

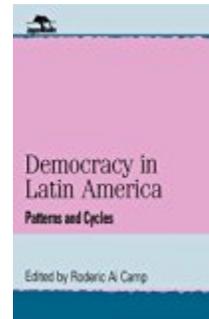
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Roderic A. Camp, ed. *Democracy in Latin America: Patterns and Cycles*. Jaguar Books on Latin America, no 10. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996. xiv + 294 pp. \$34.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8420-2513-3; \$80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8420-2512-6.

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Published on H-LatAm (May, 1996)



This is an excellent book. With a maestro performance as editor, Roderic Camp has orchestrated an outstanding collection of a dozen previously published essays designed to define and analyze the issue of democracy in modern Latin America. This volume succeeds as a comprehensive handbook on the essential theoretical and quantitative elements of the topic. It will become a standard reference for professionals and an exceptional contribution to the classroom.

In his foreword, Camp notes that international political events of the last decade have drawn fresh attention to the political present and future of Latin America. The end of the Cold War, global economic integration, and the emergence of “new” democracies in the place of authoritarian or revolutionary regimes have raised old questions about the prospects for democracy in Latin America. Two concerns in particular are central to this analysis. The first concerns the apparent historical cycle of democracy and authoritarianism which has characterized Latin America since its independence. The second concerns the question of a linkage between democratic politics and economic development. Camp leads us into the discussion with speculation whether that cycle may be broken and democracy may be able to deliver a better material existence for the citizens of Latin America.

The collection begins with two articles addressing the topic “What Is Democratization in Latin America?” The first is an overview of the material in the book by Camp and Shannan Mattiace. This concise synopsis of the selections explains how they bring out the basic questions regarding democracy and development in Latin America. This selection will serve well as a fine model of literature analysis for undergraduate and graduate students. The

second selection, by Terry Lynn Karl, addresses “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America.” She notes that the combination of the economic crisis of the 1980s accompanied by the emergence of democratic regimes in Latin America challenged old theories of democratic preconditions. New analysis focuses upon democratic “process” and “transition.” Democracy may emerge in three forms. Democracy by imposition may be engineered by either the Right or the Left, by the military or revolutionary regimes, using “electoralism” and representative apparatus to dominate the society and contain opposition. Transitions to more authentic democratic practice depend upon agreements on foundational rules of the political game. Through this “pactismo” all varieties of elites may design and lead the popular sectors into more stable and effective types of democratic regimes which will be able to break the cycle of the past and deliver on social and economic development.

The four chapters of the second major section, entitled “The Political Heritage: Culture, Structures, and Authoritarianism,” address questions of the unique nature of the political culture of Latin America, and developmental theories in Latin American history. The selection by Glen Caudill Dealy presents his analysis of the “caudillaje culture” of Latin America, which emphasizes personalism and clientelism as a virtue within the framework of corporatist, Thomistic society and monistic democracy. Mitchell Seligson reviews the methodological challenges of researching cultural attitudes toward democracy and presents case studies regarding acceptance of political dissent for Mexico, Costa Rica, and the United States. His conclusions underscore the significance of elite attitudes in forming the norms of civic culture which can play a significant role in the durability of democratic regime

types.

In an article which has become the standard analysis, James Malloy charts the rise and fall of Latin American populism within the context of economic development and modernization. The economic crisis of the Depression ignited a fundamental critique of traditional elites and encouraged the rise of new elites willing to forge new coalitions with popular sectors to gain political power. Ultimately, unable to deliver increasing prosperity to their constituencies, populist regimes were soon engulfed in political turmoil and gave way to the control of authoritarian regimes. Finally, Peter F. Klaren offers a masterful introduction to the major theories of development and politics in modern Latin America, from modernization and dependency to corporatism and bureaucratic-authoritarianism. Klaren concisely defines the theories and briefly introduces the reader to the major authors, from Marx, Weber, and Durkheim to Frank, Cardoso, and O'Donnell.

Section three of the collection, "Agents of Political Change? Religion, Militarism, Electioneering, and Non-governmental Organizations," focuses upon four particular elements of political change and the role of elites and popular elements in the creation of successful transitional environments. Augusto Varas argues that civilian leadership must both create a substantive civic culture that insists upon civilian control of the military while at the same time working alongside the military to forge new intercontinental and regional responsibilities and internal professionalism. Daniel Levine reviews the history and impact of Liberation Theology and CEBs (ecclesiastical base communities) upon the process of democratization. Contrasting the experiences of Brazil and Colombia, Levine outlines the contributions of grassroots religious activism, but also acknowledges its limits as a universal model. He observes that successful democratization will create an environment which will encourage competing models of local activism and may ultimately diminish the role of CEBs. Within that context, Alan Angell, Maria D'Alva Kinzo, and Diego Urbaneja offer an interesting study of "electioneering" in Latin America from the 1950s to the present. With the convergence of urbanization and television they find that elections have become increasingly a cultural mainstay, highlighted by sophisticated advertising, polling, and electoral strategies crafted by civilian elites who are becoming increasingly more effective within a democratic culture. Discussing another new element within democratizing cultures, Leilah Landim focuses on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as a relatively new institutional "nov-

elty" of autonomous, grassroots organizations which are committed to strengthening civic society, pragmatic and issue focused in their approach to problem solving, and inclusive in terms of attempting to combine the interests of the elites and popular elements.

In the final section of the collection, "Consequences of Democratization: Case Studies in Change," three authors examine particular challenges of the transitional process of democratization. Ben Ross Schneider analyzes the rise and fall of Fernando Collor de Mello, Brazil's first civilian president following years of military-authoritarian rule. In this case Collor's "electioneering" proved successful in terms of attaining office, but the general corruption within his government and the failure of elites to find sufficient common ground on policies doomed the administration. Peter Smith's analysis of the political impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Mexico outlines four perspectives on the potential effect. These are that NAFTA will contribute to the democratization of Mexico; that NAFTA will contribute to the further consolidation of authoritarianism in Mexico; that NAFTA will have no meaningful impact; and that NAFTA will act as a catalyst to uncontrolled change and contribute to the debilitation of the Mexican state. Smith ultimately concludes that the economic impact of NAFTA will have significant political consequences by creating objective conditions for fundamental political change. In the final selection, Karen Remmer offers a comparative study of policy outcomes for "old" democracies, authoritarian regimes, and "new" democratic regimes. Her findings challenge the assumption that authoritarian regimes are more capable of managing economic crisis. Neither authoritarian regimes nor "old" democracies demonstrate any greater success in managing economic challenges than the more recent "new" democracies. In addition, Remmer concludes that in general democratic regimes overall achieved a far better record of avoiding acute crisis in the first place.

In the last couple of years there have been over a dozen new books on democratization in Latin America. The strengths of these studies, both monographs and edited collections, have been to emphasize the relationship of the market to the state, the elites to the popular sector, and the role of the military. The general criticism of this field has been the absence of cultural considerations, only slight attention to historical analysis, and too much emphasis upon contemporary policy analysis. The success of this volume is that it not only does an excellent job of addressing the issues of market, class, and the military, but also effectively integrates cultural and historical

analysis while avoiding particular policy analysis. This collection is not only the most recent of many volumes on the topic but it is clearly one of the better offerings available.

As scholars of nineteenth-century Latin America continue to advance the analysis of the early state, caudillismo, constitutionalism, and republicanism, Camp will want to add an extra section to the next edition of this volume to integrate a bit more the historical perspective on democracy in Latin America. For the moment, the emphasis upon twentieth-century Latin America is ap-

propriate to the current state of the scholarship.

Finally, a concluding accolade for Camp for creating a true book out of these selected materials. These articles and selected excerpts from monographs are not left to stand alone, but are carefully interwoven in their themes and analyses. This collection reads as one manuscript where the discussion of theory is supported by case studies, which are set in cultural and historical context. This editor's keen insight and careful selection have produced an exceptional volume.

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Citation: Roger P. Davis. Review of Camp, Roderic A., ed., *Democracy in Latin America: Patterns and Cycles*. H-LatAm, H-Net Reviews. May, 1996.

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