democracy all conspire against the rapid growth of a party like the PT. As Keck notes, so, too, does the PT's ambivalence about state power and its lack of clarity about a political vision: "To a large extent, the party has less of an ideology than an ethical proposal" (p. 504).

The author emphasizes the tensions the PT has faced between being a political party, which involves formulating strategies for influencing institutional politics and inevitably involves compromise, and supporting social movements, especially the labor movement. Particularly in the Brazilian context, winning votes would seem to require a certain amount of pragmatism and a multi-class perspective, while remaining faithful to the labor movement often dictates eschewing such pragmatism and compromise. Thus, the PT has been caught between external exigencies and internal demands.

Also on the PT is the book edited by Emir Sader, E Agora PT? which offers essays by eight PT leaders and intellectuals of different internal tendencies. Unfortunately, the essays generally lack the incisive character of Keck's work. One cringes to find a talented PT intellectual (José Alvaro Moisés) writing that "The great innovation of socialism is that, in contrast to capitalism, it does not propose to maintain the old division between governed and governors, leaders and followers, that always existed in the history of humanity" (p. 180). This kind of refusal to admit that domination inheres in all complex societies and, worse, the refusal to acknowledge the profoundly authoritarian character of most extant socialist experiences do not bode well for the PT's realism. On the positive side, the essay by Francisco de Oliveira addresses tensions and dilemmas within the party in refreshing ways.

While the already mentioned works stand out, they by no means exhaust the recent literature on Brazilian parties. Lamounier and Kinzo (1981) offer a useful bibliographic essay on some earlier contributions. Santos (1985) provides a fascinating analysis of the decline of parties as channels of political representation, though he probably overstates the extent to which parties have been eclipsed by other vehicles. Jenks (1979) provides considerable information on parties and elections between 1966 and 1974. Fleischer (1981) is a useful two-volume compilation of 28 articles on parties, with some attention to the 1945-64 period. Fleischer (1984) provides a competent overview of changes in the party system from 1945 to 1984. Finally, we should register the existence of several excellent studies of elections in the period since 1974; including Cardoso and Lamounier (1975); Reis (1978); and Lamounier (1980).

### Argentina

Argentina has had a troubled history since 1930. Between 1862 and 1930, this republic enjoyed rapid economic growth and political stability. Since then, it has experienced chronic political instability and one of the worst growth rates in the world. The economic destruction and perverse human rights atrocities committed by the last military government (1976-83) are but the culmination of a lengthy process of deterioration.

Since 1946, Argentina has had two major parties, the Radicals and the Peronists and, in contrast to Brazil, party identification in Argentina is strong. Whereas most parties in Brazil have been very malleable, until 1970 the two dominant Argentine parties were rigid in their opposition to each other. Indeed, one of the major political problems in the period between the late 1940s and late 1960s was a sharp polarization that led both parties to support coups against the other.



Nevertheless, for reasons that differ from those of the Brazilian case, party life in Argentina has been both the expression of a troubled overall political system and a major contributing factor to those political troubles. As in Brazil, parties have not been major instruments of expressing and channeling political interests and demands. In Brazil, this is fundamentally because of the state-centered character of political life; in Argentina, it is because civil society is strong, but in "praetorian" fashion, to use Huntington's (1968) classic expression. Corporative bodies, especially labor unions and the armed forces, have played the leading role in political life. Business and agricultural interests have also been strong and well organized by Latin American standards, and also have functioned primarily through corporatist, rather than representative channels. The strength of the labor unions has primarily to do with the strange symbiosis that evolved between Peronism and labor, in which the leader (Perón) and unions were strong, while the party was weak.

The weakness of Argentine parties goes back at least to 1930, when a military coup ended a period of 68 years of uninterrupted civilian rule with regular (though until 1912 limited in terms of the electorate) elections. Democratic parties cannot thrive when democracy itself does not; the 1930 coup aborted prospects for more favorable growth in the party system. As Potter (1981) has noted, authoritarian practices, in the sense of attempting to destroy the opposition (albeit in a fashion that was technically within the limits of the constitution), contributed decisively to the 1930 coup. What is also interesting about the pre-1930 period in Argentina is the absence of a more vigorous conservative party (or constellation of parties) capable of attaining national level organization. Between 1930 and 1943, party development was held in abeyance; meanwhile industrialization and urbanization laid the basis for the rapid emergence of mass politics, which occurred when Juan Perón came on the scene.

Perón profoundly affected subsequent Argentine history, including the history of political parties. Although a detailed analysis of his impact on Argentine political life goes beyond present purposes, it is necessary to note briefly his legacy on party formation. Perón is one of history's few unequivocal examples of an authoritarian ruler who was elected in democratic fashion (at least in 1946; the democratic character of the 1951 elections can be questioned even though Perón would certainly have won in any case). His authoritarian style of governing and his widespread repression of opponents had their parallel within the Peronist movement. Perón promoted the cult of the leader; systematically destroyed and undermined alternative currents and leaders within Peronism; and established the famous principle of "verticality" within the movement. Peronism was more of a movement than a party. Party offices depended on the approval

of Perón and Evita. Whereas political parties depend on the institutionalization of authority, Perón and Evita avoided institutionalization, precisely to concentrate authority in their own hands. Politics occurred more through Perón's famous public speeches to the masses than through institutionalized channels. Needless to say, these characteristics are entirely inimical to the formation of a developed party. Popular as he was among the working classes, Perón continued a process of institutional enervation that had begun with the 1930 coup. The virtual nonexistence of a real party accounts for the absence of studies on the Peronist Party, notwithstanding the existence of some fine studies on the Peronist movement and the two Peronist governments. (For 1946-55, see especially Waldmann 1981; for 1973-76, see especially Viola 1982 and De Riz 1981.)

The Radical side of the picture was no more promising. From the 1940s until the end of 1960s, the Radicals resorted to endless conspiracies and alliances with the armed forces, first to overthrow Perón, then to keep him out of power. This series of non-democratic measures tainted the party and contributed to the vacuum of channels of democratic representation in the country. Different Radical factions held power from 1958 to 1962 (President Frondizi) and from 1963 to 1966 (President Illía), but both governments were weakened by their limited support in civil society. Sharp divisions within the Radical Party, revolving around proscription of Peronists, support for coups, and different developmental models, further weakened the party and prevented it from governing effectively. The insistence of key political actors (especially the armed forces, but also the Catholic Church, the bourgeoisie, and parts of the Radical Party) on proscribing Peronism, coupled with the Radicals' severe internal divisions and lack of support, generated, between 1955 and 1966, what O'Donnell (1973) aptly termed "an impossible game." Although the problems of internal authoritarianism and lack of institutional building were not as acute as in Peronism, the Radical Party, too, was dependent on the leadership of one individual, Ricardo Balbín.

In response to an already lengthy history of political failures and frustrations, the Radicals and Peronists reached some important agreements in 1970, known as *La Hora del Pueblo* (The Time of the People). These agreements ended the period of sharp opposition between the country's two main electoral forces and helped pave the way for a new democratic experience that began in 1973, when the Peronists again won. Until his death in May 1974, Perón ruled in a less authoritarian way than he had in the 1940s and 1950s. Nevertheless, party building was never a major objective or interest of his. Non-institutionalized forms of political action, especially that of the leftist guerrillas and the right-wing death squads, soon gained ascendancy. Once again, the unions, themselves structured in authoritarian fashion, dominated what semblance of a political party existed.

After Perón's death, the government disintegrated in vertiginous fashion. Inflation reached record heights, the economy collapsed, and terrorism of the left and right took grasp of the political situation. The military coup of March 1976 took place in a virtual vacuum of political institutions; neither the Radical nor the Peronist Party was capable of averting the rapid descent into the tragedy of the 1976-83 years.

Without placing the primary blame on the parties, Marcelo Cavarozzi's excellent papers (1985, 1986), show how party practices in the past contributed to the successive failures of democratic experiences. Parties supported coups, tolerated unacceptable practices when in office, and pursued non-democratic means of obtaining office. They promoted, or at least allowed, personality cults that impeded party development; and they constructed alliances with blatantly anti-democratic forces.

This past history of weak parties, alongside strong partisan identification and opposition, poses a number of questions in the new democratic period (December 1983 to the present). What kind of parties emerged after nearly eight years of Argentina's most repressive regime in the twentieth century? To what extent have the parties changed?

Cavarozzi (1986) analyzes the characteristics of the two main parties, discussing their evolution over time while paying particular attention to the two more recent transitions to democratic rule, 1973 and 1983. Cavarozzi notes that in 1973 there was one propitious change in the two parties: rather than treating each other as mortal enemies, they worked together to overthrow the military regime. This alliance was crystallized in the aforementioned *La Hora del Pueblo*. But, Cavarozzi argues, in critical regards the parties had not matured sufficiently. The Peronists were still authoritarian in their internal structure and their way of governing. This structure made Perón indispensable, and when he died, his wife, who assumed the presidency, was entirely incapable of filling the void. Nor, under those circumstances, could anyone else. On the Radicals' side, the problem was that they did not challenge the deleterious aspects of the government, instead opting to watch from the sidelines as the political and economic situations deteriorated. The Radicals moved from one extreme to the other: from being a disloyal opponent of Peronism to playing the role of a permanent subordinate opposition.

During the more recent years of military rule (1976-83), the Peronists had enormous difficulty in recovering from the paralysis that set in after Perón's death. The dismal failure of the Peronist government and the devastating consequences that resulted led to widespread disillusionment with Peronism. The paralysis is captured by the fact that Isabel Perón was for years titular head of the party, even though she resided in Spain and was entirely distanced from Argentina's reality. The period between 1974 and 1983 witnessed the strengthening of right-wing populism of a clearly authoritarian

nature within Peronism. Many of the students, artists, and intellectuals who supported the party in the early 1970s have defected.

The interesting collection of articles by Peronist leaders reprinted in Unamuno et al. (1984) makes apparent that attempts at internal change are serious and concerted. Written by party leaders who disagreed with the party's authoritarian orientation, the essays demonstrate a healthy capacity for self-criticism. The authors denounce the party's internal authoritarianism, questionable commitment to democracy as a political regime, and conniving with the armed forces. At the same time, the figure of Perón remains something of an untouchable myth even for these unusually critical Peronists. This faction, known as the Peronist Renewal, won control in 1987, facilitating the party's victory in the congressional elections later in the year.

Cavarozzi notes that on the Radical side change has been more forthcoming. From 1955 on, there were sporadic but frustrated challenges to Ricardo Balbín's conservative leadership within the party. One of these challenges came from a group headed by Raúl Alfonsín, a former ally of Balbín. This group, known as *Renovación y Cambio* (Renovation and Change) emerged in the late 1960s and was strong enough to challenge Balbín for the leadership of the party in the early 1970s. Only after Balbín's death in 1981, however, did *Renovación y Cambio* become ascendant, defeating the more traditional conservative Radical line in the 1983 primaries. Despite these changes, Cavarozzi concludes on a mildly pessimistic (and in my view realistic) note, arguing that the "weakness of political parties has become apparent again... Neither party has put forward a proposal which takes into account the political repercussions of the entirely new type of economic crisis affecting the country" (p. 173).

Acuña's (1984) history of Radicalism from 1958 to 1983 provides ample information on the internal struggle within the party, its attempts at changes, its internal contradictions, and the failures of the Radical governments. Its greater detail on many key points provides a useful complement to Cavarozzi's work. Acuña is ultimately pessimistic about how deep the changes in the Radical Party are. His book adds to a string of worthwhile studies on the Radical Party: Peter Smith (1967), Peter Snow (1965), David Rock (1975) and Gallo and Sigal (1965). The absence of studies on the Peronist Party, while explicable in terms of the high degree of personalism within Peronism until 1974 when Perón died, is nevertheless noteworthy. Canton's classic book (1973) remains indispensable reading on Argentine parties, even though it mostly focuses on electoral behavior.

As is the case elsewhere, in Argentina the recent transition to democracy has posed difficult challenges for the left. In contrast to Chile, where the Socialist and

Communist parties historically won about 30% of the vote, the leftist parties in Argentina and Brazil are electorally insignificant. Moreover, the profound economic crises of the 1980s have seemingly made any major socio-economic advances for the popular classes impossible. The governmental agenda has been to consolidate tenuous democracies and to maneuver around formidable obstacles to maintaining economic growth, not to promote radical socio-economic change. Under these conditions it is surprising that leftist disgruntlement has been relatively contained. The primary reason is that the left suffered vicious persecution during the recent military governments and wishes to avoid a repetition of that experience.

So the left is torn between hoping for more progressive policies and wanting to avoid actions that could stimulate new coups. How has it managed this situation? Recent studies of leftist parties in Argentina make apparent that the kind of innovation we find in Brazil is sorely lacking. The time worn platitudes that blame Argentina's problems on imperialism make Nosiglia's book on the leftist Intransigent Party (1983) a testimony to the lack of renewal of the Argentine left. Written by a CP ideologue, Arévalo's book on the Communist Party (1983) underscores the dogmatic, authoritarian, and consistently pro-Soviet character of that party.

Generally speaking, the scholarship on parties in Argentina is less bountiful than that on Brazilian or Chilean parties.

### Chile

Considering its limited size, Chile has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. There are fine monographs on many different aspects of Chile's politics, including political parties. Since the military coup of 1973, foreign scholarship on Chile has declined, but a very fine Chilean production continues to exist.

Chile's political system and its party system were long unique within Latin America, and the distinctive character of its political system was in large measure a product of the distinctive character of its parties and party system. As Arturo Valenzuela (1985) notes, "parties were the determining political force in forging the nation's democratic institutions, as well as prominent actors in periods of political unrest" (p. 1). Chile's parties stood out historically in terms of their national scope (A. Valenzuela 1972), their highly ideological character, and their central role in the political system. These singularities were duly noted by many analysts in the 1950s and 1960s (Scott 1958; Silvert 1965). After 1932, Chile's party system bore greater resemblance to the French party system than to that of any other Latin American nation. The obvious question is why Chile's party system became so distinct.

A. Valenzuela's "Origins and Characteristics of the Chilean Party System" (1985) is an excellent contribution to the analysis of this question. Valenzuela argues that the relationship between parties, parliament, and the state bureaucracy was critical. In sharp contrast to Brazil, where the state bureaucracy dominated parliament and the parties from an early time, in Chile, beginning shortly after independence, the legislature became the central arena for channeling conflict. The Chilean conservatives embarked on a program of suffrage expansion (see J. Samuel Valenzuela 1985) beginning in the mid-19th century and leading to broad electoral reform in the second half of that century. This expansion strengthened the capacity of parliament and political parties to channel political conflict and demands. As a result, "individuals and interest groups expressed their demands through parties and legislative cliques, rather than directly with state agencies, or through corporatist schemes...(This made) parties and representative networks the fulcrum of the political process, insulating Chilean politics from the statist, corporatist and populist tendencies of countries where the legislative arena was weak and public agencies developed through the tuition of the executive" (p. 4).

For A. Valenzuela, following Lipset and Rokkan (1967), these early features of the Chilean party system were decisive. The early establishment of a political system centered around parliament and the parties enabled the later incorporation of working-class parties without major disturbances. After the creation of the major working-class parties, the party system changed little, despite the proliferation of numerous small parties. Yet the major exception to this pattern, the emergence in the 1960s of the Christian Democrats as a powerful party, was of decisive importance. The Christian Democrats displaced the more pragmatic and less ideological Radical Party, eventually constituting a fundamental destabilizing force in the system (A. Valenzuela 1978).

J. Samuel Valenzuela (1985) also argues for the decisive importance of early patterns of party formation and political development. In tracing and explaining the emergence of democracy in Chile, Valenzuela argues for the importance of specifically political, rather than cultural or economic factors (see also Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1983). He also shows how important parties are in democratic processes. He argues that without strong parties and a "complete" party system, i.e., one in which "the different social sectors...are linked to a party" (p. 31) as a means of seeking political influence, a consolidated democracy cannot be established. I question whether strong parties are essential for a consolidated democracy--much hinges on how we define this nebulous term--but I am convinced that Valenzuela is correct in arguing that parties and party system are the keys to a consolidated democracy.

Above I argued that in both Brazil and Argentina, political parties contributed to the demise of democracy. The UDN in Brazil, and both the Radicals and Peronists in Argentina, supported coups in the hopes of enhancing their own political prospects. Whether or not the support of these major political parties for the coups was decisive we cannot know, but we do know that in these more developed Latin American countries the history of successful military coups is the history of coups that had considerable civilian support. More broadly, in both countries, the lack of party development contributed to an institutional weakness that helped destabilize democracy. Because parties were not powerful forces, political actors on different sides of the political spectrum preferred to circumvent them--and other legal channels--to pursue their interests. Thus, they took to the streets or engaged in backroom discussions with generals and admirals.

The issue of party responsibility for coups in Chile and Uruguay assumes a completely different dimension. Here, deeply rooted parties did exist; political actors did channel their demands through the parties; and yet the parties were incapable of sustaining well established vibrant democratic regimes. The breakdown of democracy in Chile and Uruguay shows that the existence of developed parties and political institutions does not guarantee the viability of democracy. Indeed, in the Chilean case the strength of the parties was a contributing factor to the demise of democracy: the parties had such strong identities that they were incapable of moderation during the Allende years (1970-73). How did the breakdown of democracy occur given these strong political parties, and what role did parties play in the breakdown?

Drawing on comparative evidence, A. Valenzuela (1985) argues that notwithstanding the responsibility of party leaders, the party system was not responsible for the breakdown of democracy in 1973. Arguing against those who see Chile's polarized multi-party system as a cause of instability, Valenzuela affirms that, on the contrary, in a country marked by sharp cleavages, this kind of system may provide greater stability, precisely by allowing for the representation of the conflicting interests. He concludes his essay echoing Juan Linz's (1984) call for a parliamentary system.

Manuel Antonio Garretón (1985) provides a somewhat different perspective on the party system's impact on the demise of democracy. Garretón argues that alongside the positive features of the dense character of partisan life in Chile, there were also some deleterious features. Other political actors had limited autonomy vis-à-vis parties, which dominated political life; there was a relative "partyization" of society, to borrow an untranslatable expression from the Spanish. The counterpart to the broad ideological spectrum represented by the parties was the fragility of exchange between them; the

party system was polarized. By 1973, political activity overwhelmed the parties, which, in order to maximize their own partisan position, encouraged praetorian political activity.

Michael Fleet's book on The Rise and Fall of Chilean Christian Democracy (1985) addresses the question of parties and the demise of democracy from the perspective of the responsibility of the Christian Democratic Party rather than the dynamics of the party system as a whole. Fleet's overall assessment is that the Christian Democrats bear a heavy responsibility for the coup. The dominant faction within the party supported the coup.

But of course the Christian Democrats were not alone in bearing responsibility for the breakdown of democracy. Most leaders of the conservative National Party supported the coup. And as Ignacio Walker's account (1986) shows, the Chilean Socialist Party also must shoulder some of the responsibility. Walker traces the evolution of the Socialist Party from 1933 until the 1973 coup, focusing especially on the party's attitude about whether democratic elections or insurrection were the most appropriate means of coming to power. While President Allende himself was a convinced democrat, after 1965 he was increasingly isolated within his own party, which became pronouncedly Leninist and insurrectional. The Socialist Party continuously called for more radical postures, opposed compromise with the Christian Democrats, and clashed with President Allende, who was seen as pursuing excessively moderate policies. Its actions contributed to the widespread radicalization that culminated in the 1973 coup.

The advent of long term military rule surprised even those politicians who had supported the coup. Even those who were sanguine about the impact of military rule imagined that it would last a short time, paving the way for a Christian Democratic or conservative government. What has happened since 1973 shattered those expectations. Not only did Pinochet decide to remain in power, the military government also had little use for civilian politicians. In Brazil, it was possible for the military to abolish old parties and create new ones; in Chile, the previously existing parties had identities that were too strong for this to happen. In Brazil, a congress continued to function, allowing politicians an arena where they exercised some minimal influence--and that gave them a base for patronage. In Chile, congress was closed immediately. A similar attack on the "political class" happened in Argentina, but with two crucial differences. First, politicians in Argentina had never exercised the clout they did in Chile; and second, politicians in Argentina were accustomed to functioning under authoritarian rule. All of this meant that the change from democracy to military rule was far more radical and difficult for professional politicians in Chile and Uruguay than in Brazil and Argentina. How have the parties responded to this situation? With considerable bewilderment, as Fleet's book



(1985) makes apparent. Fleet's study suggests the novelty of the experience of functioning under authoritarian rule, and the painful and difficult task of weaving an opposition network capable of challenging the regime.

As in Argentina and Brazil, some aspects of Chile's parties and party system present difficult problems in the event of a transition to democracy. In Argentina and Brazil, the main problem has been that parties have not been central actors in the political process, allowing other forces (most notably the military) to assume fundamental importance. In Chile, the problem is radically different: here, it is precisely the difficulty in establishing moderation and communication among parties that are powerful actors with strong identities. The contrast with Brazil is especially sharp: in Brazil, parties are so malleable that they fail to represent civil society; in Chile, they are capable of being so intransigent that the spaces of moderation and compromise erode. This past raises the question as to how much parties and the party system have changed under authoritarian rule, and how these changes augur for the new democracy. Like the military regimes in Argentina and Uruguay, the Chilean regime banned party activity, and ever since 1973 the center and leftist parties have suffered sharp repression. One could assume that these determined attacks on the old political system might have had some success in altering it; this is however not the case.

In their fine chapter A. Valenzuela and J. Samuel Valenzuela (1986) address how partisan identifications, the party system, and the main political parties have changed since 1973. They state succinctly their main argument: "It is our contention that the major parties have not disappeared, nor are the fundamental political loyalties within the society likely to erode in the foreseeable future" (p. 193). Like Lipset and Rokkan (1967) for the European cases, they argue that "once formed, party systems have remarkable endurance" (p. 202). The continuity of a party system results in part from organizational efforts of militants and leaders of different parties. In addition, in the Chilean case (in sharp contrast to Brazil), citizens had developed strong partisan identifications over a long period of time. Moreover, the ban on partisan activity led to a virtual "freezing" of political leadership in the parties, thereby blocking deeper changes in the parties and party system. While emphasizing the fundamental continuity of parties and party systems under military rule, the Valenzuelas also analyze the profound repercussions of military rule on the internal life and organization of the parties, especially the difficulties the parties have faced under military rule.

The Valenzuelas' main contention raises discouraging questions about the prospects for democracy in Chile. If protracted authoritarian rule has not caused any fundamental changes in partisan identities, how can we expect the right to be willing to

live with a left that will probably be as strong as ever--especially considering that the Communist Party has become more wedded to orthodox Leninism than in the past? Judging from Argentina's experience between 1955 and 1973, proscriptions of major parties only serve to weaken the party system and the legitimacy of democratic governments. In this sense, it is difficult to imagine the reconstruction of such a vital, stable party system in the next decade. The myriad of problems (dealing with the armed forces, reconstructing a destroyed economy, dealing with a disloyal left and disloyal right) that any democratic government will face reinforces this difficulty. Moreover, there is evidence (see A. Valenzuela and Wilde 1979) that even before 1973, parliament (and probably by extension, political parties) were on the decline.

Garretón's analysis (1985) of the post-1973 situation is generally consistent with that of Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986). Garretón argues that social organizations have become somewhat more autonomous *vis-à-vis* parties but that there is still a tendency to impose party logic. The profound division of Chilean society along party lines does not bode well for the opposition under the military regime. Far more so than was the case in Brazil, internal divisions representing partisan cleavages limit the opposition's effectiveness. Fleet (1985) dissents from Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986) and from Garretón (1985) in asserting that significant changes have occurred under military rule; he predicts the demise of the Christian Democrats in the advent of a transition to democracy. But I do not find his argument compelling; divided as the Christian Democrats now are, they still have a strong partisan identity and represent one of the fundamental and well established segments (the center) of the Chilean political system. Moreover, as Remmer's careful analysis (1985) shows, party systems have tended to undergo less change under authoritarian rule in cases where the previous party system was well established.

One of the great understudied topics in Latin American politics is the role of the right. In societies where the right has easy access to other channels of power--most nefariously the military--the way it acts in political life is of decisive importance for democratic regimes. Most perspicacious observers agree that it is futile to construct long lists of requisites for the establishment of stable democracies (see Hirschman 1986; Huntington 1984). Nevertheless, it probably is a requisite that the political right be willing to tolerate a democratic government (Przeworski forthcoming), and in turn it is probably essential that the right feel represented in the party system, albeit not necessarily through an exclusively conservative party. Although they do not focus principally on parties, Moulián and Torres (1984) discuss at length the right's involvement in Chile's political life,

coming to largely pessimistic conclusions about the possibilities for integrating the right into democratic politics.

### Uruguay

As Luis González (1984) points out, this diminutive River Plate country's democratic experience is unique in Latin America. A remarkably homogeneous country with no major ethnic cleavages, before 1973 Uruguay had one of the two oldest and most established democracies in the region (the other being in Chile). Its party system antedates that of several European countries, for the two main parties (Blancos and Colorados) are as old as the country itself, dating back to the early nineteenth century. These parties originated from nineteenth century intra-oligarchical strife revolving around the national versus local power cleavage. Whereas elsewhere in Latin America, with the partial exception of Colombia, the traditional nineteenth century parties disappeared, in Uruguay they survived, largely, according to Rial (1984), because "the adoption of a welfare style of development before the class structure was consolidated facilitated the survival of the traditional parties" (p. 3). In most of Latin America, the traditional parties failed to adopt banners that would make them viable in an age of mass politics; in Uruguay, they survived precisely because they changed. Both parties are relatively non-ideological--"catch-all" parties in the opposite term of Kirchheimer (1966)--with no significant ideological cleavages between them. Indeed, González argues that the ideological differences within each party are greater than the differences between them. Nor are there significant differences in class base for the two traditional parties. Both parties have historically been characterized by a high degree of internal fractionalization, to such an extent that some analysts have argued that the Blancos and Colorados are not really parties, but rather federations of parties. González (1984) and Rial (1984) eschew this position, convincingly arguing that such a viewpoint, assuming significant ideological coherence, would lead to the conclusion that the established major U.S. parties (not to mention some European cases) are likewise not parties. The strong partisan identification that surprisingly exists alongside the low degree of ideological coherence supports this argument.

As Rial (1982) observes, the traditional parties in Uruguay were quite unusual; they were similar to Chilean parties in occupying a central role in political life, but in other ways were relatively undeveloped, marked by their traditional origins. In contrast to Chilean parties, the traditional parties in Uruguay functioned little outside of election periods. Like parties in Brazil and in contrast to those in Chile, they had limited ideological

cohesion. Also in contrast to Chile, because of the way the two parties divided power, there was no clear separation between the parties and the state.

Uruguay is like Chile in that a well established democracy, with a well institutionalized party system, broke down in 1973. It is unlike Chile in that party leaders do not bear such direct responsibility for the breakdown of democracy; the clear majority of leaders in both parties opposed the growing military intrusions into political life. Nevertheless, the nature of the two traditional parties, and in particular the profound problems both parties had in conceptualizing new developmental models, contributed to the breakdown of democracy. Rial (1984 and 1985a) argues that the character of the traditional parties provided great continuity to Uruguayan politics for decades, but that this very continuity made them incapable of responding to the crisis that appeared in incipient form in the 1950s, acquired more serious dimensions in the late 1960s, and eventually culminated in the breakdown of democracy in 1973. The very success of Uruguay's developmental model and the inertia of the traditional parties that resulted in part from that success helped block the emergence of competing political forces that might have a different set of responses to the economic and political crisis.

González argues that electoral arrangements also contributed to the breakdown of democracy in 1973. We know from the work of Rae (1967) and others that electoral tendencies do not simply reflect already patterned class or other cleavages; electoral arrangements affect party systems and electoral tendencies. González starts from this vantage point and analyzes how Uruguay's electoral system has affected party life and, in turn, democracy. He argues that Uruguay's unusual double simultaneous vote, which allows parties to run multiple candidates for the same office, has encouraged internal party fractionalization, which in turn helped contribute to the erosion of democracy before 1973, even though the leading parties did not support the coup. The issue of electoral arrangements in new democracies, or in countries that now face the challenge of reconstructing democracy, is an interesting one that deserves more attention. Lamounier (1986), Linz (1984), Rial (1985b), and A. Valenzuela (1985) have made important contributions to this debate. The recent collection edited by Nohlen and Rial (1986) suggests that this debate is richer in Uruguay than in Brazil, Argentina, or Chile.

There is a fundamental consensus about the high level of continuity in the traditional parties between 1973 and 1985 (see Rial, 1983, 1984, and 1985a; Gillespie 1985; González 1984; Mieres 1984). From 1973 until 1980, this continuity resulted largely from the "frozen" political situation; the repression greatly inhibited party life and decimated the leftist parties. Minority fractions of both traditional parties supported the coup; this situation would lead to the curious result that, with the advent of political

liberalization, within both parties some leaders firmly opposed the military government and others supported it. In contrast to Argentina, the hegemonic faction within the Uruguayan armed forces did not have a "refoundational" project that involved radically restructuring the character of the society. For this reason, the government never suppressed the traditional parties, even though President Bordaberry wished to do so in 1976.

After the military lost the 1980 plebiscite, a relatively protracted transition to democracy began, culminating in the return to civilian rule in 1985 (see González 1983 and Gillespie 1986). Compared with Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay has the highest degree of continuity in the parties and the party system when one contrasts the pre- and post-authoritarian periods. The important new development is the coming together of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front), a coalition of leftist parties, as a third electoral force. It is, however, questionable that this continuity is a blessing for Uruguayan politics. "The cost of party inactivity during the long decade in terms of the traditional parties' capacity to govern is high. Both traditional parties have difficulties in capturing the changes in the society. Although they continue penetrating the social web, they do so with the 'old society' in mind; they fail to internalize the existence of new situations that appeared (or at least became manifest) during the period when they were 'frozen'" (Rial 1984, p. 20; see also Mieres 1984). The parties have a view of society that corresponds to the 1940s, not to the mid-1980s. On balance, the same problems that plagued the parties in the second half of the 1960s and first years of the 1970s still exist--a viewpoint that leads Rial to conclude that the chances for avoiding a repetition of the pre-1973 scenario are not good.

### Comparative Studies

Despite the many fine recent contributions to the literature on parties in Latin America, much still remains to be done. A particularly noticeable lacuna involves the area of comparative studies. As a result of this lacuna, some important singularities in party life are overlooked, while at times features that are not unique are presented as such. Illustrative of the former tendency is Chalmers' interesting 1977 piece, which lumps all Latin American parties in the same basket, overlooking critical differences. His characterization of Latin American parties ("a limited role in decision making," etc.) is surely misleading for the Chilean case before the 1973 coup. To a lesser extent, this characterization is also misleading for the cases of Uruguay and Venezuela (see Levine 1973; Levine forthcoming). Illustrative of the latter problem is Kinzo's assertion that the Brazilian authoritarian regime was distinct because it maintained elections and parties; we know that this is true of many authoritarian regimes (Hermet, Rose, and Rouquié 1978).

Rather, the unusual feature of the Brazilian regime was that beginning 1974, the military allowed parties and elections to become gradually more meaningful as a part of the slow and cautious liberalization process.

Among the works analyzed in this review, the most theoretically sophisticated authors (Cavarozzi, González, Keck, Lamounier, Rial, the Valenzuelas, for example) draw upon comparative references, but without extensive explicit comparative work. The earlier comparative work of Alexander (1973) is weak, as is Duff (1985), and McDonald (1971) is outdated.

There are, however, two notable recent comparative works, as well as the earlier contribution of Kaufman (1977). De Riz's suggestive article (1986) focuses on the relationship between state and parties in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay. De Riz argues that in two of these countries (Chile and Uruguay), political parties have played a key role in political mediations. In Chile, in fact, they have been, following Garretón's (1981) expression, the "backbone" of political life, dominating other political expressions until 1973. In Uruguay, too, parties have played a key role in political mediation. But in sharp contrast to the Chilean cases here the parties are relatively amorphous, with no outstanding class or ideological cleavages. Also in contrast to Chile, in Uruguay unions and other major political actors were not so pervasively marked by partisan debates and cleavages.

Parties have historically been less central political actors in Argentina and Brazil. In terms of social structure, Argentina historically was relatively similar to Chile and Uruguay, but never consolidated a stable system of parties in the way that the other two countries did. The counterpart to the fragility of political parties has been the strength of corporative organizations, especially the unions and the armed forces. Finally, Brazil is characterized, above all, by the weakness of parties vis-à-vis the state. But in contrast to Argentina, here it is not only the parties that are weak; civil society as a whole is. And also in contrast to Argentina, politics remained largely limited to elite struggles.

The most notable shortcoming of De Riz's analysis is a puzzling contradiction in her argument. In an early section, the author writes (pp. 663-664), "What stands out in a first approximation to the problem is the relative weakness of the parties with respect to the state," generalizing to all four countries. Certainly it is true, as she emphasizes, that in all four societies, the state has played a more central role in the development process and in political life than was the case in the classical European and North American cases. Nevertheless, in comparative perspective, the relative importance and strength of parties in Uruguay and Chile stand out--as the author herself notes in the second half of the article.

Kaufman (1977) also contrasts Latin American parties along major dimensions, rather than lumping parties into one excessively undifferentiated category. Working on seven countries, he develops three main classifications: countries where parties were formed by the caudillo struggles of the nineteenth century (Colombia, Uruguay); countries where parties have strong roots in group associations (Argentina, Chile, Venezuela); and "center-dominant" party systems (Brazil, Mexico). The essay is characteristically well done, but it also has some problems. The issue of party strength and centrality in political life, so important to De Riz's formulation, is less clear in Kaufman, who understates the centrality of parties in Uruguay's political system and overstates it for Argentina. He characterizes the Argentina-Chile-Venezuela group as promoting the most reformist policies (pp. 135-142), when Uruguay fits this bill the most. The characterization of Brazil as a no-party system is off-base. Whereas Kaufman groups Chile and Argentina together, De Riz compellingly claims that the similarities between Chile and Uruguay are more significant.

The other noteworthy comparative study is Remmer (1984), an impressive analysis of the development of the party systems in Argentina and Chile, and of the impact on public policy caused by this development. Without neglecting similarities in the party systems of the two countries, Remmer devotes most of her attention to analyzing and explaining differences, beginning with the pre-1890 period. In Chile, the stable national political system allowed for earlier acceptance of the principle of the legitimacy of organized opposition. By the 1870s, a tradition of peaceful competition for office had developed; after 1891, this tradition facilitated the transition to a system of party competition. In contrast, in Argentina parties did not grow out of an institutionalized system of elite competition, but rather as a challenge to governmental authority. Pressures for the introduction of a competitive regime met greater elite resistance, leading to a sharp polarization between government and opposition.

With the important exception of the working-class parties, Chilean parties evolved out of established parliamentary factions that gradually expanded their organizational networks. In contrast, party development in Argentina involved the mobilization of political opposition against the ruling oligarchy. This struggle created stronger incentives for the organization of popular support than in Chile. In contrast to the fluid, clientelistic parties that evolved in Chile between 1891 and 1924, in Argentina there was a profound antagonism between government and opposition. Political life in Argentina involved a much higher proportion of the population in Argentina than in Chile, largely because the conflict between competing political parties provided stronger incentives to expand the scope of participation.

Having traced salient differences in party developments in the first half of the book, Remmer devotes the second half to examining how the development of a competitive party system affected political recruitment and public policy. Her basic argument is that political recruitment and public policy changed considerably in Argentina, but did not change significantly in Chile. In Argentina, there was a sharp decline in the percentage of federal representatives who were aristocrats; in Chile, there was no such decline, and perhaps even an increase in the domination of traditional families. In Chile, public policy changed in ways beneficial to elites; in Argentina, no major changes of this type occurred. In Chile, the competitive party system impeded rather than promoted state action on behalf of subordinate groups; in Argentina, the opposite occurred.

The conclusion, that democratic political regimes may fail to equalize access to political power and may even have negative consequences for subordinate groups, is of patent theoretical importance. If her argument is correct, the implications for those who assume that democracy will have positive distributive results are disappointing. Remmer attributes the differential impacts of the emergence of a competitive party system to two main factors. First, the scope of political participation was much broader in Argentina than in Chile, so there were fewer pressures for social reform in the latter. Second, the absence of significant ideological cleavages in the pre-1930 Chilean party system blocked the articulation of popular sector interests.

### Conclusions

Like some other subjects (especially democracy), the treatment of political parties by social scientists and historians has a somewhat cyclical history. The recent wave of interest in parties is not the first; in the early 1960s, coinciding with the last "democratic cycle" in Latin America, parties were an object of some research, although not of the quality and quantity of recent years. This suggests an initial question: do the current studies differ in significant ways from the previous round? Or are we simply reinventing the wheel?

Certainly some earlier studies continue to be relevant and interesting--though often neglected. Some of the tendencies to reinvent the wheel could be avoided through greater familiarity with these earlier works. Packerham's studies on the legislature stand out as an example; the contemporary "true-believers" in strong parliaments (for example, Herrera 1984, Storani and Raimundi 1984) would do well to be reminded that not only is the emergence of strong parliaments unlikely, at least in presidential systems, but also that strengthening legislatures by no means ensures juster policies.



Nevertheless, many recent studies go beyond the literature of the 1950s and 1960s. A first general difference between the 1980s and 1960s studies on political parties is that in contrast to the earlier period, Latin American intellectuals are playing the leading role in the current analyses of parties. To be sure, North Americans have produced fine scholarship on Latin American parties, but Latin Americans have been at the forefront. This means more than a simple shift in geographic leadership. Between the early 1960s and the present, Latin American social science underwent fundamental changes, assuming for the first time ever significance at a world level, perhaps above all for its contributions on dependency and authoritarianism. One can quarrel with many of the analyses produced on these two subjects; indeed even in Latin America there has been a clear trend away from the kinds of analysis that prevailed fifteen years ago. Nevertheless, the analyses of dependency and authoritarianism produced some salutary effects that continue to mark the current studies on parties. Most important, there is an enhanced awareness of the distinct character of Latin American social structures, of the difficulty of creating stable democratic regimes, of the impossibility of reproducing the classical U.S. or Northern European patterns of development.

Many of the 1950s and early 1960s studies on parties were marked by an implicit ethnocentrism--parties should be like they are in Europe or the U.S.--that is generally absent from the current studies. Among the many fine current works, there is a clear (though also generally implicit) understanding that, just as Latin American societies have distinctive social structures, so are they likely to have distinctive parties and party structures. The emergence of the kind of highly disciplined and well organized European parties analyzed in the classic works of Michels (1959) and Duverger (1964) is unthinkable. In most countries the parties are not likely to be organizations that set the political agendas; rather, they are likely to be somewhat subordinate to the state, relatively diffuse in their ideologies, and relatively prone towards clientelism (see Rels 1983; Chalmers 1977). In terms of their ideologically diffuse character, Latin American parties are likely to be closer to parties in the U.S. than to European parties. But the U.S. parties are much less subordinate to the state than parties in most Latin American countries. Moreover, although parties in all democratic systems engage in clientelistic practices, these practices are more pervasive in most Latin American countries than in Europe or the United States.

A second important feature of the leading studies of the current wave is the attention paid to the relationship between parties, the state, and political regimes. The fundamental questions asked about parties have changed. Most of the earlier round of party studies was characterized by the functionalist problématique of the late 1950s and

early 1960s. In theory, functionalism could ask what I consider the most important questions about parties: How do parties function? What is their role in the political system? However, there was a tendency for ethnocentrism to obscure the issues. Today, intellectuals are asking how parties relate to other leading political actors, particularly the state and other parties. Rather than assuming that parties will be at the center of political life, intellectuals are asking if they are and, where not, searching for explanations. No doubt this characterization is in part prescriptive: this is the direction I would favor for party studies. Yet the works of Cavarozzi, González, Lamounier, Rial, Souza, and the Valenzuelas show that this kind of concern is salient for some leading thinkers.

A third new tendency, still inchoate because of the lack of more comparative studies, is to pay more attention to the differing roles of parties in different countries within Latin America. Even some of the most perceptive works of the 1960s and 1970s overgeneralized about the nature of parties in Latin America. Certainly it is true that most parties in most countries are personalistic; employ many clientelistic mechanisms; do not represent clear class, religious, or ethnic cleavages; etc. But such platitudes suffer from two problems. On the one hand, one frequently senses that there is a view that "normal" parties in "normal" democracies are not personalistic, do not employ clientelistic mechanisms, and do represent interests along clear cleavage lines. In fact, the enormous variety of parties in stable democratic regimes undermines this commonplace view. The United States is the obvious example, but even in some polities where parties are structured around clear cleavages, personalities are important and clientelism is widespread. Italy, in particular, stands out as a country known for a combination of sharp ideological cleavages and widespread clientelism.

On the other hand, these generalizations tend to obfuscate important differences among Latin American parties and party systems. The Chilean parties and party system, for example, diverge more from the common stereotypes about Latin American parties than do parties in the United States. Moreover, although one could correctly characterize parties in both Uruguay and Brazil as being clientelistic, such a statement misses profound differences in the centrality of parties in the two political systems. Or, to provide another example, although parties in both Argentina and Brazil have suffered from being weak actors in the political systems, the reasons for this problem are quite different in the two cases: in Argentina parties have been overshadowed by strong corporative actors in a praetorian society; in Brazil they, along with the rest of civil society, have been overshadowed by the state.

Despite the pressing need for more comparative works on parties, an awareness of the problems of generalizing about Latin America as a whole is present in many recent studies about parties. Today, one finds greater concern with understanding specificities of the various countries. This tendency must, however, be strengthened through more explicitly comparative work aimed at understanding similarities and differences, not only within Latin America, but also relative to the United States and Europe.

In reviewing recent contributions on parties in these four countries, one is impressed by the apparent degree of continuity in party practices. Even where the social structure changed in fundamental ways during the period of authoritarian rule, as in Argentina (because of deindustrialization and economic decline) or Brazil (because of rapid industrialization, urbanization, capitalization of the countryside, and economic expansion), parties seem to have many of the same features as they did in the previous democratic regime. In the Brazilian case, this continuity exists alongside a sharp change in the party system, which bears little resemblance to the pre-1964 party system. Continuities are particularly marked in Uruguay, a fact which is not surprising considering the "frozen" character of Uruguay's social structures and, if one goes by Perelli and Rial (1985), by the aspirations of the majority of the population to return to the 1950s' social democracy.

To be sure, there are some changes and modifications in the party systems. In Brazil, as Keck (1986) indicates, the PT represents a real innovation. The dominant parties, however, appear to be guided by practices and a logic that is not terribly different from that of the pre-1964 period, notwithstanding the formation of new political actors that might support more consistent, less clientelistic parties.

In Argentina the Radical Party has undergone some changes, even though Acuña (1984) is probably correct in suggesting that the changes are less significant than the continuities. What has changed in Argentina is the way key political actors perceive the two leading parties. Today, progressive intellectuals are more often aligned with the Radicals; in 1973, they were almost unanimously aligned with the Peronists. Parts of the popular classes have also realigned with the Radicals. These changes in alignments, however, probably overstate the real change in the Radical Party. Finally, in Uruguay, the existence of the Frente Amplio implies the presence of a party aware of the need to effect a break with the past.

If my reading of the relative continuity from the past is correct, it suggests a leading question for future research: how are these kinds of parties and practices likely to affect the new democracies? Again, the question is not an easy one to answer. There is reason for skepticism about the oft-repeated formula (for example, Duverger 1964) that

strong parties are needed for a stable democracy. The notion of a "strong" party is used in different and sometimes contradictory ways; moreover, the formula might be misleading. To the limited extent that "strong" parties have emerged in Latin America, they have been the result of, rather than a prerequisite for, stable democracy. (Cuba is a possible exception here, being a country where a party has played a reasonably important role despite the absence of democracy; this is because of the fundamentally different nature of the official party in Marxist-Leninist states.) In other words, it is not necessary for developed parties to exist to inaugurate a democratic regime, even though parties surely play an important role in consolidated democracies.

Moreover, the experiences of Chile and Uruguay serve to warn us against generalizations about the capacity of well established parties to sustain democratic regimes. While one could attribute the vicissitudes of democracy in Argentina and Brazil in part to the absence of political parties capable of channeling, representing, and expressing conflicting interests, the breakdown of democracy in Chile and Uruguay cannot be attributed to the absence of such parties. Despite the sharp differences between parties in Chile and Uruguay, in both countries, parties and parliament functioned as integral elements of the political system. In neither country did the existence of such parties prevent the collapse of democratic regimes. Note that I am not denying the responsibility of party leaders in the breakdown of democracy in both countries. Rather, I am arguing that the problem was not, as Huntington (1968) and others would have it, one of weak institutions, incapable of channeling political conflict. Strong parties are neither prerequisites for democracy in the early phases, nor sufficient to ensure its preservation.

Nevertheless if over a period of time, parties capable of representing different and broad social sectors do not emerge, I find it hard to imagine that a democratic system could attain stability. For parties continue to be important channels of representation in political democracies.<sup>8</sup> Many kinds of parties can sustain democratic regimes, but where parties are underdeveloped, other actors that are not constituted in democratic ways (such as the armed forces and other corporations) are likely to be more important. And tendencies towards personalistic leadership, likely to be important even in stable democracies, are apt to be more pronounced where parties are thoroughly subordinate. Under these conditions, legitimacy and stability are likely to suffer and democracy is likely to fail once again.

### Notes

1. I place "national interests" in quotation marks because of the controvertible character of the expression. What constitutes the "national interest" is, of course, highly open to debate, and depends on where a given actor sits and how he/she perceives the world. Nevertheless, different actors frequently invoke the notion of "national interest" to justify their own actions. The anti-partisan elements found in most Latin American societies generally see parties as voicing particularistic concerns to the detriment of some common good. Many politicians engaged in practices that made such anti-party sentiments understandable.
2. This renewed attention is evident when one reads the 1980 review article of Martz. She argued that there were few studies of merit on Latin American parties, somewhat overstating the case but nonetheless pointing out a real lacuna. In the intervening years, many important works were produced.
3. Although I do not develop the point here, there were important differences in the timing of the reorganization of parties depending above all on the nature of the authoritarian regime and the kind of transition. In general terms, extremely repressive regimes with a refoundational project (Argentina) attempted to suppress political parties entirely, making it difficult for them to function after the collapse of the previous democratic regime. Less repressive regimes (Brazil) were not as relentless in their attacks on parties. More protracted transitions, based partly on allowing increasing party competition (Brazil), enabled parties to assume a more important role than in the transitions that occurred more quickly, resulting from the collapse of the military regime (Argentina). For a typology of different kinds of transitions during this recent period, see Mainwaring and Viola (1985); and Mainwaring and Share (1986).
4. The debate on the breakdown of democratic regimes is extensive. Fundamental works are Linz and Stepan (1978), Collier (1979), O'Donnell (1973), and Santos (1987).
5. In the typology of transitions to democracy Eduardo Viola and I developed (1985), we considered the ability of an authoritarian regime to create a party that can compete well in the first democratic elections the decisive feature that distinguishes transitions such

as the Brazilian one from other negotiated transitions where the authoritarian regime has less popular support. See also Mainwaring and Share (1986).

6. For another important discussion of the dilemmas of opposition parties in the context of authoritarian regimes, see Linz (1977).
7. Although she understands the abertura in terms of the relationship between the regime and the opposition, Alves (1985) also analyzes the 1964-1974 period largely in terms of the military's ideology. Internal military divisions and the impact of the opposition on the military receive less attention than in Kinzo's study. For an excellent overview of the relationship between regime and opposition during this period, see Velasco e Cruz and Estevam Martins (1983).
8. I am skeptical about the applicability to Latin America of some of the literature that foresees a decline of parties. In his provocative essay, Offe (1983) argues that parties are becoming less central political actors in the advanced capitalist countries, as corporatist mechanisms and new social movements gain ground (see also Offe 1985). This argument certainly has merit in the European context. Santos (1985) attempts to generalize the argument to Latin America, where parties never "exercised a monopoly of political representation," as he claims. Territorial representation remains a central part of democratic politics, so it is difficult to imagine a stable democracy without parties that can channel and articulate a reasonably broad range of interests.

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