KELLOGG INSTITUTE
THE HELEN KELLOGG INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA ANOTHER VIEW

Daniel H. Levine
Jose E. Molina

Working Paper #342–November 2007

THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

ANOTHER VIEW*

Daniel H. Levine

Jose E. Molina

Working Paper #342–November 2007

Daniel H. Levine is James Orin Murfin Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan. He has also been chair of the Department of Political Science and director of the Program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. He has published widely on issues of religion and politics, democracy, and social movements in Latin America. His books include *Conflict and Political Change in Venezuela*, *Religion and Politics in Latin America, Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America, Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism,* and *Constructing Culture and Power in Latin America.* He has also published numerous articles and chapters in books.

José Enrique Molina Vega is a professor at the Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Derecho Público of the University of Zulia, Venezuela. He was visiting professor and lecturer in the Department of Political Science at the University of Michigan (1999–2006). His publications include: *Los Partidos Políticos Venezolanos del Siglo XXI* (coedited with Angel Alvarez); "Venezuela," coauthored with B. Thibaut, in Dieter Nohlen, ed., *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook, Vol. 2, South America*; "La Democracia en América Latina: Éxito o Fracaso," coauthored with Valia Pereira, in *Cuestiones Políticas* 37; "The Unraveling of Venezuela's Party System: From Party Rule to Personalistic Politics and Deinstitutionalization," in Jennifer McCoy and David Myers, eds., *The Unraveling of Representative Democracy in Venezuela,* as well as various journal articles and book chapters. He holds a PhD from the University of London (London School of Economics and Political Science).

*The authors are grateful for comments on earlier drafts of this article from Scott Mainwaring, Mark Jones, Claudio Holzner, Leticia Ruiz, and Fátima Garcia.

ABSTRACT

Studies of democracy in Latin America have gone beyond attention to transitions and consolidation to a concern with developing reliable comparative assessments of the quality of democracy. This requires conceptualization of democracy in multi-dimensional terms; quality of democracy is a continuum that varies along a range of related dimensions: electoral decision, participation, responsiveness, accountability, and sovereignty. Working with these dimensions, an index of quality of democracy in Latin America is developed that provides for comparison between countries and for a richer analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of democracy within each country. Appropriate data include expert assessments, aggregate statistics, and opinion surveys.

RESUMEN

Los estudios sobre la democracia en América Latina han ido más allá de la atención a las transiciones y la consolidación y han desarrollado una preocupación por el desarrollo de evaluaciones comparativas confiables sobre la calidad de la democracia. Esto requiere concebir a la democracia en términos multidimensionales. La calidad de la democracia es un continuo que varía dentro de un rango de dimensiones relacionadas: la decisión electoral, la participación, la respuesta a la voluntad popular, la responsabilidad y la soberanía. Trabajando con estas dimensiones, se desarrolla un índice de la calidad de la democracia en América Latina que permite la comparación entre países y un análisis más rico de las fortalezas y las debilidades de la democracia dentro de cada país. Los datos incluyen estimaciones de expertos, estadísticas agregadas y encuestas de opinión.

As civilian democratic political systems have survived and consolidated throughout Latin America, the central focus of academic work on democracy in the region has also shifted, moving away from preoccupation with "transitions" and consolidation to address concerns about the quality of the newly established or reestablished political systems, and a renewed focus on the reform and operation of core institutions including electoral and judicial systems (Beetham 2004; Diamond and Morlino 2005; Mainwaring and Hagopian 2005; O´Donnell 2004a and 2004b; Powell 2004; Rueschemeyer 2004). This change in academic focus tracks reality in important ways: militaries are out of government; human rights are (with some exceptions) more respected; civil wars are over except in Colombia.

This emerging literature is often critical of democracies in the region as low in quality on the grounds that they do not deliver good or effective government, or that they have not been able to improve the ordinary living situation of most of their citizens. The conflation of democracy as political process with good government as a set of policies and results is a common theme. The United Nations Development Program, for example, identifies the success of democracy very closely with the delivery of good government and policies that promote development and social justice (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2004). The convergence of new democracies with hard economic times, and the extent to which, as Smith puts it, democracy has survived by being "tamed" gives substance to these concerns (Smith 2005).

The tendency to conflate democracy with good government is understandable but draws analysis in too many directions. Although the two are not only desirable but also necessary, the value of each can be understood more clearly if they are kept analytically distinct. Good or less good democracy is one thing, and good or less good government is quite another: democratic governments may deliver poor results and this may undermine their position; authoritarian governments may deliver good results without thereby acquiring democratic legitimacy (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi 2000).

Even a very responsive government may follow policies overwhelmingly supported by its citizens that then end up not producing the expected results.

Democratic legitimacy rests on a tacit pact between citizens and government. Citizens acknowledge by their participation that governments have a right to rule and a right to claim allegiance; governments (and leaders) acknowledge that this right is ultimately subject to citizen approval. Concern with legitimacy means centering analytical attention on the procedures in place for choosing, controlling, and influencing governments and policy making: the operative rules of the game (formal institutions and informal norms) and the rights associated with them. Two further elements are required for legitimacy to be democratic: citizenship that is inclusive and conditions of organization and participation that are open and accessible.

Any set of political procedures and institutions must be situated within the social order in ways that facilitate assessment of the extent to which access and participation (by individuals and organized social groups, directly or through representatives) are available on an unhindered and free and equal basis throughout the social order. This directs analysis to civil society and more broadly to conditions of organization and access to information, and also to the institutional means and procedures for representation: electoral systems, legislatures, regional and local governments.

A PROCEDURAL DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

Procedural definitions of democracy rest on a liberal and pluralist understanding of politics and the political process. Democracy is envisioned as a system of representation, with universal adult participation according to open and equal rights and rules. A focus on procedures and on the rights necessary for them to operate as designed centers attention on the conditions and process for deciding who rules, and on how groups and individuals can operate to influence government decision making. This definition, and the concept of quality that stems from it, locate legitimacy in conditions for political participation, competition, and accountability and not in the "substantive" content of the policies

implemented by the government, unless the latter encroach upon or promote the former. Competition is important, and recent work (Anderson and Dodd 2005; Hagopian 2005) affirms that more competition engenders more engaged participation. Competition can of course take place in oligarchic and restrictive settings. Analysis of competition must be set in a context of open access, participation, and accountability. Intense electoral competition and close results are not defining conditions of democracy: what makes a system democratic is that conditions exist (as defined by Dahl 1971) for competition that is free and fair. Analysis of levels of the quality of democracy thus entails evaluation of the effective conditions of organization, access and competition, but not the level of competition as such.[1]

Procedural definitions of democracy are attractive because they have clear boundaries and are portable from case to case. But they quickly run into difficulties if the motivations and institutional channels specified in the definition are not linked clearly to surrounding society. Elections and electoral systems provide an important entry point, but these too must be situated in a full social context, with attention not only to formal rules of representation but also to factors that affect the flow of information and access to it, along with the conditions of organization and barriers to entry that groups and candidates face as they contemplate democratic political participation. This is not as simple a problem to solve as it may appear at first glance.

Many recent writings on the quality of democracy provide lists of attributes and conditions and almost all trace quality of democracy back to issues of rights and how these rights are situated in society and in key institutions (electoral, judicial, and administrative). There is a broad acknowledgement that for procedural democracy to work—and procedures to be meaningful—there must be inclusive citizenship, access to the political arena that is open on clear and relatively equal lines to individuals and groups, freedom of information and organization, and formal as well as informal means of ensuring accountability. But with rare exceptions (Beetham 2004; Hagopian 2005; Powell 2004; Rueschemeyer 2004) these are left as un-theorized questions. To

theorize the question means to take the connection between political procedures and the surrounding social order as itself a prime focus for inquiry. This requires that, at a minimum, we examine prevailing conditions of organization (including formal rules as well as cultural norms, access to information, and access to organizations beyond the local level, including transnational linkages) and the nature of public space and access to it, and take a fresh look at the question of representation, both official and nonofficial. It is not enough to attribute political difficulties or low quality of democracy simply to the continuing presence of non- or pre-democratic holdovers, elements that provide the underpinnings for an informal, shadow system of rules alongside the formal, legal ones on view in constitutions and regulations. The origins of these working rules and the reasons for persistence must also be specified, and their impact on connections between politics and the broader social order laid out as clearly as possible (Philip 2003; Smith 2005).

Issues of representation and its relation to civil society warrant a closer look. How representation is provided for is critical to the operation of any democratic society beyond the size of a small group or town meeting. Despite the popularity of innovations ranging from referenda and *cabildos abiertos* (open meetings) to participatory budgeting, more conventional arrangements for representation remain critical to the quality of democracy. Such "arrangements" include formal, legal, and sometimes constitutional provisions as well as informal rules and norms that give shape and meaning to the relation between representatives and those they presumably represent. Important issues here include possible elements of discrimination such as race, gender, or ethnicity, district shape and magnitude, electoral systems and the extent to which they translate votes into seats in an unbiased manner, the number of offices actually subject to election and available as sites for lobbying and pressure, and the relation between organized civil society and political representation.

In the recent experience of many Latin American countries, expectations that civil society would flourish with democracy and, in the process, provide a source for a

new kind of politics, have foundered. Despite widely shared expectations that a newly active civil society would make representation more authentic or of higher quality, the results have been if anything contrary: notable declines of civil society and systems of representation that remain unresponsive when not in fact clearly providing fewer opportunities for voice and access. These expectations foundered as a result of inadequate attention to the links between civil society groups and individuals and political institutions and their leaders.

Groups of different class and economic situation share a common difficulty in finding stable and reliable representation. Middle-class groups need to rely on shifting electoral alliances and on media power to counter an entrenched state apparatus. The poor are even more dependent than ever on that same state. Mobilization by poor people is less tied to organization than to the perception of weaknesses in dominant institutions that offers short-term opportunities for pressing claims. Lack of independent resources makes such claims hard to sustain. The result is a pattern (all too visible in recent Latin American experience) of sporadic outbursts of activity along with continued vulnerability and dependence on populist leaders (Avritzer 2002; Levine and Romero 2006; Oxhorn 2001; Piven and Cloward 1998).

Concerns about representation must be set in a context that pays attention to how citizens acquire the skills and capabilities that make access to power possible—to empower them and in the process to enhance the "quality" and "authenticity" of representation, which entail more than the assurance that electoral results reflect votes accurately and fairly, according to whatever electoral rules are in place. Assuming universal suffrage and free, fair, and frequent elections, representation that is authentic and of high quality further requires lowering barriers to organization, multiplying instances and arenas of political action, making voting easier and representatives more accountable and more accessible. The goal of such reforms is to link emerging social spaces and networks to the institutional structures of the political systems in ways that allow social energies to "bubble up" and find representation (Avritzer 2002). The

theoretical challenge here is to rethink the relations between social movements and political representation in ways that preserve the energy and openness of both. The practical challenge is to confront the resulting dilemmas of disempowerment faced by many citizen movements in ways that limit the damage to the possibilities of activism and open, representative politics (Levine and Romero 2006). Addressing both of these challenges requires attention not to civil society alone, but also to the character of political leadership, institutions, and the kinds of ties that connect civil society with politics.

INFORMED ELECTORAL DECISION, POLICY DECISION MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Following Dahl (1998), we take democracy to be a process by which the citizenry decides who will lead the executive and integrate the legislature, and has the power to remove them and influence their decisions under the following conditions: a) government is actually in the hands of elected officials; b) there are free, fair, and frequent elections; c) there is freedom of expression; d) there is free access to alternate sources of information; e) there is freedom of organization and assembly and associational autonomy; f) there is inclusive citizenship and there are no discriminatory barriers to electoral and political participation.[2] Understood in this way, the quality of democracy is not a zero-sum phenomenon, but rather a range, from minimally acceptable to best possible conditions on a range of theoretical concerns and empirical indicators

The preceding considerations lay the basis for a working definition of quality of democracy: *the quality of democracy is given by the extent to which citizens can exercise informed participation in processes of free, fair, and frequent elections and influence the taking of public policy decisions, and by the extent to which those who make decisions are accountable and responsive to popular will.* Each of these elements presupposes the existence of rights specifically associated with the activities involved, and which are considered integral to each area. An advantage of treating rights in this fashion and not as

a separate dimension (Diamond and Morlino 2005) is that the rights included are those directly linked to quality of democracy. Making rights in general a separate dimension runs the risk of stepping over into evaluation of government policies and "quality of governance," and thus beyond quality of democracy. The problems raised by a general focus on rights are visible in Freedom House, whose indicators are commonly used in evaluations of the quality of democracy (Smith 2005; Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999: 62; Mainwaring 1999: 22; Altman and Pérez-Liñán 2002; Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 173–209). Freedom House has "economic freedom, private property" as one of the "civil liberties" it uses for its evaluation of freedom and democracy. But however desirable full economic freedom might be—and this is a basic element of disagreement between left and right—it is better regarded as a field for policy decision and government evaluation, and not as inherent to the quality of democracy. Linking democracy to a particular economic system could unfairly reduce the chances of polities with leftist parties in government being considered high-quality democracies. The same could be said about other freedoms as long as they are not directly linked to the procedural components of democracy.

Our definition of the quality of democracy encompasses five conceptual dimensions: 1) Electoral Decision; 2) Participation; 3) Responsiveness; 4.) Accountability; and 5) Sovereignty. Although they are analytically distinct, much of the scholarly literature (Diamond and Morlino 2005) considers them to be closely related in theory as in practice.

Electoral decision: Elections—free, fair, frequent, competitive, and meaningful (that is, which lead to the selection of officials who do exercise power)—are at the heart of procedural definitions of democracy, and constitute its minimal requirement. Beyond pointing to a minimum, the requirement that electoral decisions be free, fair, competitive, and meaningful allows us to specify a range that runs from minimal to optimal. One aspect that is particularly open to variation, and thus to the measurement of quality, has

to do with available informational resources, including access to multiple sources of information along with measures of the educational level of the population. For decisions to be informed, elections must be open and competitive with fair and low barriers to access by citizens and organizations. There must be relatively easy access to multiple sources of information, as measured both directly (with reference to the state of the media) and indirectly (through indicators of education). Measures of campaign finance and campaign finance control (if any) are relevant here in so far as they indicate the extent to which the playing field is "level."

The quality of democracy depends directly on citizens having the highest possible and the most equal level of information necessary for political participation, what Dahl (1998: 97) refers to as "enlightened understanding." The more equal and abundant the distribution of cognitive resources, the more likely resulting political choices and decisions are to reflect the interest of the citizenry, and the more likely the citizens are to be able to make those decisions knowing the potential consequences. The level at which cognitive resources such as education and information are equally available is a key determinant of the level in which the citizenry can make an informed political decision, and therefore a key determinant of the quality of democracy. The extent to which cognitive political resources are equally available is a good indicator of substantive political equality, linked directly to social and economic equality (Lijphart 1999: 182; Diamond and Morlino 2005; Rueschemeyer 2004). If formal political equality (one person-one vote) is a minimal requirement of democracy, substantive political equality as determined by the distribution of cognitive resources among the population is an indicator of the quality of democracy, given its direct linkage to one of its crucial elements: "the level by which the electorate can make informed political decisions." The inclusion of this dimension allows us to incorporate aspects of political equality that go beyond the minimal procedural requirements for democracy.

Our approach differs from the recent literature in several respects. The rule of law is often considered as a dimension of democracy in general (Diamond and Morlino 2005;

O'Donnell 2004a and 2004b). In line with our focus on procedure, we restrict analysis of the rule of law to specific elements of the political process of democracy. The extent to which the law is fairly and effectively enforced in a country impacts the exercise of the rights linked to the dimensions of the quality of democracy—the extent by which political actors can achieve free and fair elections, exercise political freedoms, and have access to state institutions on an equal basis. We look to how the rule of law is institutionalized, and thus to the effectiveness of rights, and political rights in particular.

We also incorporate values, which are rarely considered as elements of the quality of democracy. Diamond and Morlino (2005: xiv) mention values as a condition for the development of the rule of law but not as a component of any of the dimensions of the quality of democracy that they cite. Inglehart regards values as a decisive component of the "self-expression syndrome," which he considers to be an explanatory factor for the level of democracy as measured by Freedom House's scores in political rights and civil liberties (Inglehart 2003: 57). The values on which we focus concern tolerance. Levels of tolerance reveal much about how a society meets the conditions for free, fair, competitive, and informed electoral decision-making by the population. Tolerance is also linked to equality: the higher the level of tolerance, the greater the chances that minorities can participate meaningfully as candidates and voters.

Participation: It is through participation that the citizenry chooses its government, controls it, and influences policy making, whether directly or indirectly through representatives. Greater citizen participation in politics creates conditions in which the government and governmental decisions can be considered to represent the will of the citizenry more fully. Democratic participation includes a range of means through which citizens choose and control the government and influence policy making. In most political systems of more than minimal size, participation is channeled through representatives, chosen according to some agreed-on rules, who make decisions on behalf of the population. The quality of democracy is thus influenced by the level of electoral

participation in such choices and the level of citizen involvement in political parties and interest groups that are active in the process.

Formal political representation gains in quality to the extent to which it is set in a rich and open context for citizen activation in groups and movements independent of the state (a core element of most definitions of civil society). Controversy (both political and theoretical) has arisen in connection with efforts to contrast "direct" democracy (through open citizen forums, recalls and referenda, and various provisions intended to ensure representation of civil society in state bodies) with more conventional representative schemes. As a practical matter, it has been difficult to implement such direct democracy schemes in ways that overcome obvious elements of state and leader manipulation, and to get around the problems that size creates for "direct political action." We believe that the connection of civil society to representation is best addressed not through schemes for direct democracy, but rather by attention to the conditions of freedom of organization and expression, and to accountability in its various forms.

Accountability: Accountability directs attention to a range of social and institutional means available in any political system that together make public officials (elected or not) subject to control and possible sanction (Mainwaring 2003). Accountability thus involves the extent to which the citizens can pass judgment and exercise control on government and representatives through elections (vertical accountability); the extent to which the exercise of public office is subject to checks, balances, oversight, and sanctions by other state institutions (horizontal accountability); and the extent to which the population can participate in the legal and political control of government and representatives through mobilization of public pressure (societal accountability).

The spatial metaphor of horizontality or verticality calls attention to alternative and sometimes complementary processes: horizontal accountability as exercised by

institutions in other branches of government (judges, accounting offices, investigative services) and vertical accountability as exercised by citizens through elections and recalls, which provide citizens with forums and means of judging and sanctioning officials (O'Donnell 1994 and 2003). Horizontal accountability has as one of its elements recourse to rule of law and to sanctioned judgments about the legality of government activity. The validity of vertical accountability through elections clearly varies with the quality of the electoral process. Although they are distinct analytically, vertical and horizontal accountability are related and may depend on one another. Our understanding of both is enriched to the extent that we situate them in the context of "societal accountability," which directs attention to the efforts of citizens and organized groups and movements (civil society) that raise issues, change public agendas, press for redress of grievances, organize public demonstrations, and occasionally provide alternative means for monitoring officials and staffing agencies. Conceived in this way, accountability does not require institutionalization or direct links with formal sanctions—electoral, administrative, judicial, financial, or other. The mobilizations of societal accountability may ultimately engage such sanctions, but they are highly flexible and not constrained by institutional calendars. They are "activated 'on demand' and can be directed toward the control of single issues, policies, or functionaries. Like horizontal mechanisms, societal ones can oversee the procedures followed by politicians and public officials while making policy.... [But] ... without the need for social majorities or constitutional entitlements. While vertical accountability is justified by the majoritarian principle, societal accountability derives its legitimacy from the right to petition, a right that does not require the demand to be widespread in the population" (Peruzzoti and Smulovitz 2000: 150).

Responsiveness: Responsiveness refers to the extent to which governments as well as political and group leaders act in accordance with citizen preferences. Responsiveness

distinguishes democratic leadership from leaders who remain in the traditional mold of *caciques* (local bosses), and also from those that during the electoral campaign may say what the public would like to hear, but later take a different direction without bothering to convince the public of the advantages of doing so (Stokes 2001). Powell defines democratic responsiveness as "what occurs when the democratic process induces the government to form and implement policies that citizens want" (2004: 91).

The concept is not without its own complications. Are governments and leaders responsive if they enact policies that in their view respond to long-term interests or is responsiveness best established with reference to the fit between official actions and citizen desires? The distinction—and the argument—has been around at least since Burke. As used here, responsiveness refers to policies, not results. A responsive government might implement policies supported by most of the electorate, but perhaps with bad results, leading to low popularity. Responsiveness to popular will is in any case not necessarily the same as fulfilling electoral promises. A government that convinces the electorate of the need for a policy switch in a direction different from its electoral manifesto, and makes the switch after getting support for it, could be guilty of electoral deceit but not of unresponsiveness.

Sovereignty: Sovereignty refers to the extent to which the elected officials actually call the shots in policy decision making, and are substantially free from control, direct or indirect, from sources that could be considered to be outside the democratic process: international organizations answerable to foreign powers, dominating foreign powers, religious or military leadership. Sovereignty is rarely mentioned in discussions of quality of democracy, but the requirement that those elected "really" govern clearly calls for some measure of sovereignty for officials. External sovereignty points to formal and actual political independence; internal sovereignty to the supremacy of government and the effective implementation of the rule of law. Diamond and Morlino (2005: xxix) consider sovereignty a minimal requirement for democracy rather than a dimension of

the quality of democracy. This makes sovereignty an all-or-nothing phenomenon: without it, democracies do not exist. We believe it is more fruitful and realistic to consider sovereignty as a continuum: democracies may be said to be more or less sovereign, and thus may vary in the extent to which policy decisions should be made by elected officials. The less autonomous a government is with respect to external forces (military or financial or diplomatic) and internal forces (religious, military) the lower the quality of democracy.

CONSIDERATIONS ON MEASUREMENT AND INDICATORS

Most previous work relies on qualitative analysis of elections and rights to classify democracies as either liberal or illiberal (Smith 2005: 11, 19–36, 279–84). An important antecedent of this dichotomy, and indeed of most studies of quality of democracy, is the classification made by Dahl (1971: 248)—using two dimensions, universal suffrage and competitiveness—of polyarchies as "totally inclusive polyarchies" and "quasi polyarchies"). Others rely on Freedom House scores on political and civil rights as the basis for classification (Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999: 62; Altman and Pérez-Liñán 2002; Inglehart 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 175). Freedom House rankings are derived from qualitative analysis done by panels of experts on ten political rights items and fifteen civil rights items. Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz (1999) used Freedom House rankings to classify Latin American democracies as liberal or electoral, a dichotomy broadly equivalent to that proposed by Smith (2005). Inglehart (2003) uses Freedom House rankings as indicators of the level of democracy reached in each country by adding up the scores in political rights and civil liberties. The result is an operationalization of quality of democracy along a continuum that goes from 2 (best) to 14 (worse). We think this method better captures the differences in quality of democracy between the countries than using only a twofold classification. Additionally, the twofold classification based on whether there is a partial or full respect of civil liberties leaves out important dimensions such as responsiveness, accountability, and sovereignty, and also leaves out elements of political equality such as values.

The checklist of items used by Freedom House in its 2006 version (covering developments from December 1, 2004 to November 30, 2005) is extensive, and the fact that even minimal requirement items can be scored on a scale of 0 to 4 gives it flexibility. The items included touch all our dimensions of quality of democracy, except for responsiveness, but fail to include key elements like level of electoral participation, representativeness of elected legislative bodies, level of equality of cognitive resources, values such as tolerance, or societal accountability.[3] Being a survey of freedom not specifically addressed to quality of democracy, Freedom House also includes items that reach beyond the limits of quality of democracy as specified here. These are directed to judging government performance, and they do so from the standpoint of a specific ideology. The anti-left bias in the Freedom House ratings (Mainwaring 1999: 23) is evident in the inclusion of an item that is a standard argument that the political right presses against left-leaning governments: level of economic freedom and respect for private property. This means that if one uses Freedom House scores as indicators of quality of democracy, then the larger the government intervention in the economy the lower the level of democracy, a conclusion that would be unacceptable to the democratic left in Latin America.

The problems with the Freedom House index noted here suggest the utility of an effort to build a set of indicators that address specifically political dimensions of quality of democracy, and that rely as much as possible on direct evidence (from survey or aggregate data) and not on the judgments of panels of experts. Before we move on to build an alternative index which modifies that proposed by Freedom House, it is appropriate to consider the nature of appropriate indicators for each dimension.

Electoral decision: This dimension involves elements central to minimal requirements of democracy: free, frequent, and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, and citizen access to information. Without having free, fair, frequent, and inclusive elections a country cannot

be considered a democracy. But this is not an all-or-nothing matter: there is room for establishing a range of fulfillment along this dimension:

a) Inclusiveness: Beyond the minimum required for democracy to exist, possible extensions of the right to vote to citizens residing out of the country or foreigners with extended residence in the country can be considered as indicators of quality.
b) Frequency: The average time between elections for the national legislature is a useful indicator. The shorter the mandate, the higher the level of citizen control.
c) Free elections: Whether independent candidates are allowed to run, or only parties can nominate candidates is an indicator beyond the minimum.
d) Fairness: This can be assessed through analysis of public opinion, with indicators using questions about whether respondents believe that the elections are fair or fraudulent in a given country. Other relevant indicators of fairness include party access to public funding, and whether the government uses public resources for its campaign.
e) Freedom of the press and multiple sources of information: The greater the access that the politically active sector of the population has to make its case heard by the public, the higher the level of information in the public sphere, the fairer the political process, and the higher the quality of democracy. Freedom House provides a separate index of press freedom, done on the basis of evaluation by experts, which gives the countries scores that go from 0 (best) to 100 (worse). This index could be used as indicator of this important element of quality of democracy, but the caveats made before about the Freedom House index of freedom also apply to this index of freedom of the press.

Beyond analysis of press and media, the level and equality of cognitive resources among the population can be addressed through level of education (average years of education of the adult population or the percentage of the school-age population enrolled in secondary education).

Inglehart (2003) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005) use attitudes towards homosexuals as their prime indicator of tolerance in a given country. In our view, exclusive reliance on this indicator can produce a culturally biased assessment; nations that show high tolerance on this item might be intolerant to other sectors of society such as immigrants, nonbelievers, the poor, blacks, etc. We address tolerance through a scale that includes attitudes to various sectors, which might be different groups in different countries.

Participation: This dimension combines elements of turnout and opportunities to vote with levels of participation in groups and movements, and grades of representativeness.

a) Turnout: The literature tends to use as indicator the percentage of the voting-age population that voted.
b) Depth of the offices (number, type, and level) and issues subject to election: It is useful to build a scale measuring the voting opportunities that the population has actually had in a given period of time.
c) Participation in parties and social organizations: Surveys usually ask people whether they are members of parties and other social organizations; the answer to this question could be taken as indicator of these elements.
d) Representativeness: To indicate the extent by which the different sectors of the population are represented in legislative bodies in proportion to their weight in the population, the statistics developed to measure proportionality (or distortion of proportionality) between the parties' share of the vote and the parties' share of seats seems appropriate (Lijphart 1994). The statistics LSq or D (Lijphart 1994: 58–62) can be used to establish the distortion of representation that results from the distribution of seats in a legislative body in regard not only to parties, but also ethnic groups, social classes, and gender.

Accountability: Indicators of accountability must include horizontal, vertical, and societal accountability and provide a sense of how they are related to one another. Horizontal accountability rests on a balance among branches of government. The presence of an independent legislature and—above all—judiciary, is critical to the process, and the two elements tend to overlap. The general level of corruption is clearly linked to the level of judicial corruption and efficacy. A honest and effective judiciary reduces corruption, while a high level of corruption indicates an impaired judicial system, and makes it unlikely that the judiciary would be an effective instrument for making government accountable. This is why a good general indicator of horizontal accountability, or the lack of it, is the level of corruption in the country as presented by the Corruption Perceptions Index provided by Transparency International[4].

Vertical accountability is conditioned by citizen perceptions about government and politicians, and by citizen ability to gain information and exercise options in free and open elections. Along with issues of freedom, fairness, and frequency of elections, two additional indicators are whether reelection is allowed (and for which offices—executive, legislative, national, regional, and local) , and the level of party system institutionalization in the country. Reelection may be problematic in countries with weak institutions that lack the ability to prevent or punish abuse of power by incumbents, but at the same time they provide a unique opportunity to make incumbents personally accountable. Party system institutionalization, as defined by Mainwaring and Scully (1995), increases the potential for holding incumbents accountable through elections, particularly if reelection is not allowed. They offer a composite index of party system institutionalization: one of the components of their measure (the electoral volatility index developed by Pedersen (1979)) can stand alone as an indicator of party system institutionalization because the extent of stability in the relation of major parties from election to election is usually associated with their levels of organization, legitimacy, and societal penetration.

Societal accountability is difficult to capture with a single indicator, but the empirical meaning of the concept is addressed well by the level of freedom of assembly, association, and petition. One indicator which is commonly used in survey research is the percentage of citizens who engage in activities to resolve community problems or who participate in nongovernmental organizations. We can assume that the more active citizens are in pursuit of solutions for community problems or in the promotion of collective interests, the greater will be the extent of societal influence and control over governments and leaders.

Responsiveness: Indicators of responsiveness capture the degree of fit between public opinion and the actions of leaders and the policies of governments. This entails attention both to specific policies and to general measures of approval of government performance. The extent and use of systems of initiative, recall, and referendum (on paper and in practice) as well as systems of participatory budgeting and related innovations are also relevant. Powell (2004) and Diamond and Morlino (2005) suggest using level of public satisfaction with how democracy is working in the country as an indicator of responsiveness. This measure is widely available and has the advantage of incorporating assessments by the public, but it runs the risk of measuring approval of government more than policy agreement between the public and the government. Other measures of responsiveness include items that tap support for some specific aspects of government policy, or for its general orientation (Diamond and Morlino 2005: xxxi). There is also a measure that we use later here: the level in which the population considers that its actions, and in particular its votes, influence the orientation of public policies. This is appropriate because it gets to the core of the responsiveness issue: whether the government is following policies supported or at least not rejected by the majority of the electorate, when such a majority can be determined (Arrow 1951).

Sovereignty: Sovereignty refers to the extent to which government policy is made by or under effective control of elected officials, or, instead, follows the dictates of external or internal powers not accountable to the population. Two issues are particularly relevant for Latin America: a) *economic policy,* given the fact that international debt has led many countries to accept economic policies dictated by international organizations controlled by the lender countries in exchange for debt refinancing, and b) *civil-military relations,* because the way the transition to democracy was negotiated with military governments, which often included laws guaranteeing substantial autonomy for the military institution as well as immunity from prosecution for crimes including torture, have made an issue of the level at which elected governments are free from direct or indirect undue influence by the military (Smith 2005: 101; Kooning and Kruijt 2003).

We measure economic policy autonomy by the weight of international debt in the economy of the country, because it is to be expected that the larger the weight of such debt, the greater the need for that country to heed the requirements of lenders and transnational finance organizations. On civilian control of the military, it seems appropriate to build a scale using Smith's typology of civil-military relations in Latin America, which has four categories that go from overwhelming military dominance to full civilian control, with two intermediate categories (Smith 2005: 101).

BUILDING AN INDEX

The preceding discussion points to a strategy for building a comparative analysis of the quality of democracy in Latin America that draws on existing work by Freedom House while incorporating new indicators and correcting problems noted earlier in its indices. We add direct measures of aggregate and public opinion data to the evaluations of the expert panels on which Freedom House relies. We also add measures of responsiveness, electoral participation, tolerance, and social accountability. Recourse to multiple sources of information yields a richer portrait of what quality of democracy means in theory

and practice, and moves analysis beyond the dichotomous categorizations or unmatched country studies that remain common in the literature. Should the inclusion of these new items yield a rank-order similar to the one produced by the Freedom House indicators, this will affirm that there is a significant overlap among the dimensions and elements of quality of democracy, and that it is possible to built a comparison base on a limited but comprehensive set of indicators.

To build an index that is more comprehensive and more specifically attuned to the quality of democracy, we begin by incorporating the total scores awarded by Freedom House for political rights and civil liberties [5] into a scale that runs from 0 to 100, based on the "raw points" that Freedom House expert panels accord to each country for each of the twenty-five elements they measure. (See Table 1, column 1).[6] Because this figure is a summary for twenty-five items, in our final calculation we give it the corresponding weight, when we average it with the other seven elements that we add to comprise our index.

Notes for Table 1

[1] Each country is given the maximum number of "raw points" that correspond to its added scores from political rights and civil liberties in the Freedom House Methodology. This estimate is necessary because the exact number of points for each country is not available to us. Freedom House considers a total of twenty-five items, and gives from 0 to 4 points in each. The scores for Venezuela and Brazil have been modified as indicated in the text.

[2] In two-round elections we take the highest turnout. The source is Payne, Zovatto, Mateo Díaz (2006).

[3] Proportionality is calculated by applying the LSq index of disproportionality to the differences between the percentage of seats held by women and men in the lower or unique chamber in comparison with their percentage in the population of each country. For the LSq index of disproportionality see Lijphart (1994: 61). To calculate proportionality we subtracted the disproportionality from 100, as suggested by Rose (1984). The data on women's representation in national parliaments come from: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006, "Women in National Parliaments," available at: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm (updated up to January 31, 2006). The population data comes from: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2005, "Statistical Yearbook for Latin American and the Caribbean, 2004," available at: http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/1/21231/P21231.xml&xsl=/deype/tpl-i/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl-i/top-bottom.xsl.

[4] Proportionality of party representation is calculated for the lower or unique chamber of the national legislature for the election in the year indicated in column 2 (latest election as of June 2005). Proportionality is calculated by the formula: 100-LSq, that is, by subtracting the level of disproportionality from 100, as suggested by Rose (1984). Disproportionality is calculated using the Least-Squares index (Lijphart 1994). The LSq disproportionality data is taken from Payne (2006: 79).

[5] The data for Honduras is not available from the World Bank data. Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (2004) provides information on the percentage of the population with seven to twelve years of education. In this indicator that covers similar information to the one we used, Honduras performs slightly below Guatemala and lower than the other Central American countries. Consequently, we estimate the net secondary enrollment of Honduras to be similar to Guatemala's: 30 percent.

Table 1
INDICATORS OF QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

COUNTRY	Freedom House Added Raw Points (25 items)[1]	Turnout in Presidential Elections[2]	Proportionality of Women's Representation in National Parliaments (100-Lsq)[3]	Proportionality of Party Representation in National Parliaments (100-Lsq)[4]	Cognitive Resources: % of Age Group Enrolled in Secondary Education[5]	Sovereignty (Economic Autonomy)	Responsiveness (Vote Efficacy)	Societal Accountability	Quality of Democracy Index
Uruguay	100	90.6 (2004)	59.7	98.5	72	65.1	85	15	93.3
Chile	100	73.7 (1999)	64.5	94.8	79	75.8	65	12	92.7
Costa Rica	100	60.0 (2002)	86.0	94.8	50	92.7	51	15	92.2
Panama	92	74.4 (2004)	67.2	88.4	63	85.7	61	19	86.2
Brazil	90	76.3 (2002)	58.0	99.1	72	53.2	67	14	83.6
Argentina	87	77.3 (2003)	85.2	91.1	81	71.5	67	13	83.2
Mexico	87	62.8 (2000)	73.6	93.1	60	77.1	66	33	82.6
Dominican Republic	87	63.9 (2004)	68.1	94.3	36	93.6	67	32	82.2
El Salvador	78	57.7 (2004)	59.9	95.1	49	91.2	64	13	75.0
Peru	78	77.1 (2001)	68.6	91.1	69	82.9	56	20	74.9
Bolivia	72	62.2(2002)	66.7	94.4	71	81.4	50	26	70.8
Paraguay	72	47.2 (2003)	60.5	91.5	50	86.5	57	36	70.5
Nicaragua	72	75.4(2001)	70.7	95.5	39	94.2	60	9	69.8
Honduras	72	65.7 (2001)	73.8	97.7	30[5]	92.2	49	12	69.5
Colombia	72	40.8 (2002)	61.5	97.0	54	67.0	62	25	69.1
Ecuador	72	70.8 (2002)	66.2	91.9	50	64.0	48	10	68.5
Venezuela	63	45.1 (2000)	80.1	93.75	59	84.0	74	21	63.6
Guatemala	57	48.1 (2003)	57.0	91.6	30	92.6	54	13	56.4

(For notes, see p. 20.)

Table 2
QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY INDEX AND FREEDOM HOUSE RATINGS (18 LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES)

COUNTRY	Quality of Democracy Index [1]	Freedom House Index of Freedom (added scores)	Freedom House Rank Order
1. Uruguay	93.3	2	1
2. Chile	92.7	2	1
3. Costa Rica	92.2	2	1
4. Panama	86.2	3	4
5. Brazil	83.6	4	5
6. Argentina	83.2	4	5
7. Mexico	82.6	4	5
8. Dominican Republic	82.2	4	5
9. El Salvador	75.0	5	9
10. Peru	74.9	5	9
11. Bolivia	70.8	6	11
12. Paraguay	70.5	6	11
13.Nicaragua	69.8	6	11
14. Honduras	69.5	6	11
15. Colombia	69.1	6	11
16. Ecuador	68.5	6	11
17. Venezuela	63.6	8	17
18. Guatemala	56.4	8	17

[1] From Table 1.

Table 3
QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY INDEX INCLUDING TOLERANCE AS AN ITEM (NINE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES)

COUNTRY	Quality of Democracy Index [1]	Tolerance	Quality of Democracy Index Including Tolerance	Freedom House Index of Freedom (added scores)	Freedom House Rank Order
1. Uruguay	93.3	84	93.0	2	1
2. Chile	92.7	85	92.4	2	1
3. Brazil	83.6	82	83.6	4	5
4. Argentina	83.2	88	83.3	4	5
5. Mexico	82.6	75	82.3	4	5
6. Dominican Republic	82.2	72	81.9	4	5
7. Peru	74.9	78	74.9	5	9
8. Colombia	69.1	85	69.6	6	11
9. Venezuela	63.6	74	63.9	8	17

[1] From Table 1.

The anti-left bias noted earlier in Freedom House is particularly visible in two of the twenty-five items. The first specifies economic liberty and private property.[7] We can assume that leftist governments and those with strong policies of state intervention in the economy (like Venezuela) will be penalized on this item with a loss of all possible points (four on the Freedom House scale) or of at least half in the case of relatively moderate but still interventionist governments such as Brazil. The second is an item labeled "personal autonomy,"[8] which is included as one of the points in evaluating the extent to which citizens show "excessive dependence" on the state. Here as well, we can assume that leftist governments with intense social policies will be at least partially penalized in Freedom House rankings on these items, the most radical with a loss of at least two out of a possible four points, and the more moderate with a loss of one point. To correct for this bias, we add six points for countries with radical leftist governments and intensely interventionist policies (Venezuela) and three points to countries with leftist governments and moderate interventionist policies (Brazil) (Table 1, Column 1). In our overall calculation of scores for quality of democracy for each country (on a 0 to 100 scale), we also include seven additional items that together cover elements missing in the Freedom House analysis (Table 2) with the exception of "level of tolerance," for which we have information available only for nine countries, which is therefore presented separately (Table 3). These additional indicators are as follows:

To measure responsiveness, we take one item from the 2005 Latinobarometer survey (Latinobarómetro 2005): vote efficacy.[9] This item presents the percentage of valid cases which indicate agreement with the following statement:: "The way one votes can make things different in the future." Those who consider that their vote is efficacious in modifying the situation of the country are implicitly acknowledging that political leaders respond positively to public opinion as expressed in the voting booths. This is a more direct indicator of the sensitivity of those in power to expressions of popular will than the more general question about satisfaction with the functioning of democracy. The latter

evaluates satisfaction with the results of government actions, which does not necessarily imply that these have been accomplished by carrying out those policies that have the greatest popular approval.

Level of equality of cognitive resources in the population is another element of quality of democracy not included by Freedom House. Secondary education provides citizens with basic cognitive tools for processing information about politics. The extent to which the population has access to this level of education thus seems particularly suitable for the comparative assessment of cognitive resources, especially in developing countries where access to higher education is typically quite limited. We therefore measure cognitive resources in terms of the proportion of the corresponding school-age population enrolled in secondary schools—"Net Secondary Enrollment"—for 2002 (Table 1) the most recent year for which data are available for all countries in the region (World Bank 2005).

For tolerance, we build a scale ranging from 0 to 100 for the nine Latin American countries included in the third (1995) and fourth (2000) waves of the World Value Survey,[10] and recalculated the ratings on quality of democracy for these countries in Table 3. Six items are included in the scale; the answers to each one were recoded as 0 = not tolerant or 1 = tolerant. The scores on each answer were added creating a scale of tolerance from 0 to 6, or when one item was missing, from 0 to 5. The mean for each country was taken and transformed into a 0–100 scale. The result is the level of tolerance indicated in Table 3. The items included are: 1) "Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five." We give one point to those who select "Tolerance and respect for other people." Items two to six are covered by the question: "On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? 2) People of a different race; 3) Muslims; 4) Immigrants/Foreign Workers; 5) Homosexuals; 6) Jews." [11]

Two further elements not included by Freedom House are turnout and representativeness of the elected bodies (in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, and partisanship). We measure turnout as a percentage of the voting-age population in elections for which data were available up to June 2005. We measure representativeness for gender and parties using the LSq statistic, the most commonly used indicator of disproportionality of representation, converted into a proportionality measure by subtracting the disproportionality from 100, as Rose (1984) suggests. To do this we use data on electoral results available through June 2005. (See Table 1.)

Although vertical and horizontal accountability are included among the Freedom House items, societal accountability is not. We measure societal accountability using the percentage of respondents to the Latinobarometer 2005 survey (Latinobarómetro 2005: 34), who said they work on community issues very frequently or frequently. This is an appropriate indicator of the level to which people organize themselves to promote the interest of their community vis-à-vis the government, to demand that officials properly carry out their duties, fulfill their electoral promises, and respect the rights of citizens.

Regarding sovereignty, Freedom House includes expert evaluations of two items: a) "Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?" and b) "Does the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?" (Freedom House 2006). These items are among the twenty-five summarized by the total estimated raw points in column 1 of Table 1. For the reasons outlined above, we believe that a specific indicator of economic autonomy/dependence is needed and thus constructed an indicator based on the value of foreign debt service as a percentage of the value of exports of each country in 2004 (World Bank 2006). The result indicates the weight of the debt on the economy: the greater the weight of debt on the overall economy, the more likely it is that the country will be obligated to follow economic policies dictated by its creditors, or by

international financial institutions. The indicator of economic autonomy presented in Table 1 is the result of subtracting the level of economic dependence from 100.

Table 1 presents the overall scoring for each country on the twenty-five Freedom House items (raw points with the modifications suggested above to correct for anti leftist bias) and for each of the seven additional indicators available for the eighteen democratic countries of Latin America in 2005, on a scale of 0 to 100. The last column of Table 1 presents the overall rating on quality of democracy for each country. To reach this rating the Freedom House points are multiplied by 25 in order to give them a weight equivalent to the twenty-five items summarized by it. The ratings of the seven additional items are added, and the result is divided by the total number of items included (thirty-two). Our rating on quality of democracy is thus an average of the ratings in the items considered, giving equal weight to each of them.

In spite of having seven additional items, the rank order that results from our ratings is exactly the same as in the Freedom House ratings, and the correlation between the ratings of quality of democracy in our calculation and Freedom House's added scores in political rights and civil liberties is -.988. The inclusion of "level of tolerance" does not modify the rank order among the countries for which we have this information, nor does it alter the conclusion reached earlier about the high level of covariation and overlapping. These results suggest, as has been indicated (Diamond and Morlino 2005), that to a large extent the elements of quality of democracy vary together, with an extensive overlap.

Our ratings ratify the information already provided by Freedom House, but the results in Table 1 and 3 provide richer and more varied data, and give an idea of the particular strength and weakness of democracy within the region and in each country, and offer insights that can be used by scholars and reformers interested in the improvement of democracy in Latin America. For example, Costa Rica, one of the countries with the highest levels of democracy in the region, is high on representativeness, but weak on turnout, cognitive resources, and societal accountability. Colombia, with one of the

lowest rankings overall (due to the weight of violence and institutional weakness) is nonetheless strong in tolerance, societal accountability, and partisan representativeness. We do not have the space here to analyze individual country results in detail, but it is important to underscore that consideration of the elements of quality of democracy and their indicators can provide important knowledge about the strength and weaknesses of democracy in each country and in the region. These considerations are important elements for a research agenda for the future.

CONCLUSIONS

In our effort to rethink analysis of the quality of democracy in Latin America, we remain committed to working within the rich tradition of procedural analyses of democracy while making a sustained effort to theorize the connections between political institutions and procedures and surrounding society, and to understand what makes them more or less democratic, and how they may enhance or limit the quality of democratic politics. The procedural analysis of democracy has been criticized over the years for static and often unrealistic analyses that too often leave procedures, institutions, and those who operate within them (politicians and elected as well as appointed figures in government) disconnected from society, economy, and culture. There is validity to this critique, but carrying it too far risks gutting political analysis of much that is of great value.

Throughout, we have drawn an explicit link between the analysis of legitimacy and the day-to-day workings of democratic procedures, situating these firmly in a context of rights and open participation. The effort has been to get at the enabling conditions of access and participation in ways that do not assume the connection to politics but rather point to ways of specifying it more fully. This approach to the matter moves analysis beyond top-down concerns with governability by incorporating citizen concern about, capacity for, and access to participation and formal institutions.[12] We argue here for an approach that overcomes this "disconnect" by theorizing the ways that political

institutions and practices are connected to society. How successful have we been, or on the evidence presented here, are we likely to be?

It may be helpful at this point to step back from the details of measurement and indicator construction to consider once again our core definition, and the empirical dimensions we derive from it. We defined quality of democracy as *the extent to which citizens can exercise informed participation in processes of free, fair, and frequent elections and influence the making of public policy decisions, and by the extent to which those who make decisions are accountable and responsive to popular will.* Five related empirical dimensions follow: electoral decision, accountability, responsiveness, participation, and sovereignty. Some of these, like sovereignty, are enabling conditions, factors that set broad parameters for any political process. Others, such as participation, accountability, and responsiveness, point directly to the rhythm and content of political processes. Taking the empirical dimensions of quality of democracy as a dynamic set points our analysis to indicators that link citizen capacity (as individuals and through associational life) to the effective realities of pluralism and to thresholds and barriers to participation.

Expanding the analysis of civil society and representation remains a challenge. A distinguishing problem that has left much of civil society and representation undertheorized—or when theorized, oddly disconnected from political analysis—has been the difficulty of finding comparable measures and turning a literature that has been largely focused on qualitative and comparative historical analysis towards the construction of quantitative indicators (or, at least, into comparable indices). There is no easy way to do this, but we believe that it is possible to incorporate social and organizational dimensions in a meaningful way. One useful strategy may be to develop crossnational indices that track the evolution of arenas and sites for representation (Kurtz 2004); another may be to match such general analysis with paired comparisons of representation patterns with particular group histories.

Any set of political institutions and procedures operates within constraints that shape and limit the viability of particular forms of political process. But politics is not simply a space that is acted upon, and political leaders are not simply passive agents of other forces. Innovations and reforms coming from the political process also shape the way social forces and civil society groups approach the tasks of politics. If we hold up the analysis laid out here against a range of proposals that have surfaced in recent years to improve democracy in Latin America, it is evident that apart from its theoretical and comparative interest, the systematic analysis of quality of democracy has the potential to yield important practical payoffs in the short and medium term.

The potential for reform is particularly clear if we focus on points of access to politics and how these affect the operation of the political process. Proposals to guarantee a share of offices (seats in national legislatures) to women have enhanced representativeness, elicited new kinds of participation, and stimulated the emergence of hitherto hidden leadership potential. Measures that strengthen the judicial system and implement the use of referenda, recall, and initiative measures are short-term steps that can reinforce accountability. Although the increase of cognitive resources depends on education, which is a long-run proposition, useful distinctions can be drawn between policies that invest in university as opposed to primary and post-primary schooling. In many countries, reforms centered on decentralization and opening up of party finances made a promising start at transforming party systems but were swept away by broader economic and political crisis. In the same vein, decentralization has thus far proven to be a double-edged sword: with early signs of the emergence of new party elites accompanied by declining levels of voter interest in lower-tier elections. Reforms intended to strengthen party systems and thus provide more effective representation and articulation of interests have often foundered on obstacles set by the class and educational differences that divide elites from masses, and by growing distrust of once-dominant parties. Thus far, however, apart from the mass media and the manipulations of powerful populist

leaders, no alternative has appeared to mediate the relation of large populations to political institutions as effectively as political parties. Political parties will likely remain critical but no longer in the classic mould of Venezuela's Democratic Action (Acción Democrática, or AD), not to mention the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI) that so long dominated Mexican reality. Reforms that encourage transparency, multiple points of access (such as primaries) and reduced barriers to organization and participation seem most likely to push forward the process of creating new institutions in fruitful ways.

A fascinating aspect of recent political change in Latin America has been what one may legitimately call a refoundation of democracies. There has been a steady move from early concern with constitutional establishments, founding moments, and survival of the new regimes (a la Karl Schmitt) to a gradual extension of the meaning and participatory scope of what counts as "democracy." Smith (2005: 313) has argued recently that the survival of this wave of democracy in Latin America has been contingent on its being "tamed": initially fragile democracies endured and were able to set down roots in the measure that their proponents have been willing to accept a series of limitations, from guarantees of military autonomy to agreements to avoid costly or controversial social policies. But the mounting costs of these tradeoffs has become more and more evident, and has spurred a search for new forms of participation and an effort to extend the meaning of rights, broadening the working definitions of democracy in countries throughout the region.

Accompanying debates over social policies, justice for victims, or perpetrators of past human rights abuses, or over the proper form and scope of citizen participation (for example, over participatory vs. representative democracy) have opened a range of debates on explicitly political topics such as the use of referenda, the proper form of political organizations, initiative. and recall, the role of civil society, the nature of suffrage and the number and nature of offices subject to popular election in the first place. Whatever

the specifics, the tendency to move beyond early "tamed" versions of democracy is itself important, and reinforces our commitment to link the procedural analysis of democracy with attention to how political democracy is situated in the social and economic order.

The politics of democracy are also a continuing struggle to control the definition of what democracy means in practice. Consider the question of the rule of law. There are many desirable features in the ideal of the rule of law, (in Spanish, *un estado de derecho*) but by itself a state of law is not necessarily democratic. The extension of real, relevant rights is what makes political situations democratic. The presence and orderly free exercise of the relevant rights within a legal framework is central to the quality of democracy. At the risk of making invidious distinctions between kinds of rights, it is clear that for our purposes some rights are more critical than others. Those most central to the quality of democracy are rights that in some measure control or filter access to the political process and to institutions. Rights connected with informed electoral decision, with equal access to and treatment by institutions, and with accountability are clearly of critical importance. This means that we pay particular attention to the conditions of electoral participation (including but not limited to voting and access to being a voter), to the judicial and penal systems, and to measures of transparency, and to those rights that guarantee freedom of organization and information.

The analysis of democracy, and of the quality of democracy, benefits from taking a long view. This is apparent in all cases, but is perhaps particularly evident in Latin America, where the record of experience with democracy over the decades has given grounds for pessimism to the most optimistic, and made cyclical theories attractive even to die-hard believers in progress. Is the present period more than just another turn in the cycle? To the extent that we can arrive at a more complete and dynamic understanding of the quality of democracy, we will be better able to assess its likely durability and to understand when key actors will and will not defend it. Particular democratic regimes may succeed or fail, but the longer-term question is whether or not (and in what specific

ways) the ground for democracy is strengthened. If there are relapses, or serious erosion of key elements of democracy, will returning democrats do a better job the next time around? Will they create political processes that are of higher quality and more viable in the face of troubles?

These considerations suggest the outlines of an agenda for future study. We believe it useful to remain within the tradition of procedural democracy. This links our effort to major lines of democratic theory, which have gained new importance in Latin America with the restoration of democratic government and meaningful elections throughout the region in recent decades (Anderson and Dodd 2005). Working within this tradition, we continue to seek ways to relate democratic institutions and processes more effectively to indicators that get at the openness of these arenas and to measures of social capacity that provide populations with the tools they need to achieve access to these arenas and thus shape the way they come to the encounter with these institutions. Much of the excellent recent work on democratic governance infers the impact of governance from indicators as varied as inequality, crime, education, or economic volatility. Inferring governance from results is suggestive, but in the long run, it will be important to match up general indicators with case studies of countries and institutions.

ENDNOTES

[1] In contrast to Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002), we do not take intensity of competition as a dimension of quality of democracy, although to be sure it is a factor that affects one of our dimensions: participation.

[2] Discriminatory barriers are those that are in place to prevent a defined group of a nation's adult . inhabitants from having a fair and equal say in the political process, i.e., apartheid, poll taxes, selective registration, or measures that specifically bar an entire gender or ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic group.

[3] An account of methodology and a complete list of the 25 elements evaluated by Freedom House can be found at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=35&year=2006.

[4] See http://www.transparency.org.

[5] The data are taken from the 2006 "Freedom in the World" report, covering from December 1, 2004 to November 30, 2005. See Freedom House (2006b). .

[6] See a full explanation of the Freedom House methodology in Freedom House (2006a).

[7] The Freedom House formulation is: "Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?" Freedom House (2006a).

[8] This element is formulated as follows by Freedom House: "Does the state control travel or choice of residence, employment, or institutions of higher education? Further, in one of the items about "equality of opportunity," the following is included: "Does the government exert tight control over the economy, including through state ownership and the setting of prices and production quotas?" Freedom House (2006a).

[9] The text of the question is: "Some people say that the way one votes can help make things different in the future. Others say that regardless of how one votes, this will not make things better in the future. Which of these views is closest to your way of thinking?" We thank Marta Lagos and the Latinobarometer for providing us with access to the responses to this question. For more information on the survey and the questionnaire, see http://www.latinobarometro.org.

[10] The World Value Survey of 2000 is the most recent that is publicly available. Since it appears unlikely that levels of tolerance would have varied much over such time periods except in very special cases, we assume that data from the World Value Surveys of 1995 and 2000 furnish an appropriate approximation to the situation in 2005.

[11] This is scored 1 for nonrejection of the group and 0 for rejection of the group. As expected, the level of tolerance in Latin American publics is closer to the one presented by the public in developed countries, in some cases higher, when the composite scale proposed here is used rather than the one item regarding whether homosexuality is or not justifiable. For example, on a scale from 0 to 100, Argentina would get 88 in the composite index of tolerance, but only 43 from the question about attitude to homosexuality. The scores for the US would be 87 and 48, and for Spain, 82 and 62. The answers to the 2000 survey were used for Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. The 1995 answers were used for Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, which were not included in 2000. The question on "Jews" was replaced in Mexico by "Evangelists," and not asked in Peru. In Venezuela the questions on "Jews" and "Muslims" were replaced by a question on "people of other religion denominations." In the 1995 questionnaire, the question on "Jews" was not asked.

[12] Recent work by Anderson and Dodd (2005) and Bermeo (2003) underscores the democratic capabilities and orientations of ordinary citizens who have repeatedly proven to be more committed and confident democrats that their leaders. Our view of quality of democracy incorporates this dimension.

REFERENCES

Altman, David and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán. 2002. "Assessing the Quality of Democracy: Freedom, Competitiveness and Participation in Eighteen Latin American Countries." *Democratization* 7: 85–100.

Anderson, Leslie E. and Lawrence C. Dodd. 2005. *Learning Democracy: Citizen Engagement and Electoral Choice in Nicaragua 1990–2001.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arrow, Kenneth. 1951. *Social Choice and Individual Values*. New York: Wiley.

Avritzer, Leonardo. 2002. *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Beetham, David. 2004. "The Quality of Democracy: Freedom as the Foundation." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 61–75.

Bermeo, Nancy 2003. *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Dahl, Robert. 1998. *On Democracy.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Diamond, Larry, Jonathan Hartlyn, and Juan Linz. 1999. "Introduction: Politics, Society, and Democracy in Latin America." In *Democracy in Developing Countries. Latin America*, eds. Larry Diamond, Jonathan Hartlyn, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset. Second Ed. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 1–70.

Diamond, Larry and Leonardo Morlino. 2005. "Introduction." In *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. ix–lxiii.

Freedom House. 2006a. "Methodology." Available at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=35&year=2006.

Freedom House. 2006b. "Table of Independent Countries 2006." Available at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=264&year=2006.

Hagopian, Frances. 2005. "Brazil and Chile." In *Assessing the Quality of Democracy in Latin America*, eds. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp 123–62.

Inglehart, Ronald. 2003. "How Solid is Mass Support for Democracy? and How can we Measure it?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36 (1): 51–57.

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kooning, Kees and Dirk Kruijt. 2003. "Latin American Political Armies in the Twenty First Century ." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22: 371–84.

Kurtz, Marcus. 2004. *Free Market Democracy and the Chilean and Mexican Countryside*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Latinobarómetro. 2005. *Informe Latinobarómetro 2005*. Available at: http://www.latinobarometro.org/uploads/media/2005.pdf.

Levine, Daniel H. and Catalina Romero. 2006. "Urban Citizen Movements and Disempowerment in Peru and Venezuela." In *When Representation Fails: The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes,* eds. Ana Maria Bejarano, Scott Mainwaring, and Eduardo Pizarro. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 227–56.

Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lijphart, Arend. 1994. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945–1990.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mainwaring, Scott. 2003. "Introduction: Democratic Accountability in Latin America." In *Democratic Accountability in Latin America,* eds. Scott Mainwaring and Christopher Welna. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–33.

Mainwaring, Scott. 1999. *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Mainwaring, Scott and Frances Hagopian, eds. 2005. *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully. 1995. "Introduction. Party Systems in Latin America." In *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, eds. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 1–34.

O Donnell, Guillermo. 2004a. "The Quality of Democracy: Why the Rule of Law Matters." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 32–46.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2004b. "Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy." In *The Quality of Democracy*: *Theory and Applications*, eds. Guillermo O' Donnell, Jorge Vargas Cullell, and Osvaldo M Iazzetta. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 9–92.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2003. "Horizontal Accountability: The Legal Institutionalization of Mistrust." In *Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, eds. Scott Mainwaring and Christopher Welna. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 34–54.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1994. "Delegative Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1): 55–69.

Oxhorn, Phillip. 2001. *When Democracy Isn't All That Democratic: Social Exclusion and the Limits of the Public Sphere in Latin America*. Miami: North South Center.

Payne, Mark. 2006. "Sistemas de Elección Legislativa y Gobernabilidad Democrática." In *La Política Importa: Democracia y Desarrollo en América Latina*, eds. Mark Payne, Daniel Zovatto, and Mercedes Mateo Díaz. Washington, DC: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo and Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral, pp. 41–89.

Payne, Mark, Daniel Zovatto, and Mercedes Mateo Díaz. 2006. "Participación Electoral en América Latina 1978–2004." In *La Política Importa: Democracia y Desarrollo en América Latina*, eds. Mark Payne, Daniel Zovatto, and Mercedes Mateo Díaz. Washington, DC: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo and Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral. Appendix 2 on CD-ROM.

Pedersen, Mogens. 1979. "The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility." *European Journal of Political Research* 7: 1–26.

Peruzzoti, Enrique and Catalina Smulovitz. 2000. "Societal Accountability in Latin America." *Journal of Democracy* 11 (4): 147–58.

Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard Cloward. 1998. *The Breaking of the American Social Compact.* New York: The New Press.

Philip, George. 2003. *Democracy in Latin America: Surviving Conflict and Crisis?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Powell, G. Bingham. 2004. "The Quality of Democracy: The Chain of Responsiveness." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 91–105.

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo. 2004. *La Democracia en América Latina Hacia una Democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos.* Buenos Aires: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo-Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, José A. Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, Richard. 1984. "Electoral Systems: A Question of Degree or of Principle?" In *Choosing and Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*, eds. Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman. New York: Praeger, pp. 73–81.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich. 2004. "The Quality of Democracy: Assessing Inequality." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 76–90.

Smith. Peter H. 2005. *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stokes, Susan. 2001. *Mandates and Democracy: Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank. 2005. *The Little Data Book 2005*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

World Bank. 2006. *The Little Data Book 2006*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.