The Quality of Democracies in Latin America

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Preface

In this publication, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) presents a slightly revised English version of a report that International IDEA commissioned a group of experts, led by Professor Leonardo Morlino, to conduct, consisting of an exhaustive study of the quality of Latin American democracies. Originally published in Spanish in 2014, the report addressed trends in the quality of democracies that were unfolding in Latin America at a difficult time of economic and social crisis. Since then, the results of the report have been discussed and validated with policymakers, political analysts and practitioners. For example, in January 2015 the Third International Forum of Santo Domingo, on the theme of 'Time for Reforms'[1] addressed the issue of the quality of democracies in Latin America in a panel attended by Leonardo Morlino and other contributors to the analysis presented in these pages, generating a stimulating debate that highlighted the policy relevance of the research results.

Since it addresses trends and variables in a medium- to long-term perspective, the recommendations of this report remain valid and continue to be relevant to policymakers and practitioners alike, especially those who are working in the field of democracy support in Latin America. The findings of the report will be discussed in the context of the current economic and political landscape.

From a global perspective, 2015 was a difficult year in economic terms and a complex year politically—terrorist attacks by fundamentalists, massive migration flows, geopolitical tensions, war in Syria, and populism on the rise in the United States and Europe—and 2016 is unlikely to be much better. In terms of the economy, internationally and in Latin America, slow growth is expected to continue with a mix of possible outcomes.

In the words of International Monetary Fund Director Christine Lagarde (2016), growth will be disappointing and uneven in 2016. Regionally the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) projects anemic economic growth of 0.2 per cent. Even more pessimistic, the World Bank projects that growth in 2016 will be zero after shrinking 0.9 per cent in 2015.

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[1] The Forum was co-hosted by International IDEA and two Dominican institutions, the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (Fundación Global para la Democracia y el Desarrollo – FUNGLODE) and the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra.

Elections, elections and more elections

The Latin American agenda is replete with elections and crucial political events. This year will conclude the second stage of the Latin American electoral marathon during which, in a period of four years (2013–16), a total of 17 presidential elections will have taken place. Fourteen have already been completed. Taking into account the first stage (2009–12), during which another 17 were held, we find ourselves in this period has experienced an unprecedented series of elections. In only eight years the 18 countries in the Latin American region will have experienced a total of 34 presidential elections.

In 2016 three presidential elections that will complete this electoral rally are in Peru on 10 April, the Dominican Republic on 15 May and Nicaragua on 6 November. In addition Bolivia held a referendum in February in which incumbent President Evo Morales unsuccessfully sought citizens' ratification of constitutional reforms allowing him to seek re-election in 2019.

Local elections were held in Costa Rica on 7 February, and other local elections will be held in Brazil, which will be decisive for President Dilma Rousseff and the Workers' Party (PT). Local elections in Chile are very important for President Michelle Bachelet and the future of the Nueva Mayoría, and elections in 12 Mexican states will be an early prediction of the 2018 presidential elections.

Local elections will also be held in Venezuela (governors), and depending on how the political situation evolves, might also lead to the calling of a recall election seeking a constitutional amendment and early end to the administration of President Nicolás Maduro. For now his term expires in 2019. The referendum, if it takes place, would be a result of the ongoing conflict between President Maduro and the new National Assembly in the hands of the opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) following the December 2015 elections.

In Colombia, depending on the speed with which the peace process moves forward, there may be a referendum to approve or reject the agreements signed by the Santos government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Electoral trends for 2016

Out of seven presidential elections held in Latin America in 2014 (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and Uruguay), the predominant trend in South America was the re-election of the centre-left or left-wing governments already in power. By contrast, in Central America there was a greater balance between continuity and alternation. In 2015 two presidential elections—Guatemala and Argentina— resulted in a new political direction.

In 2016 the re-election of President Danilo Medina in the Dominican Republic and the re-election of the leftist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSNL) in Nicaragua are likely.

In both Peru and the Dominican Republic it may be necessary to hold a second round of balloting to elect the president, as occurred (from 2013 to 2015) in most of the countries that have runoff elections written into the constitution: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Uruguay.

In Peru, Keiko Fujimori appears to be assured a place in a runoff election as she currently tops the polls with more than 30 per cent of the votes. It is not known who she would face in the second round. He currently rules a coalition government with several parties, including the PLD's traditional rival, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). Medina's main rival is opposition leader Luis Abinader who heads a coalition between the Modern Revolutionary Party and the Social Christian Reformist Party.

And in Nicaragua, in November, current President Daniel Ortega (FSLN) seems likely to win a third consecutive term. Nonetheless, encouraged by the opposition's victory in Venezuela, the Nicaraguan opposition formed the Coalición Nacional por la Democracia, made up of the opposition Independent Liberal Party (PLI), headed by Eduardo Montealegre, and the centre-left Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS).

Likely scenarios in 2016

The first half of 2016 will be crucial for several countries of the region. In Argentina it will be the litmus test for the administration of President Mauricio Macri. In Bolivia, as mentioned before, the historical defeat suffered by Evo Morales ushers in a totally unprecedented political scenario heading into the 2019 presidential elections.

Venezuela is likely to experience more clashes between President Maduro and the opposition which for the first time in 16 years now controls Congress. The MUD already warned, in remarks by the new Speaker of the National Assembly Henry Ramos Allup, that it will pursue options to bring about a constitutional change of government in the next six months. This situation will increase the levels of polarization and confrontation between the government and the opposition and will deepen the already serious economic crisis.

In Brazil, close attention should be paid to the economy—to date projections are very negative—and the progress of the possible impeachment of President Rousseff on corruption charges.

Peace negotiations in Colombia and tensions in Haiti

In Colombia, if negotiations continue to move forward, it is likely that the much longed-for peace agreement will be signed, and that a referendum will be called to approve or reject the accords.

It will be equally important to monitor the complex and tense political and electoral situation in Haiti, especially regarding whether the second round of the presidential election will be held as recently scheduled on 24 April or put off once again due to the serious irregularities in the first round in October last year and subsequent postponements in January 2016.

New economic cycle

The defeat suffered by *kirchnerismo/peronismo* in the presidential elections in Argentina in November (after 12 years in power), and that of *chavismo* in Venezuela's legislative elections on 6 December (after 17 years of exercising absolute control over the National Assembly) and the historical defeat suffered by Evo Morales in the referendum held on 21 February would appear to indicate a new political cycle has begun in South America likely at least in part as a result of a profound change in the economic cycle.

Unlike other analysts, the authors do not interpret these results as marking a swing in the region from the left to the right, but rather as reflecting citizens' weariness with presidents who have been in power for many years and who, personally or by means of their parties, would like to continue in power for many more years. Citizens appear to be rejecting presidents who are characterized by a high degree of personalization, who seek to concentrate considerable power in their own hands, who have a very confrontational and polarizing leadership styl and whose administrations are negatively impacted by serious corruption scandals. Moreover, all these regimes share a common problem, which is one of their main weaknesses: succession in leadership.

This new cycle is accompanied by an explosive combination of economic slowdown, adjustment programmes, stagnation in the reduction of poverty, allegations of corruption on the rise and public support for presidents falling. This is likely to lead to greater social conflict and more complex governance in several countries of the region. Of course national circumstances vary widely in Latin America, but most countries are facing similar challenges.

As Moisés Naím points out: 'While societies are undergoing full effervescence, paralyzed governments and stagnant political parties continue without credible responses to the new demands of a society that is changing at a pace that cannot be reached by those operating with ideas from the past' (2013).

Massimo Tommasoli
Daniel Zovatto
February 2016

Foreword and acknowledgements

Since Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, one of the recurrent questions in political research has been: 'what is the best form of government?' More recently, this query has been reconsidered and reworded within empirical research as: 'what is a good democracy?' or 'what is the quality of a certain democracy?' However, to reply to such questions, a different yet related question must first be answered: 'How can one assess a democracy empirically?'

This report aims to address both questions based on recent experiences in several Latin American countries. In order to do so, it first proposes an original theoretical framework and then applies it to most of the Latin American cases. Additionally, the report implements this framework innovatively by developing an empirical analysis that identifies the primary dimensions, sub-dimensions and specific guiding empirical queries. This set of quantitative data, combined with the well-known major international databases (see Annex I), is then supplemented by qualitative data gathered by country experts (see Annex III for the summary of these country reports). The country reports, essential to flesh out and explain this empirical analysis, serve to better identify the most critical issues in each country and subsequent policy recommendations based on a theoretical framework free from value choice. Citizens and political stakeholders in each country thus determine the suitability of policy recommendations. Recommendations, therefore, are only deemed 'good' within the context of the relevant population's political leanings and choices.

This research was initially made possible by the financial support of the Italian Ministry of Culture and the College of Mexico. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) provided an additional and decisive contribution: my gratitude to its Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Massimo Tommasoli, and its Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Daniel Zovatto. International IDEA's activities on this topic of democracy assessment date back to 1998, when a group led by David Beetham first met in Stockholm to develop criteria and modes for assessing democracy (a group of which I was also a part). A number of publications resulted from that theoretical proposal. The framework of a later text, the *Handbook on Democracy Assessment* (International IDEA 2002), was developed and partially transformed by Todd Landman in *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* (International IDEA 2008). Democracy assessment remains a central objective for International IDEA, as shown by two recent texts, *Philippine Democracy Assessment: Rule of Law and Access to Justice*

(International IDEA 2010) and *State of Local Democracy in the Arab World* (International IDEA 2011).

Most of the country reports would not have been possible without the significant contribution by Jesús Tovar Mendoza, who organized the first meetings that gave birth to this research. My gratitude to him and to Angélica Abad, Diego Abente, Nicolás Cerney, Javier Corrales, Maria Celina d'Araujo, Gloria de la Fuente, María de los Ángeles Fernández, María del Sol Prieto Bayona, Rocío Duarte, Javier Duque, José Luis Exeni, Lorenza Fontana, Martha Liliana Gutiérrez, Gerardo Hernández, Manuel Hidalgo, Charles Kenney, Miguel López Leyva, Salvador Martí, Carlos Moreira, Marco Novaro, Simón Pachano, Juan Rial, Catalina Romero, Federico Mathías Rossi and Angélica Watt. These meetings led to the establishment of the Quality of Democracy in Latin America Studies Network [Red de Estudios sobre la Calidad de la Democracia en América Latina]. Most of the network's scholars, joined by other Latin American specialists, contributed to the country reports.

Finally, this report is a revised version of a previous study co-authored with Gabriel Katz. Gabriel additionally provided help with the qualitative analysis of each country report and Cecilia Sottilotta assisted in the quantitative analysis. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Gabriel and Cecilia.

Leonardo Morlino
Rome, May 2014

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

Daniel Zovatto and Massimo Tommasoli

The quality of democracy in Latin America 35 years after the start of the third wave of democratization in the region

The year 2013 was symbolic in Latin America. It celebrated the 35th anniversary of the start of the third wave of democratization in the region. The transition process that began in the Dominican Republic in 1978 was followed in successive stages by the countries of the Andean region, then Central America and Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay during the 1980s, and finally Paraguay and Chile in 1989, and Nicaragua in 1990. Cuba has been the only exception to this regional trend. In addition, 2013 saw the start of a new electoral cycle (2013–16) during which 17 countries held or are scheduled to hold presidential elections. Taking into account the 17 presidential elections held during the previous electoral cycle (2009–12), then over a period of only eight years (2009–16) no fewer than 34 presidential elections will have been held. This is unprecedented in the history of Latin America. Never before has the region experienced such a concentrated and sustained series of elections in such a short time.

As a result, there could scarcely be a better time to take stock of the quality of democracy in the region. Latin America has good reason to feel satisfied. Democracy has been consolidated and is now the default system in the region (with the exception of Cuba), although in many cases the emphasis is solely on the electoral process. Alternation of power has occurred without the trauma and political violence of the past. Levels of poverty have fallen significantly. Even inequality, Latin America's Achilles heel, shows signs of gradual improvement. For the first time in the history of the region, and according to data from the World Bank, the middle class (32 per cent) represents a larger share of the population than those living in poverty (28 per cent).

The region's citizens are increasingly well educated, thanks to public policies that have emphasized compulsory, universal schooling and to the increased provision of higher education. However, as Talvi and Munyo rightly points out, the economic boom of the last decade has masked the shortcomings of the region's education systems: 'This deficiency undermines the region's long term economic outlook, its social stability, and the struggle against poverty and for social inclusion' (2013). Any in-depth analysis of regional democracy must also address the issues that persist: a crisis of representation, institutional weakness, inequality, corruption, weak rule of law, high levels of citizen insecurity, threats to freedom of expression and a long list of pending issues.

Focusing on the quality of democracy requires that one examine, over time, how the institutional structures of the different countries satisfy democratic principles such as the freedom and equality of citizens. This means that states should establish an adequate relationship between the production of wealth, based on economic growth, and its equitable distribution. Meeting such standards is crucial to the perception of proximity and openness towards civil society, without which the threat of authoritarianism or populism persists. Accomplishing the equitable distribution of wealth in the region entails a political solution to one of the main collective problems, and, therefore, is a substantial indicator of the quality of democracy in Latin America.

For all these reasons, it is important to recognize and value the accomplishments without glossing over the shortcomings or becoming complacent. There are plenty of motives for seeing the glass as half full, but there are also grounds for seeing it as half empty; there are reasons for hope, but also grounds for frustration. The celebration of three-and-a-half decades of democratic life in the region is a good occasion to look back on the road travelled so far and, starting from an understanding of the heterogeneous nature of the region, to take an overview of what it has achieved, and of what remains to be done so as to provide a basis for identifying the priorities for the coming decade.

This was our objective when we worked closely with Professor Leonardo Morlino to assess the quality of democracy in Latin America, and it is with both satisfaction and pride that we present this regional report. The proposal to focus on the quality of democracy has enabled us to compare how democratic regimes perform among the countries of the region with respect to minimal and observable standards in the specific context of each country.

The report presents the results of over two years of work by an international team of social scientists, experts and researchers, most of whom work in and come from the countries included in the project. This initiative contributes to the methodology for analysing the quality of democracy, and to measuring the state of the democracies in the region, identifying useful elements for analysing options for political and institutional reform.

In methodological terms, the analysis is part of a wider set of approaches developed by International IDEA within the framework of its assessments of the quality of democracy based on the perceptions of citizens in a number of regions of the world.

A change of epoch: global and regional trends

Latin America is experiencing not so much an epoch of changes as a 'change of epoch'. The world is interdependent, complex, volatile and marked by uncertainty. New developments come thick and fast: the gradual economic recovery in the United States; the progressive exit of eurozone countries from recession; the rise of China as a global power (despite its current slowdown); the growing role of Brazil, Russia, India and China (the so-called BRIC countries) and Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey (the so-called MINT countries); the boom in natural resources exports from Latin America to Asia; increasing inequalities in income distribution; the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring and their subsequent stagnation or retreat; the significant increase in the size of the middle classes and urban populations; social protests across the globe; the unending civil war in Syria; the recurrent Iranian nuclear threat; the bogging down of negotiations in the Middle East; global warming; the explosive growth of social networks and their impact on democracy; and much more.

This 'change of epoch' is reconfiguring contemporary history and will have a profound influence on humanity over the coming decades. Its impact is likely to be similar in scope to such key moments of historic change as 1945, which shaped the post-war world, or 1989, when the fall of the Berlin Wall exemplified the triumph of capitalism over the 'actually existing socialism' model championed by the Soviet Union. As this is an historical process, it is difficult to identify a specific year in which the world began to shift towards a new order. However, the events of September 2001 and the major financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 are likely to be the key reference points when future historians seek to define the era.

What are the signs of this global transformation? The latest report of the World Economic Forum (2013) identifies 10 global trends: (1) rising societal tensions in the Middle East and North Africa; (2) widening income disparities; (3) persistent structural unemployment; (4) intensifying cyber threats; (5) inaction on climate change; (6) the diminishing confidence in economic policies; (7) a lack of values in leadership; (8) the expanding middle class in Asia; (9) the growing importance of megacities; and (10) the rapid spread of misinformation online.

With regard to Latin America, the WEF report identifies three major challenges: reducing inequality, increasing economic growth and improving the quality of education.

The impact of global and regional changes on the quality of democracy in Latin America

Many countries in Latin America, especially those in South America, have benefited from the rise of Asia, and in particular of China as a world economic power. Driven by the rise in commodity prices, the region enjoyed a cycle of 'golden years' from 2004 to 2011, with average real growth of 4.3 per cent annually (*The Economist* 2014). The crisis of 2009 led to a contraction of 1.5 per cent, but thanks to Asia's appetite for the region's raw materials many countries managed to emerge from the crisis quickly.

In this regard, it is important to distinguish between South America, on the one hand, and Central America and Mexico, on the other. It is increasingly difficult to generalize about Latin America, given the very heterogeneous nature of the region. South America today benefits greatly from developments in China and India, and these have helped the region to achieve a faster economic recovery from the financial crisis. This contrasts with what has happened in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean, which are closer to the United States and therefore more reliant on the economic health of that country for their own recovery. These trends may be changing.

The Latin American export boom in recent years plus low interest rates globally have been a veritable 'tailwind' for the economies of the South American countries. This, together with prudent fiscal and monetary macroeconomic management during the last 10 to 15 years in most of the countries of Latin America, has allowed the region to make major progress on a number of fronts. For example, poverty in the region fell from 48.4 per cent in 1990 to 27.9 per cent in 2013, while the provision of secondary and higher education has risen significantly in a large part of Latin America, according to ECLAC data.

However, there are signs that this super-cycle of raw material-led growth may be coming to an end. Economic growth has slowed during the last two years in comparison to the achievements of the 'golden years'. According to ECLAC, for 2013 the average regional growth was 2.5 per cent, and the projection for 2014 is from 2.3 per cent to 2.7 per cent.[2] In addition, the easy profits to be made from the export of natural resources have had two

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[2]   Since the finalization of this report in March 2014, the economic situation in the region has shifted. According to ECLAC, the average regional growth for 2014 was 1.1 per cent and the projection for 2015 is –0.4 per cent, according to information gathered until end of November 2015. For the OECD, this abrupt slowdown 'is not cyclical, but has come to stay', it is the 'end of a cycle'.

effects: first, the marked appreciation of local currencies due to the enormous influx of foreign exchange, making products and services more expensive; and second, a lack of incentives to diversify the productive sectors, reflected, for example, in the return to the prevalence of commodities exports in many economies and a stagnation in productivity.

The second global trend that is having a major impact on the region is the rise of an increasingly empowered citizenship, together with the large increase in urbanization (close to 80 per cent as a regional average). In the case of Latin America, this global phenomenon has gone hand in hand with the rise of the new middle classes, the approximately 70 million people who have moved out of poverty to join the middle and vulnerable sectors. According to World Bank regional data, during the last decade the middle class in Latin America grew 50 per cent, from 100 million to 150 million people. Despite this important progress, the largest social group is not the middle class, but the 'vulnerable' class—that is, those who have an income of USD 4–10 a day, a group that represents 38 per cent of the region's total population.

Together with the cycle of economic expansion, these new middle classes have generated a genuine 'revolution of expectations' by demanding, for example, better-quality public services, particularly health and education, and by publicly demonstrating their indignation with corruption, the shortcomings of public transport systems, the lack of protection from violent crime and other issues. In contrast with previous decades, many of their demands are no longer channelled through traditional political parties, whose credibility has increasingly been called into question. Rather they are being channelled through citizen organizations and public protests, as seen in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, among others.

In other words, the 'new citizens' are increasingly aware of their social rights and are prepared to demand them through a variety of channels. This phenomenon has also led many public policymakers to rethink strategies for developing and funding social policies. As a result, the focus of debate is now more on the universality of certain social provisions instead of the traditional targeted approach.

35 years holding our breath

Together, these global and regional trends are reconfiguring the political, economic and social order worldwide and in Latin America. But what about democracy? What is the impact of these trends on the quality of democracy in Latin America? Any taking stock of the state of democracy in the region must be based on two initial clarifications.

First is the need to conduct a balanced analysis of the process of democratization in the region. This means avoiding being overly pessimistic while at the same time rejecting a simplistic, complacent vision of what has been achieved. The progress and achievements of the last 35 years should be recognized, and the shortcomings of the region's democracies and the challenges they face should be identified.

Second, it is important to bear in mind the structural heterogeneity of Latin America. As is clearly shown by the report, there are significant differences among Latin American countries with respect to the quality of democracy. Latin America has, for the past 35 years, been living through the longest, most widespread and most far-reaching period of democratization or re-democratization (depending on the country) in its entire history. The progress achieved in these years with regard to free, fair elections and recognition and respect for human rights has been significant. This is an asset that must be recognized and valued.

Support for and satisfaction with democracy

Support for democracy in Latin America has remained above 50 per cent for many years now. The latest Latinobarómetro survey (2013) puts it at 56 per cent. However, there are wide disparities among the countries of the region. Venezuela (87 per cent), Argentina (73 per cent) and Uruguay (71 per cent) head the list. In Central America, Costa Rica at 53 per cent continues to have the highest support for democracy, but it is important to note that this figure has fallen by 21 points during the last four years. Honduras (44 per cent), Guatemala (41 per cent) and Mexico (37 per cent) are the countries with the lowest levels of support.

While *satisfaction* with democracy remained stable at 39 per cent (from 2011–13), this is 17 points below the level of *support* for democracy. Uruguay (82 per cent), Ecuador (59 per cent) and Nicaragua (52 per cent) lead in this category. Argentina fell from 58 per cent to 51 per cent, putting it in fourth place. By contrast, Peru (25 per cent), Mexico (21 per cent) and Honduras (18 per cent) have the lowest levels of satisfaction.

The low levels of satisfaction with democracy have their origins in two central problems. The first relates to the fact that only 25 per cent of the Latin American population (regional average) believes the distribution of wealth to be fair. Three countries belonging to ALBA (the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas) occupy the first three places: Ecuador with 58 per cent, Venezuela with 43 per cent and Nicaragua with 41 per cent. These are followed by Panama and Uruguay, with 35 per cent each. Of the countries examined, the five with the lowest levels of satisfaction with democracy are

Costa Rica with 15 per cent, Colombia with 14 per cent, Honduras with 12 per cent, and Chile and Paraguay with 10 per cent.

The second cause lies in the fact that only 28 per cent (regional average) believes that government is for the benefit of all. The highest-ranking country is Ecuador (62 per cent), followed by Uruguay (49 per cent) and Nicaragua (47 per cent). The last places are occupied by Costa Rica (17 per cent), Honduras (9 per cent) and Paraguay (8 per cent).

Strengthening electoral democracy

Evidence that democracy, at least at the electoral level, is firmly rooted in the region comes from the fact, highlighted earlier, that from 2009 to 2016 no fewer than 34 presidential elections have been held or will be held. Few doubt that the elections to come will be reasonably transparent and that, with only a limited number of exceptions, there will be no major trauma associated with the handover, even when this entails a shift in power.

In general, the dominant trend in Latin American politics has been moderation, pragmatism, and a drift towards the centre (both from the left and the right). Again, it is necessary to make distinctions within the region. In South America, there has been a trend towards the left (the ALBA countries of Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela) and the centre-left (Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay). This trend is likely to continue during the next electoral cycle, and the presence of the centre-left may even increase as is shown by the victory of Socialist Michelle Bachelet in Chile, the likely re-election of Evo Morales and Dilma Rousseff in Bolivia and Brazil, respectively, in late 2014, and the potential return of former president Tabaré Vázquez to the presidency in Uruguay. If the foregoing forecast plays out, it would leave Colombia and Paraguay as the only countries with centre-right governments in South America. By way of contrast, in Central America one observes a greater balance between alternation and continuity, and between governments of the centre-left and left and governments of the centre-right and right.

From the electoral perspective, then, these democracies have made very important strides. However, behind this robust façade, they conceal major deficits and symptoms of fragility that directly threaten electoral integrity.

Tasks pending

One of the main deficits of the process of democratization is the misalignment between politics and society. Indeed, some have argued that backwardness characterizes not only how politics is conducted, but also how people think about it. As Bernard Manin argues in *The Principles of Representative Government* (1997), the 'party democracy' template has declined with the

rise of new ways of conducting politics, due to the changes in the societies themselves and in the culture through the strong presence of the media (or what Giovanni Sartori has dubbed the 'videocracy') technology, and social networks.

In recent decades, these misalignments and the crises of governance that generally accompany them have led Latin American countries to embark upon a packed agenda of constitutional, political and electoral reforms designed to balance, adjust and synchronize political systems with dynamic social realities, and with the growing demands of citizens calling for more and better levels of representation, participation, efficiency, transparency accountability, and governance.

Yet, there is still much to be done, including the institutional problems that affect governance and the rule of law, the independence and relationship among the different branches of government, and the workings of electoral systems and political parties, together with the serious issues of citizen insecurity and corruption. This report focuses on six major challenges and/or risks faced by Latin American democracies.

1. Weakness of democratic institutions and crisis of representation

Political parties and legislatures are two of the institutions that enjoy the least trust among Latin American citizens. On average, in surveys conducted by Latinobarómetro from 1996 to 2013, political parties enjoyed the trust of only 20 per cent of the population surveyed, while the legislature was trusted by only 28 per cent (in the figures from Latinobarómetro 2013 the support for legislatures was 29 per cent and for political parties 24 per cent). This weakness of two of the central institutions of any democracy is a worrisome sign, because of both the low levels of trust and the persistence of these low levels over time. With such low ratings, it is hardly surprising that many experts speak of a crisis of representation: to put it bluntly, citizens do not believe in their representatives, nor do they feel represented by them.

If the fragility of the rule of law in many countries in the region is also considered, expressed as a lack of juridical security that encompasses every sphere of people's lives (from prison policy to gender and ethnic discrimination) then they may represent what has been termed a 'defective democracy'. In fact, according to the Democracy Index compiled by *The Economist* in 2012, only two countries in the region could fit into the category of 'full democracy', namely Costa Rica and Uruguay. Ten countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico, are considered 'defective democracies', while another six (including Bolivia, Guatemala and Venezuela) are not even deemed to be democracies as such, but are classified instead as 'hybrid regimes'.

Finally, despite the advance of electoral democracy, during the last 30 years the mandates of 16 presidents have been interrupted for various reasons. The two most recent cases were those of Manuel Zelaya, in Honduras in 2009 (*coup d'état*), and Fernando Lugo, in Paraguay in 2012 (impeachment).

2. Excessive presidentialism and the rise of re-election

In most Latin American democracies, the presidency wields enormous power which, at times, compromises the independence of the other branches of government. In some cases, the executive branch has so much influence over the legislative agenda (from having priority over which legislation is discussed to wide-ranging veto powers) that, in effect, the president becomes the legislator-in-chief of the nation. In other cases, the presidency has so many executive and communication resources that these can come to overshadow the federal structures existing in some countries.

Nonetheless, this concentration of powers is distributed unevenly across the region, thus one may find countries that preserve the proactive and reactive powers of their legislatures to varying degrees. Even in those circumstances, some changes in the constitutional designs, such as the growing phenomenon of re-election, appear to sound a warning as to the dangers of hyper-presidentialism and the populist temptation. The impetus towards re-election reinforces the personalization of power, although one must note the trend to amend constitutions to allow for the re-election of a popular or powerful president.

This trend has not been the exclusive recourse of the left. Although the most recent examples have been Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, back in the 1990s, Carlos Menem (Argentina), Alberto Fujimori (Peru) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil) successfully changed the constitutions of their respective countries in order to allow themselves to run again right away, or consecutively. In other cases, under the system of alternating re-election, there is no need to change the constitution: instead, a president can run for office again after one term out of power. This is the situation in Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

This reformist trend has been accompanied, in many cases, by a reduction in the length of the term. Most of the countries in the region currently have four-year presidential terms (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala and Honduras), six countries have a five-year term (Bolivia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) and only two countries have six-year terms (Mexico and Venezuela).

As Mexican historian Enrique Krauze (2013) wrote following the death of Hugo Chávez: In Latin America, the 19th century was the century of the military *caudillo*. The 20th century suffered from the phenomenon of the

enlightened redeemer. Both centuries endured the necessary' men. Perhaps the 21ˢᵗ century will see a new dawn, a fully democratic one without any 'necessary' men, where the only people who are necessary are citizens who act freely within the framework of laws and institutions.

3. High levels of corruption and opacity

Corruption has been a constant throughout the history of the region, and all the evidence suggests that this is one of Latin America's most persistent problems. Corruption and the perception of corruption have had one of the most significant influences on the degree of trust that the region's citizens feel towards their public institutions. In other words, it is one of the factors contributing to the high levels of mistrust.

The latest Global Corruption Barometer, published by Transparency International in 2013 (which includes 11 Latin American countries, namely Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) reveals that political parties are the institution most widely viewed as corrupt in the region, with 78 per cent of those surveyed stating that they are 'corrupt' or 'very corrupt'. This is well above the global average of 64 per cent in the survey, which covers a total of 114 countries around the world. Legislatures were the second-least trusted institution, with 71 per cent of interviewees in 11 countries in the region viewing the legislative branch as 'corrupt' or 'very corrupt', again well above the global average of 57 per cent. In addition are the high levels of mistrust of institutions such as the judiciary and the police, which are also seen as being susceptible to corrupt practices.

However, corruption is far from being seen exclusively as a problem of politics or government. The wave of privatization which, to a greater or lesser degree, swept the region during the last two decades would appear to have contributed to citizens' perceptions of corruption. The low levels of trust in large private companies in various polls in the region are one indicator. Approximately 45 per cent of Latin Americans surveyed say that the business sector in their country is 'corrupt' or 'very corrupt'.

Given the nexus between corruption, money and power, many citizens have the sensation that behind the façade of democracies lurk hidden negotiations among powerful *de facto* powers, the results of which primarily favour those involved in such negotiations, but not necessarily the population at large. And this dangerously undermines the democratic foundations of society.

The Global Corruption Barometer reveals that 54 per cent of those surveyed in Latin America think that governments are 'largely' or 'wholly' run by a few big interests that operate for their own benefit. The same poll also found that in the 11 Latin American countries that participated (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and

Venezuela) all of those surveyed believed that corruption in their country had increased compared to the previous year.

The issue that best illustrates these suspicions of corruption and the opacity that exists at the highest levels of power with regard to how influence is exercised is the relationship between money and politics. Although there has been legislative progress in regulating these links, the funding of politics (whether through election campaigns or corporate lobbying to secure favourable legislation or the award of major public contracts) continues to be one of the most opaque aspects of the region's democracies. It is, then, hardly surprising that in the same Transparency International survey, the citizens of eight countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay) reported that they believe that political parties are the institution most affected by corruption.

To this opacity and the perception of corruption is added the absence, in many countries, of clear mechanisms for holding public institutions accountable, or accessing reliable public information, which, deservedly or not, only leads to greater suspicions.

4. *High levels of insecurity*

As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has noted, 'In recent years, Latin America has witnessed major socio-economic growth and major growth in crime. Despite economic growth, improvements in health and education, and the reduction of poverty and inequality, the region has become the most dangerous region in the world' (UNDP 2013a). Each year, there are over 100,000 violent deaths in the region. In 11 of 18 countries, homicide rates exceed the 'epidemic level' of more than 10 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants annually. At the same time, robberies have tripled in the last 25 years. It is not surprising, then, that the lack of security is the principal problem in the region and the number one priority for most citizens.

What makes this serious threat to the legal and democratic order even worse is that many of these crimes are linked to drug trafficking and organized crime. These groups often wield financial and even military power that makes them a real threat to democratic institutions and processes. One need only recall how the Cali cartel funded political campaigns in Colombia in the 1990s, or how Mexican drug trafficking organizations have conducted what amounts to a war against the country's police and armed forces in recent years.

At the same time, the growing perception of insecurity and the 'shrinking' of the state, according to the UNDP, have stimulated the hiring of private security guards in the region, with their numbers growing at an estimated annual rate of 10 per cent. As a result, today Latin America has almost 50 per cent more private security guards (3,811,302) than police officers (2,616,753).

5. Attacks on the independence of the judicial system and freedom of expression

In several countries in the region, there have been more cases of harassment of (and pressure being applied to) the judicial system, in particular by the executive branch. More and more governments pressure or complain publicly about judgments that they consider are not in keeping with their political agenda or ideological outlook. In other cases, there have been direct attempts to control the judiciary by packing it with sympathetic judges or with active members of the governing party. There is no need to explain why this trend, by gradually eliminating the independence of the branches of government, poses a threat to democracy itself.

Attacks on the press constitute another trend that undermines the healthy functioning of democracy. Whether through legal subterfuge, changes in legislation, the purchase of favourable information or, quite simply, the intimidation of journalists, many different groups, including the executive branch as well as drug trafficking cartels and large business groups, have sought to ensure favourable coverage of their opinions and interests through the use of methods that were not always orthodox.

This problem is further complicated when one considers that in many countries the most influential media organizations are owned by powerful families or large corporations. In other words, in a large part of the region the press is structured as an oligopoly and defends specific interests, whether ideological or commercial. As a result, given the perceived lack of diversity among the influential media or the notion that they only answer to the commercial interests of their owners, it is not so difficult for part of the population to accept attacks on, or a possible government intervention against, the 'fourth estate'.

6. The need to strengthen the participation and presence of women in politics

The progress made in recent decades is encouraging, but there is still a long way to go before gender parity is achieved.

With regard to women's political participation, the situation in Latin America is as follows: At the presidential level, the existing trend towards the election of women has been consolidated. As of early 2014 there were four female heads of state: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Argentina), Dilma Rousseff (Brazil), Michelle Bachelet (Chile) and Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica).

The average number of ministerial posts held by women has dropped from 28 per cent in 2013 to 25 per cent in 2014. Eight countries in the region fall below this average; in one the percentage is alarmingly low (El Salvador,

with 7.7 per cent). The proportion of female legislators in Latin America has diminished. The percentage of women holding seats in the upper chambers of the region's legislatures has gone from 24 per cent in 2013 to 23 per cent in 2014. And in the lower chambers or unicameral legislatures the proportion climbed from 22.3 per cent to 23.8 per cent during the same period.

However, these averages conceal significant differences among the countries of the region. In some countries, such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua, women hold more than 30 per cent of the seats, while in Brazil, Guatemala and Uruguay the figure is 12 per cent or less, according to figures from International IDEA.

The existence of quotas in several countries has clearly enabled progress in the political arena. Nonetheless, this has not been reflected in the economic and social area, where open discrimination persists.

Halfway there: much has been achieved but much remains to be done

This brief analysis of the situation in Latin America shows that there are grounds for both hope and frustration. There are reasons to see the glass as half full, but also to see it as half empty. As Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Alejandro Foxley have said, we are 'halfway there'.

The economy

The glass half full

For the first time in its modern history, Latin America did not collapse with the global financial crisis. The region displayed sound macroeconomic management in response to the crisis by applying countercyclical fiscal policies (saving when times were good and spending when times were tough).

The glass half empty

There are more and more indications that the commodity 'super cycle' that has been the major engine of regional growth (especially in South America) could be coming to an end, but the region has not used the 'golden years' to diversify its export and productive base or to improve its productivity.

As ECLAC Secretary General Alicia Bárcena has said: 'we face a very challenging situation', with a 'very complex outlook' and a 'slow economic recovery, marked by uncertainty''. The 'economic cycle in Latin America is coming to an end'. What the region needs now are 'solid states' to prevent the gains of the last decade from simply evaporating. According to Bárcena, this framework of weak growth could pose a threat to the main emerging economies and, in particular, to all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

These views were echoed by Moisés Naím, who has observed that, the last decade created the illusion that average rates of growth of between 4 per cent and 5 per cent were stable and sustainable. However, we are going to see those rates falling when we remove the performance-enhancing steroids of commodity prices and the monetary policies of the rest of the world. That is the reality. The past decade has not been the same for everyone, and nor will the next.

Democracy

The glass half full

Democracy as a form of government enjoys major support among Latin American citizens.

The glass half empty

There are high levels of dissatisfaction with how democracy operates. Indeed, while 56 per cent of citizens support democracy, only 39 per cent are satisfied with how it is working. 'The discontents of progress' (as *The Economist* calls it) accurately summarizes the current moment in Latin America. Despite major achievements, in particular poverty reduction and the expansion of the middle class, Latin Americans are dissatisfied with the current situation and are demanding more from their democracies, their institutions and their governments.

Electoral stability

The glass half full

The vast majority of presidential elections in recent years have been conducted in a climate of absolute normality, and the same seems likely to be true for the 17 elections scheduled to be held between 2013 and 2016, though there are areas in which continued improvement is needed. The peaceful transfer of power—and even alternation in power—has become the norm.

The glass half empty

From 2009 to 2012, two presidencies were cut short (Honduras in 2009, Paraguay in 2012), while a growing number of heads of state have sought to extend their stay in power, further accentuating the already excessive presidentialism found in Latin America, through consecutive or indefinite re-election.

There are four areas in which there is a need for a more detailed hemisphere-wide discussion in order to move forward on firmer ground towards the goal of achieving quality democracies in the region.

1. The need to restore a consensus as to the meaning of democracy and its collective defence

Electoral democracy is important: it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for quality democracy. In response to the strong trend towards re-election in its various modalities, the rise of strong men or women, and attempts by the executive to seize influence from other branches of government, it is essential to construct a new hemispheric consensus around the defence of democracy in the terms defined by Article 3 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

This time the dilemma is not how to defend democracy against authoritarianism or other anti-democratic practices (although such phenomena persist in some countries), but rather how to defend a quality democracy in the face of possible pathological deviations such as 'delegative democracy', referred to by Guillermo O'Donnell (1994), or 'illiberal democracy' as described by Fareed Zakaria (1997).

It is important to defend democracy from the new-style 'competitive authoritarianism' described by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (2010) as the combination of 'authoritarianism with elections', in which authoritarian regimes coexist with elections which, while technically fair (in most cases), lack competitive and fair conditions, and are not overseen by an impartial and independent electoral arbiter. Such regimes are also characterized by more sophisticated human rights violations, in particular violations of the freedom of expression, and by a systematic attack on the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government. Therefore, as Article 3 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter indicates, it is not sufficient for governments to access power by legitimate means; power must also be exercised legitimately: and the notion of legitimacy includes respect for the rule of law.

2. The need for elections with integrity

Elections are a necessary element of any democracy, but they are not sufficient. Elections with integrity are those that are based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality, as reflected in international agreements and provisions, characterized by professional preparation and management; they should be impartial and transparent throughout the entire electoral cycle (International IDEA and Kofi Annan Foundation 2012).

The absolute integrity of electoral processes not only promotes democratic values and human rights, but also contributes to improving governance, fighting corruption, empowering minority groups and ensuring the delivery of quality public services for all citizens.

3. The need to strengthen institutions

The best defence against the dangers of hyper-presidentialism, populism and leaders clinging onto power is to generate more democracy. And this means strengthening democratic institutions, establishing clear and transparent accountability mechanisms, and ensuring wide access to public information.

Unless it significantly strengthens its institutions, Latin America will be unable to improve the quality and legitimacy of its democracy or to deepen and ensure the sustainability of its development. This is why it is so important for the countries of the region to design and implement a reform agenda aimed at improving the quality of institutions, particularly as regards the strengthening and modernization of political parties and legislatures, the rule of law, access to public information, transparency and accountability, and reform of the state.

It should be borne in mind that improving the quality of institutions takes time, thus a sustained effort is needed if real progress is to be made. By the same token, special attention must be paid to the reform process itself. One must avoid the mistake of simply reproducing institutions that work in other contexts; as Douglass North has said, institutions 'do not travel well'. For this reason, we need to avoid taking a merely technocratic approach that adopts a one-size-fits-all approach. To the contrary, institutions should be reformed in light of the economic, political, social and cultural context in which they operate. The process should be open, plural, inclusive and participatory, and should be firmly based on broad political and social consensuses that make it legitimate and sustainable.

It is impossible for institutions to be legitimate and effective without good politics. And it is impossible to have good politics without democratic leadership. And without quality institutions, good politics and functional leadership, it is impossible to reach basic points of consensus that can provide a basis for adopting a strategic vision for the country to provide a framework for a set of state policies capable not only of improving democracy and development, but also of improving citizens' qualify of life. This is the virtuous circle that the region should set in motion as a priority.

4. The need to incorporate vulnerable groups and minorities

Traditional democracy was defined as government by the majority. This continues to be true, but modern quality democracy is also characterized by respect for and the inclusion of minorities, vulnerable groups and historically under-represented groups, in the understanding that all human societies are diverse. It is therefore essential to strengthen the political and social representation of women, youth and indigenous peoples, among others. This translates into proactive policies designed to ensure the inclusion of these groups in the decision-making and executive fabric of the region's democracies.

This was the context in which International IDEA commissioned a group of experts, led by Professor Leonardo Morlino, to conduct an exhaustive study of the quality of Latin American democracies. In this study, Morlino has addressed two key tasks. The first is constructing a theoretical framework to make it possible to define what 'quality' means in a democracy. The second, based on the definitions established in the first part, and drawing on the many existing studies and surveys of the region, is to effectively measure the quality of democracy in 15 Latin American countries.

What, then, is a quality democracy?

In the words of Morlino, a quality democracy is 'a stable, institutional structure that enables citizens to achieve freedom and equality through the legitimate and correct operation of its institutions and mechanisms'. In other words, a quality democracy provides three dimensions of quality: (1) it is a regime with broad legitimacy that fully satisfies its citizens (quality of outcomes); (2) it is a regime in which the citizens, associations, and communities that constitute it enjoy freedom and equality (quality of content); and (3) it is a regime in which citizens are able to verify and evaluate whether their government is pursuing the objectives of freedom and equality within the framework of the rule of law (quality of procedures).

The study combined qualitative and quantitative categories aggregated into eight analytical dimensions. Five of these refer to the procedures of democracy: rule of law, electoral accountability, inter-institutional accountability, political participation and political competition. Two relate to the content of democracy: freedom and solidarity/equality. And the last dimension refers to the outcomes of democracy, namely, responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Freedom, equality and institutional procedures are three substantial aspects of a quality democracy. And they are also concepts that can be empirically translated into a set of measurable political and civil rights. Meanwhile, the two drivers of democratic quality are, obviously, political competition and citizen participation.

When observing the empirical results, the study considered a key question: Are there different templates for democracy in Latin America? In particular, the authors asked whether it is possible to distinguish between traditional liberal democracies and neo-populist democracies, characterized by high levels of participation, but also by low levels of institutional accountability and political competition. Contrary to what one might think, the authors argue that neo-populist democracy no longer exists in the region. What one does find, in the view of the authors, within the liberal democratic regimes, are countries with greater or lesser democratic quality.

This certainly does not mean that the countries of the region have solid, traditional democratic regimes. 'Delegative democracy', so well described by Guillermo O'Donnell, is widespread in Latin America. This is a poor-quality democracy, where the political involvement of citizens is limited to voting, while they are ignored between elections, and they have little possibility of controlling corruption or misgovernment. In this study, the countries classified as 'delegative democracies' are also, coincidentally, the lower-quality democracies, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

On the basis of the information gathered in this study the authors conclude that there are at least three major areas where there is an urgent need to implement policies designed to consolidate democracy and improve its quality. These are anti-corruption policies, policies to improve the administrative and institutional capacity of states, and policies aimed at consolidating security for those who live in Latin American cities.

The study identities three types of difficulties characteristic of the countries examined: problems of process and freedom (Venezuela); problems of process and equality (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay); and problems of process relating to both freedom and equality (Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru).

The report also proposes several areas and specific recommendations, on a country-by-country basis, for an agenda of political and institutional reform to address the weaknesses identified. Administrative capacity is an issue in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. Freedom of information requires reforms in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Political participation is a critical factor in Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Costa Rica. The Supreme Court or Constitutional Court require reform in Bolivia and Peru. There are procedural deficits regarding security in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. The role of the army is an issue in El Salvador. Political parties and associations are issues in Mexico and Uruguay. Electoral accountability is a critical issue in Colombia. Competition in general terms is a critical issue in Mexico, while internal competition is an issue in Venezuela. The relationship between the executive branch and the legislative branch is a problem in Bolivia.

Among the aspects of interest for other regions of the world that clearly emerge from the report, and which confirm the conclusions summarized in this introduction, are the fragmentation and institutionalization of political parties, above all in presidential systems that encourage hyper-presidentialism, and the importance of 'political culture' in the framework of implementing in practice the principles and rules defined in the constitutional arrangements of the state. Also of relevance to other regions, within the context of

sharing experiences on a South–South and North–South basis, is the cost of politics, the relationship between the mass media and politics, the issue of citizen security with reference to the unsustainable levels of violence and the penetration of political processes by organized crime, and in general the capture of state institutions (both central and decentralized).

A final point of interest in this report is the potential lessons offered by the transitions in Latin America for political, social and economic transitions in regions such as the Arab world. In recent years institutions such as the UNDP and International IDEA have organized international seminars and conferences with the participation of senior specialists from Latin American countries to share experiences of political transition, for example regarding civilian control of the armed forces and police, and the creation of spaces for political dialogue in highly polarized contexts. Exchanging experiences of democratic innovation on a South–South and North–South basis is important for the legitimacy of democracy in a globalized and increasingly polarized world.

The current debate about the quality of democracy

In Latin America, the debate about democratic consolidation has become a debate on the quality of its institutions. The first part of this report analyses the theoretical framework for the study, based on the extensive literature on democratization, with reference to the principal methodological approaches used in academia to measure the quality of democracy.

During the last 15 years International IDEA has been one of the leading proponents of 'democracy assessment:' an assessment conducted in over 30 countries that seeks to measure the state of democracy as perceived by a country's own citizens. The analytical framework, also known as the State of Democracy assessment, can be used by citizens to examine their own systems in order to generate political initiatives and domestic or internally driven reform agendas.[3]

International IDEA's analytical framework draws on two basic principles of democracy: popular control of decision-making, and equality among citizens in the exercise of such control. Based on these principles democracy may take many forms, so long as it is rooted in the realities of a given country and the aspirations of its people. These two basic principles are expressed through seven mediating values: participation, authorization, representation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and solidarity. This framework is then articulated in more than 90 'research questions' that the researchers compile by combining quantitative and qualitative data using four main lines

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[3] On International IDEA's State of Democracy assessment framework see <http://www.idea.int/publications/aqd/>.

of evaluation: (i) citizenship, legislation and rights; (ii) representative and accountable government; (iii) civil society and popular participation; and (iv) democracy beyond the state.

The State of Democracy assessment framework gives citizens a tool with which to examine their institutions with the aim of recognizing strengths and weaknesses and what their fellow citizens think about them. This evidence can be used to support public debate and to influence reforms to ensure they reflect local sensitivities and conditions. Beyond its academic relevance, a State of Democracy assessment is a structured methodology for identifying areas and issues in which political and institutional reform are needed in order to strengthen democracy. It also enables citizens to participate on an equal basis, without discrimination on the basis of gender, age, social class, religion or ethnic group. It is important to stress Professor Morlino's contribution to one of the first applications of this analytical framework developed by International IDEA in the context of a study on the state of democracy in Italy.[4]

The main researchers who participated in developing and applying this framework shared several experiences conducting a State of Democracy assessment during a conference held in Bangkok in September 2013. Among the examples considered, a number are relevant to this analysis. In Nepal, the study contributed to the definition of an agenda for post-conflict reconstruction. In Mongolia, the research study helped the executive branch, the legislature and civil society actors define a Millennium Development Goal for democratic governance and human rights. In Zambia, the recommendations generated by the study contributed to the public debate about possible constitutional reform. In Pakistan, a reform of the electoral law took the results of the survey into consideration. And in the Philippines, a report on the quality of democracy at the local level has been one of the most influential documents in the negotiation of a new local government structure in the autonomous region of Mindanao.

Key issues emerging in the debate about the quality of democracy in Latin America

There is an extensive and steadily expanding literature analysing the quality of democracy in Latin America. Running parallel to the academic debate, which the report analyses in its theoretical framework, many studies and reports (which have come to constitute a critical mass) have focused on identifying the favourable conditions for international actors (such as regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations) to be able to provide effective support for the development and consolidation of

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4   See <http://www.idea.int/sod-assessments/profiles/italy.cfm> for a copy of this report (2000), one of eight countries in the State of Democracy series.

democratic institutions and processes in the region.

In recent years, several international organizations have analysed the trends in relation to the deepening of democratic institutions in Latin American countries. Despite the different methodological approaches, this report examines all the results of these studies, placing it at the centre of the debate on the policies to support democracy proposed by the international actors and partners in the region.

In 2004 the UNDP report *Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy* identified a number of issues, including the huge democratic achievement of having elected civilian governments in almost all countries in the region; a free, independent press; and progress in the attainment of fundamental civil liberties.

At the same time, the UNDP warned of the danger of Latin American democracies becoming irrelevant to their citizens due primarily to the problems of inequality and poverty. It found that individuals did not express themselves as citizens with full rights, which eroded their social inclusion. The report also identified structural problems, such as the limited capacity of states to guarantee basic civil rights such as access to justice. In a collection of analyses on the relationship between democracy and citizenship, compiled in a UNDP publication (2007), Guillermo O'Donnell highlighted the key role of the state as the 'indispensable guarantor of the various citizenship rights that democracy both entails and requires', and stressed the scant capacity of the state and the governments of Latin America 'to democratize societies affected by a long and deep-rooted history of inequality and social heterogeneity'.

The UNDP Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean (2010) addressed the problem of the intergenerational transmission of inequality, analysing how this is a systemic problem with a complex relationship to a type of political regime that, despite being democratic, provides unequal access to influence over public policies, which in turn contributes to perpetuating inequality. The conclusion of this report is that in addition to the political regime there are other factors that can contribute to reducing inequality, including the possibility for citizens to gain access to mechanisms for acquiring the information that will allow them to evaluate public policies in sufficient depth; the existence of a suitable institutional design that ensures that the preferences of the more underprivileged sectors are represented during collective decision making processes; and the proper functioning of political institutions that prevent or curb state capture by minority groups.

The second report on democracy in Latin America published by the Organization of American States (OAS) and UNDP in early 2011 analysed

the trends and status of civil, political and social citizenship in Latin America as a factor to take into consideration when determining the quality of democracies in the region. The report states that these democracies need to resolve long-standing deficits in citizenship and tackle new realities in order to deliver 'minimum standards of citizenship that, in general, are not just achievable but should also be a basic feature of the democratic system'. Insisting on this point, the report of these international bodies stressed that 'if democracies fail to prioritize the effective implementation of citizenship, they will find themselves falling short of minimum thresholds, and will lose legitimacy and sustainability'. In this context, the report also issued an appeal to work harder on issues such as reducing income inequality and making progress with respect to gender and ethnic equality, among others.

At the same time, the latest UNDP Regional Human Development Report (2013a) placed the issue of citizen security at the centre of its concerns, noting that 'insecurity is preventing the consolidation of democracy in the region, and there is a pressing need to consider its effects on the relationship between citizenship and the state'. This conclusion confirms one of the results of the joint UNDP–OAS report on democracy in Latin America, which underlines that 'support for democracy as a system of government in the region has been seriously affected by perceptions of high levels of insecurity and skepticism of the performance of the government in fighting crime'.

Another important issue identified by international bodies concerns social conflicts. A recent study by the Regional Project of Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios [Proyecto de Análisis Político y Escenarios Prospectivos, PAPEP] and UNDP of the capacity of democratic systems to manage conflicts recognizes democracy as a 'conflictive order' and as the best system for achieving a 'constructive politics', that is, a system that recognizes 'both conflicts and the legitimate institutional order where these are addressed' (PAPEP-UNDP 2012). The study states that 'the new forms of communication modify and recodify politics, social conflicts and, in general, the public space'. Doing this, the PAPEP report goes on to explain, creates a 'new culture of techno-sociability that modifies subjectivity, changing the patterns of recognition and the daily lives of individuals and communities'. In its conclusion, the study states that 'this new subjectivity today constitutes the new force constructing democratic change'.

The multilateral political debate of the next two years will focus on the contribution of democracy and democratic governance to defining a strategic framework for international action in the post-2015 development agenda.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding this report

In light of the foregoing considerations, especially the analysis of the trends and challenges for the quality of democracy, a clear picture emerges that casts

light on the current period in Latin America. The region combines advanced electoral democracy with the worst income distribution scenarios in the world; it combines a functional rule of law with high levels of corruption, impunity and violence; it combines very high levels of poverty with a critical mass of urban, informed and hyper-connected citizens.

This leads to a first important consideration. The debate today is no longer between democracy and authoritarianism or between formal democracy and real democracy. Rather, it revolves around the quality of democracy—the capacity of democracies to deliver quality (in public services, distribution of wealth, and social cohesion among other areas) to all citizens.

Final considerations

For the last 35 years, Latin America has not only successfully restored democracy and made it sustainable; it has also given democracy an important foundation in the form of citizen support. The resilience of democracy in the region is without question one of the most significant achievements to note and to value.

As a result, debate now focuses on the quality of democracy. The focus is on how to construct more and better citizenship; on how to progress from being an electoral democracy to being a democracy of citizens and institutions; on how to reconcile democracy with economic development in societies with greater levels of social cohesion, less inequality and poverty, and greater gender equity; on how to establish a more strategic relationship between the market and the state, and a more functional relationship between the state and society; on how to get democracy to deliver responses to new types of demands from more complex, more modern, younger and more urban societies—in summary, how to make democracy work effectively in a globalized international context.

All of these issues pose problems for democracy that should be debated within the framework of democracy, and the solutions to which need to be arrived at democratically.

At the same time, there is a wide consensus in the region that Latin America is enjoying a good period. The region today has more consolidated democracies, more and better public policies for social protection, and stronger and more integrated economies. In the last decade, 70 million people have emerged from poverty, and the middle class has grown by over 50 per cent. The big challenge becomes how to continue going forward and how to ensure the sustainability of this process over the medium and long term in a complex and volatile global context beset by challenges and uncertainty.

For all of these reasons it is essential that the region makes the most of this window of opportunity and avoids falling into the trap of premature self-congratulation. Moderate optimism should be enjoyed by all means, but there is no place for naïveté or self-complacency.

Hence it is so important to be alert to the emergence of new phenomena and trends. As Guillermo O'Donnell so rightly advises: 'reality requires' that we continuously bring ourselves up-to-date so that we can analyse and detect reality and identify new phenomena, new realities and new trends that are emerging in the region every day (2007). This report is a propitious opportunity to analyse the quality of the region's democracies and the paths they are taking. The reader will be able to explore here the strengths and weaknesses of the Latin American regimes through a most valuable analytical tool to capture the diversity of processes in a profoundly varied context.

Finally, in this second edition, prepared and reviewed in early 2014, the reader will find the Postscript by Juan Rial and the supplemental comments on Politics and Quality of Democracy in Latin America, by Manuel Alcántara. These texts make for a more complete study and analysis of this report, which was authored by Professor Leonardo Morlino for International IDEA and at its request. The opinions expressed are the exclusive responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of International IDEA.

CHAPTER 2

2. Theoretical framework

Leonardo Morlino

Literature review

The existing literature on democracy and democratization includes at least three main currents that address the questions posed in the introduction: (a) scholarly work on democratization, including consolidation and crisis, which highlights the need to look behind the façade of institutions (i.e., that addresses the content and actual workings of recently established democratic institutions); (b) texts by scholars in established democracies, especially those in the tradition of common law countries (the UK, Canada and Australia), who engage in research on so-called democratic auditing to assess their democracies; and (c) data banks, such as those of Polity IV, Freedom House, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the World Bank and the Bertelsmann Index, which provide measurements of categories related to democratic performance, governance and the quality of democracy.

These three groups of scholars and institutions have made—and some are still making—an important contribution to the study of democracy. The first group includes O'Donnell with his notion of 'delegative democracy' (1994 and see below), Lijphart (1999) with his thesis on the superiority of consensual democracy vis-à-vis majoritarian democracy in terms of implementing democratic quality, and Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002), who refer to three aspects that draw upon Dahl's concept of polyarchy (civil rights, participation and competition) (1971).[5] In this group Ringen (2007, esp. 32–47), Roberts (2010, esp. Ch. 2), Levine and Molina (2011), and Alcántara Sáez (2012) also merit special attention. Ringen proposes strength, capacity, security and trust as the four key dimensions for measuring democratic quality in 25 countries (2007) and meritoriously emphasizes—and rightfully so—that democracies

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[5]   Consistent with his notion of consensual democracy, Lijphart includes indicators such as female representation, electoral participation, satisfaction with democracy and corruption. Once applied, these indicators show how a consensual democracy can improve its quality.

have to be assessed based on what they effectively deliver to citizens.[6] Roberts develops a notion of quality as linkages and analyses a set of East European countries quantitatively and qualitatively on three dimensions: electoral accountability, mandate responsiveness and policy responsiveness (see below). The work of Levine and Molina also deserves mention for their procedural definition of democracy, which analyses five qualities: electoral decision, participation, accountability, responsiveness and sovereignty.[7] Alcántara Sáez presented an original direction of analysis, which Juan Linz had mentioned but which no one had explored until then, that posited the quality of politicians as a possible relevant and independent variable to account for the quality of a democracy and as a way to analyse democracy.

In the second group, Weir and Beetham (1999: 4) developed a qualitative analysis that they define as 'democratic auditing': 'a systematic assessment of institutional performance against agreed criteria and standards, so as to provide a reasonable authoritative judgment as how satisfactory the procedures and arrangements of the given institutions are'. Their auditing procedure follows four steps: identify appropriate criteria for assessment; determine standards of good or best practices which provide a benchmark for the assessment; assemble the relevant evidence from both formal rules and informal practices; and review the evidence in light of the audit criteria and defined standards to obtain a systematic assessment. A number of authors followed Beetham by implementing the proposal for auditing in the United Kingdom and other countries (see Beetham, Bracking, Kearton, Weir 2002; Beetham, Byrne, Ngan, and Weir 2002; Sawer 2001 and 2007; Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin 2009; and Landman 2006).

The third group includes several international institutions, such as the World Bank, the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Economist Intelligence Unit and others that have built different databases. Massive initiatives exist that provide scores and rankings for a large number of countries or in some cases (for example, Freedom House) for key aspects such as freedom and rule of law in all independent countries. From a strategic perspective, these data sets are also extremely important for those who are planning to invest in a specific country or are choosing where to start an industrial enterprise (see Morlino 2011a, especially Ch. 8). Rothstein, Holmberg and others at the University of Gothenburg's Quality of Government Institute compiled almost all existing

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[6] See below and Morlino (2011a: Ch. 8) to more precisely corroborate how these dimensions are included in the qualities, especially in the rule of law and responsiveness sub-dimensions, albeit using partially different indicators.

[7] Mazzuca (2010) suggests a different approach to the conceptualization of quality of democracy, especially if applied in Latin America. In his opinion 'access to power' and 'exercise of power' should be the critical notions to take into consideration. The second refers to the analysis of the quality of democracy that includes as one characteristic state involvement. This is a relevant perspective that, however, oversimplifies and has the consequence of unnecessarily narrowing the empirical analysis.

databases to create a meta database.[8] Among these institutions, PoliLat's index on democratic development deserves special mention. Since 2002, with essential financial support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, PoliLat proposed an index of democratic development for 18 Latin American countries (IDD-Lat). The index is the result of measuring a series of fields (primarily civil and political rights, corruption, party participation in the legislatures, accountability, governmental stability, implementation of welfare policies and economic efficiency). Most of the data come from other organizations, such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.[9]

In summary, on reviewing this literature one finds either a quantitative analysis in which the reader does not have access to what lies behind numbers and rankings, or encounters a highly detailed qualitative analysis often lacking in adequate theoretical justification. Moreover, in both types of analysis, the explanation—the key function of every scientific enterprise—is forgotten. The analytic tool proposed in this text avoids these problems by attempting to combine quantitative and qualitative analysis, empirical descriptions and explanations of all the principal aspects of democracy. It additionally takes into account some of the criticisms that have been expressed.[10] These include the dangers of oversimplification; the ambiguous meaning of 'quality' as a characteristic or a positive dimension; the possible confusion between 'democraticness' and effective governance; the need to evaluate the quality of democracy along with the quality of life and other cultural aspects, or, more specifically, the correct notion of responsiveness.

As will be explained in the following sections, while simplifying reality is unavoidable, as anyone who does empirical research knows, and even though the notion of responsiveness will be discussed in more detail below, it is important to emphasize here that 'quality' is considered to be a dimension (which can be positive or negative); no confusion exists between democraticness and effective governance; governance in its most important respects is subsumed in the rule of law. As quality of life and other cultural aspects are considered only as possible independent variables of democratic qualities, no confusion is possible.

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[8]   The perspective of the quality of government, that is, of 'trustworthy, reliable, impartial, uncorrupted, and competent government institutions' is different from the analysis developed here. As can be observed below, these authors mainly focus on what this study considers the rule of law. However, the meta database they built is much broader and encompasses the variables considered here (see below and Annex 2).

[9]   For details of how the measures complement each other, see the website of the Latin American political consultancy organization PoliLat, specifically their democratic development index's methodology page at <http://www.idd-lat.org/cuestiones_metodologicas/n/index.html>.

[10]   Among the strongest critiques, see especially Plattner (2004).

In order to present and discuss this tool, the following sections will suggest a definition of quality and identify all the empirical qualities that normative democratic notions would include. The subsequent sections will provide further definitions and a few key considerations of those qualities. A central section will apply the tool to a set of 15 cases in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela).[11] Annex 1 more precisely supplements definitions with basic sub-dimensions and relevant questions for conducting research on the topic, while Annexes 2 and 3 provide quantitative and qualitative evaluations of each of the basic dimensions and sub-dimensions of democratic quality.

Quality and qualities

An analysis of the quality of a democracy—that is, an empirical check of how 'good' a democracy is—requires not only that some definition of democracy (see Morlino 2011a, ch. 2) be assumed, but also that a clear notion of quality be established. A survey of the use of the term in the industrial and marketing sectors suggests three different meanings of quality:

1.   Quality is defined by the established procedures associated with each product. A 'quality' product is the result of an exact, controlled process carried out according to precise, recurring methods and timing; the emphasis is on the *procedures*.

2.   Quality is contained in the structural characteristics of a product, be it the design, materials used, how it works or its other particulars; the emphasis is on the *content*.

3.   The quality of a product or service is indirectly derived from customer satisfaction, the consumers' repeat request for the same product or service, regardless of how it is produced or its actual content, or how consumers acquire the good or service. According to this definition, quality is simply based on *result*.

In summary, the three different notions of quality are grounded, respectively, in procedures, contents or results. Each has different implications for empirical research. Importantly, even with all the adjustments demanded by the complexity of the 'object' under examination—democracy—it is still necessary to keep these conceptualizations of quality in mind when creating definitions and models of democratic quality or qualities. At this point, democratic *deepening*, a notion poorly developed in the literature, means

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[11]   This study leaves out the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Panama, as it was decided to postpone the field research in those countries. In their work Levine and Molina (2011) analyse Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

merely 'the process of developing what in different normative perspectives are considered the qualities of a democracy'. The subsequent questions, thus, are: What are the most relevant normative notions of democracy? And what are the qualities of democracy in terms of procedures, content and results?

A quality democracy is a 'good' democracy, that is, 'a stable institutional structure that realizes the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms' (see Morlino 2011a: Ch. 2). This means that a good democracy is a broadly legitimated regime that completely satisfies citizens (*quality in terms of result*); in which the citizens, associations and communities of which it is composed enjoy liberty and equality, even in different forms and degrees (*quality in terms of content*); and in which the citizens themselves have the power to check and evaluate whether the government pursues the objectives of liberty and equality according to the rule of law (*quality in terms of procedure*).

A different yet relevant definition is that proposed by Roberts (2010: 31): 'the quality of democracy is equivalent to the degree to which citizens control their rulers or alternatively the strength of linkages between citizens and policy makers'. Although such a definition makes a great deal of sense, it has two problems. First, it is not useful for building a tool that can be applied by experts with—or on behalf of—different normative positions, as it sets forth an empirically narrow notion of democracy that is focused on policies; past research abundantly displayed how values and procedures themselves have been considered important components of democracy (see the next section). In other words, one can produce multiple distinct empirical notions of democratic quality. Yet as a normative contested concept that is empirically translated, a more farsighted tool is needed to account for people with different normative positions. Second, the notion of linkage or anchor is relevant, yet it is not present in this analysis of processes of consolidation (see Morlino 2011a: Ch. 5). If it is applied at this point, it causes conceptual confusion between two different, although possibly overlapping, phenomena.

With these caveats in mind, eight possible *dimensions* or *qualities* on which democracies might vary should be at the core of the empirical analysis of the aforementioned normative notions of democracy. The first five dimensions are procedural, which although also relevant to content, mainly concern rules. The first procedural quality is the *rule of law*. The second and third procedural qualities relate to two forms of *accountability* (*electoral* and *inter-institutional*). The fourth and fifth are the classic dimensions of *participation* and *competition*, which, however, have a special theoretical status (see below). The sixth refers to the *responsiveness* or correspondence of the system to the desires of citizens and civil society in general. The seventh and eighth dimensions are substantive in nature. These are full respect for rights, expanded through the attainment of a range of *freedoms* and the progressive

implementation of greater political, social and economic *equality*. These dimensions will be further detailed in separate sections below.

Procedures

The first procedural dimension encompasses decisional output and its application and is constituted by the rule of law. The second and third concern the relationship between input (interventions) and output (results), and regard the two accountabilities—electoral and inter-institutional accountability. Competition and participation are the other two key procedural qualities. A large body of literature, which cannot be summarized here, exists on all these dimensions. In short, each dimension will be analysed with respect to three aspects: the empirical definition, the problems of implementation and the central condition or conditions.

The *rule of law* is not only the enforcement of legal norms. It also connotes the principle of the supremacy of the law, that is, the Ciceronian *legum servi sumus*. It minimally entails the capacity, even if limited, to make authorities respect the laws, and to have laws that are a matter of public knowledge, universal, stable, unambiguous and non-retroactive.[12] These characteristics are fundamental for any civil order and a basic requirement for democratic consolidation (see Morlino 1998). In this vein, the basic sub-dimensions of the rule of law include:

1.   individual security and civil order; focus on the right to life, freedom from fear and torture, personal security, and the right to own private property guaranteed and protected throughout the country;

2.   independent judiciary and a modern justice system; focus on mechanisms establishing an independent, professional and efficient judicial system that allows equal access to justice, which is free from undue pressures and any imposition of decisions;

3.   institutional and administrative capacity to formulate, implement and enforce the law; focus on the governance system (president, legislature and executive) capable of ensuring the production of high-quality legislation and its implementation throughout the country in a transparent policymaking process that allows for the participation of civil society, and the presence of a professional, neutral, accountable and efficient state bureaucracy;

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[12]   The minimal definition of the rule of law, suggested by Maravall (2002), refers to the implementation of laws that (i) were enacted and approved following pre-established procedures; (ii) are not retroactive . . . but general, stable, clear and hierarchically ordered . . . (iii) are applied to particular cases by courts free from political influence and accessible to all, the decisions of which follow procedural requirements, and that establish guilt through ordinary means.

4.   integrity or, in its absence, effective fight against corruption, illegality and abuse of authority by state agencies; focus on the existence and implementation of a comprehensive legislative framework to prevent and fight corruption; and

5.   security forces that are respectful of citizen rights and are under civilian control; focus on the mechanisms of civilian control over security forces as well as on efficient, uncorrupted, disciplined police forces respectful of human and political rights.

In developing an analysis of these dimensions a number of particularly critical and more specific aspects can be identified, which include:

• individual security and civil order, with an emphasis on the right to life, the freedom from fear and torture, personal security, and the right to private property as aspects guaranteed and protected throughout the country;

• application of the legal system *erga omnes, 'towards all'*, also at the supranational level, to guarantee the rights and equality of citizens;

• absence, even at a local level, of areas dominated by organized crime;

• absence of corruption in the political, administrative and judicial spheres;

• existence of a local, centralized and civilian bureaucracy that competently, efficiently and universally applies the laws and assumes responsibility in the event of an error;

• existence of an efficient police force that respects the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the law;

• free and equal access of citizens to the justice system in cases of lawsuits between private citizens or by private citizens against public institutions;

• reasonably swift resolution of criminal inquiries and of civil and administrative lawsuits; and

• complete independence of the judiciary from any political influence.

All of the above concern the efficient application of the law and the fair resolution of lawsuits in the legal system. Each can be evaluated using various indicators and the relevant data can be analysed on a case-by-case basis using

both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The main characteristics and the degree to which the rule of law is respected can be determined for each indicator in a country.

It should be emphasized, albeit tangentially, that the level of detail and thoroughness of an investigation has been limited to a number of cases. Sub-dimensions that should be part of the analysis, even in a quantitative analysis involving many cases, include: the level of corruption based on all available data on the phenomenon, the access of citizens to the court system and the duration of legal proceedings using the pertinent judicial statistics. It is obvious, however, that this scarce number of indicators provides an incomplete portrayal of the phenomenon.

The analysis of the democratic rule of law in each country should be done carefully, observing trends that impede its full realization. It remains an essential factor of democratic quality, and plays a very important role in the existence and development of the other dimensions (see below). What then are the fundamental conditions that allow for at least a moderate development of the rule of law? Research on various dimensions of this question suggests that the necessary conditions for the democratic rule of law are the dissemination of liberal and democratic values on both the popular and especially the elite level, as well as the existence of the bureaucratic and legislative traditions and economic means necessary for the effective implementation of laws. However, these conditions exist in only a few countries, and they are very difficult to create. Consequently, it is difficult to cultivate and enhance this dimension of democratic quality. The most reasonable and concrete strategy is to proceed in short, measured steps that follow the aforementioned lines and objectives.

In general, accountability is the obligation of elected political leaders to take responsibility for their political decisions when asked to do so by citizen-electors or other constitutional bodies (see, among others, Mainwaring 2003: 7). Schedler (1999: 17) suggests that accountability has three main features: information, justification and punishment/compensation. The first element, information on the political act or series of acts by a politician or political body (president, cabinet, government, legislature, etc.), is indispensable for attributing responsibility. Justification refers to the reasons furnished by the governing leaders for their actions and decisions. Punishment/compensation, the third feature, is the consequential action taken by the elector, other person or body following the evaluation of the information, justification, and other aspects and interests behind the political action. All three of these elements require a public dimension characterized by pluralism, independence, and the genuine participation of a range of individual and collective actors.

Accountability can be either electoral or inter-institutional. Electoral accountability is that which electors can demand of their elected officials. In other words, it is that which the governed can request of a particular

person or body in light of particular acts. Electoral accountability is periodic in nature; it is dependent on the various national, local and, if they exist, supranational elections. The voter makes a decision and either rewards the incumbent candidate or slate of candidates with a favourable vote, or else punishes them by voting for another candidate, abstaining or voiding the ballot. The governor and the governed are involved in electoral accountability and thus are politically unequal. This dimension of democratic quality can become less irregular only through a consideration of the various electoral occasions locally, nationally and—for European citizens—supranationally. Continuity is also sustained when citizens can vote in referendums on issues regarding the activity of the central government.

Inter-institutional accountability is the responsibility rulers have to other institutions or collective actors with the expertise and power to control the formers' behaviour. In contrast to electoral accountability, for the most part the actors are political equals. Inter-institutional accountability is relatively continuous, being formally or substantially formalized by law. In practice, it is usually manifest in the monitoring exercised by the opposition in the legislature, by the various decisions and checks made by the court system, when functional, and by constitutional courts, state accounting offices, central banks and other bodies of a similar purpose that exist in democracies. Political parties outside of representative institutions also exercise this kind of check, as do the media and other intermediary associations such as unions and employers' associations (see O'Donnell 1999; Schmitter 1999). Hence, this notion of inter-institutional accountability is not strictly legal. Societal accountability, proposed by Smulovitz and Peruzzotti (2000), is part of such a notion; although considering it an autonomous concept could add confusion to an empirical analysis.

Two additional considerations remain necessary. First, in the discussions of accountability, a spatial metaphor (that is, vertical for electoral and horizontal for inter-institutional) is commonly used (see O'Donnell 1994 and Morlino 2004). This author posits that neutral expressions (electoral and inter-institutional) are more appropriate since they avoid assumptions entailed in the metaphor. Differing from vertical accountability, horizontal accountability implies a comparable power and authority among the different institutions. However, this is not the case, for example, when the executive branch and an independent authority such as the ombudsman are compared. Vertical accountability, moreover, implies an asymmetry of power between electors and elected representatives that effectively exists although not on election day.

Second, electoral accountability is based on two assumptions from the liberal tradition that highlight the interconnectedness and possible tensions among the aforementioned qualities. The first assumption is that if citizens are given

the opportunity to evaluate a government's responsibility with reference to the satisfaction of their own needs and petitions, they are capable of doing so. The second related assumption is that citizens, either independently or as part of a group, are the only possible judges of their own needs; no third party can decide on these needs for them, as it would not have that precise knowledge. It is a mistake not to acknowledge these assumptions as well as to consider them as a mere ideological choice.

Certain underlying conditions must exist to ensure that the two forms of accountability can be fully satisfied. For electoral accountability, political competition and the distribution of power must at least be sufficiently fair to allow for genuine electoral alternatives at the various levels of government. Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002) focus on competition; they developed an indicator to measure the 'balanced presence of opposition in the legislature': the indicator has a negative value when the governing party numerically dominates the legislature or when the opposition is so strong that it poses problems for the government's decisional efficacy. The absence of alternation and bipolarism between two parties, or between party lines or coalitions, undermines the importance and force of electoral accountability. The presence of inter-institutional accountability hinges on a legal system that provides for the use of checks and balances by other independent public entities. Next, it is also necessary for the judiciary and other public institutions to be independent of the executive and legislative branches and capable of concretely exercising the legally established checks. This form of accountability demands strong and well-established intermediary structures, such as parties and associations organizationally well rooted and present in civil society; a responsible, vigilant political opposition; independent media conscious of its civil function; and a well-developed network of active, informed organizations and associations that hold democratic values. It is also essential that interested, educated and informed citizens who have internalized the fundamental values of democracy remain involved in the political process. Furthermore, for one form of accountability to exist to any effective degree, the other must also be present, for they reinforce one another.

As research reveals (see Diamond and Morlino 2005), participation and competition are qualities that can affect all other dimensions. Participation can be defined as the entire set of behaviours, be they conventional or unconventional, legal or borderline with respect to legality, that allows women and men, as individuals or a group, to create, revive, or strengthen group identification or to try to influence the recruitment of, and decisions by, political authorities (representative and/or governmental) in order to maintain or change the allocation of existing values.

The two basic goals of participation are to achieve or strengthen an identity, and to satisfy a specific interest. That is, participation means to be a 'part',

to revive or to affirm a sense of belonging or identification with a group of a different sort (identity participation), and to aim to achieve a particular goal (instrumental participation). A third aspect is the way in which participation makes citizens more informed and involved by also developing their civic attitudes and facilitating communication and social relationships (see Elster 1998; Pettit 1997). Through participation, citizens become more aware of their rights and duties and develop more structured, conscious political opinions. These aspects aid in the development of more effective political behaviour (see Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Briefly, participation strengthens itself (see Parry 1972).

From an empirical perspective, there are various forms of conventional participation including, for example, involvement in electoral campaigns, involvement in partisan and other associational activities, personal contacts with politicians and collective forms of action. There are also several forms of non-conventional participation, such as strikes, demonstrations and riots, among others, some of which also imply violence (Barnes and Kaase 1979). Although it is obvious that an analysis of participation should also distinguish between these actions, one should consider that violent, radical participation may be unlawful and generate different reactions. That is, eventually it should be accepted that only moderate participation is a positive quality, whereas radical and violent participation is important yet not acceptable due to its potential for conflictive, more radicalizing, and violent consequences. Additionally, the complete panorama also includes political parties, interest groups and movements that are at the core of democratic action in several countries and generate different consequences, which cannot be analysed here.[13] Political elites have ample opportunities to create favourable circumstances and incentives for participation. Leaders often seek compliant, supportive participation; in this context, clientelism and similar arrangements can help in new democracies, not only in the long-standing ones that have experienced the phenomenon.

Forms of participation regarding policies and deliberative democracy have developed more recently in some countries; when these are present, they should also be considered. The reasons for this type of development primarily include: globalization and sheer imitation, technological innovation, greater citizen education, but also changes in public bureaucracy, decentralization, and politicians' quest for new forms of legitimation or new ways to obtain additional resources.

A basic condition for widespread participation in a good democracy is extensive basic education and literacy, and alongside it political knowledge

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13 For example, as stressed in a classic research study by Verba, Nie and Kim (1978), the strength of an organized group makes up for the weakness and consequent inequality of resource-poor social groups. At the same time organization can bring about other distortions, such as bureaucratization, development of oligarchies and a professionalized political class that is distant from citizens (see Michels 1962).

of governmental institutions and their procedures, rules, issues, parties and leaders. Cultural attitudes that value participation and the equal worth and dignity of all citizens constitute supporting conditions that should not be overlooked. These attitudes entail tolerance of political and social differences, and thus acceptance by all individuals and organized groups of the right of others (including their adversaries) to participate equally within the confines of the law. As shown in the abundant literature (see especially Putnam 1993 and 2000), these conditions and attitudes are present when there is also so-called social capital, characterized by a texture of individual, social and associational relationships in which cooperation exists and when 'going it alone' is rare. Finally, it should be reiterated that extensive participation also requires a rule of law that defends the right and the ability of weaker social groups to full participation (see Diamond and Morlino 2005: xvi–xvii).

Competition, the second 'motor' that can develop other qualities, in addition to being considered a 'quality' in its own right, exists when more than one political actor is involved in political decision-making processes. As is well known, the very notion of competition has different facets. There is competition within the party system, within parties, as well as within different interest groups in distinct intercommunicating arenas. The relationship between competition and democracy, which has been a central issue in democratic theory (see, for example, Schumpeter 1964; Downs 1957; Sartori 1957 and 1987), requires explanation. To summarize: if political competition exists, so does democracy. However, the opposite is not always true. In some cases, democracy can exist without competition, as in the cases that Lijphart (1968 and 1999) labels as 'consociational' or 'consensual' as opposed to majoritarian democracies. If the basic notion of competition is that of peaceful, non-threatening interaction among individuals and groups for the purpose of allocating a recognized value that is repeatedly at stake (see Bartolini 1999 and 2000), the possibility of competition and the legally unconstrained choice of accommodation and consensus show how competition can be set aside while democracy is maintained. This point is more noticeable when looking at the more competitive development of Dutch or other typically consensual democracies. At the same time, this postulate demonstrates how there rule of law and freedom are also conditions of competition, rather than being conditioned by it.

The most salient empirical sub-dimensions are on the input and output sides. On the input side, the relevant competition is that among political actors, characterized by freedom for all political parties to compete with each other and complemented by the fairness of political competition. This implies that there are few parties and established 'rules of the game', which make competition possible within a politically free and fair context; that is, there is contestability. Tougher and more effective electoral competition exists in case of higher electoral volatility, yet this aspect overlaps with electoral accountability.

On the output side of the political process, one finds alternative patterns in the formation of governments and different potential choices among policy alternatives. Within legislative institutional arrangements the competition to form the cabinet—and even the competition inside the cabinet, if it is based on a coalition—is a key aspect of the democratic process. This means one must give due attention to (partial or total) alternation of incumbent actors as well as to the duration and reshuffling of the cabinet. In the case of presidential or semi-presidential regimes, despite their differences, the composition of the cabinet and the parties and political groups represented remains important.[14] This implies the possibility of incumbent elite turnover, as well as the possibility of distinguishing between political proposals and programmes during the electoral campaign and sometimes beyond.

When analysing competition one must also take into account what goes on within societal actors, especially interest groups, and between political and societal actors. This in and of itself is an extremely broad field of analysis entailing different channels of representation (in addition to electoral, functional and even plebiscitary representation); and relationships among organizations active in those channels, and especially the relationships between parties and unions, business organizations and other organizations (Morlino 1991: 447).

The statutory and constitutional order, which is the rule of law supplemented by a working inter-institutional accountability, is one of the conditions for vigorous competition. In contemporary democracies political party and campaign financing is such an important foundation of electoral viability that it is difficult for challenging parties and candidates to compete effectively without some fair minimum standard in this regard. While there is considerable scepticism regarding the efficacy of laws that limit campaign spending—in part because of the ease with which they are evaded in new and old democracies alike—some floor of public funding for significant parties and strict requirements for the full and rapid reporting of all contributions to parties and campaigns seem to promote greater electoral fairness and competitiveness (see Pinto-Duschinsky 2002). In addition, one must recall how the different aspects of electoral systems such as electoral formula, size of electoral districts, thresholds for allocation of seats and structure of the ballot affect the results of electoral competition. Those results also depend on fairness in access to the mass media, pluralism in media ownership, some dispersion of economic resources in society and the enforcement of political rights by an independent judiciary. There is also an important linkage with horizontal accountability because the most important institutional guarantee of freedom and fairness (and hence of competition) in elections is an independent and authoritative electoral commission (see Pastor 1989). Finally, having rules

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[14] The Latin American cases especially support this point, though not covered here (see, for example, Mainwaring and Shugart 1997).

that make competition tougher and more demanding is a typically recurrent way of strengthening both poles of conflictive actors; from this perspective, it is again a recurrent way of shaping, if not subverting, competition.

Substantive dimensions

Freedom and equality are the two main democratic values, and they are plainly central to a number of normative definitions of democracy (see Morlino 2011a: Ch. 2). For the most part, those values can be empirically translated into a set of political and civil rights for freedom and social rights for equality and solidarity.

Political rights include the right to vote, the right of political leaders to compete for electoral support and the right to be elected to public office (passive electorate). But in a good democracy, the political right *par excellence*, that is, the right to vote, can be strengthened and extended if the electoral mechanisms allow the voter the possibility/right to elect the government either directly (elections for head of state or prime minister who also holds office as head of government), or else *de facto* (when the leader of the winning party or coalition in a bipolar context is elected prime minister). A reinforced version of this right is achieved when citizens can influence or choose the electoral candidates in intraparty or primary elections. Extending political citizenship to adult residents in a given territory so that immigrants can also participate in this part of the political process is a problem that has yet to be resolved.

Fundamental civil rights include personal liberty, the right to legal defence, the right to privacy, freedom to choose one's place of residence, freedom of movement and residence, the right to expatriate or emigrate, freedom and inviolability of correspondence, freedom of thought and expression, the right to education, the right to information and a free press, and freedoms of assembly, association and organization, including political organizations unrelated to trade unions. In addition, the so-called civil-economic rights should also be mentioned within the broader category of civil rights. Elaborated by Giddens (1984), these include not only the rights to private property and entrepreneurship, obviously constrained within the social limits established by law, but also the rights associated with employment and connected with how the work is carried out, the right to fair pay and time off, and the right to collective bargaining.

As the overwhelming majority of democratic legal systems have established this set of civil rights, two primary dimensions appear to be important for a good democracy. The first pertains to the capacity to augment the legacy of rights enjoyed by citizens without limiting or damaging others. The second concerns the actual procedures by which these rights are granted to

all residents in a certain area. This latter dimension relates to the issues of efficiency raised in the discussion of the rule of law. As previously stated, the right to a legal defence, for example, entails the right to due process, to a speedy trial and to legal assistance regardless of one's economic means. Although the overlapping of such rights appears messy and less than elegant from a theoretical point of view, it is inevitable when demonstrating that rights and freedoms are the 'content' of democracy and are important in their own right. Thus, the overlapping between rights and the rule of law can be clarified when it is recalled that the actual implementation of existing rights is only possible when most sub-dimensions of the rule of law (see above) operate effectively.

The main social rights in a democratic polity include the right to health or to mental and physical well-being; the right to assistance and social security; the right to work; the right to human dignity; the right to strike; the right to study; the right to a healthy environment, and, more generally, to the environment and environmental protection; and the right to housing. Although these rights vary little from country to country, their full observance is a challenge in all countries. Compared to political and civil rights, there is more room for improvement in the effective observance of social rights.

The greatest problem associated with these three kinds of rights—particularly social rights—is the cost they impose on the community. Consequently, there have been attempts to redesign policies that support social rights, so as to alleviate their economic burden. However, it is understood that a broad application of social rights is the best means available to diminish inequality.

Despite this, many democratic countries have serious deficiencies with regard to social rights, which are often more precarious than civil or political rights. Therefore, the main prerequisites for the further consolidation of social rights (beyond political will) are sufficient societal affluence to support the earmarking of resources to less affluent individuals, and at the same time unified and organized unions that represent a broad range of employees and are capable of obtaining recognition for, and the eventual expansion of, these rights (see Rueschemeyer, Huber-Stephens and Stephens 1992).

The implementation of equality, if possible, is closer to utopian objectives and is not always advocated by all supporters of democracy. In this sense one can distinguish between at least two phases in the affirmation of this value. The first is widely accepted and concerns formal equality, meaning both equality before the law, and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, language, religion, opinions, or social or personal conditions.[15] The second is more problematic and pertains to the pursuit of substantive equality. It concerns the lifting of barriers that limit social and economic

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[15]   This equality is also sanctioned by the legal system and is covered in manuals of constitutional law.

equality, and therefore 'the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic, and social organization of a country'.[16]

All of the rights that specify how to implement freedom and equality in a democratic society are now included in the constitutional charters of a number of countries. Furthermore, the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights, attached to the Treaty of Nice (December 2000), and the annex to the European Union Treaty of Lisbon (2009), clearly spell out all of the aspects of dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizenship and justice, still referable to the two substantive dimensions of equality previously discussed. The problem, therefore, is not understanding or defining these values: they are now embedded in the legal cultures of many countries throughout greater Europe and could easily be exported to many non-European countries at least as a matter of knowledge. Rather, it is implementation that poses a problem. If there were perfect, complete implementation of the rule of law throughout Europe, and if other countries completely absorbed the European Charter into their own legal systems and completely recognized the rule of law, liberty and equality would be possible. The fundamental problem, however, stems from the fact that two important preconditions do not yet exist. First of all, full, diffuse, effective legitimacy of the concrete means of implementing the two democratic values does not exist in the masses or among the political elites. Second, the economic and administrative means of implementing these values remain inadequate.

Accordingly, it is necessary to underline how the problem of legitimacy is recast. In terms of democratic consolidation, legitimacy concerns the acceptance and support of democratic rules and institutions (see Morlino 1998). In relation to responsiveness (see below), legitimacy is associated with the presence of attitudes and behaviours that confirm satisfaction with existing democracy. For the substantive dimensions of democratic quality, legitimacy connotes broad support for a regime that implements the aforementioned values. In effect, this is extremely rare in European countries since the aspect of efficiency or even accountability is deeply entrenched in the various conceptualizations of democracy. Yet, in the best of cases, one finds an affirmation of freedom that is limited only to basic rights, and an affirmation of equality that incorporates only the most important social rights.[17] In this sense, specifically assuring these values meets with resistance and opposition for reasons unrelated to economic constraints that many people consider completely justifiable. Thus, the explanation for the dissemination of these political conceptions, which largely or partially mute equality, can easily be traced back to the cultural traditions of a country as well as individual choices.

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[16]   This is part of article 3(2) of the Italian Constitution.

[17]   For more on the problem of the meaning of democracy at the mass level see Morlino (1998).

At this point, the relationship between the procedural outcomes and the substantive dimensions of quality democracy should be sufficiently apparent. It bears reiterating that the affirmation of democratic values emerges through their transformation into formalized rules, institutions, or at least routines or recurring patterns, which then become elements of the legal system and of the rule of law. Yet, the assessment of accountability is based on the values of those who undertake the assessment; the related political decisions can—and should—be assessed in relation to how successfully they implement those beliefs. The substantive dimensions would not make sense without the procedural dimensions; this is a well-known principle of democratic regimes. However, for the overall quality of a democracy, substantive dimensions are more important than procedural ones.

Outcomes

In analysing democratic quality, it is fairly common to refer to the *responsiveness* of government, that is, the capacity of government to satisfy the governed by implementing its policies in a way that corresponds to their demands. This dimension is analytically related to accountability. Indeed, judgements on responsiveness imply that there is some awareness of the actual demands, and that the evaluation of a government's response is related to how its actions either conform to or diverge from the interests of its electors. Despite the tensions between them, responsiveness, therefore, must be addressed in connection with accountability. In fact, these tensions stem from the possible conflict between assessing the people elected based on the decisions they have implemented and their accountability for those decisions, and the responsiveness of these people elected to the needs of the electors. In the Western constitutional tradition efforts are made to overcome that tension by giving elected officials the possibility of evaluating the public good while at the same time isolating themselves from specific groups' particular needs. At the same time, the behaviour of the elected officials is controlled through checks and balances established in the liberal democratic tradition, that is, through inter-institutional accountability.[18]

Responsiveness is not particularly difficult to define. Eulau and Karps (1977) have demonstrated how responsiveness is a way of observing representation 'in action'. They also show how this dimension manifests through four main components in relation to: policies at the centre of public interest; services that are guaranteed to the individuals and groups represented by the government; distribution of material goods to their constituents through the public administration and other entities; and the expanded availability of symbolic goods that create, reinforce, or reproduce a sense of loyalty towards (and support for) the government.

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[18] The theoretical problems associated with the connection between responsibility and responsiveness have been discussed within the theory of representative democracy. For more on this point see Sartori (1987, especially 6.9).

Nonetheless, as stressed by the overview proposed by Roberts (2010: Ch. 5), the empirical analysis of responsiveness is more complicated. The idea that citizens, even those who are educated, informed and politically engaged, always know their own needs and desires is at best an assumption (see above); it is especially tenuous in situations where citizens might need specialized knowledge to accurately identify and evaluate those very needs and desires. However, simplified yet satisfactory solutions are still in order. Empirical measures of citizen satisfaction can readily be found in the many surveys that have been regularly conducted for several years, especially in Western Europe, but also, of late, in Latin America, Eastern Europe and other countries around the world.[19] Some scholars have also indirectly obtained a second measure of responsiveness by measuring the distance between those who govern and the governed for certain policies, and not just in terms of left/right divisions (see, for example, Lijphart 1999: 286–88).[20]

Perhaps the most effective method of assessing responsiveness is to examine the legitimacy of the government, that is, citizens' perceptions of responsiveness, rather than actual responsiveness. This is related, albeit somewhat differently, to the previously discussed fundamental process of democratic consolidation (see Morlino 1998). In fact, certain dynamics that opened the door to democratic consolidation in many countries, such as uncritical acceptance of the institutions in place, simple obedience due to a lack of better alternatives, or negative memories of the past are no longer relevant for measuring legitimacy, and might even be interpreted as delegitimizing factors. Here, the key element is that support for democratic institutions, and the belief that these institutions are the only real guarantors of freedom and equality, is diffuse at every social level from the elite to the masses. The spread of attitudes favourable to existing democratic institutions and the approval of their activities would suggest satisfaction and, indirectly, that civil society perceives a certain level of responsiveness. In contexts characterized by high levels of legitimacy, a full range of interests and forms of political participation should also be observable.

However, analyses of this type bring to light a number of problems and limitations. The late 20th century was accompanied by various challenges to legitimacy. These challenges prompted Kaase and Newton (1995: 150–72) to speak of the 'crisis of democracy', for example, with particular reference to citizen disenchantment with political parties, the emergence of anti-party attitudes, and the ever-greater general dissatisfaction and anti-establishment attitudes. In their analysis, Pharr and Putnam (2000) do not hesitate to use the term 'dissatisfied democracy', and they, together with Dalton (2000: 25),

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[19] A common question, for example, is 'How satisfied are you with the way in which democracy functions in your country?' See Morlino 1998, ch. 7, for more on this regarding Southern Europe.

[20] There are a number of quantitative studies that analyse this theme, including Eulau and Prewitt (1973), Eulau and Karps (1977), King (1990), and Huber and Powell (1994).

emphasize the decline of 'the capacity of political actors to act according to the interests and desires of citizens', which in this analysis indicates a decline in responsiveness. On the whole, these three authors see a decline of confidence in public institutions. Newton and Norris (2000) second this impression, with specific reference to the legislature, the legal system, the armed forces, the police forces and the public administration. In her analysis of corruption Della Porta (2000) also notes this growing lack of confidence in government, the scant application of the law and, more related to this author's perspective, the resulting inadequate responsiveness.[21] Moreover, here one also sees the connection between the rule of law—or rather the absence of its guaranteed application—and the incapacity of governments to respond to the demands of their citizens, for whom the guarantee of law takes precedence over other needs or preferences.

There are at least two kinds of objective limits to responsiveness. First of all, elected leaders do not always seek to understand and respond to citizens' perceptions and positions. As discussed above, at times they work instead to maximize their own autonomy and influence citizens' perceptions and understanding of what constitute the most important issues. Politicians take advantage of the complexity of problems, and, evidently, of the shifts in political priorities that occur over the course of a single legislature—a period that usually spans four or five years.

The second order of limits is shaped by the resources a government has at its disposal to respond to the needs of its populace. Limited resources and economic constraints on public spending affect the responsiveness of even the wealthiest countries. For example, if a certain population that already enjoys an upward trend in its average living standards demands better pensions and other improvements, a government burdened with budgetary limitations cannot possibly act on its behalf. Likewise, the persistent problems posed by unemployment and immigration also illustrate the near impossibility of finding generally satisfactory, legitimate and responsive solutions in contemporary democracies. Indeed, the situation is increasingly characterized by discontent, dissatisfaction, fear of poverty and general democratic malaise. Such conditions contribute to a delegitimization of democratic systems and encourage different forms of populism.

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[21] On corruption see Della Porta and Meny (1997) and Della Porta and Vannucci (1999).

CHAPTER 3

3. Empirical analysis

Leonardo Morlino

A general overview of Latin America

Based on a quantitative measurement (see Annex 2) for all countries and all the dimensions and sub-dimensions previously presented and those in Annex 1, the data provide an assessment of the quality of democracy for 15 countries in the region. Dimensions, indicators and data were also constructed based on previous comparative research experience (see Morlino 2011b).[22] The variables, indicators and measures that were eventually chosen combined perceptions detected with institutional and contextual data. While acknowledging the usefulness of survey data, this means of supplementing it involves a more appropriate and thorough analysis of all dimensions and of the region's democracies as a whole. Moreover, it should be emphasized that all dimensions were considered equally—as each is similarly relevant for effectively evaluating a democracy—and that other indicators and data could have been adopted. The analysis only includes those suggested by the theoretical framework explained above.

The empirical results show that Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay fare better, as expected, but surprisingly Argentina and Brazil are in high positions with a good score in terms of accountability (see Annexes 2 and 3 for details). Brazil is the country with the highest degree of electoral accountability in the region. While it is possible to ask, analysing this data, if there are two patterns of democracy—namely, liberal democracy and neo-populist democracy, which is characterized by both high levels of participation and a low level of inter-institutional accountability and political competition—the second pattern is no longer visible. Ecuador and Guatemala, for example, have low inter-institutional accountability and high participation, yet concurrently have

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[22] See Morlino (2011: Ch. 8) for the data selected. Additional works on Latin America include those published by International IDEA which, if updated, could be helpful to integrate into this study. See, for example, López Pintor and Gratschew (2002).

fairly high competition. In other words, as shown in Table 3.1, these data suggest a dominant pattern of democracy that is consistently characterized by low or high values in most of the dimensions. In sum, while low- or high-quality democracy exists, different democratic patterns that break the consistency among the various dimensions do not.

Table 3.1. The quality of democracy in Latin America: summary

Country	Rule of law	Electoral accountability	Inter-institutional accountability	Political participation	Political competition	Freedom	Solidarity and equality	Responsiveness	Total
Uruguay	3.44	3.74	3.74	4.75*	4.07	4.78	2.65	3.84	3.88
Chile	3.82	4.42	2.69	4.54*	3.71	4.78	3.00	3.84	3.85
Costa Rica	3.63	4.04	2.82	4.07*	4.39*	4.33	3.37	3.50	3.77
Brazil	2.50	4.86	3.40	4.23	4.28	4.17	2.85	3.16	3.68
Argentina	2.27	3.75	4.34	4.17	3.93*	4.17	3.09	3.26	3.62
Peru	2.46	3.07	3.57	4.12	3.89	3.50	2.55	3.03	3.27
El Salvador	2.19	3.77	3.45	3.53*	3.67*	3.98*	2.44	2.98	3.25
Paraguay	1.81	3.70	3.39	3.58	3.54	3.58	2.31	3.23*	3.14
Mexico	2.37	3.47	3.25	3.44	3.68	3.11	2.99	2.78	3.14
Bolivia	2.16	3.50	3.38	4.08	2.70	3.48	2.33	2.97	3.08
Guatemala	2.37	3.86	2.27	3.30*	3.92	3.37*	2.13	2.94	3.02
Colombia	1.77	3.10*	3.33	2.66	3.54*	3.22	2.31	3.07	2.88
Ecuador	1.74	2.38	1.96	3.74	3.42	3.22	2.50	3.49	2.81
Nicaragua	1.70	1.15	3.49	3.07	2.92	2.21	2.41	2.86	2.48
Venezuela	0.92	1.85	2.67	2.91	2.74	2.00	3.10	3.19	2.42

* For these values, we highlight an improvement on the basis of the latest available data vis-à-vis the previous years' average, as resulting from expert evaluation (see Morlino, Tovar and Pachano forthcoming).
Sources: See Annex 2 for an explanation of numbers found in this and each of the tables and figures that follow in the rest of Chapter 3, unless otherwise indicated.

It is first necessary to determine whether it is possible to discern 'delegative democracy' (see O'Donnell 1994 and above). This term is used to designate democracy of poor quality in which the citizen casts his/her vote, is subsequently ignored until the next election, and is left without any means of controlling corruption and other forms of bad government, combined with the absence of institutions capable of guaranteeing inter-institutional accountability. The countries labelled as delegative are at the same time those found to be of lower quality: El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela. Figure

3.1 shows the complete profile of the three lowest-quality democracies. As is noticeable, rule of law, equality and freedom receive the lowest marks and indirectly provide a strong indication of the fundamental aspects that should function effectively in a good democracy.

Figure 3.1. The lowest-quality democracies
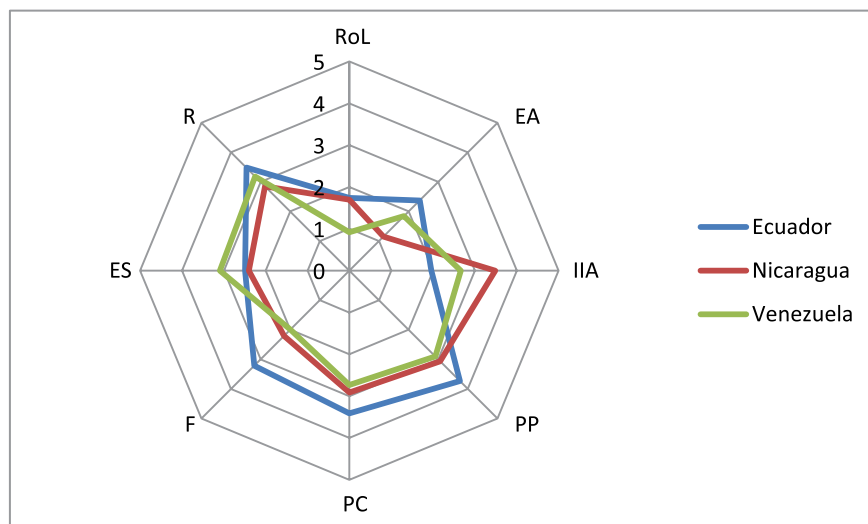
This analysis indicates that Venezuela is among the lowest-quality democracies. Some consider this country a hybrid regime. Freedom House classifies it as 'not free' with regard to press. Table 3.1 shows that Venezuela ranks last regarding rule of law, is second to last behind Nicaragua regarding electoral accountability, second to last behind Colombia regarding participation, second to last behind Bolivia (other countries have similarly low levels) regarding political competition, and is in the lowest position with regard to freedom. Yet for the characteristic of equality, Venezuela (which has had a long tradition of dominant party elites since the late 1950s) fares much better. Several scholars also consider Nicaragua and Ecuador, characterized by very low scores for rule of law, hybrid regimes. With a below-three average, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Ecuador belong to the grey zone, which is labelled 'hybrid'. The third re-election of Correa (2007–17) as President of Ecuador and the re-election of Daniel Ortega (2007–16) in Nicaragua indicate incumbent leaders have a strong, long-lasting hold on power, while also confirming these countries' democratic limitations.

Figure 3.2. Evolution of corruption and poverty in Venezuela, 1989–2010
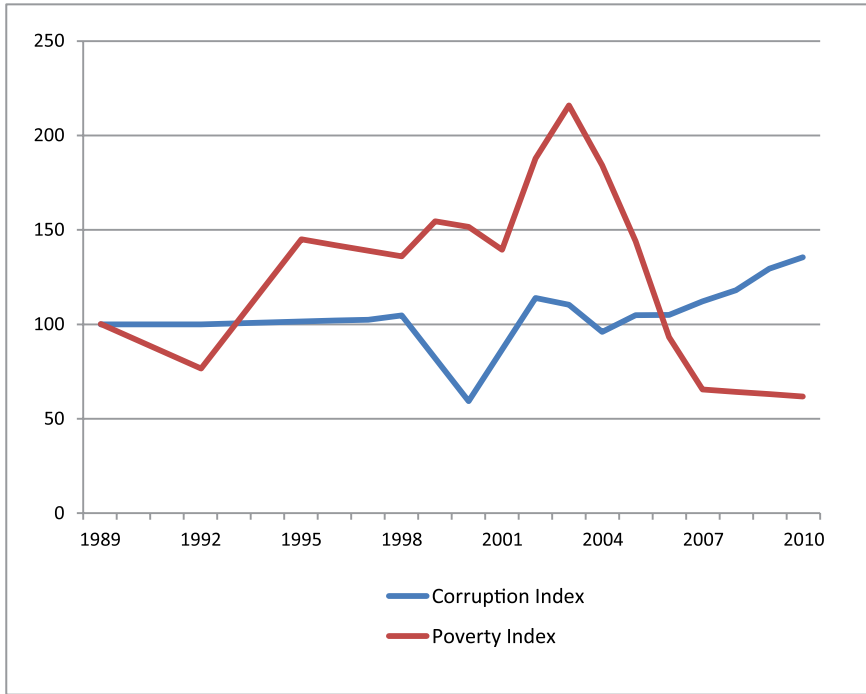
As suggested in Katz and Morlino (2012), Venezuela has experienced a substantial decrease in poverty and income inequality over the past ten years, notwithstanding the historic limited satisfaction of basic economic needs among the poorest sectors, the insufficient public provision of health services, the scarce quantity of doctors and the fairly high levels of infant mortality. This study will not discuss the policies implemented by Chávez or the criticisms of him; rather, it finds that the increasing level of corruption is supplemented by strong policies in favour of equality and poverty reduction, as illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.3 responds to the converse question of which countries have the best democracies, and in which dimensions they fare better. These findings supplement those on the low-quality democracies. Brazil ranks as the worst country regarding equality and also scores poorly regarding the rule of law. However, its best qualities are electoral accountability, participation, political competition and freedom. As can be observed, the resulting profiles are squeezed. This can be explained by streamlining and focusing the analysis on the lowest-ranking qualities: inter-institutional accountability (with Uruguay being the partial exception) and equality. Previous research (see, for example, Levine and Molina 2011) has analysed the low levels of political participation in Latin America; yet, previous findings do not conform to

this data. It is important to stress the connection between participation and equality; as shown by Morlino (2011a: Ch. 8), higher participation can imply or even generate higher equality. Yet, when there is inconsistency between participation and equality, discontent is present and latent until vigorously manifesting itself.

Figure 3.3. The highest-quality democracies
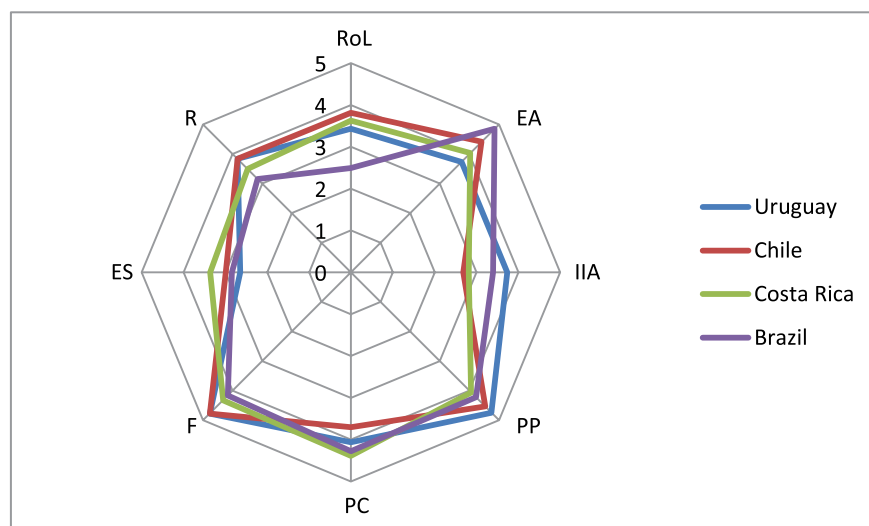
Confirming this finding, the results show that in a changed context of democratic legitimation in which radical, violent participation has declined sharply, a different kind of participation (which can even be non-conventional) has the potential to foster an active civil society that pushes for stronger equality. According to this perspective, Latin American countries do not need leaders who are saviours; rather, an active society, even if only at the local level, is a democratically safer path.

With regards to equality, the findings indicate that the most unequal countries are those that fare worst in other dimensions (see Figure 3.4). This finding, however, suggests two considerations that are not fully consistent with previous data. First, if the most unequal countries are also those with the lowest levels on all other dimensions (see Figure 3.1), then all dimensions are strongly interrelated and mutually strengthen one another, which confirms a similar finding for countries from different regions of the world (see Morlino 2011a: Ch. 8). Yet if so, the privileged connection between equality and participation is much less relevant than suggested above. This author's hypothesis, which merits further confirmation, is that a movement towards non-violent participation is a way to foster equality, but that this equation also entails the presence of the rule of law—which is very problematic in the unequal countries (see Figure 3.4)—as well as other qualities. That is, the two

propositions are not contradictory. This analysis underscores that collective action is required to increase equality notwithstanding the obvious temporal gap between the moment when participation occurs and the resulting increase in equality.

Figure 3.4. The most unequal democracies
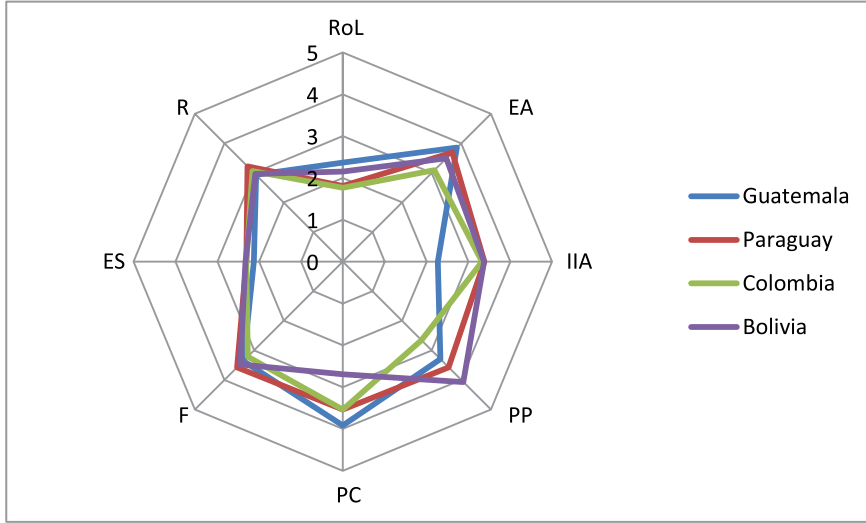
A second consideration: as can be observed in Figure 3.4, Bolivia also ranks as one of the most unequal democracies. Table 3.1 shows how Bolivia, which is low on equality, concurrently ranks in a relatively intermediate position regarding participation and other dimensions. This finding contradicts previous assertions regarding the consistency among all dimensions as well as that regarding the connection between participation and equality. Analysing equality in Bolivia, the results clearly show that: more than half of the population falls below the poverty line, and the percentage is higher in rural areas; discrimination against the indigenous population is structural and appears throughout the country's history; and racist manifestations are present in economic and political life and in the public discourse.

At the same time, with regard to political participation, binding referendums and citizen initiatives at all levels were introduced in the constitution in 2004. Turnout in national elections has shown a marked increase in the past decade, from 72 per cent in 2002 to almost 95 per cent in 2009. This same phenomenon is observed in referendums. Furthermore, about 70 per cent of the population participates in civic associations; since the 1990s strikes have lost relevance compared to other forms of political protest; new social movements have gained ground in the political arena; and over the past decade the quantity and influence of various forms of deliberative democracy have increased substantially at both the local and national levels.

Upon closer examination, the hypothesis on the connection between equality and participation is not disproved, but is actually strongly confirmed by this analysis as developed above (see Katz and Morlino 2012). The key issue is not the Morales government's prioritization of the fight against discrimination and racism, but rather the existence of a gap between implemented policies and their accompaniment by strong popular democratic mobilization. Future years will allow researchers to determine if and how such mobilization affects inequality. An apparent contradiction remains that emerges from previously low levels of participation, still observed, relatively speaking, in local elections. Although this analysis cannot be further explored at this point, it is clear that in analytical research on comparative politics, quantitative analysis must be complemented by qualitative analysis, particularly when covering a small number of cases as this study does.

Additionally, this discussion has brought substantive attention to the effects of the rule of law and its connections with the other dimensions. The first relevant consideration, which is immediately noticeable, is the inconsistency among these sub-dimensions in contrast with the consistency among the dimensions. For a more effective analysis (see Table 3.2), a reverse ranking of rule of law—an 'un-rule of law'—was created that started with the country where the rule of law was least respected. Besides Nicaragua and Venezuela as mentioned above, Paraguay surprisingly ranked second in three sub-dimensions: weak judicial independence; corruption; and greater openness to the influence of military, police, or security forces on civil and political life. Moreover, if it is accepted, as suggested by research conducted in other areas of the world (see, for example, Magen and Morlino 2008), that the judiciary is the most important sub-dimension, the weakest countries with regard to the judiciary (Venezuela and Nicaragua) are also the worst in terms of the rule of law as a whole. Additionally, Guatemala displays some inconsistency among its sub-dimensions, demonstrating poor institutional and administrative capacity.

In addition to this data, a dynamic perspective is adopted that takes Cingranelli and Richard's (2008) broad classification of justice systems as not independent (coded as 0), partially independent (coded as 1) and generally independent (coded as 2). A clearer and more disturbing picture emerges from Figure 3.5: the three countries with the lowest rule of law score—Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela—have experienced a sustained decrease in the independence of their judicial systems over the past two decades. This deterioration is more marked for Nicaragua and Venezuela in the past five years, under the governments of Ortega and Chávez, respectively, and less so in Ecuador, where the situation seems to have improved since 2006.

Table 3.2. The 'un-rule' of law: the ranking of sub-dimensions

Country	Individual security and civil order	Independent judicial power and modern justice system	Institutional and administrative capacity	Integrity	Security forces under civilian control	Average score
Venezuela	2	1	1	1	1	**0.92**
Nicaragua	4	2	2	3	6	**1.70**
Ecuador	7	4	5	3	2	**1.74**
Colombia	1	11	11	9	4	**1.77**
Paraguay	13	2	3	2	2	**1.81**
Bolivia	7	9	6	5	6	**2.16**
El Salvador	7	8	9	11	5	**2.19**
Argentina	4	5	7	6	11	**2.27**
Mexico	3	10	12	7	11	**2.37**
Guatemala	11	6	4	8	8	**2.37**
Peru	7	6	8	9	11	**2.46**
Brazil	4	12	10	12	8	**2.50**
Uruguay	11	14	14	14	8	**3.44**
Costa Rica	13	13	13	13	15	**3.63**
Chile	13	15	15	15	11	**3.82**

Figure 3.5. Independence of the judiciary, 1990–2010
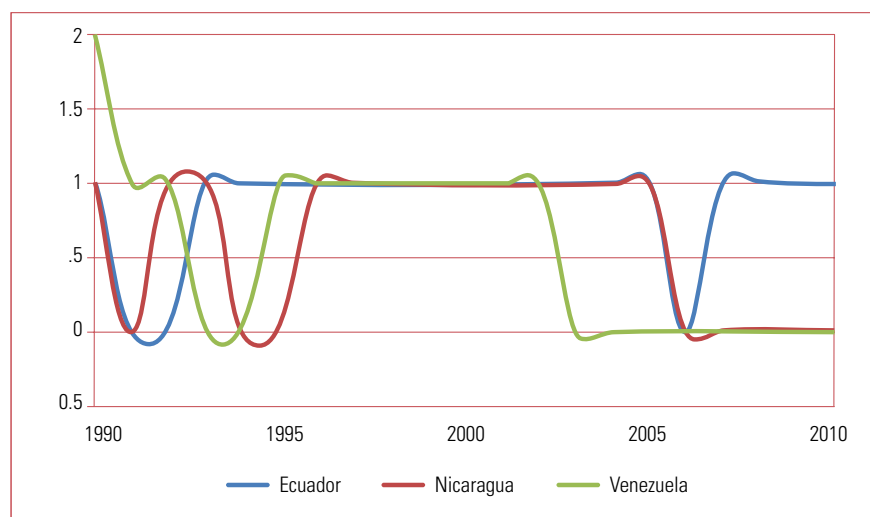
Shifting the analysis to two dimensions that have been defined as the 'engines of democratic quality' (see Diamond and Morlino 2005), what is revealed emerges not from the whole picture, but rather from the exceptions. The close connection between competition and participation has already been shown by other works (see, for example, Morlino 2011a: Ch. 8), however without it being possible to affirm whether competition takes precedence over participation or vice versa. There are only two cases—Bolivia and Guatemala—for which the divergence is greater (a difference of, respectively, nine and seven positions in the ranking: see Table 3.3). However, the two countries seem to be affected by two different syndromes. In Bolivia, there is an intermediate level of participation and low competition, while in Guatemala we find a low level of participation and a higher level of competition.

A qualitative analysis of select aspects singles out the problem, which is also a key element in other countries around the world: unconstrained party fragmentation and elite-led radicalization make these democracies difficult places to live for their citizens, who consequently develop additional attitudes of alienation from politics. Guatemala, for example, has been characterized by alternation in power in every election following the return to democracy, low citizen participation, and an unstructured and fragile party system. Fragmentation abounds in leftist parties; electoral volatility undermines governability and political decision-making. In general the party system is marked by substantive fragility and pervasive floor crossing.

In Bolivia, the authorities were elected by popular vote for the first time in 2005; binding referendums and citizen initiatives at all levels were introduced in the constitution only in 2004; turnout in national elections showed a marked increase in the past decade, albeit much lower at the local level; and participation within parties is extremely marginal. Regarding competition, the effective number of parties has fluctuated between two and six in the past two decades; however, the success of Evo Morales and his party put an end to a period of high electoral volatility and marked a drastic change in the political landscape. The current main cleavage structuring party competition is stable and based on ethnic/cultural divisions. Moreover, public funding for political parties was eliminated in 2008. It is not surprising that competition is low.

An analysis of the two substantive dimensions of democracy—freedom and equality—reveals some patterns in line with previous findings on democratic quality in other parts of the world (2011b), but also some characteristics specific to Latin America. First, prior work has already shown the strong consistency between freedom and equality (see especially Morlino 2011a: Ch. 8). As seen in Table 3.4, two higher-quality democracies (Chile and Costa Rica) score higher in both dimensions, yet Uruguay is lower than Brazil and Argentina, thus demonstrating one characteristic aspect relevant to regional

specificities. Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela should be considered among the lower-quality democracies, for different reasons.

Table 3.3. Political participation and political competition: the ranking

Country	Participation	Competition	Difference
Uruguay	1	3	2
Chile	2	7	5
Brazil	3	2	1
Argentina	4	4	0
Peru	5	6	1
Bolivia	6	15	9
Costa Rica	7	1	6
Ecuador	8	12	4
Paraguay	9	10	1
El Salvador	10	9	1
Mexico	11	8	3
Guatemala	12	5	7
Nicaragua	13	13	0
Venezuela	14	14	0
Colombia	15	11	4

The performance of Paraguay on the first substantive dimension (freedom) is much better than the second (equality). As noted above, Paraguay's economic indicators—in particular, poverty and income inequality—are among the worst in the region, which is reflected in the position that the country occupies in the 'equality' dimension. Conversely, its position in the freedom dimension reflects its efforts or achievements in the protection of personal dignity, civil rights and political rights. The gap between the protection of individual rights on paper and in practice, however, remains considerable, and the situation is far from ideal. Episodes of torture and physical violence by the security forces are not uncommon.

In contrast to Mexico, Paraguay and above all Venezuela score considerably better for equality than for freedom. As previously mentioned, in Venezuela the economic measures adopted by the Chávez government have substantially improved the living conditions of the lower classes: the proportion of Venezuelan households living in extreme and moderate poverty has declined by 10.1 and 17.2 percentage points, respectively, since 1998. Per capita poverty reduction was even more marked and the Gini coefficient dropped by almost 10 percentage points. Even though the definition of equality used here

encompasses non-material aspects such as the prevalence of discrimination and equitable access to social and cultural resources, the successful redistributive policies and gains in the economic well-being of the poorest segments of the population explain Venezuela's high score in this dimension. At the same time, the growing polarization between pro- and anti-Chávez groups has led to an escalation of political conflicts in Venezuelan society, including severe episodes of violence, torture and abuses of authority by members of the security forces—and even extrajudicial executions. Harassment of political and social activists and members of the opposition has become quite common, and their political and civil rights have been curtailed, while political pressures and intimidation also have drastically undermined press freedom.

Table 3.4. Freedom and equality: the ranking

Country	Freedom	Equality and solidarity	Difference
Chile	1	4	3
Uruguay	1	7	**6**
Costa Rica	3	1	2
Argentina	4	3	2
Brazil	4	6	2
El Salvador	6	10	4
Paraguay	7	13	**6**
Peru	8	8	0
Bolivia	9	12	3
Guatemala	10	15	5
Colombia	11	13	2
Ecuador	11	9	2
Mexico	13	5	**8**
Nicaragua	14	11	3
Venezuela	15	2	**13**

The analysis of participation and competition in connection with the two substantive dimensions (freedom and equality) singles out other key elements of Latin American democracies. It should be recalled that if a democracy works effectively from a procedural point of view, it has important consequences on the effectiveness of the implementation of the two most important democratic values of freedom and equality. If, on the contrary, it does not perform properly from a procedural perspective, the substantive dimensions tend to be poorly implemented. In other words, there has to be a strong consistency between the two procedural and two substantive dimensions.

Considering this hypothesis, an analysis of Latin American countries shows whether and (to what extent) a democracy works more effectively. Table 3.5 indicates the level of consistency between the procedural and substantive dimensions for good and bad democracies. In fact, there is little difference in rankings for Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Uruguay, as well as for Colombia, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela. Guatemala is the only case of distinctive inconsistency; the procedural dimensions are better than the substantive ones. Although this is not a sophisticated, highly reliable way to measure the actual capacity of a democracy to transform the input processes guided by participation and competition into polices and related results (output), there is little doubt that this is an aspect to be further addressed and scrutinized. This means that closer monitoring is required of the policies in Guatemala and of the possibility of people beginning to perceive this inconsistency, participating more (see above) and protesting.

Table 3.5. Participation and competition vis-à-vis freedom and equality: the ranking

Country	Participation/ competition	Equality/solidarity	Difference
Uruguay	1	3	2
Brazil	2	5	3
Costa Rica	3	2	1
Chile	4	1	3
Argentina	5	4	1
Peru	6	8	2
Guatemala	7	13	**6**
El Salvador	8	6	2
Ecuador	9	11	2
Paraguay	10	9	1
Mexico	10	7	3
Bolivia	12	10	2
Colombia	13	12	1
Nicaragua	14	15	1
Venezuela	15	14	1

From this perspective, an analysis of responsiveness (see Figure 3.6) does not contribute significantly to the first conclusion regarding the consistency and inconsistency between the two key procedural dimensions and the substantive dimensions, nor the need to fine-tune the assessment of this measure. However, the results indicate that Brazil scores much worse than

expected and Ecuador and Paraguay better than expected. For Brazil this points to high expectations among its citizens and the possibility of non-conventional participation, which converges with a similar result regarding participation as shown in Figure 3.3. Ecuador demonstrates the highest responsiveness among the lowest-quality democracies (see also Figure 3.1), which consequently demonstrates a central aspect of Correa and his political success: re-elected in 2013, he was able to convince Ecuadorians that they are doing well, or at least better than in the past. Similar reasoning is possible for Paraguay, which is among the most unequal in the region (see Figure 3.4), but ranks only behind Argentina with regard to responsiveness. Mexico ranks the lowest in this dimension, below other countries with lower democratic quality. The lack of importance attributed to responsiveness by political elites in these countries could have dangerous consequences. At the same time, hybrid Venezuela, with its low rankings indicates a very significant consistency between responsiveness and equality.

Figure 3.6. Government responsiveness in Latin America compared
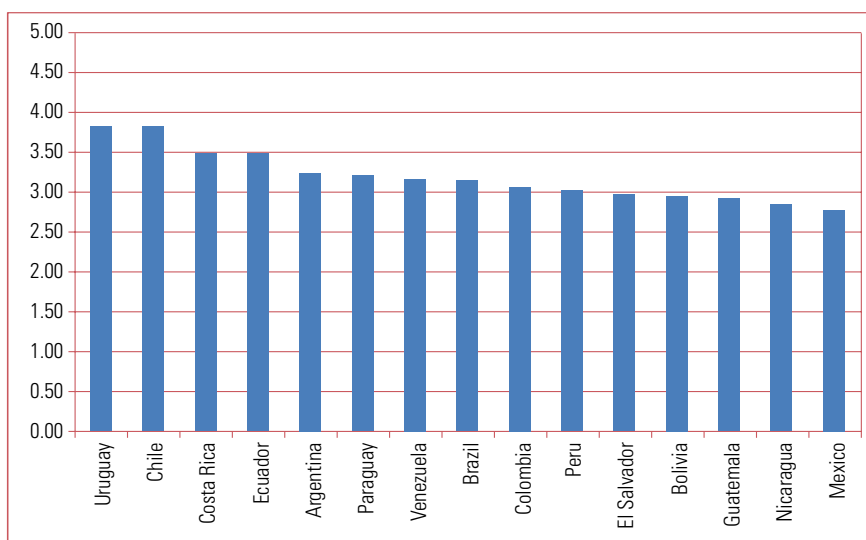
Further examination of sub-dimensions

Shifting to an analysis of the more disaggregated data at the sub-dimension level, the same broad pattern emerges: overall, countries tend to perform consistently, be that positive or negative, in most of the different components of each dimension. However, there are marked differences among dimensions: the within-dimension variation among countries is highest for freedom and lowest for political participation. Figure 3.7 below summarizes the distribution of each country's score for the sub-dimensions of the rule of law.

Figure 3.7. Distribution of country scores covering all the sub-dimensions of the rule of law
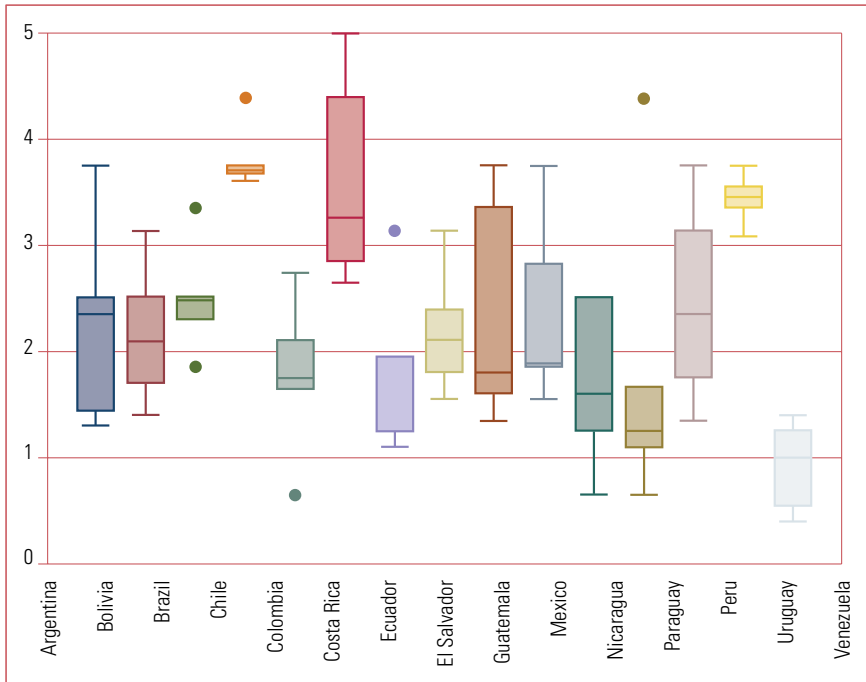
The three highest-quality democracies—Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay—score relatively highly in each of the five sub-dimensions: individual security and civil order, independent judiciary and modern justice system, institutional and administrative capacity, integrity and effective fight against corruption; and security forces under civilian control respectful of citizens' rights. Still, the findings reveal some differences among these three countries. While Chile's and Uruguay's scores are consistently high in each of these sub-dimensions, Costa Rica's scores are more spread out. In particular, Costa Rica fares worse than Chile in terms of the quality of its bureaucracy and of the policies/mechanisms in place to fight corruption. A second group of countries—Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru—shows considerable variation across sub-dimensions, performing on par with the three highest-quality democracies in some respects, but less successfully in others. In particular, the four countries perform particularly poorly in the fight against corruption, while they perform almost as well as the high-quality democracies in the sub-dimension measuring civilian control over the security forces. A third group of countries, comprising Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela (see Figure 3.7), exhibits uniformly low scores in all the sub-dimensions.

As expected, this group includes two of the lowest-quality democracies plus Colombia and Mexico. Both countries have a high incidence of organized crime associated with drug trafficking and security forces that have frequently been involved in illicit activities (see below). Paraguay scores low on all sub-dimensions except individual security and civil order. However, Brazil, which is closer to the first group, and Bolivia and El Salvador, closer to the third, are in a more ambiguous, intermediate position.

The situation is quite different when analysing electoral accountability. Comparing Figures 3.7 and 3.8, for virtually every country under analysis it is noticeable that variations across sub-dimensions of electoral accountability are less marked than across the sub-dimensions of the rule of law. In particular, 12 out of the 15 Latin American democracies under study score rather high (3 or more) on 'elections', 'freedom of party organization' and 'presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives'. Although the highest-quality democracies score better than the rest in each of these sub-dimensions—in particular, the stability and institutionalization of party systems sub-dimension is considerably greater in Brazil and Chile than in the rest of the region—these differences are definitely less important than those observed for the rule of law. That is, elections throughout the region overall tend to be clean and fair, and there are no major restrictions undermining the freedom of party organization. The only exceptions to this general picture are Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. In Ecuador, the influence of violent groups (for example, guerrilla and paramilitary organizations) often distorts the normal development of elections in some areas of the country; political violence stemming from the internal conflict undermines the freedom of party organization—as reflected, for instance, in pressures, physical threats or even the assassination of politicians. In Venezuela, serious constraints placed on the freedom and fairness of elections have become more manifest since Chávez's rise to power, as reflected in the domination of the election authority by loyal government nominees and limiting the freedom of party organization by several means (for example, constraints on opposition demonstrations and threats directed against public servants who join organizations critical of the government).

Figure 3.8. Distribution of country scores covering all the sub-dimensions of electoral accountability
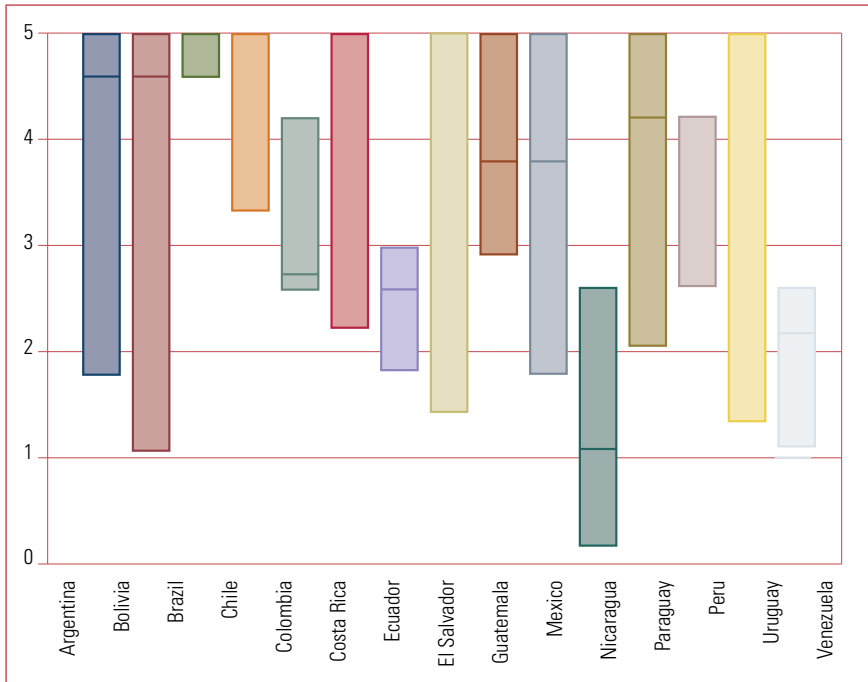
The sub-dimensions of inter-institutional accountability follow a similar pattern. Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and the high-quality democracies perform better than the others across all sub-dimensions, although Chile and Uruguay score lower with regard to the ombudsman and the decentralization sub-dimensions. However, Colombia represents the main exception as it ranks towards the bottom on virtually all the dimensions of democratic quality, yet fares very well on the sub-dimensions, regarding 'Constitutional or Supreme Courts' and 'Ombudsman and Audit Courts', due to the professionalization of these institutions and the availability of resources at their disposal. The institution of the ombudsman also works relatively well in Bolivia, another low-quality democracy, and in Peru, a medium-quality democracy.

Shifting to the two 'motors' of democratic quality, a joint analysis of each country's score in each of the sub-dimensions of political participation (opportunities for participation, elections and referendums) supplemented by qualitative evidence reveals a more complex pattern, although the distinction between high- and low-quality democracy seems to hold true. As a matter of fact, the highest-quality democracies (that is, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay) have a higher score in political participation, although it should be noted that Argentina and Costa Rica distinguish themselves by displaying little room for deliberative democracy, while other forms of participation are important (see Annex 3). A second group of countries, namely

Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico, scores low on conventional participation due to lower election turnout (see Annexes 2 and 3), with Colombia standing out for a significant increase in social protest during the 2000s. A third group, comprising Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela, scores low in terms of opportunities for participation, although Nicaragua is somewhat different in that it has recently been experiencing an increase in non-conventional (sometimes also violent) forms of participation. Finally, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru are in an intermediate position, with relatively higher consistency among the sub-dimensions of political participation. Non-conventional political participation (with indigenous groups in Ecuador, peasant movements in Paraguay, and new social movements in Bolivia and Peru that exert a growing influence) is particularly salient in these countries (see Annexes 2 and 3).

In the case of political competition, the distinction between high-quality democracies and all others is more clear cut: the former allow for a more fluid competition both between and within political parties than the latter. In addition, there is a second relevant difference on the output side, distinguishing between democracies that have witnessed frequent alternation in power and those that have not.

Critical issues and policy recommendations

An in-depth analysis of the main limitations and threats to democratic quality in each of the countries under study, categorizing these challenges in terms of the different dimensions and sub-dimensions outlined in the theoretical framework, is possible. To begin, it is worth considering some common problems that hinder improvements in the quality of democracy throughout the region.

Turning first to the rule of law, the extent and persistence of corruption is notorious among low-quality democracies like El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. However, corruption is perceived to be a central (and in some cases an endemic) problem in countries with average, above average, or even high levels of democracy like Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. Even among high-quality democracies, like Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay, where traditionally it has been low (at least when compared to the regional average), concerns about corruption are increasingly present in public opinion. In fact, this study's evidence, based on mass surveys and expert opinions, reveals that the only countries where corruption does not rank among the most important problems are El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay, though in the latter two cases this is better explained by the salience of more pressing security issues (see below).

Together, these findings suggest that corruption is one of the most widespread challenges to democratic quality in the region and that it is common to the vast majority of Latin American countries. Further, the fact that (perceived) corruption has been historically high and entrenched in many of these societies underscores both the importance and the difficulty of successfully addressing this problem. Along these lines, even though several countries have recently strengthened anti-corruption legislation or established specialized agencies in charge of fighting corruption, the effectiveness of these measures to date has been rather limited (for example, Brazil, El Salvador and Nicaragua; see Annex 3). There is not a strong connection between the effective fight against corruption and other dimensions of the rule of law, or between the former and the overall democratic quality score. This indicates that corruption is not necessarily one of the key determinants of democratic quality in Latin America, and therefore, that measures aimed at improving other more easily 'manageable' dimensions and/or sub-dimensions are more likely to be effective in boosting the quality of democracy at the short and medium term.

Yet within the rule of law sub-dimensions, the influence of crime along with related threats to individual security and civil order is another common obstacle to democratic quality in the region. Crime rates are extremely high in Central American countries (especially El Salvador and Guatemala) as well as in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela. Even where crime has not been a historic central concern, in countries like Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay, crime indicators or perceptions have declined consistently over the last 15 years. In many nations (Bolivia, Central America, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela), the preponderance and/or rise in crime is directly linked to drug trafficking, although drug-related criminal activity is actually perceived as a growing danger in the vast majority of the democracies under study. In fact, in Colombia, Central America and Mexico, drug-related violence has become a major source of political and social instability, generating internal conflicts involving guerrillas (Colombia), gangs (*maras* in Central America), and narco-armies (Mexico) that actually challenge the state's monopoly on force and can occasionally spill over to neighbouring countries and cause international tensions (as illustrated by diplomatic and political altercations between Colombia and Ecuador, and Venezuela and Colombia, in the past decade). In other countries (for example, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador), the erosion of the rule of law is also linked to domestic and gender violence, while episodes of ethnic violence are not uncommon in Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru.

Figure 3.9. The Gini Index for the countries analysed

Gini Index
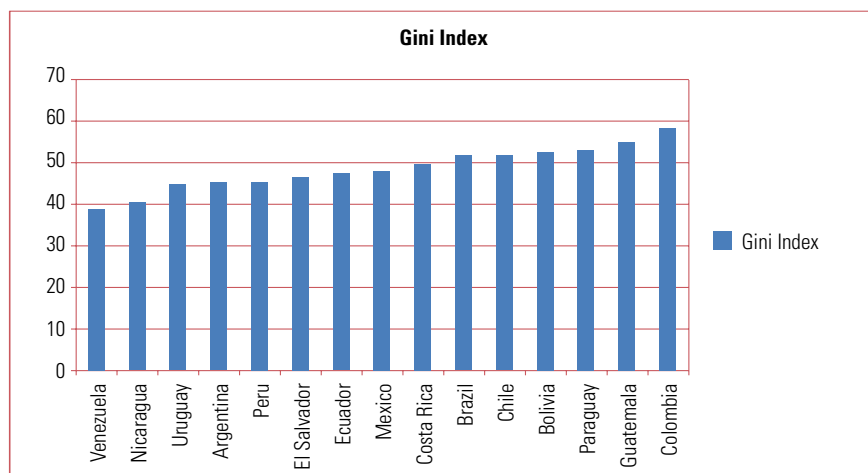
Source: CIA Factbook (most recent available data for each country)

More generally, the inability of many of the countries in the region to guarantee their citizens' individual rights and to satisfactorily preserve civil order cannot be dissociated from the socio-economic conditions in the region—specifically, the high levels of poverty and unequal income distribution, which are more marked in Latin America than in any other region of the world. The allocation of economic, cultural and social resources is especially skewed in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Paraguay (see Figure 3.9).[23] In the case of Brazil, however, the Gini Index has fallen steadily in the past decade, and it is one of the countries—along with Ecuador, El Salvador and above all Venezuela—where progress in this area has been more consistent over the past two decades. Nonetheless, income inequality in the South American giant still remains among the highest in the region.

Ethnic, gender and racial discrimination constitute another fairly widespread problem faced by Latin American democracies. As in the case of corruption, discrimination affects the cultural, economic, political and social realms and is structural, affecting individuals in countries at all levels of democratic quality. Even in high-quality democracies like Argentina, Chile and Costa Rica, indigenous populations suffer from economic and political discrimination and sometimes physical attacks even though in the past two decades measures were adopted and legislation passed explicitly aimed at guaranteeing and protecting their rights. In the case of Chile, criminalization of Mapuche social movements and protests is one of the most visible faces of these discriminatory practices. Moreover, indigenous Latin Americans have been disproportionately victimized in the internal conflicts in Colombia, Peru

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[23]   As noted in the text, income inequality—as measured by the Gini Index and reported in Figure 3.9—constitutes a useful indicator but not a perfect measure of 'equality' as defined and used in this report.

and Central America. Similarly, Afro-Latin Americans suffer discrimination in the labour market, the education and justice systems, and political life in low-quality democracies like Ecuador and Venezuela but also in Brazil, Costa Rica and Uruguay. The same can be said regarding the discrimination suffered by women, not only in the educational system, the labour market (that is, the 'glass ceiling') and political life but also, as noted above, as victims of domestic violence.

There is also a series of more 'localized' difficulties, that is, faced especially by certain nations or groups of nations in Latin America. Among these, it is worth mentioning the inefficiencies and irregularities in the recruitment, workings, and stability of public administration and bureaucracy, a problem characterizing mainly low-and middle-quality democracies. In countries like Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela, budget constraints, political pressures and job insecurity/instability—or the lack of a clearly structured career track—undermine the professionalization and independence of the state bureaucracy. Along the same lines, the justice system in some of these countries (for example, Paraguay and Guatemala) is quite inefficient and the judiciary tends to be closely tied to political parties. The same can be said of election authorities in Nicaragua and Venezuela. A related shortcoming is the scarcity of publicly available information regarding the operation of political actors and public bureaucrats; in particular, citizens and the press have limited access to information about expenditures, recruitment mechanisms and administrative procedures. By way of contrast, the examples of Brazil, Chile and even Colombia, countries where recruitment procedures, training schemes, and high information and technology standards applied to public administration have improved institutional and administrative capacity, illustrate how appropriate selection and personnel management mechanisms can be introduced notwithstanding strained public finances. Some of these practices are currently being implemented in other, lower-or middle-quality democracies like Bolivia, Mexico and Peru.

Also, the relationship between the political establishment and the security forces continues to be problematic in some of the democracies under study. In El Salvador and Guatemala, security forces—especially the army—retained considerable power after the peace processes of the 1990s, and still retain close ties with political parties. In Colombia and Mexico, state security forces have been repeatedly involved in illicit activities (for example, extortive kidnappings and drug trafficking), sometimes in collaboration with the powerful local drug cartels. Given Latin America's troubled past, ensuring civilian control over the security forces and guaranteeing that police forces are respectful of human and political rights is of paramount importance to enhance democratic quality in these countries.

In addition, certain limitations to inter-institutional accountability persist in some of the countries examined due either to political junctures or flawed institutional design. For instance, in Peru, the Constitutional Court is perceived to be highly dependent on the political powers that be—and, in particular, on the president. The autonomy of the Constitutional Court was decidedly undermined during the Fujimori government (1990–2000), and although later governments tried to reinforce the legitimacy of the judiciary, the prevailing view among Peruvian citizens and academics is that the judges of the Constitutional Court still operate as partisan appointees rather than as civil servants. The same phenomenon is more noticeable in Venezuela, where the growing concentration of power in Chávez's hands has drastically limited the autonomy of the Supreme and Audit Courts and of the ombudsman. In Bolivia, where the last constitutional reform determined that members of the Supreme Court must be elected by popular vote from the set of candidates pre-selected by Congress, the lack of political consensus about the nominees has hindered the court's effective functioning. In Chile, a country with professionalized, autonomous and strong Constitutional and Audit Courts, there is still no ombudsman despite various attempts to introduce this figure since the democratic restoration in 1990. And in both Chile and El Salvador, the most important regional and sub-national authorities are designated by the president, which in practice reduces their autonomy and their ability to monitor or serve as a check on the central government.

The oligopolistic structure of the media is another feature common to several democracies throughout the region. In Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, mass media ownership is highly concentrated in a few economic and/or family groups. What is more, in some of these polities (for example, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay) these groups have traditionally maintained close ties with specific parties. While the concentrated ownership and the political affiliations of the mainstream media do not necessarily indicate that there is no press freedom in these countries, it potentially restricts citizens' access to plural and independent information. Considering the frequent political pressures exerted over the media in Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela in recent years, as well as the physical threats (and crimes) routinely experienced in some areas of Colombia and Mexico, it is clear that the media landscape in Latin America is not particularly well-suited for satisfying the key role of providing the information citizens and organizations need to hold representatives accountable for their actions in office.

With regards to political competition and participation, the two 'motors' of democratic quality, the most conspicuous finding in this analysis is that in a regional context characterized by gradually increasing intraparty democracy, party structures, especially in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela, remain fairly closed, with few if any mechanisms for internal

democracy and a virtual monopoly by party leaders or machines over candidate selection. Furthermore, in El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay, these restrictions on citizen participation in internal party life are exacerbated by the lack of forms of deliberative democracy and the scarcity of mechanisms for popular participation in the decision-making process.

Shifting to the outcome and especially to the perceived lack of legitimacy of democracy in our sample countries, the 2009 and 2010 Latinobarómetro data indicate that 65.2 per cent of respondents support democracy and only 16.2 per cent, under given conditions, would justify an authoritarian regime. When the average over the past 20 years is considered, in some cases there is still approximately 60 per cent support for democracy and 20 per cent preference for authoritarianism. More specifically, this is a relevant issue in Guatemala and Paraguay, where roughly 50 per cent of citizens support democracy. Budgetary and fiscal constraints thwarting the state's capacity to improve peoples' lives, citizen discontent with the economic situation, a political culture in which—as noted above in the case of Paraguay—democratic responsiveness is not deemed particularly relevant by political elites or even by voters, and the idealization of extended authoritarian rule in certain segments of the citizenry all contribute to undermining the perceived legitimacy of democracy. Conversely, it should be stressed that there are cases, such as Ecuador and Venezuela, that cannot be considered 'high-quality' democracies, where most recent surveys conducted by Latinobarómetro on satisfaction with democracy show a high percentage of citizens extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with democracy.

It is very difficult not to link this result—consistently drawn from mass surveys over the past decade—to the recent experience of Peruvians under the Fujimori government. Despite the systematic violation of constitutional and statutory provisions and procedures, this government was credited with eliminating *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and thus with reducing the political violence and terrorism that was wracking the country (Burt 2009).

Potential popular support for military rule is not negligible in Chile (24.4 per cent) and higher in Argentina (27.9 per cent).[24] In Chile, in the minds of a sizeable proportion of citizens the Pinochet regime is associated with traits like efficiency, good management and low crime. Interestingly, unlike in the vast majority of the other countries in Latin America, disenchantment with democracy in Chile does not seem to—and, objectively, should not—be related to macroeconomic performance or limited state responsiveness due to fiscal constraints. Instead, political stalemates hindering the implementation of public policies or the inability to represent certain segments/interests in the electorate may have more to do with popular dissatisfaction with democracy.

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[24] This is the average percentage (1995–2000) of respondents that declared they would support military rule if the situation got very bad (Latinobarometer 2013).

In addition, it is also worth noting that the democratic–authoritarian cleavage structured party competition in Chile during much of the 1990s (Alvarez and Katz 2009), so that support (or the lack thereof) for democracy may also be perceived as an expression of partisan attachments.

Moreover, the protection of personal dignity and basic civil rights is particularly weak in Colombia, Nicaragua and Venezuela (see Figure 3.10). In El Salvador, the death penalty still exists in military courts, and it has the security forces have frequently used torture/physical violence, more often than not escaping prosecution, punishment or even investigation by the justice system. Moreover, the legal definition of torture is unnecessarily vague and restrictive, and has been subject to criticism by various international organizations. Fundamental civil rights can be limited or suspended in certain circumstances (for example, the fight against youth gangs), and practices like the protracted detention of individuals on remand are prevalent. A similar situation is observed in Guatemala and Nicaragua, where torture and abuses of power by the security forces and arbitrary/unlawful imprisonments are not uncommon. Additionally, in the case of Nicaragua, several reports mention the existence of female domestic workers in slave-like labour conditions and the persistence of imprisonment for debt. The poor record of the three Central American countries in the freedom dimension must be understood, at least in part, against the background of the brutal and prolonged civil wars that devastated the region (Dunkerley 1993; Lafeber 1993) and the ensuing demilitarization and peace process which, as previously noted, allowed the security forces to retain considerable weight in political and social life.

As an illustration, the investigations and prosecution of human rights violations during the civil conflict are still pending in El Salvador and Guatemala. In fact, Guatemala has still not signed major international agreements against torture and other human rights violations. Similarly, the *de facto* disenfranchisement of potential—especially indigenous—voters in rural areas of Guatemala due to difficulties reaching the polls can also be understood in light of the experience and role of the Mayan indigenous people and poor peasants during the civil war (Lafeber 1993).

Figure 3.10. Civil liberties and political rights in Latin America
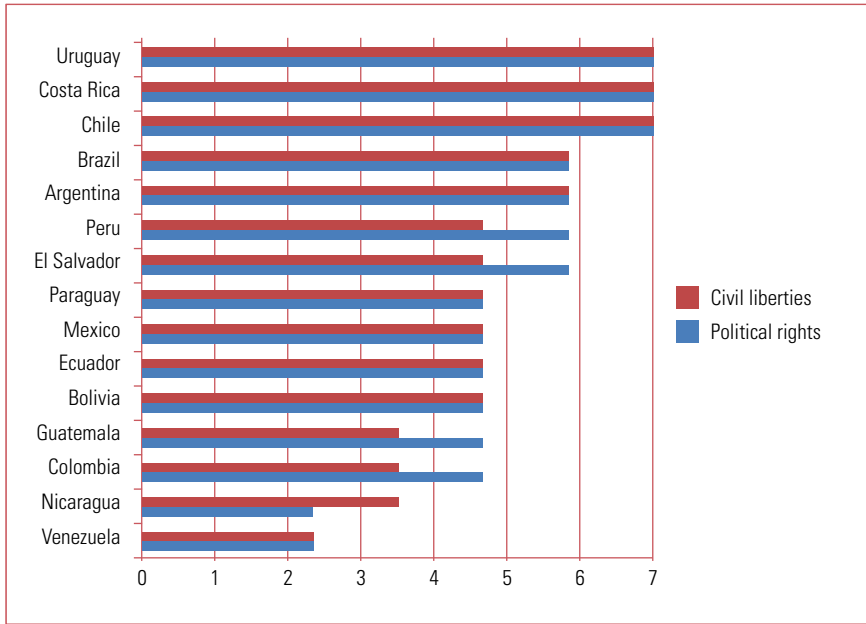
In Colombia, another country marred by domestic conflict, serious violations of personal, civil and political rights are also reported. Citizens caught in the middle of the fight involving the military, paramilitary organizations and guerrilla groups are commonly subject to intimidation, physical violence (including torture, kidnapping and murder) and forced migration. Also in Venezuela, the escalation of political clashes and polarization between pro- and anti-Chávez factions in the past decade has led to the systematic harassment of political and social activists and members of the opposition, as well as to episodes of violence, torture—which is not defined as a criminal offence in the country's legal system—and abuses of power by members of the security forces, including extrajudicial executions.

Finally, weak protection of economic and social rights is notorious in low-quality democracies. While the welfare state in Latin America has been dismantled due to persistent fiscal imbalances and the acceleration of liberal economic reforms in the 1990s, high-quality democracies like Argentina, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and even Brazil and Chile have managed to maintain or establish programmes, policies, and legislation aimed at safeguarding the basic economic and social rights of their citizens. In contrast, in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, public and social policies are scarce and extremely ineffective—even compared to other countries in the region—and social safety nets are extremely weak. Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru occupy an intermediate position in this regard, though it is worth mentioning

the important advances in social legislation and programmes introduced in Bolivia since Morales's rise to power.

To summarize the foregoing discussion, Table 3.6 highlights the most relevant difficulties faced by each the 15 countries considered in this report. These are the issues that, in the authors' opinion, pose more immediate and/ or significant obstacles to democratic quality in these countries. Directly addressing these problems would decidedly help improve democratic life in the region.

Table 3.6. Main threats to democratic quality faced by the countries of Latin America

Procedural + freedom issues	Procedural + equality issues	Procedural + freedom + equality issues
Venezuela	Argentina	Colombia
	Bolivia	Ecuador
	Brazil	El Salvador
	Chile	Guatemala
	Costa Rica	Nicaragua
	Mexico	Peru
	Paraguay	
	Uruguay	

Given the critical points that have been identified thus far in each of the countries, the first policy recommendation concerns the adoption and implementation of *policies to fight corruption*. Although this is an aspect that affects all Latin American democracies in varying degrees (see above and the first table in Annex 2), the region's governments should prioritize policies to fight corruption. The potential problems and flaws of these policies are obvious: a government-led fight against corruption when a government is corrupt or easily influenced by corrupt individuals and groups is a waste of time and a rhetorical manoeuvre void of content. Consequently, the challenge is to identify a solution and an effective tool for fighting corruption. Based on the authors' research experience and the results of research in other regions, there are two effective ways of fighting corruption, which are interconnected. First are the efforts of specialized international agencies that are likely to establish alliances and identify broader support in the organized and non-organized civil society in each country. Second are the programmes, also backed by international organizations, that strengthen the judiciary, including prosecutors, and increase its independence in different ways, including through the efficient management of justice. If the conclusions on the so-called convergence mechanisms (see Morlino 2011a: Ch. 8) are correct,

the joint efforts and the combination of these policies will lay the bases for improvement in all other democratic domains.

Table 3.7. Procedural deficits and specific policy recommendations

Country	Areas for action
Argentina	administrative capacity, information
Bolivia	relations between executive and legislative branches, constitutional court, information
Brazil	security, administrative capacity, political participation
Chile	information, political participation
Colombia	security, administrative capacity, electoral accountability
Costa Rica	administrative capacity, information, political participation
Ecuador	administrative capacity, political participation
El Salvador	military
Guatemala	security
Mexico	security, parties and associations, competition as a whole
Nicaragua	administrative capacity
Paraguay	administrative capacity
Peru	security, constitutional court, information
Uruguay	administrative capacity, information, parties and associations
Venezuela	administrative capacity, information, internal competition

In a detailed examination of other aspects, another sub-dimension of the rule of law that immediately emerges is *administrative capacity*. Table 3.7 shows that this aspect is directly and significantly relevant in several countries throughout the region. Yet before addressing this point one must disentangle institutional from administrative capacity. In fact, the constitutional arrangements in Latin America in which the presidential institution complements proportional legislative representation has been observed to be basically effective. With some exceptions (see especially Bolivia), within the past decade and earlier, all the problems and fears of democratic instability suggested by Linz and Valenzuela (1994) have been overcome. In most cases (with the exception of Venezuela, and some other cases) a basic functional alternative with institutional accommodations and routines has been reached.

Thus, in recent years, the lack of administrative capacity, including at the local level, has limited and prevented an effective working democracy throughout the region. The key element concerns the capacity of a professional, neutral bureaucracy to implement and enforce the law and to run a transparent policymaking process that allows for civil society participation. With regard to policy recommendations this implies proposing and implementing

programmes to develop a professional bureaucracy, which has been a challenge faced by other countries in the world in recent years. These types of programmes, like their predecessors, take time to implement and to become operational. From a different perspective, this indicates that Latin American democracies are in a second step in their democratic development in which their democratic façade should be more consistent with their substantial appearance: informal and formal rules should be consistent. Actually, the transformation from democratic institutions where powerful elites are in control of decision-making processes to a situation in which neutral institutions implement policies that foster freedom and equality is at stake, as underscored by the success of neo-populist leaders in some of the region's countries.

The third and final set of recommendations is related to the problem of individual security, which is only relevant for some of the countries in the region. Relevant in different areas of Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru (at least five out of fifteen countries), the delivery of individual security and the maintenance of civil order with a focus on the guaranteed and protected rights to life, to be free from fear and torture, and to property are minimal requisites for every political regime, even authoritarian or hybrid regimes. The principal problems may arise from organized crime, considerably escalated by drug trafficking. Again, the solution can only stem from international collaboration with other countries' police organizations. Individual security is possible if the relevant domestic authorities establish and prioritize this goal.

CHAPTER 4

4. Concluding remarks

Leonardo Morlino

Based on an encompassing theoretical definition of democratic quality (or qualities) that includes procedural, substantive and outcome components, this report offers a comprehensive analytic tool and applies it to the study of the quality of democracy in 15 Latin American countries. The methodological approach combines qualitative and quantitative assessments of the different aspects and characteristics of those polities, complementing and expanding previous research and providing a detailed description of the evolution and current state of democracy in the region.

The results of this analysis show a clear democratic pattern in the region, marked by a strong correlation and internal consistency between the different dimensions of democratic quality. In other words, high-quality democracies in the region (Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and, to a lesser extent, Argentina and Brazil) display high 'scores' and successful performance in most of the different components of democratic quality. Similarly, low-quality democracies concentrated in Central America (El Salvador, Nicaragua and Venezuela) fare poorly in virtually all of the sub-dimensions. Perhaps the only exception to this general trend is Venezuela, where the visible deterioration of most of the procedural and substantive dimensions—and especially the rule of law and accountability—has been accompanied by sustained improvements in at least one of the outcome components—equality, and more precisely, the economic sub-dimension of equality. Nonetheless, since democratic quality is a complex, multifarious concept, success in this single dimension is not enough to pull the country out of the group of low-ranked countries.

More importantly, policy recommendations are essential to ensure that 30 years after the beginning of the third wave of democratization, the vast majority of Latin Americans can actually enjoy the benefits of better democracies. As the examples of the Central American countries and

Paraguay suggest, a continuously underperforming democracy runs the risk of alienating its citizens, rendering them dangerously disillusioned about the value of democracy itself, and even potentially undermining its stability or survival. Even in the case of a successful democracy like Chile, popular disappointment in the way some of the aspects of democracy work in practice could undermine trust in and support for democratic institutions. Hence, measures—economic, but also political—aimed at enhancing the quality of democracy and its component dimensions are vital to ensure the continuation and strengthening of democratic life in Latin America. As suggested in the previous section, the policy recommendations to take into account affect at least three domains: policies against corruption, improving administrative capacity and consolidating personal security. All Latin American countries will be much better democracies if one or more of these aspects are improved, even if only partially.

This analysis also opens important avenues for future research. First, as has been mentioned throughout the report, the results presented herein are the most relevant, and in certain respects they also are preliminary. Much more could be done regarding the fine-tuning of indicators and measures. Other more sophisticated empirical methods and more in-depth theoretical reflections are required to better understand the main determinants of the evolution of the quality of democracy in the region. In particular, a more careful consideration of the dynamics of democratic quality and of the empirical changes that have been occurring over the past 20 years is needed. Specific additional country analyses would also help develop knowledge on the topic. All the above will make possible a better analysis and explanation of democracies in the region, as well as more precise and effective policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

5. Postscript: the quality of democracy

Juan Rial

The preceding text is an excellent study of the major trends in the movement towards the consolidation of democracy in Latin America based on recent quantitative data. Working within a theoretical framework from which these quantitative variables are derived, and complemented by qualitative considerations, it reflects the wide range of political experiences in the region since the start of the 21st century. This postscript, based on qualitative descriptions of current developments, focuses on the political situation and political action, and proposes an agenda for the discussion of the reforms needed to maintain democracy as a political regime in Latin America.

The end of the consensus regarding the definition of democracy and its relationship with republicanism

The Inter-American Democratic Charter was adopted by the OAS in 2001, coincidently on the same day as the attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. While as always there were differences among the countries, their economies, their political regimes, and a range of domestic and international conflicts, at that time there was a consensus as to what constituted democracy.

In most of the countries, the idea prevailed that democracy should be close to Dahl's 1971 definition of polyarchy: a regime in which there were elections with adequate assurances for all participants and where the rights of minorities were guaranteed. This was supplemented by long-standing republican notions regarding the separation of powers and the full enjoyment of individual rights and freedoms that have been termed first-generation human rights.

Although a new constitution had already been approved in Venezuela by 2001 and the notion of second-generation human rights was gaining traction, together with the expansion of mechanisms of direct democracy, there was a basic consensus on what constituted democracy. There was also support for financially orthodox economic policies commonly referred to as 'neo-liberalism' that prevailed in almost all the countries of the region at that time. In early 2014, this situation had changed notably. Democracy is interpreted differently in each country of Latin America. Perhaps the idea that has persisted in all of them is that access to political power is subject to elections. However, there is no consensus on the conditions under which elections should take place. In many countries it is possible for the president to run for re-election at the end of his or her term, giving rise to much debate regarding the powers of incumbents up for re-election and the use of state resources.

Many of the guarantees of electoral competition are debated, including the mechanisms for funding electoral campaigns and political parties, access to the mass media and the ability of the executive to influence the electoral authorities. Despite impressive 'legislative progress', the role of money in elections is far from being resolved. Fears remain regarding the role of money from criminal organizations that seek to influence the state to protect their illegal activities.

With regard to republicanism, the existence of the separation of powers has been called into question. In many countries, the head of the executive clearly predominates, especially over the judiciary and the various financial oversight, regulatory and electoral bodies, in addition to state enterprises. While it is well known that the judiciary reflects the dominant thinking at any given moment in time with respect to justiciable questions, it is also clear that the courts have been used more frequently to resolve political disputes. The 'judicialization' of politics is already a fact in the region, one of the costs of which is a loss of trust in the courts as the arbiters of social control. There seems to be considerable tolerance of 'illiberal' forms of democracy.

Documents on democracy in Latin America published by other international organizations, including the UNDP (2004, 2011) and others (see, for example, OAS–UNDP 2012) have sought to portray a region in which the concept of democracy was homogeneous when, in reality, especially by around 2010, there had been a clear conceptual rupture.

The performance of elected governments and democracy

In several countries the biggest problem with democracy is the performance of governments once elected, for often it does not comport with the principles of polyarchy. The 'wishes' of the majority, normally interpreted in a personal

manner by the leader, displace guarantees for minorities and dissidents. Measures are taken in the name of the interests of the majority that are of dubious legality in a liberal–republican framework.

If the crisis in the ability of political parties to act as institutions that mediate between society and political power is also considered, transforming them instead into electoral machines with only a sporadic presence, it becomes clear that the focus of the party's political activity has shifted to personalist leaders (known as 'new *caudillos*'). This has led to the gradual disappearance of the party systems, with little prospect of alternation in power in many countries. The opposition, in more than one case, has responded by expressing itself through the media rather than through legislative or political party structures. In this regard, it is important to note the ever-greater efforts to 'tame' the opposition media. The issue is far from simple, given that on more than one occasion media organizations, which are companies, interest and pressure groups, and entertainment enterprises, represent and promote 'unholy' interests.

On other occasions they express the genuine concerns of ordinary citizens and, more generally, of the population as a whole. Striking a balance between possible regulation and total freedom is very difficult, and problems arise which on more than one occasion have led to attempts to silence voices critical of existing governments. For this reason, it is not always easy to know when one is or is not observing a situation of democratic governance. Recent examples of the interruption of presidential terms (in Honduras in 2009 and Paraguay in 2012) were widely condemned by the international community, primarily on the basis of formal considerations. Behind these events, in the eyes of some, were interests to defend. Many of the region's presidents were reluctant to condone these changes which, in practice, did not usher in classically dictatorial regimes but rather 'commissarial dictatorships' (transitional regimes that were meant to transfer power to regularly elected rulers). In other cases—for example the uncertain situation of Venezuela's institutions when in January 2013 Hugo Chávez was unable to assume the presidency again due to health problems—a different solution was chosen. A large part of the international community accepted the interpretation of the dominant majority in Venezuela, both legislative and judicial, to maintain the fiction that Chávez was still president. There are whole 'libraries' of arguments to support all of the options, but the clear result is the rupture of the consensus on what constitutes democracy.

And from this observation one can derive one of the most important considerations. More relevant than elections are the institutions and their implementation, so that the dominant political culture in a given population accepts and defends them. Nonetheless, the recent tendency has not been in that direction. More than the institutions, priority is accorded to consultation at the polls, as a ritualized form of competition, which is substantially

peaceful, although electoral violence can play a more or less marginal role, which is not always consistent with the process of institutional consolidation.

The 'new *caudillos*'

Weaknesses in democratic institutions give the impression that a country is not functioning properly. The political party systems in many countries in Latin America suffer from serious shortcomings. In more than one instance they have been replaced by 'machines' headed by personal leaders, who are referred to as the 'new *caudillos*'—including charismatic leaders, symbolic figures and other mere occupants of the presidency—who appeal to populist forms that do not always involve mass mobilization, but rather circumstantial support, whether at times of real or artificial crisis or during election campaigns. Today, many parties are just ad hoc electoral machines, often changing, for each election. In addition, there are personal candidates who do not belong to a party. In addition, in many countries the national parties have no sub-national presence.

It should be noted that in more than one case, and particularly among opposition groupings, the dominant 'culture' of the political group is closer to the culture of non-governmental organizations than to the traditional culture of political organizations. In many cases, rather than coalescing different interests, they work with different segments that generally do not speak with one another or even meet physically, operating instead through new communication networks and media, most of them virtual. A serious problem in sociological terms that results from this institutional weakness is the succession of authorities (not always involving succession in leadership), which becomes traumatic. These succession problems occur in governments and parties of various currents, including progressive and leftist parties and governments, but also in those of the 'centre' and the 'right'. Presidentialism promotes the notion of re-election as an alternative. The failure to implement parliamentarianism in the 1990s, with a constructive vote-of-confidence system to prevent successive crises, has led to a high price being paid in the form of an additional dosage of presidentialism which, in some cases, comes close to embodying the idea of a 'tyranny of the majority'.

It is worth noting that the expressions 'right', 'centre' and 'left' are in quotes because in some countries very few define themselves as right wing, either personally or when acting collectively. These are times in which the dominant trend is for politicians to define themselves as left wing, which in many cases goes no further than embracing the notion of social justice, without any clear idea as to its content beyond a vague notion of welfare-type policies and the constraints those imply. Many of those who oppose this notion flock towards an unwieldy and not very coherent 'centre', which defies any positive definition.

Difficulties implementing 'negative integration'

German Social Democrats were more or less second-class citizens. Yet little by little, they adopted practices to adapt to the dominant regime, culminating after the period of Nazi rule, when in 1957 the party abandoned Marxism. Nonetheless, even before 1914 they had achieved the fundamental transformation, 'negative integration', the process of maintaining a more or less revolutionary rhetoric alongside conservative practices, which accepted the market economy and 'bourgeois' institutions.

The German social democrats and the Europeans in general achieved this in the context of disciplined party structures and a more or less respected institutional framework. In Latin America, that task was carried out by leaders or activists (or those who followed them in time) of the former revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s. They did this by appealing to new forms of mobilizing—not those of the 1940s or 1950s—which gave way to implementing the practices of the old conservative oligarchies. Today populism involves not much more than a change in discourse and practices of widespread 'horizontal clientelism', and therefore it is hard for 'negative integration', practiced mainly by 'new *caudillos*', to become institutionalized. This is difficult even in quasi-authoritarian contexts.[25] The parties that support those leaders suffer from erosion, desertions and constant transformations that bring in new people.

One must bear in mind that 'horizontal clientelism' allows for a level of mass manipulation using 'personalist' and *caudillista* approaches, much like Perón or Vargas did in the past, appealing to conservatism, a nationalist and anti-cosmopolitan rhetoric, and on more than one occasion using a language that evokes the 'rurban' nature of these societies.[26] This clientelism appeals to the pre-eminence of 'politics' over the rules, which presupposes the de-institutionalization of the state. In many cases, it leads to a dichotomy between economic teams that implement orthodox fiscal and monetary policies (more or less neo-liberal) and social policy teams, with a different orientation. Together, private actors' actions lead to major contradictions. It is not unusual, then, for the informal sector to continue to account for such a large share of the labour market, for tax evasion to continue to be widespread and for emergency social measures to become permanent. These phenomena lead to even greater de-institutionalization.

In its day-to-day practice the 'new class', using Djilas's old terminology, competes with the 'parties' (especially those in government) for political

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[25]   Classic 'clientelism' is a vertical relationship between the client and its benefactor/patron. Meanwhile, 'horizontal clientelism' implies a protection of the entire poor social collective. Both of these forms are constantly combined in practice.

[26]   'Rurban' is a neologism introduced by Professor Horacio Martorelli in the 1960s. It is used here to classify peoples who might live in urban settings but their mentalities are rural.

hegemony and the support of the state apparatus. But one must also note that it has ceased being a cautious clash, for circumspection is cast aside and positions are aired in the media, reflecting an attitude typical of the old privileged classes. The result has been the rise of a new political elite that maintains conventional practices, in which the most skilled or the most willing to take risks predominate. Under the mantle of a rhetoric that appeals to change, they maintain the characteristics of the *ancien regime*. When they control governments, the new *caudillos*, populist leaders, undergo a transformation from 'social avengers' to 'traditional' leaders.[27]

Attempts to create mechanisms of direct democracy and the development of new institutions have not always strengthened democracy

The main innovation in direct democracy has been the introduction of a wide range of consultations, as well as the possibility of a recall vote to remove an elected official from office.

The consultations did not always produce adequate results. When several Ecuadorian presidents were removed in the late 1990s, it was preceded by plebiscite surveys that did not achieve political stability. Recall of laws (*revocatoria de leyes*) and referendums to resolve controversial political issues or to approve changes with constitutional implications (such as the election of constituent assemblies and later the approval of new constitutional charters) have been extremely important as substitutes for the worn out normal institutional workings.

The constant recalls of elected politicians, particularly at the local level, are used as rehearsals for forthcoming elections or as mere scenarios for settling accounts and acts of revenge more than as genuine corrective measures to express the sense of the citizenry. And it is common for many of those who are recalled to go on to win the next election, initiating a cycle of constant acts of vengeance.

The new constitutions and their developments, while important at a symbolic level (in recognizing the multinational and/or multicultural character of many countries), have nonetheless introduced certain elements of 'political engineering' which, in more than one instance, have increased institutional

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[27] A more sophisticated example is provided by José Mujica. While his predecessor Tabaré Vázquez managed who exercised the most authority via his own guidelines, Mujica appealed to his old *blanco* anarchist and populist roots [*blanco* being a reference to a historical party in Uruguay]. This made for an internal change in the *Frente Amplio*. Mujica did not have the capacity or 'directive influence' over his successor and, similar to what happened in the past in Uruguay's historical parties, this led to his constituents (the so-called *barra* [supporters] of the Movement for Popular Participation [MPP]) paying the price. They will not continue being the majority faction of the governing party, *Frente Amplio*. Negative integration in Uruguay carries the cost of the gradual elimination of this faction, and the 'inheritance' of the old militants of the 1960s and 1970s will not be passed down.

uncertainty. In other cases, there have been only very partial reforms to permit or hinder presidential re-election, in accordance with the interests of each particular sector or leader in each country. Today, very few countries remain in which an individual can serve only one term as president.

In addition, some countries have approved laws about new rights, such as same-sex marriage, while others discuss abortion and still others debate laws to legalize drug consumption.[28]

Current political discourse in a market economy and society

This whole panorama is seen in a context of various discursive positions (it would be an exaggeration to call them ideological) with regard to the imagined community of the future, yet all have as a backdrop recognizing the existence of market economies as the way economic life is organized. Many of the economic structures of the region impose some limitations on this concept (for example, nationalizations and state-run enterprises, restrictions on certain private activities, particularly those that tend to be monopolistic, restrictions on foreign investment, etc.) but all of the mechanisms are, in the final analysis, based on the market. Only Cuba is an exception to this model (despite the changes introducing limited market relations).

The market economy has also promoted a market society in which persons are addressed as consumers rather than as citizens, with differing levels of access to goods. Consumerism, especially in the south of Latin America, has grown under the auspices of economies that are exporters of commodities, whose prices have increased sharply, giving the lower classes greater access to different types of goods and services, often as a result of government-managed transfers. It should be noted that this cycle depends largely on the demand for those basic materials from countries outside the region. The challenge of how to satisfy the problems of the lower classes, who also want a minimum of consumption, led to the development of welfare-type policies based largely on 'horizontal clientelism'.

Since the return to democracy in the 1980s, one of the major problems has been the 'promise' of material prosperity that democracy would bring. One of the leaders of those years stated that with democracy 'there is education, food, and health care'. Obviously, it was not possible to ensure the provision of these benefits within a liberal framework and operating in a loosely controlled market economy.

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[28]   Uruguay has already recognized common law unions and has now legalized same-sex marriage. It has also made abortion legal and approved a law that regulates selling cannabis nationwide.

That is why today many of the governments that were accused of not respecting liberal republican guidelines pointed to their governance on behalf of the poor sectors as their greatest source of legitimacy. The result, welfare-type policies with practices that combine horizontal clientelism and the classic vertical clientelism, is one of the greatest controversies when it comes to evaluating the quality of a democracy. For the time being, governments of very different politics practice welfare-type policies and growing public spending, and it is to be expected that they will muster academic justifications.[29] One must recall that this approach hinges on the notion that an economy based on commodities exports will continue to prosper, which may change, hindering the financing of such an expansion of social policies.

Social changes condition institutional development

Latin America is increasingly urban, and has some of the world's largest megacities, such as Mexico City and São Paulo. Their security problems have compounded enormously and governments lack the capacity to address them successfully. The tendency towards greater urbanization is reinforced by urban concentration in large urban centres, many of them littoral or coastal cities, generating huge problems that are hard to solve.[30] Sometimes, the distance between social sectors does not translate into geographic distance. The poor sectors, submerged, live or engage in subsistence activities practically back to back with the more affluent, increasing frictions and possible conflict.

Many of the problems result from the rise of an economy that is illegal yet integrated into the capitalist system, based on drug exports, imports, production and consumption, tax evasion and asset laundering accompanied, especially in the case of drug trafficking, by a major increase in violence. In many cases this process has occurred in tandem with the breakdown of the basic social unit—the nuclear family, which ceased to function as a unit of containment, without any other social institution emerging to take its place— together with the inability of the state education system to act as a source of values and integration while providing the rudiments of learning. Some new developments—for example, the Central American *maras*, inspired by US street gangs—are only a provisional mechanism of integration, yet tend to convert their members into cheap 'labour' for criminal activities. The sport

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[29] During the neo-liberal period targeted compensatory social policies were implemented, with an aim towards equity. The period of progressive predominance continues, in practice, with targeting and selectivity, but its justification is social integration and universal coverage in the pursuit of equality. Thus, policies are implemented in the name of the protection of women and children, ending hunger and homelessness, and the improvement of remunerations.

[30] Of course historical trends matter and the formation of countries and interior regions around original urban centres prevails, but in 'new' areas, coastal and littoral urban settlement patterns predominate. In big cities, social co-existence is difficult when different sectors (poor vs. middle class, for example) are forced to interact. There has been a surge in *flashmobs*, led by young people who mobilize others. In Brazil, for example, the *rolezinhos*, are people of modest means who take up space for short periods of time in shopping malls as a form of protest.

fans known as the *barras bravas* (hooligans) are another example.[31]

Public insecurity is one of the key issues that need to be addressed, not just by particular administrations but also by the state and civil society in Latin American countries.

There is no question that the position of women in Latin America has improved, but the situation of youth has not improved as much

Progress has been fastest among the middle social strata, although there is still a long way to go. There are more female legislators and government ministers, and even female heads of state. The existence of quotas has made progress in the political sphere possible, but it is not always reflected in the economic and social spheres, where discrimination persists. The dominant culture, and its correlates in social and economic life, particularly among the poor, continues to be dominated by male chauvinism.

This remains a key issue insofar as the participation of large numbers of women in political and social activities continues to be questioned, not in the discourse, but in practice. At times, women have been 'ghettoized' by establishing organizations exclusively for women that lack the influence to change existing practices. The turning point will be when 'mediocre' men and women are perceived, and subsequently treated, the same way, for then brilliant women can, despite the personal cost, pave the way forward.

In terms of young people, there have been attempts to interest them in politics, but it is not an easy subject to address. Youth, by definition, is an unstable category: people grow out of it quickly, yet others join the ranks. One could argue that the same happens with all groups, but it is especially so for youth, for one is a young person for only so long, and new generations of young people come and go in a relatively short time.

One of the most difficult expressions of these issues is the existence of the so-called *ni-ni* ('neither-nor') generation: those who neither study nor work. It is a serious problem that requires that social integration be addressed before political participation can be contemplated. In many countries in the region, young people constitute the majority of the population, but have not found an adequate expression as a 'voice' (in the sense proposed by Albert Hirschman). For now, there are no initiatives to correct this situation, other than granting the right to voluntary vote for persons aged 16 and 17. For many who benefit from such a measure, it is irrelevant when it comes to their interests.

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[31] Also known as *barras bravas* in Argentina and Uruguay, or *torcidas organizadas* in Brazil and 'ultras' in most of Europe. Outside of Latin America, there have been important political manifestations by these sorts, such as the Tigers of Arkan in Serbia during the 1990s, or, more recently, in Cairo in 2011, the followers of Al Ahly in Tahrir Square.

Social protest as a constant and the new forms it takes: virtual assemblies

Many young people prefer to exercise their 'voice' in the form of protest. Sometimes, it goes no further than the expression of discontent on social networks. At other times, however, they also take to the streets. Generally that 'voice' is perceived as an amorphous protest in which each person expresses his or her own concerns, humiliations or frustrations. It is hard for such gatherings to constitute a unified movement and there is no specific programme for change, but they know they cannot be ignored and that, as in the recent past such as in France in 1968, they will bring about a change of mindset.

Some portray recent protest as the global demands of a new globalized middle class. Yet now it also takes it subaltern sectors who aspire to its 'form of consumption'. At the time, Huntington (1968) depicted the problem as one of unmet demands that economic growth is unable to resolve. He proposed a policy of repression and control. However, that is not always possible. According to Labrousse's classic study of the French revolution, the great social change occurred when the crisis was being overcome yet change could no longer be contained.

It is not always possible to see such protests through the prism of rational and economistic considerations. Although protest recurs throughout history—consider the time of the Gracchi—it does not always mobilize greater support or succeed in changing the dominant culture. The events of May 1968 and parallel movements involve a process that is still relevant. The same may be true of these voices in the streets and on the Internet in the early 21st century. Moreover, there is no doubt that while the protests are spontaneous, or rather respond to calls from several quarters, there are various interest groups or political groups that attempt to use each of the protests, whether to make them grow or shrink, and to harness them for their own ends.

Today, there are few proponents of purely repressive responses. The aim, instead, is to deactivate the activists, segmenting as much as possible their interests and proposals, preventing the aggregation characteristic of a 'catch-all' political party, thus preventing different players from coordinating their activities. This can also be seen in the virtual world, where the use of algorithms makes it possible to design tailor-made preferences, with the aim of cordoning off different interests. The cost is immobility and a lack of innovation, despite the enormous flow of information. This information overload is also designed to paralyze activism. '*Eppur si muove*' ("and yet it moves"), and so, consequently, in other cases appeals for constant reform and re-foundation are made. The aim is to anticipate the issues, but in the prevailing climate of uncertainty and doubt, the response is often 'change so that everything may remain the same', or do nothing at all.

Rule of law, elections, participation and other relevant issues on the day-to-day agenda of proposed institutional changes

This study illustrates that what is understood by full observance of the rule of law varies from country to country.[32] Some continue to insist on the need to maintain liberal guarantees; in others, responding to the social needs of the poor tends to take precedence, even at the expense of traditional legal guarantees.

In terms of the quality of elections, generally efforts are made to preserve the formalities. Nonetheless, the opposition does not always accept the outcome and in some countries argues that the incumbents have excessive predominance. On more than one occasion, they say, there has been fraud, referring more to the overall context than to the specific mechanisms of the vote in each election.

When it comes to overall institutional arrangements and the relationship between the executive and the legislative branches, one must bear in mind the strong predominance of the executive and its economic teams in allocating and managing budget funds. This is very relevant when considering legislative power for addressing the problems of poverty, marginalization, and scarce resources for health and education. It is the executive's economic teams that establish the direction of these policies; the elected representatives have little power to change those preferences.

In the judicial realm, from the political standpoint the executive is always tempted to bring pressure to bear in relevant cases, among other things as a result of the growing 'judicialization' of political competition and of cases that come up in anti-corruption campaigns. On more than one occasion, accusations have been used to try to destroy political adversaries in a context where restrictions make it easy to end up breaking the law.

Decentralization has ceased to be a key political issue in the last decade, but formally there has been no move away from the commitments of the 1990s. In several countries, relations between the sub-national units and the national-level executive branch involve constant haggling for resources, particularly in large countries with a federal system. The outcome tends to reflect the dominance of the central authority.

Given that much of the opposition to the current governments is expressed, primarily, through the media, many governments have sought to introduce

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[32]   The English expression 'the rule of law' is not quite a direct equivalent of the Spanish term *estado de derecho*, which refers not just to respect for the law but also to the statutory and constitutional basis of the state. This distinction reflects the different legal traditions, with the common law countries having a more flexible, pragmatic approach than the continental European tradition that was exported to Latin America.

measures to regulate the media, which in more than one case are considered restrictions on the freedom of expression.

There have been major advances with regard to guarantees of individual liberty in most of the countries. Nonetheless, in terms of institutions, much work remains to be done to improve the operations of the police and the prison system. Competition, mainly electoral, is a mixed bag. Although there do not appear to be obstacles to establishing parties in principle, in practice it is not easy to establish new ones, nor is it easy to obtain genuine funding for political activity. Citizen consultation is often restricted to one-off issues or specific groups, but there does not tend to be general discussion of the direction each country should take, nor do such discussions take place in the parties or movements that support individual leaders, many of whom pursue purely pragmatic policies designed to preserve their power.

Equity is a serious problem in today's world. Various indicators show that in recent years, Latin America has seen 60 to 70 million people emerge from poverty, accompanied by the creation of a new middle class of some 50 million people. These figures are valid according to an income-based approach to measuring poverty and with reference to standards that reflect the recent past rather than the present. New qualitative aspects are being incorporated into these measurements, providing a far more detailed picture.

Many of those changes have not involved increased mobility, a change in housing or other aspects of standard of living, except those that refer to consumption, and such changes have occurred for the various social strata. This is another issue for discussion. However, as in every region of the world the process of urbanization is irreversible and the problems of rural populations, while still important, are gradually becoming secondary.

The political legitimacy of all the governments—which is based on having won a majority in elections—is accepted despite strong criticism levelled at some of them. In previous decades it was foreseeable that presidential terms would be interrupted, whereas now it is considered exceptional. Only Honduras and Paraguay experienced this situation in recent years, and the governments that followed these changes quickly stated their commitment to hold elections in the immediate future, without any plans to change the pre-established constitutional framework.

A basic agenda for discussion on institutions

This agenda is necessary to ensure that elections are genuinely competitive and to promote the principles of polyarchy and liberal democracy, which have been under such harsh attack, and to see what organizational alternatives can be proposed. This means considering the specific features of each country,

particularly its historic inertia and its dominant political culture. In terms of the regional framework, an effort should be made to achieve a new minimum democratic consensus.

The potential issues for political reform that should be discussed in many countries include the following:

1. Whether voting should continue to be compulsory. The current experience in Chile and the historic experience of Colombia show that the level of participation is lower if voting is not compulsory. Whether compulsory voting should be maintained or established (as there are several countries where fines are not imposed, meaning that in practice voting is voluntary). There is also a need to indicate the maximum age (in general, around 70 years of age) to exercise the vote by legal mandate together with the minimum, whether this becomes 16, an age at which voluntary voting is already established by some countries.

2. Whether the recall of mandates on the terms currently established should be maintained. To date the experience has been, on the whole, negative.

3. Whether presidents should be able to run for a second term and for how long.

4. In practice, this issue suggests a renewed discussion of the political set-up: Should one maintain this type of presidentialism, which promotes *caudillismo* and a lack of party organization? Or is it necessary to seek an alternative?

5. It is important to discuss whether the 'arbiters' of electoral contests, whatever their organization and title, should have increased powers. In many cases, by intervening in aspects relating to the funding of parties or access to media, to cite examples of recent conflicts, the 'arbiter' becomes a 'player', leading to a loss of trust.

6. That does not mean that the funding of political activity and access to the media should not continue to be regulated, but rather that there is a need to entrust the controls to other bodies, such as audit offices, offices of the comptroller or national telecommunications councils.

7. With regard to funding, the recent International IDEA–OAS–UNAM study (2011), and in particular the possible agenda for discussion and the proposals in the chapter by Zovatto and Casas (2011) are valuable resources.

8. It is also important to take into account the influence of new communication technologies on political activity. They have the effect of quickly rendering obsolete certain prohibitions on political advertising or the release of opinion poll results, to cite two well-known examples.

9. It is also important to discuss the impact of new technology on voting methods; this is an issue that parties, candidates and electoral bodies have sought to avoid. While there is currently greater trust in manual methods, this situation is bound to change in the not-too-distant future.

10. While it is not well advised to fix something that works well, it is also clear that some changes will have to be made. So, for example, it is not the role of electoral bodies to issue projections of results, but rather to count the actual votes. However, this has to be in line with the expectation of the public to receive the results in the shortest possible time. That is why many electoral bodies are exploring ways of speeding up the vote counting and quickly communicating the results to voters.

11. This also leads us to inquire into whether it is still advisable to have a unified electoral oversight authority or whether it would be better to have other specialized bodies, whatever the final formula adopted.

12. In more general terms, there needs to be a discussion about the dominant political culture. Clearly there have been efforts by non-party candidates, reflecting a deep mistrust of political parties. It is becoming increasingly necessary to discuss alternatives.

13. In that context, it would be desirable to apply political styles that anticipated political changes. However, for the time being there is no sign of either the discourses or the leadership to promote them.

Final general consideration

In a context in which inequality is a major problem, not just in Latin America, but worldwide, institutional frameworks are subject to constant erosion.

There is a triple crisis. The inadequacy of political formulas (using Mosca's concept) from which the institutional designs are derived were discussed above.[33] Current arrangements show dense but inefficient entities that mostly

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[33] Mosca defines it as '*la dottrina o le credenze che danno una base morale al potere dei dirigenti*' (the doctrine or beliefs that give the moral high ground to the political elite's power).

appeal to a discursive ritualism to cover up their ineptitude and irrelevance.[34] Bureaucracies generally serve their own interests and formulations rather than their society. One item on the agenda is to discuss which political formula, and its institutional derivation works best.

A second crisis is constructing governance, agreements and conflict management. Nowadays, 'political correctness' makes people anticipate conflicts in the hopes that they will disappear, which is not possible. However, efforts to manage them are not always in the right direction. In that context, obtaining a majority to govern and avoid obstructionism is a substantial point for discussion.

The third crisis is that institutions are viewed in a negative light and there is little trust in political parties, legislatures and the political class. Furthermore, people do not trust the media or religious institutions either. Without a minimum of trust in the institutions, elections become a mere ritual that does not meet expectations, and that favours constant social unrest and protest.

In that context, the representation that each person (understood more as a citizen than as a consumer) seeks is his or her own, without intermediation, and not through an elected body. For many people from the subaltern sectors, the ideas and values regarding democracy and human rights seem 'out of place' or 'from another time'. Without the correlates of social advancement and a change in the educational profiles of those sectors, it seems very difficult to contain the 'illiberal' tendencies in the political organization of these countries. In trying to resemble the most advanced North Atlantic societies, appeals are generally made that refer to deceptive doctrines such as those that consider them 'weak states' (or even 'failed states'), concepts that lead those 'central' countries to embrace mistaken policies for the region.

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[34] Bolivia had a Ministry of Human Development (*Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano*) that tried to secure funds from international cooperation through a prestigious concept. In Venezuela there was a Ministry of Intelligence (*Ministerio de Inteligencia*). Ecuador has a Minister-coordinator of Knowledge and Human Talent (*Ministro Coordinador de Conocimiento y Talento Humano*). The use of language, originally from the business world, is common in the discourse. People talk about 'strategic agreements' or 'managing talent' or other similar expressions that lack any sort of precision.

CHAPTER 6

6. The new constitutionalism: re-foundational constitutions

Juan Rial

In February 1999, Hugo Chávez was sworn in as president of Venezuela. A new constitution was adopted in December 1999. The Fifth Republic and its Bolivarian Constitution, already amended on several occasions, is voluntarist and long, with 350 articles. It is preceded by a Preamble that is a declaration of the intentions of its now-deceased leader.[35] It defines a multi-ethnic, multicultural, decentralized (a feature that it has inherited from the past) and federal state. The name of the country was changed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the invocation of Bolívar has been constant from 1999 to the present day.

The Venezuelan Constitution of 1999 is the first to systematically recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, granting their languages official status and recognizing rights over their 'ancestral' territories. It also establishes three *ad hoc* seats in the legislature for this sector and recognizes their system of justice within their sphere of action (articles 9, 156, 181, 186, 260 and 281), an issue that was to developed in more detail in the Bolivian Constitution of 2009.[36]

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35 The Preamble reads as follows: 'The people of Venezuela, exercising their powers of creation and invoking the protection of God, the historic example of our Liberator Simon Bolívar and the heroism and sacrifice of our aboriginal ancestors and the forerunners and founders of a free and sovereign nation; to the supreme end of reshaping the Republic to establish a democratic, participatory and self-reliant, multi-ethnic and multicultural society in a just, federal and decentralized State that embodies the values of freedom, independence, peace, solidarity, the common good, the nation's territorial integrity, comity and the rule of law for this and future generations; guarantees the right to life, work, learning, education, social justice and equality, without discrimination or subordination of any kind; promotes peaceful cooperation among nations and furthers and strengthens Latin American integration in accordance with the principle of non-intervention and national self-determination of the people, the universal and indivisible guarantee of human rights, the democratization of imitational society, nuclear disarmament, ecological balance and environmental resources as the common and inalienable heritage of humanity; exercising their innate power through their representatives comprising the National Constituent Assembly, by their freely cast vote and in a democratic Referendum, hereby ordain the following: Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 1999 . . .'

36 As background it should be noted that the 1991 Colombian Constitution reserved legislative seats for indigenous communities and Afro-descendants.

It can also be described as the first constitution that reflects ecological and environmental concerns, as it recognizes the right of citizens to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment (articles 12–28), making socio-cultural and environmental impact studies obligatory for any project that changes ecosystems, and prohibiting the manufacture of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (article 129). Drawing on the concept of food security, it holds that the state should promote sustainable agriculture (article 305). It even refers to the genomes of living beings, which cannot be patented (article 127).

Title IV (articles 136–85) establishes five National Public Powers (branches of government), instead of the traditional three, with the citizen and electoral branches added to the legislative, executive and judicial branches. It also refers to sub-national authorities at the federal, state and municipal levels. The citizen branch has at its head the 'Republican Ethics Council, made up of the Ombudsman, the General Prosecutor, the Office of Public Prosecutions, and the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic' (article 273) and is composed of the bodies over which each respective official presides.

According to article 292, 'the Electoral Branch is vested in the National Electoral Council as governing body, and by its subordinate organs, the National Elections Board, the Civil Status and Voter Registry Commission, and the Commission on Political Participation and Financing, organized and operating as established by the relevant organic law'.

The constitution introduced the recall of mandates at all levels, including presidential, but with safeguards that make it very difficult to implement a presidential recall. It also creates an unelected vice-president who is dependent on and appointed by the president. The unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, can issue so-called enabling laws (*leyes habilitantes*), provisions that delegate legislative functions and in practice allow the president to legislate by decree for up to 18 months. This mechanism was used extensively by President Chávez, not exceptionally, but routinely, which has the effect of significantly strengthening presidential powers.

The Armed Forces of Venezuela now have a dual composition. One part consists of the traditional armed forces, made up of the army, the navy and the air force, together with the existing auxiliary force, now called the Bolivarian National Guard, a sort of military police force with reserve functions. In addition, a National Militia was created consisting of two bodies, the National Reserve and the Territorial Militia, in addition to a Presidential Honor Guard. These new bodies answer exclusively to the commander-in-chief (President Chávez while he was still alive) without the intermediation

of the minister of defence.[37] It is to be assumed that his successor will seek to maintain these prerogatives. These changes were made by recourse to an enabling law, after they were first proposed as a constitutional reform and rejected.

Constitutional amendments had already been introduced, the most important of which allowed for indefinite re-election, including the elections of Chávez, a project that was undone by Chávez's death in 2013. Political practices have made it possible to concentrate power in the executive (the President). Chávez's survival of an attempted coup in 2002 marked Venezuela's trajectory. It enabled him to increase his power and survive an attempt to revoke his mandate in 2004, when he won the support of almost 60 per cent of the electorate. He was even able to ensure that his successor, Maduro, won the election in April 2013, despite Maduro's failure to convince all the Chávez loyalists.

Political practice indicates that Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, and to a degree Nicaragua and Argentina, are 'Bonapartist' political regimes, legitimated by successive electoral consultations of very different scope. In their economic policy, they follow a *state capitalist* approach, protecting major capitalist sectors, both local and international. In the case of Venezuela, for example, the supply of oil to the United States has never been interrupted. At the same time, they follow social policies designed to favour the poorest sectors of society, implementing extended welfare-type policies, based on a horizontal clientelism that extends to large sectors of society. Many of today's political regimes have stopped heeding the middle sectors, except for those which for special reasons it needs to protect in order to maintain social control because they are part of the state machinery, such as police and army officers and, in some countries, teachers.

The Bolivian Constitution of 2009 had a more difficult history. President Morales relied on the predominant social sectors in Bolivia's *altiplano*, and mestizos from poorer sectors, while facing resistance from the elites who controlled power in the tropical departments of Bolivia, led by the people of Santa Cruz. Like the Venezuelan Constitution, the Bolivian Constitution contains a voluntarist preamble that invokes a 'mythical' past:

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[37] Unlike his contemporaries Evo Morales (who completed his military service as a private soldier) and Correa (who has no military background), Chávez was an army officer of long standing, and was part of the military culture and ethos. This meant that he found it easier to manipulate the officer corps. Correa has had less success, while Morales draws on the support of rank-and-file soldiers, the majority of whom come from the poor, mixed-race segments of Bolivian society, whom he courts in order to counterbalance the officers.

In ancient times mountains arose, rivers spread out from one place to another, lakes were formed. Our Amazonia, our swamps, our highlands and our plains and valleys were covered with greenery and flowers. We populated this sacred Mother Earth with different faces, and since that time we have understood the plurality that exists in all things and in our diversity as human beings and cultures. Thus our peoples were formed, and we never knew racism until we were subjected to it during the terrible times of colonialism.

We the Bolivian people, of plural composition, inspired by the struggles of the past since the depth of history, by the anti-colonial indigenous uprising, and in independence, by the popular struggles of liberation, by the indigenous, social and labor marches, by the water and October wars, by the struggles for land and territory, construct a new State in memory of our martyrs.

A State based on respect and equality for all, on principles of sovereignty, dignity, interdependence, solidarity, harmony, and equity in the distribution and redistribution of social wealth, where the search for a good life predominates; based on respect for the economic, social, juridical, political and cultural pluralism of the inhabitants of this land; and on collective coexistence with access to water, work, education, health and housing for all.

We have left the colonial, republican and neo-liberal State in the past. We take on the historic challenge of collectively constructing a Unified Social State of Pluri-National Communitarian Law, which includes and articulates the goal of advancing toward a democratic, productive, peace-loving and peaceful Bolivia, committed to the full development and free determination of the peoples.

We, women and men, through the Constituent Assembly and with power originating from the people, demonstrate our commitment to the unity and integrity of the country.

We found Bolivia anew, fulfilling the mandate of our people, with the strength of our Pachamama and with gratefulness to God.

Honor and glory to the martyrs of the heroic constituent and liberating effort, who have made this new history possible.

President Evo Morales, at his inauguration ceremony, said that his mission had already been completed upon giving Bolivia its new constitution: 'they can drag me out of the Palace, they can kill me, but my mission has been completed with the re-founding of a new, united Bolivia' (BBC Mundo 2009). He added: 'what we are doing is remarkable: from the rebellion of

our ancestors to democratic and cultural revolution, to the re-founding of Bolivia and reconciliation between millennial *originarios* and contemporary *originarios*' (*El País* 2009). Morales is right; it is very difficult to turn back from such emotive texts as the preambles to the constitutions of Venezuela and Bolivia. It seems very unlikely that this voluntarist approach will be reversed anytime soon.

The first three articles define the re-founding to which President Morales referred.[38] A strong 'salvationist' notion is affirmed in two articles of the new constitution, which speak of the ethical and moral principles of the state, and its values, drawing on a rhetoric that uses an Aymara vocabulary to stress that its orientation has moved away from a Western legacy, which is deemed to be purely colonialist.[39]

The second article grants the right to indigenous autonomy or self-government, which is developed further in article 5. The same article identifies Bolivia's languages including among the country's national symbols the *whipala*, a flag of seven colours, presumed to be indigenous, that may have been created in the 1970s but which official rhetoric recognizes as a standard from the Aymara or even Quechua past.[40]

With regard to political representation, in addition to traditional forms, the constitution adds: 'The election, designation, and direct appointment of the representatives of indigenous native peasant nations and peoples [shall

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[38] Article 1 states: 'Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Pluri-National Communitarian Law that is free, independent, sovereign, democratic, intercultural, decentralized and with autonomies. Bolivia is founded on plurality and on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism in the integration process of the country'. Article 2 states: 'Given the pre-colonial existence of nations and rural native indigenous peoples and their ancestral control of their territories, their free determination, which consists of the right to autonomy, self-government, their culture, recognition of their institutions, and the consolidation of their territorial entities, is guaranteed within the framework of the unity of the State, in accordance with this Constitution and the law'. Article 3 states: 'The Bolivian nation is formed by all Bolivians, the native indigenous nations and peoples, and the intercultural and Afro-Bolivian communities that, together, constitute the Bolivian people.'

[39] Article 8 states: 'I. The state adopts and promotes the following as ethical, moral principles of the plural society: *ama qhilla, ama llulla, ama suwa* (do not be lazy, do not be a liar or a thief), *suma qamaña* (live well), *ñandereko* (live harmoniously), *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (land without evil) and *qhapaj ñan* (noble path or life). II. The State is based on the values of unity, equality, inclusion, dignity, liberty, solidarity, reciprocity, respect, interdependence, harmony, transparency, equilibrium, equality of opportunity, social and gender equality in participation, common welfare, responsibility, social justice, distribution and redistribution of social wealth and assets for well being.'

[40] Article 5 states: 'I. The official languages of the State are Spanish and all the languages of the rural native indigenous nations and peoples, which are Aymara, Araona, Baure, Bésiro, Canichana, Cavineño, Cayubaba, Chácobo, Chimán, Ese Ejja, Guaraní, Guarasu'we, Guarayu, Itonama, Leco, Machajuyai-kallawaya, Machineri,Maropa, Mojeñotrinitario, Mojeño-ignaciano, Moré, Mosetén, Movima, Pacawara, Puquina, Quechua, Sirionó, Tacana, Tapiete, Toromona, Uru-chipaya, Weenhayek, Yaminawa, Yuki, Yuracaré and Zamuco. II. The Pluri-National Government and the departmental governments must use at least two official languages. One of these must be Spanish, and the other shall be determined taking into account the use, convenience, circumstances, necessities and preferences of the population as a whole or of the territory in question. The other autonomous governments must use the languages characteristic of their territory, and one of these must be Spanish.'

be conducted] in keeping with their own rules and procedures' (article 26, II.4). The system is to be established by law. A number of special electoral constituencies are allocated to *pueblos originarios* (indigenous peoples).

In Chapter Four, articles 30 to 32 list the protections for indigenous peoples. Article 32 states that Afro-Bolivians deserve the same protection. In addition, a parallel judicial system is established, exclusively for indigenous peoples (articles 190–93). The Constitutional Court, for its part, will include representatives of both systems, that of the indigenous peoples and the traditional 'Western' type. The constitution establishes that there shall be indigenous legislators, on the basis of electoral districts to be defined by law. The establishment of this dual system of Western citizenship and a special category of protected citizens who are members of 'indigenous peoples' breaks the social unity that every state is assumed to have with regard to its citizens.

The constitution sets out Bolivia's position as a country without direct access to the sea.[41] Article 267 establishes that access to the Pacific Ocean is a permanent and non-renounceable objective of the state. In principle, this position places the country in a situation of permanent conflict with Chile. Many of the other modifications are programmatic and discursive, but one has had a major impact. Bolivia is the first country in the world to introduce the idea of electing the judges who serve on its principal judicial bodies. Article 182 establishes that 'I. The Members of the Supreme Court of Justice shall be elected by universal suffrage'.[42] However, they are not allowed to campaign for election, so the mechanism appears to be halfway between a contest and an election.

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[41] In May 2013 Bolivia submitted a claim to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, demanding access to the sea from Chile. When Argentina revised its constitution in 1994, a first temporary provision was added stipulating that the Falkland Islands and other islands in the South Atlantic (South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands) are part of Argentine territory.

[42] The article continues as follows: 'II. The Pluri-National Legislative Assembly, by two thirds of the members present, shall determine the pre-selection of the candidates for each department and shall send the names of those selected to the electoral body so that it may organize the sole and exclusive electoral process. III. No candidate or any other person shall make an electoral campaign in favour of the candidacies, under penalty of disqualification. The Electoral Organ is the only entity responsible for publicizing the merits of the candidates. IV. Magistrates may not belong to political organizations. V. The candidates that obtain a simple majority of the votes shall be elected. The President of the State shall administer the oath of office. VI. In order to become a Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice one must meet the following requirements: satisfy the general requisites established for public servants; be at least thirty years of age; have a law degree; have honestly and ethically performed judicial functions, practiced as a lawyer or have been a university professor for eight years; and not have been sanctioned with dismissal by the Council of Magistrates. The determination of merit shall take into account performance as a native authority under its system of justice. VII. The system of prohibitions and incompatibilities applied to Magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice shall be the same as that applied to public servants'.

The first time that 56 judges were elected, on 16 October 2011, electoral abstention, not surprisingly, was high (almost 60 per cent).[43] When they took office, on 2 January 2012, Morales told them: 'I want to tell all of those who hold judicial office to work on behalf of the people, of the neediest. . . . Justice is not for people who have money or for people with political influence, that has to end'.[44]

Bolivia's practical policy also shows that the market continues to be a guiding principle, with the country holding significant foreign reserves, the result of an orthodox fiscal policy. Despite certain exceptions, many of them rhetorical, capitalism continues to be the prevailing economic form in Bolivia.

The Constitution of Ecuador is also lengthy, with 444 articles, and also bears witness to a voluntarist politics, with a vocation to transform the country. President Correa, who has led this process, characterizes it as a 'citizen's revolution' that intends to become permanent.[45] The constitution also expands the number of branches of government. In addition to the three branches of government established in previous constitutions—the legislature, vested in a unicameral National Assembly, the executive, led by the president, and the judiciary—it also provides for an electoral branch (Poder Electoral), consisting of the National Electoral Council and the Electoral Disputes Court, and a branch of government for Transparency and Social Oversight, consisting of six bodies (Office of the Comptroller General, Superintendency of Banks and Insurance, Superintendency of Telecommunications, Superintendency of Companies, Ombudsman, and the Citizen Participation and Social Oversight Council).

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[43] The judges elected were members of the High Court of Justice (9), the Constitutional Court (7), the Agricultural and Environmental Court (7), the Council of the Judiciary (5) and their substitutes. The high abstention rate coincided with an indigenous march to La Paz by opponents of the construction of a highway that would cross the Tipnis ecological reserve and the Isidoro Sécure Park. The march was organized by one of Evo Morales's strongest supporters, the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia.

[44] Morales added, 'I want to tell all the members of the Judicial branch that Evo Morales is not asking you to defend him. Just as no member of the State may make use of any magistrate of the judicial authorities'. He also expressed his desire that the justice administered by the Judicial Body should be 'exported abroad' as an example: 'Just as we export policies, why should we not also export the way in which we choose and administer justice?'. These quotes are taken from the Bolivian press on 3 January 3, 2012.

[45] The Preamble appeals to 'our age-old roots, wrought by women and men from various peoples', and goes on to 'celebrat[e] nature, the Pacha Mama (Mother Earth), of which we are a part and which is vital to our existence', while also 'invoking the name of God and recognizing our diverse forms of religion and spirituality'. It recognizes the past in 'calling upon the wisdom of all the cultures that enrich us as a society', the constituents of which consider themselves 'heirs to social liberation struggles against all forms of domination and colonialism and with a profound commitment to the present and to the future', in light of which they issue a re-foundational text in their commitment to 'A new form of public coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living, the *sumak kawsay*; a society that respects, in all its dimensions, the dignity of individuals and community groups; a democratic country, committed to Latin American integration—the dream of Simón Bolívar and Eloy Alfaro—peace and solidarity with all peoples of the Earth'.

The opening articles of the new text identify the desire for change in the definition of the new state. It establishes a 'state based on rights', based on economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, of which the state is the guarantor and protagonist, displacing the priority accorded individual guarantees in previous constitutions.[46] Some of those who have analysed the text argue that it represents a move from a 'constitution of liberties' to a 'constitution of well-being' or 'welfare constitution', imbued with an 'ancestral communitarian' philosophy of 'living well', inherited from the ancient Quechuas, explicitly reflected in the expression *sumak kawsay* in the preamble.

It follows a 'developmentalist' approach, according a major role to planning, thus continuing a strong tradition in Ecuador dating back to the military regimes of the 1970s. When discussing food security, it is inferred that achieving it will require protectionist measures, a change from the previous open market policy. In social policies the main thrust is a welfare-type approach. Although the need for decentralization is proclaimed, in reality the constitution strengthens the central government and the presidency. Again with certain exceptions, many of which are rhetorical, capitalism continues to hold sway.

In Nicaragua, where Daniel Ortega won a third term in January 2012 with a legislative majority sufficient to undertake a re-foundational constitutional change, to date there are no signs that this will occur.

In the 1960s Guenther Roth, a scholar of German social democracy, coined the concept of 'negative integration' (Roth 1963). He referred to German social democracy's process of maintaining revolutionary rhetoric in the early 20th century while in practice supporting policies that sustained the existing regime, especially in socio-economic matters, albeit adopting reformist positions.

The processes that have led to the adoption of new constitutions could be defined as 'inclusive-discursive integration'. Emerging from a stage, particularly in the 1990s, in which anti-state discourse was notable, which in practice found expression in the dismantling of welfare systems, or the targeted provision of such services rather than providing them universally for all citizens, a new foundational narrative has been sought without, in essence, bringing about a dramatic change in the underlying economic relationships on which people's lives continue to be based.

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[46] Article 1 states: 'Ecuador is a constitutional State of rights and justice, a social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, multinational and secular State. It is organized as a republic and is governed using a decentralized approach. Sovereignty lies with the people, whose will is the basis of all authority, and it is exercised through public bodies using direct participatory forms of government as provided for by the Constitution. Non-renewable natural resources of the State's territory constitute part of its inalienable and absolute assets, which are not subject to a statute of limitations'.

An effort has been made to endow these constitutions with a strong social discourse, with many programmatic provisions in favour of the lower social strata in each of these countries. Hence the importance of vindicating the 'original peoples' (*pueblos originarios*, formerly referred to as indigenous, that is, *pueblos indígenas*) in each of the countries. However, in practice these countries have maintained a capitalist approach (with certain exceptions, which require accommodations between political and business elites, whether local or international) to basic socio-economic relationships, with notable variations. In many of these countries, state intervention and regulation have again become more significant and are restrictive in nature. With regard to political organization, innovations do not usually go beyond creating parallel mechanisms for specially designated citizens, such as certain indigenous communities. The Bolivian experiment of electing the members of the judicial branch is still very recent.

In June 2013, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, faced with widespread social protest, proposed reforming the political institutions. This had not been one of the demands of the protesters, who can be characterized as anti-political and anti-party. However, Rousseff and her team thought it was a good idea. Among other arguments, there was talk of controlling the funding of political activity to address the issue of the 'purchase' of legislative support, and raising the question of whether political funding should be exclusively public or should continue to be mixed. This re-foundational temptation could also take another direction: there was talk of convening a Constituent Assembly, but for the time being the idea of a Bonapartist-style plebiscite to show support by the sovereign for the president appears to predominate. The aim of this plebiscite would be to 'impose' on Congress a particular notion of the reforms the executive believes will help contain social demands that have no clear aim. The plebiscite would ask citizens questions that politicians would then use to draft the reform. It is unknown what would happen if Congress rejected the outcome of the plebiscite. Yet the alternative could be a referendum in which citizens voted for or against a proposed reform already drafted by Congress. President Dilma Rousseff believes the referendum would be more drastic, for the man (or woman) in the street may reject a full proposal that had already been approved, in which case it would be necessary to start again; and she is in a hurry. This attempt at anticipatory politics as a means of channelling a diffuse social conflict indicates that the political class has no clear idea of how to address these problems. It remains to be seen whether these announcements will lead to concrete proposals and, if so, of what scope.

Other large countries such as Argentina and Mexico implemented partial reforms or major changes by statute. In Argentina, this approach to immediate re-election was allowed and an attempt was made to introduce a major change to the structure of the judiciary, to cite some of the most

significant proposals. While for now no progress has been made with regard to reforming the judiciary, President Fernández de Kirchner and her team expect to do so in the near future, appealing to majorities including the poor in a re-foundational framework. The culmination of ongoing peace negotiations between the FARC guerrilla movement and the Colombian government will also require, as a corollary, far-reaching institutional reform. However, predicting what course it will take is very risky.

CHAPTER 7

7. Politics and the quality of democracy in Latin America: considerations to supplement the analysis

Manuel Alcántara Sáez

Politics in Latin America from 1978 to the present

After what has commonly come to be called the period of transitions to democracy, a diffuse period ensued stretching generically over some 15 years in Latin America, beginning with the 1978 elections in the Dominican Republic and extending to the Salvadoran elections of 1994. The countries of the region have succeeded in fully consolidating elections as the method of choosing their heads of government in a competitive, free and largely clean manner. This is a historical novelty, both because it has extended to the vast majority of countries of the region, and because it has continued for so long. Yet the countries have followed very different patterns of political development (Alcántara Sáez and Tagina 2013). While these transitions were influenced mainly by the previous experiences in each case, from the perspective of the time elapsed, the experiences had and the impact attained, it is very likely that the inflection point in the last three decades should be situated in the 1998 Venezuelan presidential elections. From that moment on the countries of the region slowly began not only to position themselves in two blocs, some sharing a form of political action described as 'Bolivarian', but in addition elements that were not necessarily novel yet which effectively structured the political arena were included more explicitly in the Latin American political agenda.

The nexus pulling together the new project was a sort of common official ideology called '21st-century socialism', made up of classic elements of the Latin American left such as anti-imperialism, understood as anti-Americanism; the vindication of the great fatherland, as the culmination of Bolívar's dream of Latin American union; and the push for equality.[47] Yet in

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[47] A term not incorporated in the other countries undergoing similar changes, and whose use is also limited exclusively to Venezuela. In Ecuador, for example, the term used is 'citizen revolution' ('*revolución ciudadana*').

addition there were other elements peculiar to the Latin American populist tradition, such as the charismatic and messianic *caudillismo* that entailed both a discourse marked by great emotional intensity and indefinite re-election and concentration of power; the rentier state in economies in which the extractive sector is predominant; the constant advocacy of the identity of nation and *el pueblo*, and the role of *el pueblo* as a historical subject; the tendency towards the overwhelming control of information in the name of favouring freedom of information, as the Bolivarians confronted the large business groups in control of the major media; a tolerance for elections systematically manipulated as per a logic of permanent advantages for the political party or group in power; and, in some countries, allegations of exclusionary racist conduct by the white minority.

Although the process has had a very low level of institutional embodiment, formally speaking, all that has come to be incorporated in the assumptions underlying so-called neo-constitutionalism, which has come to confront classical liberal constitutionalism.[48] According to Nolte and Schilling-Vacaflor (2012), the concern to support third-generation rights, recognition of the multicultural and plurinational nature of the Latin American countries, the incorporation of criteria of participatory democracy, but also re-election with a tendency to unlimited re-election, as well as measures increasing the weight of presidentialism, have also become more widespread.

As of early 2013, Latin America saw a split in two dimensions. In geopolitical terms the gap between the countries of South America and those of northern Latin America had widened. This is explained, first, by the different foreign policy approaches of the two largest countries. While Brazil increasingly accentuated its presence via the exercise of soft power, and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty) insists on using the term 'South America' rather than 'Latin America' in official documents, Mexico remained rather isolationist after 12 years of National Action Party (PAN) administrations that not only ignored the region overall, but that even ignored Mexico's own neighbourhood in Central America, burying the Puebla-Panama Plan. While the last Brazilian president to visit the United States was Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1995, the visits of Mexican presidents to Washington are an everyday matter. True, Mexico has a permanent open agenda on burning issues of its foreign policy with the United States, but the absence of bilateral contacts at the highest level between Brazil and the United States for more than 20 years is significant. There was also a *de facto* parting of ways with the consolidation of China as the first or second leading trading partner for most South American countries, and the third leading source of investment after

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[48] According to which every constitution seeks to attain a series of substantive objectives that are spelled out in the constitution itself in addition to being merely a way of organizing power or spelling out their competences. With a certain conceptual stretch, the constitution is a compulsory programme that must be served by all the branches of government, and if the framers have sought through the constitution to transform society and politics, this must be done without any questioning.

the United States and the European Union. Indeed, China continues to lack diplomatic relations with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, which continue to maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Finally, the start-up of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2008 and the projection of this initiative contributed institutionally to widen the gap, even if Mexico is an observer at UNASUR.

The second division was brought about by a combination of elements having to do with the definition of political action in institutional terms and other ideological elements that address the question of identity. The two groups of countries that make up this divide have some significant differences among their members, but there are sufficiently weighty factors to be able to refer to both blocs with a certain consistency. In accordance with the argument above, in the sense that the difference is shaped by the lived experiences of a diffuse period that includes the last years of the 1990s and continues a few years into the following decade.[49] It was a five-year period in which for a few countries— not all of them, and this may be considered a crucial explanatory factor— the failure of the measures of the Washington Consensus became apparent not only in relation to reducing inequality, but also as regards promoting growth. In addition, one notes the major social mobilizations that translated into political reforms on a different scale, such as the drastic constitutional changes in Ecuador and Bolivia, along with the partial constitutional reforms of Venezuela, and that new leadership came to power in the middle years of the last decade in Evo Morales, Rafael Correa and Cristina Fernández.

The Latin American countries considered in this section have no common denominator institutionally or ideologically. Indeed, the various interpretations of the left in power in the region have established the existence of at least two subgroups, though there are authors such as Dabène (2012) who note that the vision of the two lefts is reductionist and superficial. In general, there has been talk of a populist subgroup more to the left of a subgroup that is social democratic in nature, even though these distinctions have not taken into account, for example, the fact that the Chilean governments of the Concertación, though presided over by two socialists like Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet, were multiparty coalition governments with political groupings that had become distanced from the left. The circumstances have been similar in Brazil during the governments of Lula and Dilma Rousseff, in which, beginning with the respective vice presidents, the inclusion of the centrist and even rightist forces was evident.

There was also a significant difference when it came to evaluating the fact that Chile, Brazil and Uruguay did not raise the possibility of changing the clause limiting presidential re-election, nor did they abolish the constitutional mechanisms of the classic liberal rule of law in order to limit democratic

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[49]   Perhaps the period to be considered is 1998–2003.

pluralism, instead maintaining the balance of power and moving away from any suggestion that the executive might meddle in the judiciary or in the electoral bodies. Nonetheless, there has been implicit acceptance and validation by these three countries of the way in which the rest of the countries that made up the hard core of the Bolivarian axis—Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela—were acting politically.

In 2013 this second division, with the caveats indicated, appeared to take the form of a virtual stalemate in numerical terms with one group of countries made up of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Uruguay, vis-à-vis another group made up of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama.

This scenario began to come apart when Chávez was diagnosed with cancer; the process was accentuated after 8 December 2012, when he explicitly passed the command of the Bolivarian process to his then Vice President Nicolás Maduro, on the eve of his return to Havana to continue his treatment, and ended on 5 March 2013, the official date of his death. After Chávez, the Venezuelan scenario includes two novel circumstances in the context of an ever more aggravated climate of polarization. To the extent that it is impossible to transfer charisma, the Bolivarian leadership is going to undergo a process of reconfiguration in which, in a novel configuration, a balance will have to be struck between the new president, Nicolás Maduro, who was elected on 14 April 2013; the Speaker of the National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello; and Rafael Ramírez, president of Petróleos de Venezuela and at the same time minister of energy and oil. Each represents, and has a degree of control over, the three bases that are the basis of *el chavismo*: the alliance with Cuba, the social and military bases, and the oil world. History notes the complexity of a situation such as this and the need for a certain amount of time to pass either for a single leadership to become established or for an efficient cooperative formula to be constructed. However, the current situation of the Venezuelan economy, with rampant inflation and an enormous public deficit, problems of undersupply of basic necessities and very high indicators of citizen insecurity, does not allow much time for such adjustments to take place without making decisions that may prove very unpopular.

After Chávez, the region has entered a period marked by the absence of a leader who brought together different people for different reasons, having to do with both the personality of each of the other national leaders and the impetus to impose a model that could be considered a version of 21st century socialism. Chávez's charisma, which worked so well among his peers, is absent, or at any rate having been anointed successor by the deceased president is not turning out to be of much use to Nicolás Maduro. The current scenario of economic boom in the countries of the region will render unnecessary

financial bailout operations such as those Chávez performed with respect to Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay, buying those countries' debts at critical moments. Oil dependence with the Petrocaribe partners will remain, though the poor situation with finances may advise cutbacks in total aid—never in the case of Cuba—in which case there may be tensions between Maduro and Ramírez.

The quality of democracy in Latin America in 2012 in diachronic perspective

As already highlighted in other articles (Alcántara Sáez 2008 and 2013), the first decade of the 21st century has been especially rich in new studies whose purpose is to measure the health of politics. Under the rubric of 'quality of democracy' various lines of research have been initiated with a very compelling theoretical underpinning (see, for example, Beetham 1994; O'Donnell et al. 2004; Diamond and Morlino 2005; Munck 2009; Levine and Molina 2011; Morlino 2011b; Coppedge et al. 2012), and also by establishing different indices that are commented on regularly that have undertaken to measure democracy in empirical terms. It is not the purpose of this text to review the intellectual contributions of the first group just mentioned, but rather to analyse some of the existing indices so as to offer an overview of the political situation in Latin America in 2012 as well as how it evolved in the previous five years, considering that, as indicated in the previous section, the region has had more than a quarter century of continuing national democratic experiences.

Accordingly, the idea is to analyse separately the indices of Freedom House, the Democratic Development Index (DDI) used by PoliLat, a Buenos Aires-based institution associated with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index and the Transformation Index of the Bertelsmann Foundation (BTI). Once all of these have been analysed, an effort will be made to look into their degree of connectivity to establish a typology of political systems in Latin America based on four groups. This essay concludes by comparing this grouping with the results of the work led by Morlino (2013) for Latin America.

The Freedom House index is the longest running, as it dates from the early 1970s, and while it is not exactly an instrument for measuring democracy, but rather of just two components of democracy, namely civil liberties and political rights, over the years it has reflected great stability over time. This index is drawn up annually on the basis of the subjective opinions of experts who evaluate the situation of freedom globally based on how individuals experience it. Therefore, it is not an evaluation of governments' performance per se but of individual rights and liberties. The index, whose purpose is to evaluate the extent of freedom, understood as the opportunity to act

spontaneously in a variety of spheres beyond the reach of the government and other potential centres of domination, translates into a scale of 1 to 7 with two well-differentiated sections for political rights and civil liberties. Political rights train people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for different alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties or organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and who are accountable to the electorate. Civil liberties have to do with the freedoms of expression and belief, the right to association, the rule of law and personal autonomy without interference by the state.

Table 7.1 shows the variation among the various countries, first, and then the stability of most of the countries based on the score given. On comparing the situation of various countries over the period considered, one notes that only five countries—Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela—have seen changes in their score. In all of them, moreover, the quality of democracy has worsened, the most extreme case being Nicaragua.

Unlike Freedom House, the DDI and the Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit experience greater variability of the data when comparing 2006 with 2012.

The DDI (Table 7.2) is made up of indicators that measure the attributes of formal democracy on the basis of free elections, universal suffrage, and full participation (dimension I) and the attributes of real democracy articulated in three other dimensions: respect for political rights and civil liberties (dimension II), institutional quality and political efficiency (dimension III), and the effective exercise of power to govern (dimension IV), this last one being divided into the capacity to bring about policies that safeguard well-being, and economic efficiency. Therefore, they are indicators that derive from subjective perceptions but also from empirically quantifiable measures of output.

Table 7.1. Freedom House Index

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change 2006–2012
Argentina	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	=
Bolivia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	=
Brazil	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	=
Chile	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	=
Colombia	3	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	↓ 0.5
Costa Rica	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	=
Ecuador	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	=
El Salvador	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	=
Guatemala	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4	3.5	=
Honduras	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	↓ 1
Mexico	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3	3	↓ 0.5
Nicaragua	3	3	3	3.5	4	4	4.5	↓ 1.5
Panama	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	=
Paraguay	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	=
Peru	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	=
Dominican Republic	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	=
Uruguay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	=
Venezuela	4	4	4	4	4.5	5	5	↓ 1

Average values of the indices for political rights and civil liberties.
Source: http://www.freedomhouse.org/

Table 7.2. Democratic Development Index in Latin America

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change 2006–2012
Costa Rica	9.70	9.71	9.71	9.70	9.25	8.50	10.00	↑ 0.30
Chile	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	9.96	↓ 0.04
Uruguay	8.40	9.38	9.38	9.26	9.73	8.91	9.61	↑ 1.21
Panama	6.83	6.45	6.45	7.19	6.13	5.14	6.05	↓ 0.78
Peru	3.59	4.11	4.11	5.59	5.77	6.07	5.70	↑ 2.11
Argentina	5.33	6.12	6.12	5.85	5.66	4.99	5.66	↑ 0.33
Mexico	5.92	5.57	5.57	6.49	5.46	4.93	5.37	↓ 0.55
Brazil	4.47	4.58	4.58	4.51	4.69	4.84	4.91	↑ 0.44
El Salvador	4.71	3.97	3.97	3.49	3.53	3.46	4.36	↓ 0.35
Colombia	4.36	4.78	4.78	4.05	4.31	3.69	3.97	↓ 0.39
Paraguay	3.75	3.88	3.88	3.86	3.62	3.64	3.81	↑ 0.06
Honduras	4.43	4.78	4.78	3.86	2.54	3.23	3.33	↓ 1.10
Guatemala	3.83	3.50	3.50	3.28	3.00	1.90	2.98	↓ 0.85
Dominican Republic	4.19	2.90	2.90	3.68	2.74	3.12	2.95	↓ 1.24
Nicaragua	3.15	2.73	2.73	3.80	3.04	2.93	2.89	↓ 0.26
Ecuador	2.24	3.21	3.21	3.48	2.93	2.07	2.85	↑ 0.61
Bolivia	2.73	3.28	3.28	2.59	3.08	3.33	2.73	=
Venezuela	2.72	2.85	2.85	3.59	3.35	2.47	2.42	↓ 0.30

Source: http://www.idd-lat.org/

Table 7.3. The EIU Democracy Index

Country	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	Change 2006–2012
Argentina	6.53	6.63	6.84	6.84	6.84	↑ 0.31
Bolivia	5.98	6.15	5.92	5.84	5.84	↓ 0.14
Brazil	7.38	7.38	7.12	7.12	7.12	↓ 0.26
Chile	7.89	7.89	7.67	7.54	7.54	↓ 0.35
Colombia	6.40	6.54	6.55	6.63	6.63	↑ 0.23
Costa Rica	8.04	8.04	8.04	8.10	8.10	↑ 0.06
Ecuador	5.64	5.64	5.77	5.72	5.78	↑ 0.14
El Salvador	6.22	6.40	6.47	6.47	6.47	↑ 0.25
Guatemala	6.07	6.07	6.05	5.88	5.88	↓ 0.19
Honduras	6.25	6.18	5.84	5.84	5.84	↓ 0.41
Mexico	6.67	6.78	6.93	6.93	6.90	↑ 0.23
Nicaragua	5.68	6.07	5.73	5.56	5.56	↓ 0.12
Panama	7.35	7.35	7.08	7.15	7.08	↓ 0.27
Paraguay	6.16	6.40	6.40	6.40	6.26	↑ 0.10
Peru	6.11	6.31	6.40	6.59	6.47	↑ 0.36
Dom. Rep.	6.13	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.49	↑ 0.36
Uruguay	7.96	8.08	8.10	8.17	8.17	↑ 0.21
Venezuela	5.42	5.34	5.18	5.08	5.15	↓ 0.27

Source: http://www.eiu.com

According to this index, the number of Latin American countries that have improved in the quality of democracy is similar to the number that worsened. There are ten countries that improved their democracy ratings: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. At the same time, eight others—Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela—have had worse ratings, comparing 2006 to 2012.

Another index that has been available since 2008 is the Transformation Index of the BTI, which every two years analyses and evaluates the process of change towards democracy and market economies in 128 developing countries by bringing together national experts who consider 12 criteria. The index is the result of aggregating two sub-indices that measure democracy (made up of five criteria: level of statism, rule of law, political participation, stability of democratic institutions, and social and political integration), and the market economy (made up of seven criteria: economic performance, sustainability,

welfare regime, private property, monetary and price stability, organization
of the market and socio-economic level).

Table 7.4. The Bertelsmann Transformation Index

Country	2008	2010	2012	Change 2008–2012
Uruguay	8.90	9.25	9.30	↑ 0.40
Chile	8.99	8.99	8.90	↓ 0.09
Costa Rica	8.73	8.86	8.80	↑ 0.07
Brazil	7.90	8.05	8.10	↑ 0.20
Panama	7.42	7.49	7.40	↓ 0.02
El Salvador	6.99	7.14	7.20	↑ 0.21
Argentina	7.34	7.25	7.00	↓ 0.34
Mexico	7.30	7.09	6.90	↓ 0.40
Peru	6.60	6.74	6.90	↑ 0.30
Dom. Rep.	6.80	6.78	6.70	↓ 0.10
Paraguay	6.14	6.34	6.40	↑ 0.26
Colombia	6.21	6.33	6.30	↑ 0.09
Bolivia	5.75	5.98	6.20	↑ 0.45
Honduras	6.09	5.88	6.00	↓ 0.09
Nicaragua	6.08	5.63	5.60	↓ 0.48
Ecuador	5.75	5.56	5.40	↓ 0.35
Guatemala	5.43	5.55	5.40	↓ 0.03
Venezuela			4.50	

Source: http://www.bti-project.de/?&L=1

Applied to the reality of Latin America (Table 7.4), the results are not very
different from those offered by the earlier-mentioned indices, albeit with
some nuances.

Despite the differences among the indices, when it comes to comparing
how the countries have evolved, there are patterns that reflect similar trends
from one index to another. In terms of the deterioration of democracy, there
is a certain coincidence in that from 2006 to 2012 democracy declined in
quality in Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela, while there were
improvements over the same period in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and
Uruguay.

As highlighted in Table 7.5, independent of the differences among the various
indices used, they are highly correlated. The index that best correlates with

the rest is the Bertelsmann Transformation Index; accordingly, it can be considered the most robust.

Table 7.5. Pearson correlations of the various indices for 2012

	Freedom House Index (2012)	Democratic Development Index (2011)	EIU Democracy Index (2011)
Freedom House Index	1		
Democratic Development Index	0.813 (**)	1	
EIU Democracy Index	0.900 (**)	0.916 (**)	1
Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2012)	0.908 (**)	0.906 (**)	0.960 (**)

** The correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral).

A similar exercise, worthwhile for integrating the four measures in a format that reveals the existence of various families of Latin American countries in relation to their different degrees of democracy, can be performed by using the HJ-Biplot method. It is a graphic representation of multivariate data. Just as a scatter plot shows the joint distribution of two variables, a biplot makes it possible to simultaneously represent individuals and three or more variables. To better interpret biplot graphs one must bear in mind the following aspects: the variables (democracy indices) are represented by vectors, and the individuals (countries) by points.

As for the variables, the resulting graph provides information on the following:

1. The variability of the variables, observing the length of the vectors and the angle they make with the factorial axes. So the longer a variable in the analysis and the smaller the angle with the factorial axis that represents it (axis 1 or axis 2), the greater the variance explained by that variable.

2. The correlation among the variables, observing the angle between them. Accordingly, the smaller the angle between two variables, the greater the correlation between them; and, vice versa, the larger the angle the less the correlation between those two variables.

The relationship between individuals and variables is obtained from the perpendicular projection of the points on the vectors. Proximity between the points is interpreted as similarity between cases.

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 show that the indices with greater variability in the analysis are the EIU Democracy Index and the Bertelsmann Transformation

Index for 2012, while the remaining indices also show high variability in the study. The correlation among the variables is high, with the DDI and the Freedom House Index correlating the least.

Projecting each of the points that represent the countries perpendicularly on the vectors that represent the variables, country profiles are developed with similar characteristics in the democracy indices. Four major groups of countries have been established (see Figure 7.1):

1. The group made up of Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay, characterized by the highest democracy indices in Latin America.

2. A second group made up of Panama and Brazil, with high democracy indices.

3. The group of countries with medium democracy indices, made up of Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru.

4. The group of countries with the lowest democracy indices, made up of Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Classifying the countries into these four groups has a very high level of agreement with the classification by Morlino (2013: 62), bearing in mind that he does not address the cases of Honduras, Panama or the Dominican Republic. The first group coincides entirely, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay; and there is complete agreement as well with the exception of the worse rating for Colombia, on comparing those classified as lowest by Morlino with those indicated in the previous paragraph. In effect, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela (as has been noted, he did not study Honduras) occupy the last places in his classification.

This should not be surprising to the extent that Morlino's proposal presupposes an approach to the evaluation of democracy based on integrating three different notions of quality, based respectively on procedures, contents and results. This idea, which is drawn from industrial psychology, makes it possible to unpack democracy in different dimensions (five related to procedure and to the content articulated around rules) in which accountability (understood as the variable that gauges the capacity to respond) plays a fundamental role of tying them all together; to that are added two more dimensions of content that refer to liberty and equality.

Figure 7.1. Country profiles based on democracy indices
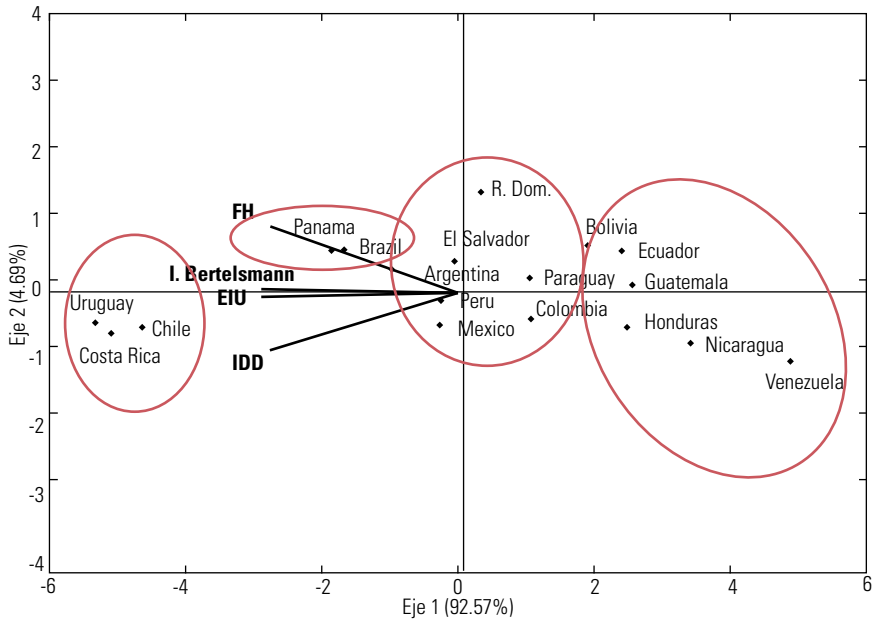
If one takes note of the change the countries have experienced in their quality of democracy comparing 2008 to 2012 (Figure 7.2), in general the changes in those four years have been limited. The countries in which the variation is minimal across all four indices are Brazil, Costa Rica and Paraguay. By way of contrast, countries such as Nicaragua, Honduras, Peru and even Colombia have seen more significant changes in the indices on the quality of democracy over those four years. In the cases of Colombia and Peru one observes an improvement in the quality of democracy with respect to 2008, while in Honduras and Nicaragua it has worsened.

Figure 7.2. Profiles of countries based on trends in democracy indices 2008–12
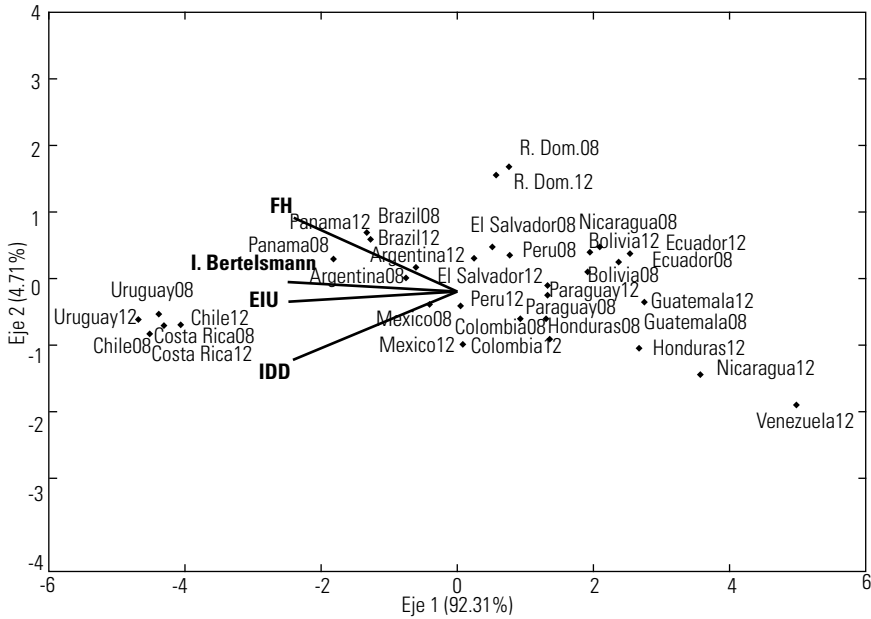
Final considerations

The information and analysis presented in the previous section, in light of what was already indicated in the first section, requires an analysis of more qualitative characteristics. It is enriched when turning to the assessment of the fundamental problems and the recommendations for public policymaking put forth by Morlino (2013: 78–89). Bringing it all together: while on the macro level of politics the last decade has witnessed the consolidation of a trend that began to emerge in the 2005–10 period, namely the rise of governments of the left in a large part of South America, which has notably expanded pluralism, the cases of each of the particular states offer an array of common problems that affect political performance; these can be individually differentiated in light of the specific performance of the variables presented.

The disaster of neo-liberal policies, which caused a veritable social trauma and inspired very strong popular mobilizations, mainly in Argentina and Bolivia, plus Ecuador—which also suffered enormous political instability with seven presidents in only ten years—brought to power governments that were distinct under a common model of 'rentier populism', according to Mazzuca (2013). This model followed the one articulated by Chávez in Venezuela a few years earlier, which was strengthened once the April 2002 coup and the late 2002/ early 2003 oil strike had receded into the past. Moreover, these countries, united in institutional terms by a plebiscitary hyper-presidentialism, proved

capable of adopting a common language and guidelines for acting in solidarity with one another on a regional basis. As has been indicated, under the rubric of what has been called 21st century socialism, the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela adopted common strategies and came to form a novel arrangement of articulation of the countries under UNASUR, which Brazil and Uruguay joined immediately, and which Chile, Colombia and Peru joined more parsimoniously, as did Paraguay, especially after Fernando Lugo was elected president.

This scenario has helped to validate once again the heterogeneity of Latin America, since while it is true that there was a turn to the left, especially in the countries of South America, it had a dual component that led to profoundly singular nuances—in response to the failure of neo-liberalism, as noted above, but also in culminating a cycle of electoral politics in which alternation of power was a natural consequence thereof. This gave impetus to movements for social change based on a major transformation of the political elite in power, who are constructing a mystique of their own by creating myths, or reinterpreting existing ones—such as Bolívar—while also creating a new discourse. However, incidentally, this has given rise to processes of institutionalization of various stripes that are making large gains as much in the socio-economic sphere as in politics in experiences that are clearly inclined to the right in Colombia and Paraguay—the latter after the equivocal period, with its coalitional character, of the government of Fernando Lugo with the support of the liberals—whereas the government of Peru has been notably ambiguous. Chile, after 20 years of governments of the centre-left, had a brief experience of government by the right, before going back to the centre-left in early 2014. Moreover, Chile and Colombia—having gotten past the personalism of Uribe and with the peace negotiations with the guerrillas moving forward—are two contexts of considerable institutional maturity, unlike Paraguay and Peru, the former consisting of multi-layered contexts with a highly volatile political party system, and the latter experiencing a stultification of the oligarchy. A separate case that should be considered is Mexico and the return of the PRI to the executive; at the beginning of its new term it is laying the bases for articulating great national agreements that can be expected to be far-reaching. Little by little, all of these developments resulted in different models, discussed above.

This vision of democracy in Latin America in 2013 and of its evolution in recent years makes it possible to put forth an assessment of possible factors explaining this scenario. In relation to both the existence of the groups of countries discussed and how the quality of democracy evolved in the five years after 2008, a period for which there is data for the four indices used and for the one proposed by Morlino (2013), it would appear that the various variables into which democracy can be broken down yield convincing results. Indeed, there are six aspects that should be emphasized, which are lessons

derived from the empirical evidence: two are related to the state sphere, and to them are added poor inter-institutional accountability, inequality, the oligarchic structure of the media, the weakness of the political parties and the party systems, and the existence of a professionalization of politics that is of dubious quality.

The problems associated with the very dynamic of the state, at a historical moment that is highly questioned due to the neo-liberal winds, are considered a consequence of serious failings of the rule of law associated with corruption, citizen insecurity, and the weak protection of economic and social rights, but also the inability to tackle the degrading internal violence. In addition, the state is perceived as very inefficient due to its lack of administrative capacity, which is linked to the existence of a very precarious civil service that is not even professionalized or independent, aspects that are magnified by the chronic failure of the security forces, and in general with the inability of the state to exercise a monopoly over legitimate violence.

The institutions, by creating various offices to implement horizontal accountability mechanisms, are offering a novel response to the constitutional development in keeping with more or less successful experiences in other countries that are copied sometimes thanks to express incentives in those countries' development aid. Nonetheless, the poor education and training of the personnel directing such efforts—and the capture of these institutions by the hegemonic projects that have been expanding their presence in the region—renders them inefficient, making them into mere yes men for the official project, without any ability to control or demand an adequate response from the agencies that are subject to oversight.

The excruciating economic inequality, which makes Latin America the most unequal region of the world, is another common problem when it comes to achieving quality politics. Yet it is not merely economic inequality; to that one must add the ethnic component, since the marginalization of indigenous and Afro-descendant sectors continues to be a major problem. In addition to economic and ethnic inequality is gender inequality, with both socio-economic and cultural aspects. The fact that there has only been up to four women concurrently holding the presidency of their respective nations in the region, and even then only for a few months, is evidence that 35 years after the democratic wave in the region women are clearly subordinated to men in politics.

The oligopolistic structure of the media in countries with a weak political opposition leads them to assume the role of opposition, confronting the hegemonic political powers, and in other scenarios, where the situation is not similar, they also come to have an all-powerful presence, anointing presidential candidates and playing a key role in election campaigns. Yet at the same time, the efforts of the political authorities to intervene by imposing gag laws,

the creation of a public communications network or implementing special Saturday broadcasts (*sabatinas*) in which the president speaks, sometimes indefinitely to an audience that is gagged circumstantially by the obligation of all media outlets to broadcast the presidential speeches, are also key aspects of a situation in which there is a confrontation over power in which public opinion is subordinated to politics.

The weakness of the political parties and of the party systems in some countries has led to them being practically eliminated from the public space and replaced by a practice based on candidates who, apart from any party discipline or programme, have an autonomous political career. On another subject, one also finds parties articulated with movements under personalist forms of leadership in which there is no transparency in the management of their finances, nor internal mechanisms for selecting their leaders and candidates, and it is unclear how their programmes are drawn up (Alcántara Sáez and Cabezas Rincón 2013). The institutional mechanism imposed by presidentialism as well as the widespread phenomenon of the personalization of election campaigns, along with the deteriorating trust in parties by society, lie at the root of this situation.

Finally, one aspect that should be considered has to do with the quality of the political leaders of Latin America. One aspect that has been considered very little has to do with the professionalization of the police (Alcántara Sáez 2012). Lacking sufficient experience, adequate training and exhaustive mechanisms for ensuring the oversight of their work, politicians are encapsulated in the political system. To ensure quality politics, politicians need to be subjected to evaluation mechanisms *ex ante*, while in office and upon conclusion of their term in office. The possibility of independent agencies reporting on their record and monitoring their performance is an imperative that will no doubt benefit the quality of the system.

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Annexes

Annex 1.
Basic sub-dimensions and guiding questions

The rule of law

Basic sub-dimensions

1. Individual security and civil order; emphasis on the right on life, freedom from fear and torture, personal security, and the right to private property as aspects guaranteed and protected throughout the country.

2. Independent judiciary and a modern legal system; emphasis on mechanisms for establishing an independent, professional and efficient judicial system that allows equal access to justice, free from the undue pressures and without any imposition of decisions.

3. Institutional and administrative capacity to draft, implement and ensure compliance with the law; emphasis on the governance system (president, legislature and executive) capable of ensuring the production of quality legislation and its implementation throughout the national territory of a transparent policymaking process with civil society participation, and the presence of an efficient, professional and neutral state bureaucracy subject to accountability mechanisms.

4. Integrity or effective fight against corruption, illegality and abuse of authority by state agencies; emphasis on the existence and implementation of a comprehensive legislative framework to prevent and fight corruption.

5. Security forces respectful of the citizenry and under civilian control; emphasis on mechanisms of civilian control over security forces as well as on efficient, uncorrupted, disciplined police forces respectful of human and political rights.

1. *Individual security and civil order*: What are the major threats to individual life and well-being in the country? Quantitatively assess the extent of individual security and threats from the lowest security and greatest threats to a high level of security and no threats. Please provide a differentiated assessment if there are particular areas of the country with major differences in security and civil order.

2. *Independent judiciary and a modern justice system*: Based on your findings, are there structural guarantees for the independence of the judiciary, and are the legal guarantees duly implemented ensuring that the judicial system is free from interference by the executive or legislative branches? Is the judiciary working efficiently? Quantitatively assess the extent of independence and efficiency.

3. *Administrative and institutional capacity*: How well developed are the institutions and the administration? How well do they actually perform? Please provide two different assessments and then combine the two evaluations. Please single out possible negative aspects.

4. *Effective fight against corruption, illegality and abuse of power by the state agencies*: Does a comprehensive legislative framework exist to prevent and fight corruption? Is it implemented? Provide a differentiated assessment on the two aspects and then combine them.

5. *Security forces respectful of citizen rights, under civilian control*: Are army, police and other security forces respectful of citizens? And are they under the civilian control of elected authorities? Please provide an assessment and identify negative aspects, if they exist.

Electoral accountability

Basic sub-dimensions

Because of the key intrinsic characteristics of this dimension there is no direct indicator to consider. The best strategy for empirically detecting it is to refer to its most immediate conditions, as suggested by the definition:

1. free, fair and periodic elections with their specific procedural aspects;

2. freedom of party organization and related aspects; and

3. presence and stability of alternatives.

Guiding empirical questions

1. *Elections*: Are elections free, fair, periodic and competitive? Please provide an overall assessment.

2. *Freedom of party organization*: How strong are the constraints on forming democratic parties? Please provide an overall assessment.

3. *Presence and stability of actual political alternatives*: Is there a competitive and stable representative multiparty system that is reflected by the composition of the legislature? Please provide an assessment. Additionally, consider if there are obstacles to political alternatives or to actual political competition.

Inter-institutional accountability

Basic sub-dimensions

The main sub-dimensions and indicators to explore refer to:

1. executive–legislative relations, with special focus on the legislative opposition or the role of the legislative organs;

2. Supreme Court or Constitutional Court;

3. ombudsman and other independent authorities;

4. plural and independent information; and

5. modes and extent of decentralization.

Guiding empirical questions

1. *Executive–legislative relations*: What are the different ways that the legislative branch and the executive branch exercise checks and balances on each other? Please assess the strength of the power of the executive vis-à-vis the legislative or vice versa. Provide an evaluation going from the highest-level authority of the executive to the highest-level authority of the legislature. Please single out specific exceptional features, if they exist.

2. *Supreme or Constitutional Court*: What are the formal and informal powers of review? And to what extent can these powers be used? Provide an evaluation going from a politically controlled court with weak powers of review to an independent court that effectively implements its review powers over the other branches of government. Please single out specific exceptional features, if any.

3. *Ombudsman*: What are the formal and informal powers? And to what extent is the ombudsman politically controlled? Provide an evaluation going from a politically controlled ombudsman with weak powers to an independent ombudsman who effectively implements his/her powers. Please single out specific exceptional features, if they exist. Audit Courts: What are their formal and informal powers? To what extent is the Audit Court politically controlled? Provide an evaluation going from a politically controlled Audit Court with weak powers to an independent one that effectively implements its powers. Please single out specific exceptional features, if they exist.

4. *Plural and independent information*: How much of the information is effectively independent? Please provide an overall assessment.

5. *Modes and extent of decentralization*: What is the extent of the distribution of powers among the central, regional and local governments? How strong is the mutual oversight? Please assess the extent of decentralization and oversight going from a maximum of centralization and strong oversight of regional and local authorities to maximum decentralization and weak central oversight. Please single out specific negative or exceptional features, if any.

Political participation

Basic sub-dimensions

The forms of participation include:

1. Identifying participation, to become a 'part', revive, or restate one's belonging to or identifying with a differentiated group.

2. Instrumental participation to try to achieve some goal.

Basic forms:

A. Conventional participation: referendums, election, local or national, political organizations, by affiliation or otherwise; interest group associations: membership, or other forms.

B. Non-conventional participation: strikes; demonstrations; mobilizations and marches, other forms (please indicate), terrorist actions involving participation, forms of participation with regard to specific policies.

1. *Opportunities for participation*: How developed are these opportunities? Assess from the least opportunity to the greatest opportunity.

2. *Elections and other forms of conventional participation*: What is the level of conventional citizen participation? Please provide an assessment from the lowest participation (up to 30 per cent) to the highest (over 80 per cent).

3. *Participation in organizations*: parties and associations: What is the level of citizen participation in parties and other associations? Please provide an assessment from the lowest participation (up to 10 per cent) to the highest participation (over 40 per cent).

4. *Non-conventional participation*: What is the level of non-conventional citizen participation and the extent of repression? Please provide an assessment from the lowest participation (up to 5 per cent) with high repression to the highest participation (over 20 per cent) and low repression.

5. *Participation related to policies and the realm of deliberative democracy*: What is the level of citizen participation in policies and deliberative circles with regard to the government's openness to encourage it? Please provide an assessment from the lowest opportunities for this kind of participation to the greatest opportunities.

Political competition

Basic sub-dimensions

1. Competition among political and societal actors, characterized by freedom for all political parties to compete with each other and by proper conditions of political competition.

2. Competition within political and societal actors.

3. The 'output side' (results) of political competition (please note a relevant empirical overlapping with electoral accountability).

Guiding empirical questions

1. *Competition among political and societal actors*: plurality in competition patterns vs. dominant patterns complemented by presence/absence of legal and/or actual constraints. Please provide an assessment going from dominant patterns to plurality.

2. *Competition within political and societal actors*: Is there internal pluralism inside the main parties? Please provide an assessment going from lowest to highest internal pluralism.

3. *Results of political competition*: Is there potential and/or actual alternation? Please provide an assessment going from low potential for alternation to real and effective alternation.

Freedom

Basic sub-dimensions

Three main dimensions suggested in connection with freedom are:

1. personal dignity;

2. civil rights; and

3. political rights.

In all these cases one observes the existence of opportunities in the country's legal system and the real guarantee of each of the dimensions mentioned.

Guiding empirical questions

1. *Personal dignity*: Are the different features of dignity recognized and guaranteed? Please provide an assessment from low recognition with few guarantees to full recognition with sufficient guarantees.

2. *Civil rights*: How strongly are civil rights guaranteed? Is citizens' equal and secure access to justice entailed in these? Please provide an assessment from insufficient guarantees of civil rights to high guarantees of civil rights.

3. *Political rights*: How strong are the right to vote and directly elect the executive? Please provide an assessment from weak to strong of the right to vote and elect government officials at the local and central levels, even if indirectly.

Solidarity and equality

Basic sub-dimensions

In addition to social, economic and cultural rights, the key dimensions also refer to the actual arrangement for allocation of economic resources within the population, the dissemination of education, the extent of poverty, the existence of gender discrimination, and the existence of ethnic or racial discrimination.

1. *Allocation of economic, cultural and social resources*: What is the concentration of resources and the extent of poverty? Please provide an assessment from the high concentration of resources and widespread poverty to a distribution of resources and limited poverty.

2. *Existence of discrimination*: What are the characteristics and extent of discrimination? Please provide an assessment from a high and differentiated discrimination to a low level of discrimination focused on only one factor.

3. *Social, economic and cultural rights*: What is the extent of the development of the welfare state and its effectiveness?

Responsiveness

Basic sub-dimensions

Undoubtedly, the most effective method for measuring responsiveness is:

1. By examining citizen perception of responsiveness, that is, the dissemination of attitudes favourable to the existing democratic institutions and the approval of their activities.

2. By examining resources a government has at its disposal to respond to the needs of its populace.

Guiding empirical questions

1. *Perceived legitimacy*: Please provide data on general or specific satisfaction/ dissatisfaction. Please provide your assessment from low satisfaction/ high dissatisfaction to high satisfaction/ low dissatisfaction, seeking to strike a balance between general and specific satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

2. *Constraints to responsiveness*: Are constraints due to politicians or to economic limitations? Please provide an assessment from constraints due to politicians to constraints due to objective considerations.

Annex 2.

Quantitative assessment of dimensions and sub-dimensions

Data retrieved June 2013, generally uses figures covering 2009 to 2012.

Table A2.1. The rule of law

Country	Individual security and civil order	Independent judiciary	Institutional and admin-istrative capacity	Integrity	Civil control of the military	Average score
Argentina	2.50	1.30	2.34	1.45	3.75	2.27
Bolivia	3.13	1.70	2.09	1.40	2.50	2.16
Brazil	2.50	2.30	2.49	1.85	3.35	2.50
Chile	4.38	3.70	3.67	3.60	3.75	3.82
Colombia	0.63	2.10	2.74	1.75	1.65	1,77
Costa Rica	4.38	3.25	2.85	2.65	5.00	3.63
Ecuador	3.13	1.10	1.95	1.25	1.25	1.74
El Salvador	3.13	1.55	2.39	1.80	2.10	2.19
Guatemala	3.75	1.35	1.80	1.60	3.35	2.37
Mexico	1.88	1.85	2.82	1.55	3.75	2.37
Nicaragua	2.50	0.65	1.60	1.25	2.50	1.70
Paraguay	4.38	0.65	1.67	1.10	1.25	1.81
Peru	3.13	1.35	2.35	1.75	3.75	2.46
Uruguay	3.75	3.56	3.08	3.45	3.35	3.44
Venezuela	1.25	0.54	1.40	1.00	0.40	0.92

Table A2.2. Electoral accountability

Country	Free, fair and recurrent elections	Freedom of party organization	Presence and stability of alternatives	Average score
Argentina	4.58	5.00	1.67	3.75
Bolivia	4.58	5.00	0.91	3.50
Brazil	4.58	5.00	5.00	4.86
Chile	5.00	5.00	3.25	4.42
Colombia	4.17	2.50	2.65	3.10
Costa Rica	5.00	5.00	2.11	4.04
Ecuador	2.92	2.50	1.71	2.38
El Salvador	5.00	5.00	1.30	3.77
Guatemala	3.75	5.00	2.84	3.86
Mexico	3.75	5.00	1.67	3.47
Nicaragua	2.50	0.00	0.94	1.15
Paraguay	4.17	5.00	1.94	3.70
Peru	4.17	2.50	2.54	3.07
Uruguay	5.00	5.00	1.22	3.74
Venezuela	2.08	2.50	0.97	1.85

Table A2.3. Inter-institutional accountability

Country	Legislative-executive relations	Constitutional Court	Ombudsman and Audit Courts	Plural and independent information	Modes and extent of decentralization	Average score
Argentina	4.29	5.00	5.00	2.40	5.00	4.34
Bolivia	4.29	5.00	5.00	2.60	0.00	3.38
Brazil	4.29	5.00	0.00	2.70	5.00	3.40
Chile	5.00	5.00	0.00	3.45	0.00	2.69
Colombia	4.29	5.00	5.00	2.35	5.00	4.33
Costa Rica	5.00	5.00	0.00	4.10	0.00	2.82
Ecuador	2.86	5.00	0.00	1.95	0.00	1.96
El Salvador	4.29	5.00	5.00	2.95	0.00	3.45
Guatemala	4.29	5.00	0.00	2.05	0.00	2.27
Mexico	4.29	5.00	0.00	1.95	5.00	3.25
Nicaragua	5.00	5.00	0.00	2.45	5.00	3.49

Paraguay	5.00	5.00	5.00	1.95	0.00	3.39
Peru	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.85	0.00	3.57
Uruguay	5.00	5.00	0.00	3.70	0.00	2.74
Venezuela	2.14	5.00	5.00	1.20	5.00	3.67

Table A2.4. Political participation

Country	Opportunities for participation	Election turnout	Average score
Argentina	4.38	3.97	4.17
Bolivia	3.44	4.73	4.08
Brazil	4.38	4.09	4.23
Chile	4.69	4.38	4.54
Colombia	3.13	2.19	2.66
Costa Rica	4.69	3.46	4.07
Ecuador	3.44	4.04	3.74
El Salvador	4.38	2.68	3.53
Guatemala	3.13	3.47	3.30
Mexico	3.75	3.12	3.44
Nicaragua	2.19	3.95	3.07
Paraguay	3.75	3.41	3.58
Peru	4.06	4.19	4.12
Uruguay	5.00	4.50	4.75
Venezuela	2.50	3.32	2.91

Table A2.5. Political competition

Country	Competencia entre actores	Effective alternation	Average score
Argentina	3.86	4.00	3.93
Bolivia	2.39	3.00	2.70
Brazil	4.57	4.00	4.28
Chile	2.72	4.70	3.71
Colombia	4.08	3.00	3.54
Costa Rica	3.78	5.00	4.39
Ecuador	3.83	3.00	3.42
El Salvador	3.34	4.00	3.67

Country			
Guatemala	3.84	4.00	3.92
Mexico	3.37	4.00	3.68
Nicaragua	2.23	3.60	2.92
Paraguay	3.58	3.50	3.54
Peru	3.77	4.00	3.89
Uruguay	3.15	5.00	4.07
Venezuela	2.47	3.00	2.74

Table A2.6. Freedom

Country	Personal dignity	Civil rights	Political rights	Average score
Argentina	4.06	4.29	4.17	4.17
Bolivia	2.81	4.29	3.33	3.48
Brazil	4.06	4.29	4.17	4.17
Chile	4.69	4.64	5.00	4.78
Colombia	3.13	3.21	3.33	3.22
Costa Rica	4.06	3.93	5.00	4.33
Ecuador	3.13	3.21	3.33	3.22
El Salvador	3.13	4.64	4.17	3.98
Guatemala	2.50	4.29	3.33	3.37
Mexico	3.13	2.86	3.33	3.11
Nicaragua	2.81	2.14	1.67	2.21
Paraguay	3.13	4.29	3.33	3.58
Peru	3.13	3.21	4.17	3.50
Uruguay	4.69	4.64	5.00	4.78
Venezuela	2.19	2.14	1.67	2.00

Table A2.7. Equality

Country	Distribution of resources	Existence of economic discrimination	Social security and cultural rights	Average score
Argentina	2.71	2.50	4.06	3.09
Bolivia	2.35	1.25	3.38	2.33
Brazil	2.41	2.50	3.65	2.85
Chile	2.40	2.50	4.10	3.00

Colombia	2.08	1.25	3.60	2.31
Costa Rica	2.49	3.75	3.87	3.37
Ecuador	2.62	1.25	3.62	2.50
El Salvador	2.66	1.25	3.40	2.44
Guatemala	2.25	1.25	2.91	2.13
Mexico	2.59	2.50	3.88	2.99
Nicaragua	2.98	1.25	3.00	2.41
Paraguay	2.34	1.25	3.35	2.31
Peru	2.70	1.25	3.71	2.55
Uruguay	2.74	1.25	3.96	2.65
Venezuela	3.05	2.50	3.74	3.10

Table A2.8. Responsiveness

Country	Perceived legitimacy	Constraints to responsiveness	Average score
Argentina	2.48	4.04	3.26
Bolivia	1.70	4.24	2.97
Brazil	2.61	3.72	3.16
Chile	2.91	4.76	3.84
Colombia	2.09	4.06	3.07
Costa Rica	3.10	3.89	3.50
Ecuador	2.52	4.46	3.49
El Salvador	2.31	3.66	2.98
Guatemala	1.58	4.30	2.94
Mexico	1.40	4.17	2.78
Nicaragua	1.96	3.77	2.86
Paraguay	1.80	4.66	3.23
Peru	1.50	4.57	3.03
Uruguay	4.02	3.66	3.84
Venezuela	2.52	3.86	3.19

Codebook:

Dimensions	Components		Indicators	Sources
Rule of Law (RoL)				
	1) Individual security and civil order		Cingranelli & Richards (CIRI) physical integrity index	CIRI data set (last release 2010)
	2) Independent judiciary		Independence of the judiciary	Fraser Institute (2010)
	3) Institutional and administrative capacity		Government effectiveness	World Bank Governance Indicators (2012 update)
	4) Integrity		Corruption perceptions index 2012	Transparency International (2012)
	5) Civil control of the military		Military interference in the RoL and politics	Fraser Institute (data 2010)
Electoral Accountability (EA)				
	1) Free, fair and recurrent elections		Electoral Process (sub-category "A")	Freedom House (2013 release)
	2) Freedom of party organization and related aspects		Freedom of assembly and association	CIRI HR data set (last release, 2010)
	3) Presence and stability of alternatives		Effective number of electoral parties	Nils-Christian Bormann & Matt Golder (2013)
Inter-Institutional Accountability (I-IA)				
	1) Legislative-executive relations		Executive constraints	Polity IV (2012 release)
	2) Constitutional Court		Constitutional Court	Comparative Constitution Project (2010)
	3) Ombudsman and Audit Courts		Ombudsman	Comparative Constitution Project (2010)
	4) Plural and independent information		Freedom of the press	Freedom House, Freedom of the press (2013 release)
	5) Modes and extent of decentralization		Resources given to sub-national entities	Database of political institutions (January 2013 version)

Political Participation (PP)			
1) Opportunities for participation		Rights of participation (sub-category "B")	Freedom House (2013 release)
2) Election turnout		Turnout in parliamentary election	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (online voter turnout data accessed in May 2013)
Political Competition (PC)			
1) Competition among actors		N.of seats assigned to opposition/total legislative seats shareopp = numopp/ totalseats	Database of Political Institutions (December 2012)
1) Effective alternation		parcomp	Polity IV (2012 release)
Freedom (F)			
1) Personal dignity		Personal autonomy and individual rights	The Freedom House Freedom in the World subscores (2013 release)
2) Civil rights		Empowerment rights index	CIRI HR data set (last release, 2010)
3) Political rights		Political rights	Freedom House (2013)
Equality and Solidarity (ES)			
1) Distribution of resources		Gini Index	CIA Factbook (2012)
2) Existence of economic discrimination		Women's economic rights	CIRI Human rights data set (last release 2010)
3) Social security and cultural rights		HDI	UNDP human development report (2012)
Responsiveness (Res)			
1) Perceived legitimacy		Satisfaction with democracy	Latinobarómetro (2010 data)
2) Constraints to responsiveness		No or low public debt (% GDP)	CIA Factbook (2012)

Annex 3.
Summaries of qualitative country reports (2011–12)

Rule of Law

Country	Argentina
Individual security and civil order	No terrorist threat or ethnic violence. Increasing criminality rates. Escalating tensions with UK regarding the Falklands.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Formally independent, but political pressures increasing since 2006. Relatively inefficient, particularly in the prosecution of corruption.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Decentralized structure, but strong fiscal dependence on central government. Professionalized bureaucracy, although political influence in recruitment at hierarchical levels. Insufficient transparency/public access to information.
Effective fight against corruption	Procedures and rules in place. Enforcement deficit due to lack of resources.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Insufficient funding of security forces and personnel. Police brutality and corruption are salient public concerns.

Country	Bolivia
Individual security and civil order	Stable criminality indicators. Drug trafficking more problematic in the last five years. Occasional episodes of ethnic violence.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Strong political pressures on the judiciary; exacerbated during Morales' government. Inefficiency and little public confidence in the justice system, although the latter seems to be slowly reverting in recent years.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Recent constitutional reforms increased the degree of regional autonomy while simultaneously strengthening executive power. Professionalization of the bureaucracy is progress, as well as strengthening of citizen complaint mechanisms. Public access to information still lacking.

Effective fight against corruption	Corruption and public perceptions historically high, although diminishing since Morales was elected. Reforms introduced to fight corruption, although still incipient.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Insufficient funding of security forces and personnel. Police corruption is important to the public.

Country	**Brazil**
Individual security and civil order	Relatively high crime rates. No ethnic conflict or crimes against minorities, but high incidence of domestic and gender violence.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	No clear evidence of political pressures on the judiciary. Citizens have a moderately positive opinion about the justice system. Enforcement deficit, although measures introduced in recent years to enhance efficiency.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Federal structure, though relatively centralized on fiscal matters. Professionalized bureaucracy and relatively high information and technology standards applied to public administration.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is perceived to be rampant. Instruments and procedures in place, but are ineffective or inefficiently applied.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Insufficient funding of security forces and personnel. Police brutality and corruption are salient public concerns.

Country	**Chile**
Individual security and civil order	Increasing criminality rates over the last decade, but still one of the lowest in Latin America. Gender violence is important, as well as occasional ethnic conflicts. Tensions with neighbouring states (Peru and Bolivia).
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Among the most trusted judicial systems on the continent. No serious evidence of political pressures. Still, budget is below regional averages, and human resources are insufficient.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Centralized structure. Highly professionalized bureaucracy and high information and technology standards applied to public administration.
Effective fight against corruption	Perceived corruption increasing, but still among the lowest in Latin America. New anti-corruption organisms recently created, but still one of the few countries with no ombudsman.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Sufficient funding, especially in comparative terms. Corruption among security forces is not prevalent in the public perception.

Country	**Colombia**
Individual security and civil order	High incidence of organized crime associated with drug trafficking. Terrorism and violent conflict between the FARC and paramilitary groups has resulted in numerous civilian casualties. Colombia is also one of the countries in the world with the largest number of assassinations of union leaders.

Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Political pressure are common, and have been especially frequent during Uribe's government. At the same time, administrative reforms were introduced in the 1990s to make the judiciary more meritocratic and independent of the political power. Still, judges' personal security is often threatened, mainly by terrorists and drug lords.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Upper-level bureaucracy in Colombia tends to be better qualified and have access to more/better resources than in most of the other countries in the region. However, there is also considerable political influence in bureaucratic recruitment. Although decentralization was introduced in the late 1980s, the president has the power to remove and sanction governors.
Effective fight against corruption	Perceived corruption levels are quite high (similar to Brazil or Peru), despite the fact that the 1991 Constitution introduced several institutions specialized in investigating and prosecuting cases of corruption. Most public institutions score high in perceived corruption levels, and quite a large number of politicians have been investigated or prosecuted due to involvement in corrupt practices.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Security forces have often been involved in illicit activities (such as extortive kidnappings), sometimes in collaboration with drug lords or common criminals. Close ties between security forces and paramilitary organizations have also been frequently denounced.
Country	**Costa Rica**
Individual security and civil order	Increasing criminality rates over the last decade. Even larger increase in the public perception of the saliency of criminality.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	No strong evidence of political pressures. Moreover, reforms in the 1990s reduced the influence of politicians on the justice system. Efficient prosecuting capacity, especially compared to other countries in the region. Still, perceived corruption in the judiciary is increasing.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Centralized structure. Coordination problems and overlapping competences among the bureaucracy.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is perceived as one of the most important problems, and increasingly so. Recent legal reforms have been adopted to update inadequate procedures and rules to tackle corruption. Lack of transparency and public access to information in this area persist.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Insufficient funding. Growing concern about the ineffectiveness of security forces due especially to legal constraints and lack of resources. Funding has increased during the last governments due to the need for better equipment/more staff to fight the guerrillas.
Country	**Ecuador**
Individual security and civil order	Violence levels are among the highest ten in the region. Gender violence is of particular concern, as is violence against homosexuals. The country has been indirectly involved in the Colombian internal conflict due to the activity of the FARC along the border.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Political pressures and interventions in judicial matters have been quite common. The judiciary has been frequently criticized by academics, journalists, politicians due to its lack of independence
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Some degree of political decentralization.

Effective fight against corruption	Perceived corruption levels are very high and among the highest in the region. Recently, a few prominent politicians and their relatives have been prosecuted and/or convicted or involved in corruption scandals.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Defence spending is among the highest in the region (2.7 per cent of GDP). Salaries in the sector are well above the national average. Public trust in the police is among the highest in the region (second only to Uruguay).

Country	El Salvador
Individual security and civil order	Criminality rates are the highest in the region. Organized gangs (*maras*) constitute the major security threat. Criminality is the most salient public opinion concern, and lack of confidence in institutions in charge of tackling criminality (for example, the police, the judiciary) is prevalent. Extortive kidnappings and drug trafficking (presumably linked to Mexican cartels) are on the rise.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Inefficient judiciary system, with strong influence of the political parties on the selection process and high perceived corruption levels.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature, with relatively weak executive (compared to other countries in the region). Some degree of political decentralization. The state bureaucracy is relatively small and unprofessional, and strongly dependent on political parties.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption levels are not particularly high in the regional context, but there is a lack of transparency and information regarding the manipulation of public accounts. Legal instruments exist to deal with illicit enrichment of public officials and irregular campaign financing, though they are hardly ever applied.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	The security forces (military) retain significant power, and are closely linked to political actors. Still, the military enjoys high levels of perceived legitimacy, unlike to the police.

Country	Guatemala
Individual security and civil order	Criminality rates are among the highest in the region. During the civil war, massacres against indigenous populations (Mayas) took place. Today, some forms of ethnic tensions persist. Also, violent protests/clashes are not unusual in political life.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	The justice system is strongly dependent on political parties. Selection process is not transparent, often leading to poorly qualified judges.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Some degree of political decentralization. low-quality state bureaucracy due to severe budget constraints.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is perceived to be important and difficult to eradicate. Campaign finance irregularities are especially difficult to prosecute with existing legal instruments.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	The military still maintains links with the political parties, although this trend is reverting. Citizens have an extremely low opinion of the police.

Country	Mexico
Individual security and civil order	Drug cartels are an important source of criminal activity in the country. Growing presence of gangs (*maras*). No incidence of terrorism or ethnic violence. Political assassinations are not uncommon.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Traditionally, the justice system has been strongly dependent on political parties. Public confidence in the justice system, however, is not particularly low. Judicial procedures are slow and inefficient due to a marked deficit of human resources.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. legislative branch traditionally weak, although this trend has been reverting. Federal system, with a mixture of centralized and decentralized administrative and political functions. Several mechanisms have been recently introduced to improve bureaucratic performance. Inefficiencies and irregularities in the recruitment, selection and stability of the bureaucracy persist.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption levels are similar to other Central American countries. However, corruption is not one of the most relevant problems for the public. Prosecutions and sanctions of corruption-related offences are rare. Lack of transparence about party financing and politicians' assets.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Increasing infiltration of drug organizations in the security forces (especially the state and municipal police). Lack of transparence regarding funds allotted to the security forces. Wages for the personnel are quite low, making them corruptible. Public trust in the police is very low.

Country	Nicaragua
Individual security and civil order	Crime rates are lower than in the other Central American countries, except for Costa Rica. No ethnic or terrorist violence, although violent protests and episodes of political violence are not uncommon.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Justice system strongly dependent on political actors. This leads to low-quality judges and an inefficient justice system.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Centralized structure. Public bureaucracy exhibits severe material and human resources constraints. Use of information technologies in the public sector is limited. No comprehensive professionalization programmes for bureaucrats.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is rampant. Lack of transparency and information regarding public employment, purchases and expenditures. Notorious deficits in the prosecution and sanctioning of corruption cases.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	After the 1990s, security forces have been professionalized and placed under the state's control. The police are insufficiently funded. Wages of the security forces personnel are extremely low. The army enjoys a high perceived legitimacy. Public trust in the police is lower, but among the highest in Central America.

Country	Paraguay
Individual security and civil order	Isolated terrorist activity activity, Paraguayan People's Army (EPP). Growing presence of gangs and drug cartels.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Some evidence of political pressures on the judiciary. The justice system is not perceived as independent by the public, although proper legal procedures for the selection of judges seem to be followed.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Centralized structure, with some decentralization of administrative functions. Public bureaucracy is not highly professionalized, and job instability/precariousness is problematic.

Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is one of the country's main problems. Insufficient legal mechanisms to tackle corruption cases, and transparency and/or access to information is limited.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Insufficient funding. Police members are perceived to be involved in small-scale corruption practices. Security forces are also seen as inefficient in the battle against crime.
Country	**Peru**
Individual security and civil order	Terrorist violence until the early 1990s, but largely diminished since then. Still some cases involving terrorists and paramilitary organizations. Drug cartels are increasing their presence. Ethnic violence took place within the larger internal conflict until the 1990s, but episodes of violence involving the indigenous population have also been verified recently.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Unfavourable public opinion about the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary. No clear evidence about possible political pressures.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Centralized structure, although decentralizing/deregulatory reforms are being gradually implemented. Steps towards the professionalization of the public bureaucracy and the adoption of new technologies in the public sector are being taken.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is an important problem. Prosecution of corruption-related cases is quite inefficient, although new institutions and mechanisms have been introduced in the last decade. Still, marked deficit in monitoring and investigating potential corruption among political actors.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	The perceived legitimacy of the security forces decreased considerably after the Fujimori government.
Country	**Uruguay**
Individual security and civil order	One of the lowest criminality rates in the region, although growing since 2005. No relevant terrorist threats since the democratic restoration, and no episodes of ethnic violence. Isolated forms of violent political protest have been observed in the last 20 years. Also, relations with neighbouring Argentina are quite tense.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	One of the most independent and reliable justice systems in the region, although public trust declined over the last decade. No clear evidence of political pressures. Still, it is one of the few countries in the region in which the attorney general is directly appointed by the executive.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Bicameral legislature. Strongly centralized structure, although attempts to foster decentralization have been implemented in the last decade. Serious deficits in the professionalization of the ageing public bureaucracy.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is not an important problem, especially when contrasted to the other countries in the region. Furthermore, perceived corruption levels have been declining since 2005, when the *Frente Amplio* rose to power. However, Uruguay is classified as a tax haven and money laundering country by the OECD. Also, little monitoring of campaign financing.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Security forces are assigned a relatively large part of the budget, although this trend has been declining since the democratic restoration. Public opinion about the police is quite unfavourable, while the army is perceived as essentially useless by a significant part of the citizenship.

Country	Venezuela
Individual security and civil order	Crime rates have been historically high and have increased since the rise of Chavez. Large-scale drug cartels and smuggler gangs operate in the country. Also, presence of terrorist groups, both domestic and based in neighbouring Colombia.
Independent judiciary and modern justice system	Justices are dependent on political power. This has been traditionally so and probably exacerbated since the election of Chavez. Scarcity of judges.
Institutional and administrative capacity	Unicameral legislature. Strongly centralized system in practice. Public servants are generally poorly qualified and managed, and typically selected because of political loyalties rather than qualifications.
Effective fight against corruption	Corruption is rampant, even though public opinion does not register corruption as a major concern. Prosecution of corruption cases depends on the political affiliation of the accused functionaries.
Security forces respectful of citizens' rights, under civilian control	Increasing proportion of the budget devoted to security forces. The state's monopoly on the use of force is challenged. In a highly polarized context, public opinion about the security forces is not particularly low.

Electoral accountability

Country	Argentina
Elections	Highly educated electorate (from a regional perspective) with low interest in politics. Elections are clean and fair overall, although clientelism and lack of transparency about campaign finances of the party in power are not uncommon. Voters' choice in legislative elections is somewhat limited due to the existence of closed lists.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization, except for extremist (for example, racist) parties. Still, registering a new party requires obtaining the signatures of 4 per cent of the electorate, which is a relatively high threshold. Low levels of trust in political parties and little mobilization capacity.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	High levels of electoral participation (about 75 per cent on average), as well as partisan identification (about 45 per cent) among voters. Marked decline in the stability of political alternatives in recent decades. Also, growing incidence of floor crossing. However, realignments between within-party coalitions are more prevalent than changes in party affiliations.

Country	Bolivia
Elections	From a regional comparative perspective, interest in politics is relatively high. Elections are generally perceived as fair/clean, despite occasional irregularities involving vote counts and inaccurate registration rolls. In the most recent elections, however, a considerable number of sub-national election results have been contested either by the government or opposition parties. Election laws have changed considerably in the last decade, though most of these changes were supported by both government and opposition.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. However, isolated episodes of political violence targeting leaders of the government party took place in recent years. Low levels of trust in political parties and little mobilization capacity, except for the MAS.

Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	High levels of electoral participation. Political/social mobilizations in the early 2000s ('water war', 'gas war') led to the creation of several new political parties and the emergence of new leaders representing formerly marginalized sectors (for example, unions, indigenous people). Together with a high level of floor crossing and lack of ideological/programmatic cohesion, this explains the high levels of instability of the party system. A considerable part of the populations' demands are channeled through social-ethnic movements.
Country	**Brazil**
Elections	Elections are clean and fair overall, despite some irregularities in campaign financing (ineffective controls over expenditures and funding sources).
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization, as long as they adhere to democracy. Requirements for registering new parties are very low. Low levels of trust in political parties and little mobilization capacity.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Relatively high abstention rates despite compulsory voting. Floor crossing is quite common, despite having been recently forbidden. Parties have little programmatic/ideological cohesion. There is a very high and increasing number of political parties.
Country	**Chile**
Elections	Highly educated electorate, though there is evidence of a gap between the electorate and effective voters. Elections are generally clean and fair, although recently the opposition has denounced episodes of inappropriate intervention of the governing party in the electoral process.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization, except for outlawed extremist parties.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Stable participation rates. Very stable and institutionalized party system, with two major coalitions dominating the political life since the return to democracy. The two coalitions have a clear programmatic identity. Traditionally low levels of floor crossing. Up until the last presidential election, the Concertación had always been in power since the democratic restoration.
Country	**Colombia**
Elections	Formally, elections are free and fair. However, violent groups (for example, guerilla, paramilitary) often distort the normal development of elections in some areas of the country. Election authorities have been occasionally accused of a lack of independence/transparency. Electoral registers are outdated, and there is little public information about campaign financing by private donors
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. Requirements for registering new parties are quite low (basically, obtaining the required number of signatures). In the past, members of political parties were assassinated.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	The two historically dominant parties (Liberal and Conservative) have experienced a drastic decline in their vote share in recent years. After the 2003 political reform, parties' ideological cohesion has become more lax, their programmatic appeals more diffuse and their leadership more personalist. The system has gone from a bi-party to a multiparty structure. Alternation in power is frequent.

Country	Costa Rica
Elections	Highly educated electorate. Elections are regularly held, free and fair. Costa Rica is one of the few countries in the region with no democratic breakdowns in the last 50 years.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization provided they are committed to respect the constitutional order. Extremist parties are not expressly outlawed.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	The party system has undergone considerable changes in terms of electoral volatility, party structures, and the number and identity of the main political forces since 2002. The once bipartisan system has seen the emergence and consolidation of several new political alternatives. This has reinforced floor crossing, weakened the programmatic/ideological content of party platforms and diminished party identification. Alternation in power has been permanent in the last half-century.

Country	Ecuador
Elections	Elections are free and fair. Nonetheless, the election authority has occasionally been subject to criticism due to a lack of independence. Electoral laws are changed rather frequently. There are no clear rules about campaign financing.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. Costs of establishing a new party are rather low, although there have been some occasional problems with signature verification.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Electoral volatility is relatively high in the Latin American context. Alternation in power is frequent, in part because of the instability of the party system.

Country	El Salvador
Elections	Fair elections have been regularly held since 2004, with the first alternation in power taking place in 2009. The institutionalization of the electoral process is still very recent, and election authorities are still quite inefficient and dependent on political actors. Voters' ability to influence electoral outcome is somewhat restricted: in closed-list multi-member districts, candidate selection depends entirely on party elites. Hence, electoral accountability is quite low.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. Extremist parties are not outlawed.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Relatively low participation rates compared to other countries in the region (slightly below 60 per cent on average). The party system has traditionally been bipartisan, representing centre and right-wing options. New leftist organizations emerged in the last 20 years, and currently it is one of the most ideologically polarized systems in the region. Nonetheless, political parties have played a relatively minor role in the country's political life.

Country	Guatemala
Elections	Low-educated electorate. The legitimacy of elections has been increasing in the last two decades. Elections are clean and fair, and election authorities are essentially independent of political parties.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization.

Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	High abstention rates—second only to El Salvador in the region. Guatemala is one of the countries with the highest electoral volatility. The party system is highly personalistic. Parties have little ideological/programmatic content, internal discipline and organizational capacity. Clientelism and floor crossing are prevalent.

Country	**Mexico**
Elections	Roughly half of the population follows political news. Elections are held regularly, although there is considerable evidence of a wide array of irregular/fraudulent practices that persist even today. Irregularities are more prevalent in municipal/state elections than in federal ones.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. Episodes of political violence against members of political parties are not uncommon during the election season.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Turnout rates around 60 per cent in the latest elections. The three main parties dominating political life exhibit some marked programmatic differences. Floor crossing has become more prevalent since the late 1990s. Almost two-thirds of the population expresses some party identification. However, the interests of the indigenous population are not explicitly contemplated by the party system. After roughly 50 years of PRI government, alternation in power was inaugurated in 2000.

Country	**Nicaragua**
Elections	A quarter of the population is illiterate. The election authority is linked to the political parties, and the electoral process is usually tainted by irregularities/fraudulent practices.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions seem to undermine freedom of party organization.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Turnout rates around 70 per cent in the latest elections. Sandinism/Anti-sandinism is the main cleavage structuring party competition. Political alliances tend to be stable, and floor crossing is not common. About 50 per cent of the population expresses some party affiliation.

Country	**Paraguay**
Elections	Elections are regularly held, although several irregularities and presumably fraudulent practices have been denounced over the years. The independence of election authorities has also been repeatedly questioned by the opposition.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	The party scene has been dominated by two major parties, the Colorado Party (PC) and the Liberal Party (PL), which exhibit little programmatic differences between them. Smaller leftist parties tend to be more ideologically cohesive. Floor crossing between the major and minor parties is not uncommon, although it rarely takes place between the two parties dominating the political life. Alternation in power took place in 2008 after more than 65 years of uninterrupted PC government.

Country	**Peru**
Elections	Interest in politics among citizens is slightly below the regional average. Fair elections have been regularly held since the return to democracy in 2001. While election results have occasionally been challenged by specific candidates, the legitimacy of the electoral process is generally perceived to be high.

Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization. The requirements for registering new parties are not entirely transparent, but this does not seem to constitute an important barrier for political entrepreneurs.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Turnout rates have fluctuated between 75–90 per cent in the latest elections. The party system is weakly institutionalized, with parties emerging and disappearing between election cycles. The number of political forces has grown substantially in the last couple of elections. In addition, floor crossing is extremely common. Parties have little internal discipline, splits are common and party competition is not structured along programmatic/ideological dimensions. Party identification among the population is fairly low.

Country	Uruguay
Elections	Highly educated electorate (compared to the regional average). Clean and fair elections have been regularly held since the return to democracy in 1984. Still, complaints about the composition of the election authority have not been uncommon during this period. The existence of a closed-list system for legislative offices somewhat limits the ability of voters to influence election results.
Freedom of party organization	No major restrictions undermining freedom of party organization.
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	Turnout rates average 90 per cent. The party system is highly stable and institutionalized, with three main parties dominating the political life. There have been various instances of alternation in power since the democratic restoration.

Country	Venezuela
Elections	Serious constraints on the freedom and fairness of elections exist and have become even more manifest in the last five years. The electoral authority is dominated by loyal government nominees.
Freedom of party organization	There is evidence of several practices limiting the freedom of party organization (for example, constraints on opposition demonstrations, threats against public servants joining organizations critical of the government, etc.)
Presence and stability of existing political (party) alternatives	The party system has undergone considerable changes since the 1990s. The 'traditional' bipartisan system, dominated since the 1960s by Democratic Action (AD) and the Social Christian Party COPEI, collapsed. Instead, a new scenario characterized by the polarization between a leader-focused official movement and a highly fragmented opposition emerged in the 1990s. Coordination among the various opposition forces has only recently become more prevalent. The main force structuring party competition is President Chavez' legacy.

Inter-institutional accountability

Country	Argentina
Legislative-executive relations	There is a well-defined set of procedures ensuring the existence of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Competences regarding constitutional review are not clearly defined. The Supreme Court is 'in charge' of the justice system. It is formally autonomous, although allegations of pressures/linkages between judges and the governing party have not been uncommon.

Plural and independent information	The media industry is highly oligopolistic. Most of the media outlets are highly dependent on public advertising for their survival. Increasing polarization and conflicts between media outlets aligned with/opposed to the government have emerged in the last ten years.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is appointed by the Congress, and enjoys the same sort of civil immunity status as congressmen. He or she is entitled to monitor and investigate potential irregularities in any state dependency, to formulate recommendations and to propose normative changes. The vast majority of his or her recommendations have been given due course over the last decade. The Audit Court is a technical institution dependent on the Congress. Its main duties involve monitoring the administrative and budgetary practices of the executive. There is little information about the performance of the court.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Federal organization. State authorities are politically autonomous, with full authority over the sub-state government organization. State governments also retain considerable fiscal autonomy. They also have some channels available for opposing acts of the central authorities.
Country	**Bolivia**
Legislative-executive relations	Congress has mechanisms at its disposal to monitor members of the executive. However, since most of the legislators are elected together (in the same list) as the president, Congress is to a large extent subordinated to the executive.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Supreme Court were previously appointed by Congress. Under the new constitution, they are elected by popular vote, from a set of candidates pre-selected by Congress. In practice, the Constitutional Court has been in a stalemate in recent years due to the resignation of its members and the lack of a political agreement to nominate new justices.
Plural and independent information	nd
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman can issue recommendations and advice on legal and administrative matters. He or she also has limited possibilities of promoting the adoption of sanctions against state authorities. The Audit Court is a technical institution that is formally independent of political parties.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Municipal and state governments have enjoyed increasing autonomy since the mid-2000s.
Country	**Brazil**
Legislative-executive relations	There is a well-defined set of procedures ensuring the existence of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	The procedure for appointing members of the Supreme Court is clearly stipulated in the constitution. No clear evidence of political dependence/pressures on the judiciary.
Plural and independent information	Legal provisions require impartiality from the media towards political parties. Even though media outlets are controlled by big business/religious groups, political information is generally plural/independent. The most prevalent form of political pressure is the withdrawal of public advertising.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is ultimately appointed by the president. He or she has only a consultative role, with no binding powers. If any public institution chooses not to take the these recommendations into consideration, he or she can take the case to the corresponding minister. The Audit Court assists Congress in investigating administrative/economic practices of public institutions. It can adopt sanctioning measures.

Modes and extent of decentralization	Federal organization. State authorities retain extensive administrative, economic and political autonomy. However, sub-national institutions have little means of controlling or monitoring central authority.

Country	**Chile**
Legislative-executive relations	Relations are asymmetric, with a very strong executive, both formally and in practice, although ruling by decree is more difficult than in countries like Argentina or Brazil. Yet procedures at the Congress' disposal are relatively weak. Interpellations have only been recently (2005) re-established, and mechanisms to dismiss members of the executive are rarely used.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Constitutional Court have full job security (that is, cannot be removed), and are appointed by the president (3), the Congress (4) and the judiciary (3). The court is autonomous, and although it rarely overrules executive or parliamentary decisions, there is no evidence indicating that it depends on the political power. However, it has been suggested that the members nominated by Congress are typically of lower quality than the rest, and more dependent on political connections.
Plural and independent information	The basic norms regulating media activity has not changed since the dictatorship. This imposes severe restrictions on press freedom and the access to plural and independent information. Media ownership is highly concentrated, and the most important news media are closely linked to political actors. However, Chile is one of the few countries (together with Brazil and Mexico) that legally grants parties equitable media access.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	There is no ombudsman, although it may be introduced by the future constitutional reform. Members of the Audit Court are appointed by the president—in agreement with the Senate - for an eight-year term. The authority of the Audit Court is stronger than in most other countries. It can impose administrative sanctions and prosecute cases involving irregularities.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Decentralization has been primarily economic, rather than political. Since the most important regional authorities are designated by the president, they generally follow the executive's political guidelines.

Country	**Colombia**
Legislative-executive relations	Legislative-executive relations are markedly dependent on the president's personal characteristics, although the 1991 reform attempted to strengthen legislative prerogatives. The executive has a clear influence on the legislative agenda.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	The Constitutional Court was established in 1992. Its members are nominated by the executive and judicial powers and appointed for eight years, without renewal. The have the necessary resources to fulfil their role.
Plural and independent information	Although the main newspapers have a partisan orientation, there are no clear links between radio and TV stations and the political parties. Given the large number of mass media, plurality is guaranteed. However, Colombia has the highest number of unsolved journalist murder cases, and intimidation of journalists (by armed groups but also politicians) is not uncommon.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is appointed for a single four-year term. There are also territorial ombudsmen in each province. The state auditor is appointed by Congress, and has appropriate resources to fulfil his or her role. However, there is some evidence of political influences and/or pressures affecting auditors' work.

Modes and extent of decentralization	There is considerable political, administrative and financial decentralization; 20 per cent of the provincial revenues come from the central government. The central government cannot modify the competences and attributes of sub-national governments. Sub-national political and electoral processes, however, are usually disrupted by the presence of armed groups (guerrillas, paramilitary organizations) in some areas of the country.
Country	**Costa Rica**
Legislative-executive relations	There is a well-defined set of procedures ensuring the existence of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches, including motions of no confidence and impeachment. However, motions of no confidence are not binding, while impeachments have never been conducted. In general, there are clear asymmetries of power in favor of the president.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Supreme Court are appointed by Congress. Since they are automatically re-elected by default, this translates into a high degree of job security and stability. Members of the court are typically highly qualified and professional. However, budgetary constraints determine important efficiency problems.
Plural and independent information	Ownership of the media is very concentrated. There are no marked political alignments/agendas among the main media outlets. Public advertising is frequently used as a means of political pressure.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is nominated by and depends on Congress, although the role has a high degree of independence. He or she is entitled to monitor the activities of all public dependencies, except for the judiciary and electoral authorities. Despite stringent budget constraints, the office has acceptable efficacy/efficiency levels. Members of the court are elected by Congress, although retain technical independence. Funding for the Audit Court is higher than the average in the region.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Highly centralized structure. Municipal governments have few and relatively unimportant competences. In addition, local governments' taxing capacity is quite limited. In general, sub-national authorities are strongly (politically and economically) dependent on the central government; 20 per cent of the provinces' revenues come from the central government.
Country	**Ecuador**
Legislative-executive relations	Although Congress formally has various mechanisms at its disposal to control the executive (for example, calling up ministers), these have been restricted or undermined during Correa's term (for example, the president issued a decree preventing ministers from providing Congress with information). Concomitantly, the president has frequently ruled by decree in this period, strengthening presidential power and weakening legislative prerogatives.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	There is both a Constitutional and Supreme Court. Members of the Supreme Court are selected by members of the executive and legislative among candidates taking part in a public competition, and are appointed for a nine-year term (without immediate re-election).
Plural and independent information	Although there is a variety of media outlets and ownership is quite diversified, the current government has denounced the concentration of the media in the hands of the right wing. The media has traditionally supported particular parties/candidates. Ongoing tensions between the government and the media have resulted in the government threatening to restrict the allocation of public advertisement to certain media outlets.

Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is selected through an open public competition, and is appointed for a four-year term that is renewable once. While the ombudsman can issue reports and conduct investigations, he or she has no enforcement power. Members of the Audit Court, by contrast, are selected through an open public competition. There is very little information about the functioning of the court in practice.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Decentralization has been primarily political and administrative, rather than economic. Even though municipal and local governments can raise specific taxes, control over the budget process is strongly centralized in the hands of the executive. Also, local/regional governments have no (political, administrative) control over the central government.

Country	El Salvador
Legislative-executive relations	Congress has several mechanisms at its disposal to control the executive. In general, these procedures allow for a stronger control than is typical in the region. For instance, ministers who refuse to appear in front of Congress without justification are dismissed. Also, motions of no confidence regarding members of the security/intelligence forces are binding. In general, the mechanisms presidents have to control Congress are weaker than in most other countries.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Supreme Court are appointed by Congress for a renewable nine-year term. Even though the independence of the court has been questioned in the past, it is not uncommon for the court to overrule executive or parliamentary decisions.
Plural and independent information	Media ownership is concentrated in a few powerful families, typically aligned with a single political party (ARENA). Even though (self-)censorship is not uncommon, the recent trend is towards increasing plurality and independence. Also, unlike in many other countries in the region, there is little evidence that public advertising is used as a means of political pressure.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is elected by Congress for a (renewable) three-year term. The possibility of effectively carrying out this role is severely restricted due to considerable budget constraints. While most of the public institutions tend to follow the ombudsman's recommendations, compliance is quite low among the sub-national government and the security forces. Members of the Audit Court are appointed by Congress. Even though in theory the court's recommendations must be followed, there is little information as to whether this holds in practice.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Regional governments are appointed by the president, while municipal authorities are elected by popular vote. The small size and limited economic/revenue capacity of most sub-national authorities have hindered decentralization. There are no specific procedures allowing sub-national authorities to monitor/control the central government.

Country	Guatemala
Legislative-executive relations	Congress has some procedures available to control the executive (for example, calling up ministers), although motions of no confidence are not stipulated in the constitution. Presidents have fewer/weaker competences than in most other countries.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	The Constitutional Court is an economically and technically independent institution, with members appointed by the executive and the judiciary, for a (renewable) five-year term. The court has overruled executive or parliamentary decisions quite frequently.

Plural and independent information	Media ownership is concentrated in a few powerful families, which limits access to plural and independent information. Political and criminal violence also induce self-censorship among media outlets.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is functionally dependent on Congress. He or she is not directly entitled to prosecute irregularities involving public offices. The ombudsman's recommendations are not always followed by the authorities. The Audit Court is a technical institution, the president of which is appointed by Congress. The court faces important budget constraints, and has even stopped monitoring municipal authorities due to these difficulties.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Municipal governments have no authority to raise taxes, and are strongly dependent on transfers from the central government. There are no specific procedures allowing sub-national governments to control central authorities. Municipal governments lack both economic resources and technical competences for an effective decentralization.

Country	Mexico
Legislative-executive relations	Congress has some procedures available to control the executive (for example, calling up ministers). Ministers typically appear before Congress when called to do so, although no formal sanctions are stipulated in case of refusal. Impeachment is not stipulated in the constitution. Yet, the executive-legislative relations are less asymmetric in favour of the former than in most countries in the region. For instance, presidents cannot dissolve Congress, and their veto power is weaker than average.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Supreme Court are appointed by the Senate, From a list of candidates pre-selected by the president, for a non-renewable 15-year term. The court has technical and budgetary autonomy.
Plural and independent information	Owners of the media have traditionally had close political connections. Together with the very high concentration of media ownership, citizens have limited access to plural and independent information. In addition, attacks/harassment of journalists are quite frequent.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is appointed by the president for a four-year term renewable once. The candidate must be approved by Congress. He or she has technical and budgetary autonomy, and can issue recommendations. The head of the Audit Court is appointed by Congress. The court is technically autonomous, although it is financially dependent on Congress. This means that Congress can exert pressures on the court through budgetary transfers. The court can issue administrative sanctions that may include economic penalties, and can initiate prosecution.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Federal structure. State and municipal authorities have ample administrative, political and economic competences. Sub-national authorities have various resources available to oppose the central government.

Country	Nicaragua
Legislative-executive relations	There are various mechanisms allowing Congress to monitor the executive (calling up ministers, requesting reports, interpellations, power to approve/reject nominations, etc.).
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Constitutional Court are appointed by Congress for a (renewable) five-year term. There is little information regarding the functioning of the Court.

Plural and independent information	Many of the main media outlets have clear affinities and linkages with political parties. Ownership is less concentrated than in other Central American countries. The press has been relatively free since 1990, although political pressures, limited access to information and economic pressures (through the use of public advertising) are not uncommon.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is appointed by Congress for a (renewable) five-year term. Ombudsmen enjoy civil immunity and are independent. Severe budget constraints and the lack of political support have hindered the ombudsman's work. Statistics show that less than a quarter of the recommendations are taken into consideration. Members of the Audit Court are also appointed by Congress for a five-year term. Members tend to have clear partisan alignments, and the composition of the court has led to conflicts between parties.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Municipal and regional authorities are elected by popular vote. The transparency of municipal elections has been recently called in question. There are no specific procedures for regional/municipal authorities to monitor/control/oppose the central government. The central government sometimes exerts pressure over sub-national authorities through the transfer of funds.
Country	**Paraguay**
Legislative-executive relations	There are various mechanisms allowing Congress to monitor the executive (calling up ministers, requesting reports, interpellations, power to approve/reject nominations, impeachment, etc.). Motions of no confidence are not binding.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Members of the Constitutional Court are appointed by the judiciary for a (renewable) five-year term. After two terms, members obtain full job security (that is, cannot be dismissed). There are sufficient economic and human resources at the disposal of the court.
Plural and independent information	Media ownership is quite concentrated in a few business groups. Many of the media outlets have a clear partisan affiliation. The press is relatively free, although there have been some isolated episodes of pressures/threats to journalists. There is evidence that public advertising is used as a way of pressuring the media.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman is elected by Congress. His or her recommendations/ suggestions are not binding, and there are no specific follow-up procedures. The members of the Audit Court are appointed by the Supreme Court. It has only advisory power; it cannot impose sanctions itself.
Modes and extent of decentralization	There is some degree of administrative and political decentralization. Economic, financial and budgetary functions are still highly centralized.
Country	**Peru**
Legislative-executive relations	The Congress is highly dependent on the president, who nominates his or her party's legislative candidates. The Congress' counterbalancing power hinges on the election returns of the opposition parties. However, given the fragmented and unstable nature of the party system, this means that in practice the executive typically has considerable discretionary power.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	The courts are characterized by low levels of independence and a little professional training. The autonomy of the judiciary was especially undermined during the Fujimori government. Although some of the later governments tried to reinforce the legitimacy of the judiciary, the prevailing view is that justices operate as government—rather than public—functionaries.
Plural and independent information	The media is closely linked to political and economic interest groups. Political pressures, intimidation and harassment of journalists are frequent.

Ombudsman and Audit Courts	The ombudsman has no binding powers, but can advise or recommend on legal and administrative matters. He or she is elected by Congress, and enjoys the same sort of civil immunity status as congressmen. The competences of the Audit Court are very limited and are essentially irrelevant to the public.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Centralized structure. Regional governments have some competences regarding regional economic development, public services regulation/administration and infrastructure. A decentralizing process was set in motion in 2002, giving regional governments increasing political and economic autonomy. Regional authorities have no possibility of monitoring the federal government.
Country	**Uruguay**
Legislative-executive relations	There are clear asymmetries of power in favour of the president stipulated by the constitution. Congress can resort to different mechanisms—not all of them based on the constitution—to counter these asymmetries.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	The procedure for appointing members of the Supreme Court is clearly stipulated in the constitution. It not uncommon for the Supreme Court to overrule executive or parliamentary decisions. In some of these situations, the court has had to endure some political pressures.
Plural and independent information	The structure of the media industry is quite oligopolistic. Some of the most important media outlets have traditionally had marked political affinities. There have been episodes of political pressures or censorship and confrontation between politicians and media outlets, especially visible since the rise of *Frente Amplio* to power. In addition, many media outlets depend on public advertising to survive.
Ombudsman and Audit Courts	There is no ombudsman at the national level. Only two states have their own ombudsmen dealing with local matters, with limited consulting competences and generally little efficacy. The composition of the Audit Courts has traditionally been determined based on election returns. However, the end of bipartisanism and the rise to power of *Frente Amplio* has altered the traditional composition of the courts and has led to political disputes concerning their composition. Overall, the functioning of the courts is acceptable.
Modes and extent of decentralization	State governments have considerable administrative, economic and political autonomy. However, the competences and resources of local governments are quite limited. Regional authorities have very limited possibilities of monitoring the federal government.
Country	**Venezuela**
Legislative-executive relations	Several checks and balances between the two powers are established by law. In practice, however, the legislative has been almost entirely subordinated to the executive in the last six or seven years. The legislature has lost most of its capacity to control the executive since 2004.
Constitutional or Supreme Court	Supreme Court members are elected by Congress. Formally, it has ample powers to deal with constitutional/legal matters. However, given the prevalent influence of the governing party, the autonomy of the court is questionable.
Plural and independent information	Marked erosion of press freedom in Venezuela in the last decade. Political intimidation by government officials and state-owned media, systematic harassment of opposition outlets, economic threats against independent media and physical attacks against journalists are by now relatively common practices.

Ombudsman and Audit Courts	Despite constitutional and legal provisions, the ombudsman is not politically autonomous. The opposition claims that the ombudsman has unduly favoured the president's position in several matters. The same holds for Audit Courts, at least since 2004.
Modes and extent of decentralization	Highly centralized structure. Municipal/regional governments are formally autonomous, but have limited capacity in practice.

Political participation

Country	Argentina
Opportunities for participation	Federal, state and local elections regularly held. Referenda and citizen initiatives at the federal level established in the constitution. At the state level, depends on each state's constitution.
Elections and referenda	Turnout rates averaged 75 per cent in the last three presidential election cycles, and from 73 to 79 per cent in the last three parliamentary elections.
Parties and associations	30 per cent of the electorate is affiliated with a political party.
Non-conventional participation	Increasing level of non-conventional mobilizations, political protest and polarization in the last decade. Typically, social movements involved in this kind of protest are highly fragmented, representing specific and not necessarily large sectors.
Policies and deliberative democracy	No forms of deliberative democracy formally recognized by the constitution.

Country	Bolivia
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held. State authorities were elected by popular vote for the first time in 2005. Binding referenda and citizen initiatives at all levels were introduced in the constitution in 2004. The former have been regularly used since then.
Elections and referenda	Turnout in national elections has experienced a marked increase in the last decade, from 72 per cent in 2002 to almost 95 per cent in 2009. The same phenomenon is observed in referenda. Turnout in sub-national elections is typically lower, around 60 per cent.
Parties and associations	Although there is little data available, party identification in Bolivia is quite low: around 16 per cent of the electorate is identified with a party. Participation and democratization within parties is still very marginal. Yet, about 70 per cent of the population participates in civil associations.
Non-conventional participation	Strikes have lost relevance since the 1990s relative to other forms of political protest. New social movements have gained ground in the political scene and have important influence in the MAS government.
Policies and deliberative democracy	The number and influence of various forms of deliberative democracy have increased substantially over the last decade, at both the local and national level.

Country	Brazil
Opportunities for participation	Federal, state and local elections regularly held. Referenda at the federal level established in the constitution. Forms of citizen initiatives exist only at the federal level.

Elections and referenda	Abstention rates in the last three federal elections were around 20 per cent. Participation rates tend to be similar in municipal elections and referenda.
Parties and associations	Partisan identification has experienced a gradual decline, from more than 45 per cent in the first democratic elections (1989) to less than 30 per cent nowadays. Less than 10 per cent of the electorate is affiliated with a political party. About 17 per cent of the workers are union members. Religious organizations have a strong presence in the society.
Non-conventional participation	There have been sporadic political demonstrations and protests. Violent protests are usually linked to non-political phenomena (for example, prison riots, local militias, etc.)
Policies and deliberative democracy	The federal constitution stipulates the principle of popular participation in public policy decision-making and implementation. Participation takes place mainly through the so-called management councils. In addition, there are experiences of participatory budgeting at the municipal level in some cities.
Country	**Chile**
Opportunities for participation	National and sub-national elections regularly held since the return to democracy. Referenda at the national and sub-national levels are stipulated in the constitution. However, the former can only refer to constitutional reform projects, and only under fairly restrictive conditions. Only one referendum—and at the municipal level—has been held in the last two decades. There are no mechanisms for citizen initiatives.
Elections and referenda	Abstention rates since 1990 have averaged 10 per cent in national elections. Participation is also very high in municipal elections: 70 per cent of the electorate voted in the only municipal referendum held in the last two decades.
Parties and associations	Roughly 50 per cent of the electorate expresses some partisan affiliation. Party structures are quite closed, with elites adopting the major decisions and little room for internal democracy. Almost 14 per cent of the workers are union members. There is a wide array of other civil society organizations (more than 80,000).
Non-conventional participation	Labour conflicts are relatively scarce, compared to the regional context. There have been increasingly important student mobilizations in the last couple of years, with some episodes of political violence.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There are various opportunities for popular participation in the policymaking process at the municipal and regional levels (for example, economic councils and participatory budgeting). Mechanisms for deliberative democracy, however, have rarely been used since the democratic restoration.
Country	**Colombia**
Opportunities for participation	National and sub-national elections regularly held. Referenda are stipulated in the constitution, although have been rarely held in the last decade (only once in 1993). Procedures allowing citizen initiatives exist, but are very unusual due to highly restrictive conditions.
Elections and referenda	Turnout levels in presidential and congressional elections are among the lowest in the region, averaging less than 50 per cent over the last three election cycles. Abstention rate in the last referendum (2003) was close to 75 per cent. Abstention is particularly high among the youth.
Parties and associations	Roughly 50 per cent of the electorate expresses some partisan affiliation. Recent polls show that less than 25 per cent of the citizens belong to civic or political organizations, and less than 5 per cent of the workers are union members. In contrast, almost 60 per cent of the population participates in activities organized by churches/religious associations.

Non-conventional participation	Social protest increased considerably during the 2000s, with the highest number of protests in the last 50 years. Violent forms of protest (mostly by the FARC), have declined substantially over the same period. Increasing influence of NGOs in social and political life.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There is a wide variety of mechanisms available for citizen participation. However, citizens and social organizations basically take part in debates, rather than in the actual adoption or implementation of political decisions. Moreover, although these mechanisms do exist, citizens know little about them and use them even less. Deliberative democracy is even less developed and used.
Country	**Costa Rica**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held. Referenda are established in the constitution, but only one referendum has been celebrated (in 2007). Procedures allowing citizen initiative exist only at the national—not sub-national (for example, municipal)—level.
Elections and referenda	Consistent increase in the levels of abstention in the last two decades, from less than 20 per cent to more than 30 per cent on average in national elections. Abstention at the municipal level exceeds 75 per cent.
Parties and associations	Marked decrease in the levels of partisanship in recent decades. Participation within political parties is limited, even though the electoral code requires a minimum level of intraparty democracy. Religious associations have an important presence, while only 10–14 per cent of the population belongs to trade unions.
Non-conventional participation	The last few decades saw an increase in the incidence of political protests. At the same time, non-conventional forms of participation are facing increasing legal restrictions (for example, the 2004 reform of the Penal Code).
Policies and deliberative democracy	There have been some initiatives fostering citizen participation in policymaking and deliberative democracy. In practice, however, most of these initiatives have had null results due to the lack of political backup or will to implement the resulting proposals. In general, authorities have limited the practical importance of these initiatives.
Country	**Ecuador**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held. National and local referenda are established in the constitution, as well as procedures regulating citizen initiatives.
Elections and referenda	Abstention rates in the last elections and referenda have ranged from 25–35 per cent, although voter turnout in the 2013 parliamentary elections reached 80 per cent (81 per cent for presidential elections)
Parties and associations	There is virtually no information about the prevalence of political and civic participation in the country. Labour unions, sport and student associations are the most common forms of civic participation. Candidate selection is done though open primaries.
Non-conventional participation	In the last 15 years, non-conventional forms of participation have become relatively more common than conventional forms. Roughly 30 per cent of the population has taken part in such non-conventional forms of participation, with a strong presence of indigenous and young citizens. The 1990s were especially marked by protests and social conflicts in the country, which even led to the removal of three presidents. Indigenous groups have recently opposed President Correa's attempt to prosecute protesters.

Policies and deliberative democracy	Popular initiative and citizen participation at the local and national levels are considered in the constitution. Participatory budgets are one of the most relevant forms of deliberative democracy.
Country	**El Salvador**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held for the last three decades. The institution of the referendum is not stipulated in the constitution, except regarding issues involving Central American political integration. Citizen initiative does not exist either, although citizen petitions are possible at the municipal level.
Elections and referenda	Turnout rates are relatively low, since abstention rates in the last four national elections have always exceeded 30 per cent, with a strikingly low 28 per cent voter turnout in the 2003 parliamentary elections
Parties and associations	Around 30 per cent of the electorate expresses some partisan affinity. Participation/internal democracy within parties is still very low. About 60 per cent of the population takes part in religious associations. Other forms of civic participation are much less prevalent.
Non-conventional participation	Very low incidence of political protests and other non-conventional forms of participation (the lowest among the countries under study).
Policies and deliberative democracy	No forms of deliberative democracy are formally recognized.
Country	**Guatemala**
Opportunities for participation	Elections regularly held at the national and sub-national levels. There are also advisory referenda at the national and municipal levels. However, no referenda have been held in the last decade. Citizen initiatives can only take place regarding constitutional reforms.
Elections and referenda	Abstention rates are typically high (30–45 per cent in the last three elections). Participation in referenda is generally even lower: less than 20 per cent in the last two.
Parties and associations	It is one of the countries with the lowest levels of partisanship: less than 20 per cent of voters express a partisan affiliation. Party structures are very closed/undemocratic, and thus only a small minority of the electorate belongs to a party. Membership in religious associations is very high (70 per cent of the population), but other forms of civic participation are relatively marginal. The only exception is indigenous (Mayan) associations.
Non-conventional participation	Non-conventional forms of participation are also uncommon (Guatemala is one of the countries with lower participation rates in this regard). However, there have been some massive and important strikes/demonstrations in the last decade.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There are no mechanisms for deliberative democracy. However, there are some mechanisms allowing for some degree of citizen participation in the decision-making process, especially regarding development policies.
Country	**Mexico**
Opportunities for participation	Elections regularly held at the national and sub-national levels. Citizens are required to 'lead an honest way of life' in order to vote, which can be used as a barrier to participation. The institution of referendum is not recognized at the federal level; these mechanisms are regulated by each state's constitution/legislation. Seven states have no referendum provisions. Mechanisms channelling citizen initiative also do not exist in six states. In practice, referenda and citizen initiatives have had limited application and/or relevance.

Elections and referenda	Turnout varied between 44 and 63 per cent in the last three federal elections
Parties and associations	Sustained decrease in the proportion of partisan identifiers over the last two decades. Still, almost 65 per cent of the electorate expresses some partisan affinity. However, less than 8 per cent belong to a political party. Participation in civic organizations is also very low: only 20 per cent of the electorate are members of political/social organizations, and less than 10 per cent are union members. These figures are below the regional average.
Non-conventional participation	Low incidence in non-conventional forms of participation. Occasional political mobilizations (for example, protesting against electoral fraud) have taken place, but these have been essentially isolated episodes. In general, labour unions, farmer organizations and indigenous movements have gradually lost relevance in the political life last two decades.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There have been several important initiatives fostering popular participation in the policymaking process, especially regarding health and regional development issues, as well as instances of deliberative democracy. However, these are—to a large extent—merely formal mechanisms, with few tangible results. Moreover, they have frequently favoured clientelist practices.

Country	**Nicaragua**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held since the 1990s. Referenda are established in the constitution, but No referenda have been held in the last 30 years. Since 1997, citizen initiatives are also acknowledged in the legislation.
Elections and referenda	Turnout rates fluctuate around 70 per cent in national elections and below 60 per cent in local ones, with a 79 per cent turnout in last presidential and parliamentary elections (2011)
Parties and associations	Two-thirds of the electorate expresses some partisan identification. About half of the population is affiliated with an association, with a predominance of religious and social associations and unions. Unions had a major role in the first years after the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) lost power. More recently, NGOs have had an important role in the fight against political/bureaucratic corruption.
Non-conventional participation	Growing incidence of non-conventional forms of participation. Violent political protests are not uncommon. Labour unions played a major role in the first years after the FSL lost power. More recently, NGOs have had an important role in the fight against political/bureaucratic corruption.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There are mechanisms for popular participation in policymaking, especially regarding development policy and at the municipal level. There are also some instances of deliberative democracy.

Country	**Paraguay**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held since the return to democracy in the 1980s. Referenda have to be authorized by Congress, and can be either binding or consultative. There have been no referenda in the last three legislative periods. Mechanisms channelling citizen initiatives exist at the national and municipal levels, and cover a wide array of policy areas.
Elections and referenda	Average turnout rate in the last three national and municipal elections was around 60 per cent
Parties and associations	70 per cent of voters declare that they belong to a political party. Parties are required by law to elect their candidates through internal elections. Other forms of intraparty participation are more restricted. Around a quarter of the population belongs to civic associations. Religious associations prevail, while union membership ranges between 7–15 per cent of active workers.

Non-conventional participation	Peasant movements have a considerable influence in political life.
Policies and deliberative democracy	There are few mechanisms for popular participation in policymaking and few instances of deliberative democracy. Lack of interest on the part of political actors and lack of tradition have hindered progress in this direction.
Country	**Peru**
Opportunities for participation	Elections at the national and sub-national levels regularly held since the end of Fujimori's government in the nineties. Referenda can only involve constitutional and legal matters—for example, no referenda on basic human rights or taxation. Very few referenda have been held, the last one in 2005. There are also some procedures to channel citizen initiatives (for example, petitions, revocation of elected officials, etc.).
Elections and referenda	Absenteeism in the last three national elections was always below 20 per cent There is no information regarding sub-national races and referenda.
Parties and associations	Although there is little data available, partisan identification is very low and decreasing. Participation in civil associations is also low in the regional context: only one-third of the population belongs to regional associations, while less than one-sixth are members of social or sport organizations. Union membership is even lower.
Non-conventional participation	Political protests have been quite common, at least since the Fujimori government. Most of the social conflicts are related to ecological, municipal and labour issues.
Policies and deliberative democracy	New potentially important mechanisms for deliberative democracy and popular participation have been recently introduced. In particular: participatory budgets and regional coordination councils, in which electors take part together with elected officials.
Country	**Uruguay**
Opportunities for participation	Federal, state and local elections regularly held since the return to democracy in the 1980s. Binding referenda and citizen initiatives at the national and municipal levels established in the constitution. Referenda have been held relatively frequently in the last two decades.
Elections and referenda	Turnout rates in the last three national elections average 90 per cent. Very high participation levels are also observed in municipal elections and referenda.
Parties and associations	Even though there are no official statistics, party membership is believed to be relatively low. Since the last constitutional reform (1996), all parties elect their presidential candidates in internal elections. About 30 per cent of the population belongs to civil organizations, while roughly 5 per cent are union members. The most important civil associations are the unions, the business chambers and the Catholic Church.
Non-conventional participation	The incidence of civil society organizations is rather weak. Labour strikes are quite frequent.
Policies and deliberative democracy	Some states have participatory budgeting provisions. However, participatory budgets are restricted to specific—and dwindling—areas. There are also some initiatives fostering participation regarding health programmes.

Country	Venezuela
Opportunities for participation	Federal, state and local elections regularly held. Referenda at national and sub-national levels are stipulated in the constitution. These can be consultative, binding or revocatory. Referenda have been frequently held during Chavez's government. The constitution also establishes various alternative procedures for channelling citizen initiatives.
Elections and referenda	Abstention rates have ranged from 20 to 25 per cent in the last three presidential elections. Rates are typically higher in legislative races. Absenteeism in the last referenda fluctuated around 30 per cent.
Parties and associations	There are no data on party membership. Labour unions were traditionally among the most important civil organizations. Today, less than 20 per cent of workers are union members. There are marked divisions within the labour movement between pro- and anti-Chavez unions, which has substantially undermined their role and incidence in the political life.
Non-conventional participation	nd
Policies and deliberative democracy	nd

Political Competition

Country	Argentina
Between political/ societal actors	Large number of political parties. However, this is due more to electoral incentives than to the need to represent competing ideological/political interests. Equitable media access. Increasing fragmentation observed in the last couple of elections, coupled with a trends towards coalition formation.
Within political/societal actors	Selection of presidential candidates is legally required to be conducted through internal elections, although some violations of this requirement have been reported by the press. Relatively high incidence of the party leader in the internal elections. Low turnover rates.
Output side	Frequent alternation in power since the return to democracy. This trend, however, has somewhat declined in the last ten years.

Country	Bolivia
Between political/ societal actors	The effective number of parties has fluctuated between two and six in the last two decades, with a downward trend in the last two elections. Morales' party, the MAS, gathered more than 50 per cent of the vote in these two elections—the first time in history any party obtained such a large share of the vote. This put an end to a period of high electoral volatility in the 1990s. The main cleavage structuring party competition today is based around ethnic/cultural cleavages, with programmatic/ideological dimensions playing a minor role. Public funding for political parties was eliminated in 2008, a situation that is exceptional in the region, where parties typically receive public funds in proportion to their electoral support.
Within political/societal actors	The internal functioning of political parties is regulated by law. However, in a context of weak institutionalization and strong personalism, these norms are rarely applied, and political leaders exert marked influence in the internal decision-making process. The emergence of new political forces and leaders after the social mobilizations in the early 1990s has led to considerable turnover among political elites.

Output side	There has been considerable alternation in power since the democratic restoration. During the 1980s and 1990s, a period in which typically no party gathered 25 per cent of the vote, five different coalitions (although usually with some of the same members) occupied the executive. The rise of MAS in 2005 marked a drastic change in the political landscape.
Country	**Brazil**
Between political/ societal actors	There are 29 parties registered, 15 of them with representation in the Senate and 22 in the lower house. Despite this fragmentation, in practice only two parties, the Workers' Party (PT) and the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), have real chances of winning the presidential election. The ideological dimension is increasingly less important in structuring electoral competition. Media access is proportional to the number of seats each party has in Congress.
Within political/societal actors	Parties are essentially self-regulated, and internal (primary) elections are not required to select the candidates. Party leaders thus have considerable influence in the internal decision-making process (for example, selecting candidates, building national and local alliances, etc.)
Output side	Since the end of military rule and the democratization process in 1985, Brazil has witnessed constant alternation of government
Country	**Chile**
Between political/ societal actors	There are 14 political parties registered. Electoral competition is, however, structured around two main coalitions that have dominated political life since the democratic restoration. Electoral competition takes place both within and between coalitions. The centre-left coalition is characterized by a fairly high degree of programmatic cohesion among its members. Relationships within the centre-right coalition are more conflictive. Electoral volatility has been traditionally low, although there have been some alternations in the leadership within the coalitions. Equitable access to the media is expressly regulated by law.
Within political/societal actors	Parties are self-regulated. There have been complaints about the lack of transparency in intraparty practices, especially regarding candidate selection. There is some incidence of leaders in the selection of candidates—especially presidential and Senate candidates, less so in the case of representatives.
Output side	Alternation in power is quite frequent in municipal elections. In presidential elections, alternation was only observed in the last election, when the centre-left coalition lost for the first time since the return to democracy.
Country	**Colombia**
Between political/ societal actors	After the collapse of the traditional bipartisan system—dominated by the Liberal and Conservative parties—the political scenario has exhibited increased fragmentation and volatility and an increasing number of effective parties. Political allegiances and partisan identification have waned considerably during the last decade. There is currently a wide variety of electoral options, most of them towards the right or centre-right of the ideological spectrum. Media access depends on parties' financial resources, although all parties are guaranteed a minimum amount of airtime by public broadcasters.
Within political/societal actors	Mechanisms regulating internal democracy and candidate selection are not established by law. Many—though not all—parties select their candidates through primary elections. The last decade has witnessed substantive and increasing turnover among party leaders and candidates.

Output side	Alternation in power has been very common in the last 20 years. However, during Uribe's first government, presidential re-election was approved, and in 2009 a new constitutional change allowing two consecutive re-elections was proposed. During the last three presidential terms, the new governing coalition—dominated by Primero Colombia—has sought to become the hegemonic political organization in the country.
Country	**Costa Rica**
Between political/societal actors	Historically a bipartisan party system, the weakening of the two traditional parties has led to an increase in the number of political alternatives since 2002. This has been coupled with increased electoral volatility and a moderate increase in ideological polarization, which had traditionally been very low. Airtime distribution is regulated by market conditions (that is, parties' expected vote share and budget), and thus is not necessarily equitable.
Within political/societal actors	Parties are essentially self-regulated. Primaries have been frequently held to select presidential candidates.
Output side	Alternation in power is quite frequent. No party has won more than two consecutive elections, although only two parties have occupied the presidential seat in the last 15 years.
Country	**Ecuador**
Between political/societal actors	Highly fragmented party system, with eight parties competing in the last presidential election—although two of them gathered almost 60 per cent of the vote—and an even higher number in legislative races. Electoral volatility is quite high, and the ideological/programmatic structure of the parties rather weak.
Within political/societal actors	Candidate selection is done through party primaries. Relevant political actors—for example, the president—can sometimes exert influence in the selection process, and turnover among political elites is relatively scarce.
Output side	Alternation in power is quite common, in part due to the frequent institutional breakdowns and to the fragmented/unstable party system.
Country	**El Salvador**
Between political/societal actors	The effective number of parties has remained stable at around three for the last two decades. Currently, each of the two major parties gathers 40 per cent of the vote. Electoral volatility has been steadily decreasing in the last 20 years. Inequality in the distribution of airtime is notorious.
Within political/societal actors	The electoral law does not regulate the within-party candidate selection process. Party structures are fairly closed, and there are no internal democracy mechanisms within the major parties. There is little turnover among party elites.
Output side	Alternation in power took place in 2009 after 20 years of uninterrupted rule by ARENA. This was also the first time a leftist party won the national elections.
Country	**Guatemala**
Between political/societal actors	Large number of political options, especially on the left of the ideological spectrum. While centre-right options are clearly defined and identified, fragmentation dominates among leftist parties. Electoral volatility—and, in particular, volatility among post-electoral coalitions—undermines governability and political decision-making. More generally, the party system is marked by substantive fragility/instability and pervasive floor crossing. Equitable media access among the parties.

Within political/societal actors	Party structures are fairly closed, and there are no internal democracy mechanisms within the major parties. Party leaders exert significant influences in the intraparty decision-making process.
Output side	Alternation in power has characterized all elections following the return to democracy.

Country	**Mexico**
Between political/societal actors	Seven parties compete in federal elections, three of which have serious electoral chances. The 1988 election marked an important change from a single dominant-party system to an increasingly competitive electoral scenario. Programmatic/ideological positions have been somewhat erratic among the major parties; currently there is a marked difference between the centre-left party (PRD) and the two other viable options (PRI and PAN). There has been considerable electoral volatility in the last decade due essentially to fluctuating coalition formation, coupled with more competitive elections. Recent normative reforms have sought to make media access more equitable among contenders.
Within political/societal actors	Party structures are fairly closed, and the mechanisms for internal democracy are not regulated. Irregularities in the candidate-selection process are frequent. Party leaders essentially monopolize the internal decision-making process.
Output side	The 2000 election marked the first alternation in power after 70 years of PRI rule. Elections have become more competitive, and the potential for alternation has increased in the last decade.

Country	**Nicaragua**
Between political/societal actors	Three parties gather more than 95 per cent of the vote. Steady increase in the competitiveness of elections in the last 30 years. The party system is one of the most ideologically polarized in the region.
Within political/societal actors	The electoral law does not regulate the within-party candidate selection process. Candidates are frequently nominated by the parties' elites.
Output side	Frequent alternation in power, with four winning the presidential elections since 1984.

Country	**Paraguay**
Between political/societal actors	The number of parties competing in the national elections is seven; the effective number of parties in the last election was five. These parties cover the whole ideological spectrum, with a relatively fragmented left. Still, two parties have dominated the political life since the democratic restoration (PC and PL). None of them has a clear ideological/programmatic cohesion. Rather, they operate as a coalition of different political movements/organizations. There has been some diversification in the electoral demand in the last couple of elections. Given the close connection between the media and some political parties, airtime distribution is not equitable.
Within political/societal actors	There are no legal or institutional mechanisms regulating internal party competition. Irregularities in primary elections are common. Marked influence of party leaders/machines in the selection of candidates. Turnover among elites is frequent in the major parties.
Output side	Alternation in power is quite frequent at the sub-national level. However, at the national level, alternation took place only in the 2008 elections.

Country	Peru
Between political/ societal actors	There are 27 registered political parties covering the whole ideological spectrum, from guerrilla supporters to pro-militarist right wing. Electoral volatility has been very high since the democratic restoration. High polarization and fragmentation and weak structural organization have characterized the party system. Airtime distribution among parties is equitable regarding the public media, but large inequalities persist when it comes to private broadcasters.
Within political/societal actors	Mechanisms regulating internal democracy/candidate selection are not legally stipulated. Few parties hold internal elections, and irregularities in the selection process are rather common. Leaders exert considerable influence in the internal functioning of their parties.
Output side	Alternation in power is extremely high: seven parties have won the presidential elections since 1980. Presidential re-election is not allowed.

Country	Uruguay
Between political/ societal actors	Four parties have had parliamentary representation since 1994. Electoral competition takes place both between and within parties (that is, among factions). The introduction of the *ballotage* in 1999 has led to a system with two well-defined blocks: a left-wing party, and two centre-right parties. These two parties dominated the political life throughout much of the 20th century, until the leftist coalition *Frente Amplio* won the 2004 election. Electoral volatility in the last 20 years has been one of the lowest in the region, while ideological polarization is at the regional average. Airtime distribution in the state-owned media is required by law, but no regulation exists regarding private broadcasters. In practice, the ruling party tends to enjoy some advantage due to the existence of state-owned networks and the pressures it can exert through the allocation of public advertising.
Within political/societal actors	Presidential candidates are chosen in open internal (primary) elections. Party leaders have some influence in the nomination of presidential candidates. However, the leader's favoured party has frequently lost in the primaries. The influence of the leaders is more notorious in the definition of the closed lists competing in congressional races. Only party members participate in the election of party authorities.
Output side	Three parties have held the executive since the return to democracy. Alternation is also frequent in most sub-national elections, the exception being the state capital, where the leftist *Frente Amplio* has been in power for more than 20 years.

Country	Venezuela
Between political/ societal actors	The historically bipartisan system changed dramatically in the 1990s. The traditional parties (AD, COPEI) essentially disappeared, Chavez' party emerged and consolidated as the dominant (and virtually only) political force until 2010. Parties have become highly personalist and weakly institutionalized entities, with a strong polarization between the governing party and the opposition. The ruling party has been repeatedly accused of using state funds to finance electoral campaigns and of monopolizing state-owned media.
Within political/societal actors	While the electoral legislation stipulates mechanisms for intraparty democracy, internal elections are rarely held and party leaders exert considerable influence in the decision-making process. This is especially marked in the case of the ruling party. There is virtually no turnover among the ruling party elite (PSUV), which in the last decade has been virtually the only functioning party.

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Output side	Since 1999, when Chavez was elected president, there has been no alternation at the national level and fairly little at the sub-national level. Indefinite presidential re-election was introduced in the 2009 constitutional reform.

Freedom

Country	**Argentina**
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights (life, prohibition of torture and forced labour, etc.) are recognized in the country's constitution. Numerous investigations and prosecutions regarding human rights violations during the last military dictatorship have been conducted in the last two decades.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights (privacy, religious freedom, self-determination, access to courts, etc.) recognized in the constitution. There is, however, a marked confrontation between the current government and some media corporations that could, to some extent, undermine press freedom.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	**Bolivia**
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. A reduction in state-sponsored violence and human rights violations has been verified in the last couple of years. The gap between the protection of rights on paper and in practice, however, is still considerable. For instance, episodes of torture/physical violence on the part of the security forces are still not uncommon. Lynching is still being applied as part of the indigenous justice system. A non-negligible number of native Bolivians are subject to slave-like labour conditions. Investigation and prosecution of human rights violations during the last military dictatorship have only recently begun.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights (privacy, religious freedom, self-determination, access to courts, etc.) recognized in the constitution. Improvements in the protection of basic civil rights have been observed over the last decade. However, discrimination against women and indigenous people persists, long detentions on remand are still prevalent and threats to freedom of expression are not isolated.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	**Brazil**
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. The gap between the normative protection and actual practice, however, is still considerable. For instance, episodes of torture/policy brutality are frequently denounced, and 20,000-40,000 workers are living in conditions all too similar to slavery, especially in rural areas. There have been marked efforts to investigate and prosecute human rights violations during the last military dictatorship.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. Discrimination against black population—especially regarding their relationship with the justice system—is notorious.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Chile
Personal dignity	The definition of torture in the national legislation is fairly restrictive; international conventions against torture have only been partially incorporated into the domestic law. The death penalty was abolished in 2001. The last 20 years have witnessed important advances in the investigation/prosecution of human rights violations during the autocratic period.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. Some of the most important deficits in this regard are the discriminatory treatment of the indigenous communities—more specifically, the criminalization of indigenous social movements and protests—and the discrimination against homosexuals.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Colombia
Personal dignity	Respect for individual rights—especially the right to law—is very weak. Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world and has one of the highest murder rates. Kidnapping and tortures are also unusually high, even compared to the regional average.
Civil rights	Restrictions to freedom of expression, press freedom and mobility, and the existence of a large number of refugees due to the internal conflict seriously undermine civic rights. Yet, minority rights—for example, for indigenous people—are guaranteed by law.
Political rights	On the one hand, political rights enjoy full protection and the procedures and mechanisms for popular participation in politics have been expanded considerably—for instance, following the 1991 constitutional reform. On the other hand, citizens are commonly subject to intimidation, violence and pressures, severely limiting political rights in practice.

Country	Costa Rica
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. While the protection of some basic rights is still incomplete (for example, access to health care, access to clean water in some rural areas), respect for personal dignity is quite high in the country.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. Some of the main deficits in this regard are the poor prison conditions, the discrimination against indigenous people, and a limited legal protection of freedom of expression. Also, some isolated episodes of abuses of power by the security forces have been denounced by international and non-governmental organizations.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Ecuador
Personal dignity	The country has signed various international human rights treaties, and internal laws protect fundamental human and personal rights. Unlike in other countries in the region, no amnesty was granted to perpetrators of human rights violations during the most recent dictatorship. Yet, several cases of torture and forced disappearance—usually attributed to the security forces—have been denounced even after the democratic restoration, without leading to prosecution/sanctions.

Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights (privacy, religious freedom, self-determination, access to courts, etc.) recognized in the constitution. During President Correa's tenure, however, attempts to undermine freedom of expression and press freedom by the government have been reported. Confrontation between the government and the media has been common throughout President Correa's administration.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.
Country	**El Salvador**
Personal dignity	Although fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution, there is a marked gap between normative and actual protection. Although torture is a criminal offence, its legal definition has been subject to criticism by international organizations. The death penalty still exists in military courts. Torture/physical violence by the security forces is not uncommon, and these episodes are virtually never investigated/prosecuted. Similarly, investigation/prosecution of human rights' violations during the civil conflict is still very limited.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. However, some of these rights can be suspended/limited under certain circumstances (for example, fight against youth gangs). Also, practices like protracted retention of individuals who are on remand are prevalent. There is also evidence of discrimination against less educated/affluent people by the justice system.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.
Country	**Guatemala**
Personal dignity	Although fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the constitution, there is a marked gap between normative and actual protection. Although torture is a criminal offence, its legal definition has been subject to criticism by international organizations. The military takes part in the fight against crime, assuming an active role in internal security. Similarly, investigation/ prosecution of human rights violations during the civil conflict is still very limited. International organizations have underscored deficits in the prosecution of sexual offences and in the professionalization of the security forces, and have noted that the country has still not signed important international agreements regarding torture/ human rights violations.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. However, discriminatory practices against indigenous/rural populations are quite common. In addition, budget constraints and the low quality of the justices leads to irregular situations/practices in the justice system (for example, people detained for long periods without trial, arbitrary imprisonment, etc.). Torture and abuse of power by the security forces are not uncommon.
Political rights	No formal limitations to fundamental political rights. However, the difficulty in showing up at the polls in rural areas determines that a non-negligible proportion of these voters are *de facto* disenfranchised. In addition, discrimination against the indigenous population is not uncommon.

Country	Mexico
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. However, there is a considerable gap between normative protection and actual practice. For instance, international treaties are not binding at the sub-national level, and even constitutional provisions are not effectively applied in some parts of the territory. The death penalty was only eliminated in 2005. Rural workers in some areas are subject to forced labour. Investigations and prosecutions of human rights violations during the long PRI rule have been quite limited.
Civil rights	Harassment of political and social activists is not uncommon, and arbitrary detentions are not uncommon. Gender violence and discrimination against homosexuals, women and indigenous people are widespread. Abuses of power by security forces are relatively frequent. Freedom of press/information is also severely limited in practice.
Political rights	No formal limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Nicaragua
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. The gap between the normative protection and actual practice, however, is still considerable. For instance, violence against homosexuals is a relatively common phenomenon, as are torture/abuses of power by the security forces. Similarly, several reports mention the existence of female domestic workers in slave-like labour conditions. Also, there are cases of people imprisoned for debts.
Civil rights	Arbitrary detentions and prolonged detentions without trial are some of the most visible failures of the justice system. More generally, there are notorious deficits in the effective protection of the civil rights of less educated/affluent people and of the indigenous population. Violations of freedom of expression/information are prevalent as well.
Political rights	No formal limitations to fundamental political rights. However, electoral fraud, intervention of government officials in the election process, etc., undermine the effective exercise of political rights.

Country	Paraguay
Personal dignity	Torture and forced disappearing have only been considered criminal offences since 1998. This has somewhat limited prosecution of violations of human rights that took place during the last autocratic government. Some evidence indicates that some rural/indigenous populations may be subject to slave-like labour conditions.
Civil rights	Some of the main deficits in this regard are the limited freedom of expression/information in the country, the existence of poor prison conditions and long detentions without trial, the ample discretionary power enjoyed by the security forces—leading to cases of torture/abuses of power—and the poor effective protection enjoyed by workers and inhabitants of rural areas. Discrimination against homosexuals and sex workers has been repeatedly denounced.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Peru
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. However, only certain segments/classes—that is, the more educated/affluent citizens—have their basic rights guaranteed in practice.
Civil rights	Fundamental civil rights recognized in the constitution. However, due to the mixture of inefficiency and corruption, only more affluent/educated citizens have their civil rights protected in practice. This is clear, for instance, regarding the treatment citizens receive from the justice system.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Uruguay
Personal dignity	Fundamental human and personal rights are recognized in the country's constitution. Episodes of torture/abuses of power by the police are not uncommon, and detention conditions are very deficient. There is also evidence of poor labour conditions for some service jobs, especially among immigrants. Some advances in the investigation/prosecution of the human rights violations that took place during the dictatorial period have taken place during the last two governments.
Civil rights	Some of the main deficits in this regard are the appalling conditions of the country's prisons, torture/abuses of power by the police, extended periods of detention without trial, episodes of discrimination against blacks and homosexuals, and a fragile press freedom.
Political rights	No limitations to fundamental political rights. No evidence of substantive restrictions in practice.

Country	Venezuela
Personal dignity	Growing incidence of paramilitary groups in the last decade, and increasing engagement of military-like groups (for example, Milicia Nacional Boliviariana) in internal security. The escalation of political conflicts/polarization in the last decade has led to severe episodes of violence, torture and abuses of power by members of the security forces—including extrajudicial executions. Torture is not a criminal offence in the country's legal system.
Civil rights	Important normative advances in the recognition of some basic civil rights in recent years. At the same time, harassment of political and social activists and members of the opposition have become quite common in the last decade. Torture/abuses of power of the security forces have been repeatedly denounced. Political pressures and intimidation of journalists and government abuse of its control of broadcasting frequencies also undermine press freedom. Partisanship of the judiciary *de facto* undermines due process. Also, protracted detention without trial is widespread.
Political rights	Basic political rights formally recognized in the legislation. However, members or supporters of the opposition have been discriminated against in the exercise of their political or civil rights (for example, through the application of the *lista Tascón*). Several mechanisms—legal or otherwise—have been introduce to hinder the exercise of political rights by the opposition, and allegations of electoral fraud have been pervasive throughout Chavez' government.

Equality

Country	Argentina
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is among the lowest in the region (Gini Index is approximately 0.48), with 13-18 per cent of the population below the poverty line.
Existence of discriminations	Afro-descendants, homosexuals, indigenous people and women suffer economic, political and social discrimination. The National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism was created in 1997 in order to guarantee and protect the rights of people facing discrimination.
Social, economic and cultural rights	The welfare state is stronger than in most other countries in the region, although in practice this varies substantially across states. Despite relatively advanced labour regulations, union members are sometimes faced with unfair labour practices (harassment in the workplace, wrongful terminations, unlawful breaches of contract, etc.).

Country	Bolivia
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is one of the highest in the region (Gini Index = 0.56). More than half of the population is below the poverty line. Poverty is especially high in rural areas.
Existence of discriminations	Discrimination against the indigenous population is structural, present throughout the country's history. Racist manifestations are present in economic and political life as well as in the public discourse, and have frequently resulted in physical attacks. Similarly, sexist and homophobic conduct is entrenched in the society, and ranges from work discrimination to physical aggression. There is also some degree of discrimination against immigrants, especially those from Peru. The government of Evo Morales has set the fight against discrimination and racism as one of its priorities.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Unions face several restrictions/limitations—for example, public employees and peasants cannot become union members in practice. The new labour legislation—not approved yet—seeks to eliminate some of these restrictions. The right to strike is also relatively limited in practice. Several initiatives/policies have been implemented in recent governments to facilitate citizens' access to basic needs. Some of these have been very successful (for instance, decreasing infant mortality and improving education indicators). However, other problems persist—for example, health coverage is still insufficient and child labour is still widespread.

Country	Brazil
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is very high. Brazil's Gini Index has fallen steadily in the last decade, but remains high: in 2010, it reached 0.53—the lowest number in over 50 years but one of the highest in the region nonetheless. Poverty affects more than a quarter of the population, and it is considerably higher in some geographic areas (for example, Northeast).
Existence of discriminations	Discrimination against Afro-descendants is evident in practice: they are paid less, have poorer access to education and are often victims of violence. Significant income inequalities impose considerable discrimination against women as well. Women are paid less and have poorer job prospects, facing discrimination even in the public sector (in many positions of public administration, armed forces and police). Some laws/initiatives to improve the situation of these groups facing discrimination have been adopted since the Lula government (for example, the 2005 National Women's Policy Plan, the 2010 Statute of Racial Equality).

Social, economic and cultural rights	There are several pieces of national and international legislation that regulate the rules of workplace safety and health. However, Brazil has still not ratified ILO Convention 87, and union membership is somewhat restricted, since no more than one trade union representing a particular professional or economic category in the same territorial base may be created. A wide array of social policies has been implemented in the last decade to improve citizens' access to housing, education, and health and to reduce the incidence of poverty. Health and education indicators, however, are still below those of neighboring Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.
Country	**Chile**
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is relatively high, with a Gini Index of approximately 0.55. However, inequality has been decreasing in the last two decades. The decrease in poverty since 1990 has also been impressive: currently less than 14 per cent of the population is under the poverty line, the lowest figure for the region.
Existence of discriminations	The indigenous population suffers economic, political and social discrimination. Despite marked improvements in the situation of women (especially regarding their job prospects), gender discrimination is still present. Also, immigrants from Bolivia and Peru are discriminated in their job opportunities and access to some services (for example, banking). While, as noted, legislation/measures have been adopted in in the last two decades to improve the situation of women, efforts to reduce discrimination against immigrants and indigenous people have been less consistent.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Despite labour regulations, violations of workers' rights are not uncommon and are rarely sanctioned by the authorities. The right to strike is also considerably more restricted than in many other countries in the region. Several social policies have been implemented in the last 20 years to guarantee citizens' access to basic needs. Despite these advances, child labour is still relatively high, and the number of doctors relative to the population size is quite low.
Country	**Colombia**
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is very high (Gini Index = 0.58) and has remained relatively stable during the last 20 years. Almost 46 per cent of the population is poor. Inequality and poverty are geographically concentrated and very unevenly distributed across provinces (*departamentos*).
Existence of discriminations	While the civil rights of ethnic minorities are protected by law—since the 1991 reform—discrimination against Afro-Americans and indigenous people persists. Ethnic minorities have been disproportionately affected by the internal conflict; indigenous populations have been victimized by paramilitary groups and expelled from their lands. Poverty is also higher among ethnic minorities than among the rest of the population. Gender discrimination in the workplace is also a relevant concern.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Informality is prevalent in the labour market (60 per cent), and has actually increased over time. Furthermore, the flexibility of labour market regulations and the absence of welfare programmes determine that the situation of informal and unemployed workers is critical. Labour unions also face difficult conditions, since Colombia is one of the most dangerous countries for labour activists, according to the International Trade Union Confederation. More generally, social and welfare programmes in the country are minimal.

Country	Costa Rica
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality has increased over the last decade: the Gini Index rose from 0.41 in 2000 to 0.44 in 2010. Still, it is among the lowest in the region and definitely below the average for Central America. Between 16-21 per cent of the population is poor.
Existence of discriminations	Despite legislation that favours the recognition of indigenous people's rights, they face economic discrimination. There is also some degree of economic and political discrimination of the Afro-descendants. Educational and labour discrimination against women is also present, linked to some cultural values of the society. Some relevant measures have been adopted to improve the situation of women, for example, increasing women political representation. Immigrants—especially those from Nicaragua—are also subject to substantive discrimination, sometimes promoted by the political establishment.
Social, economic and cultural rights	The welfare state is stronger than in most other Central American countries. There is an important set of public policies regarding labour conditions, housing, health, education, satisfaction of basic needs, etc. Even though economic difficulties have undermined the extension or effectiveness of these policies, the country's situation in terms of the protection of economic, social and cultural rights is among the best in the region.

Country	Ecuador
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality—as measured by the Gini Index—has declined over the last five years, from 0.5 to 0.45. The proportion of the population in extreme poverty is 14 per cent. Poverty disproportionately affects indigenous people.
Existence of discriminations	Economic and cultural discrimination against indigenous people and Afro-Ecuadorians is prevalent. There are also episodes of gender discrimination and, in some cases, xenophobia (against Colombian and Cuban immigrants). Although the constitution established National Councils in charge of implementing measures aimed at reducing/fighting discrimination, there is little information about their work in practice.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Trade unions face no restrictions, and there are no limitations to the right to strike. Labour and social security legislation in force protects basic social and economic rights (minimum wage, unemployment allowance, pensions, disability benefits, public health programmes). However, child labour is still widespread.

Country	El Salvador
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	One of the countries with the lowest income inequality in Central America (Gini Index around 0.48), even before the steady decline in inequality experienced in the last decade. Slightly less than 40 per cent of the population, however, is poor, although this figure varies considerably across geographical areas.
Existence of discriminations	Indigenous people are discriminated against in economic and cultural terms. Provisions against discrimination are not contained in the legislation, and the country has not ratified the ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Some measures aimed at improving the situation of indigenous people have been adopted recently. Gender discrimination is also prevalent in family, work and social life, as is discrimination against homosexuals. Finally, immigrant workers are also subject to discriminatory practices.

Social, economic and cultural rights	Presence of the welfare state is relatively weak. In some areas, like education, performance is relatively good and improving. Yet, although basic labour regulations (for example, minimum wage, unemployment insurance) exist, unions face some limitations/restrictions to operate, and the right to strike is clearly limited. Family policies are limited, and the state plays virtually no role in areas like housing or food security, which are essentially regulated by market conditions. Health policies are scarce, and public spending in this sector is quite low; in fact, it is one of the few countries in which private spending on health services is higher than public spending.
Country	**Guatemala**
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is relatively high (Gini Index over 0.55 in the last 20 years), and more than half of the population is poor. Poverty is especially high among the indigenous people and is quite heterogeneous across areas.
Existence of discriminations	Indigenous people (roughly 40 per cent of the population) are subject to notorious discrimination, and few measures have been implemented in practice to alleviate their situation. Gender discrimination is also substantial.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Public/social policies are scarce and ineffective. Safety nets are relatively weak, especially regarding policies pertaining to the satisfaction of basic needs (housing, health).
Country	**Mexico**
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is below the regional average, with a Gini Index slightly above 0.5. The proportion of the population under the poverty line increased in the last couple of years and is currently around 46 per cent. Poverty is especially prevalent in the southern states.
Existence of discriminations	Afro-descendants and indigenous people are discriminated against in the labour market, in the education system, and in their access to health and social services. As in many patriarchal societies in Latin America, gender discrimination is also present. Finally, immigrants—coming mainly from other Central American countries—are also subject to discriminatory practices. While several laws/initiatives have been implemented in the last decade to protect the rights of women and ethnic minorities, racism is entrenched in the society.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Unfair labour practices (wrongful terminations, unlawful breaches of contract, etc.) have been repeatedly denounced before national and international organizations, and unions have frequently complained about the intervention of political actors in the unions. Public/social policies have led to important advances in the population's well-being in recent decades. Some of the main problems persist: 70 per cent of elderly adults are not covered by the pension system, disabled people have essentially no social security coverage, and the public provision of health services is largely insufficient.
Country	**Nicaragua**
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is around the regional average. Despite a declining trend in the last two decades, the Gini Index is still around 0.55. More than 50 per cent of the population is below the poverty line, with figures ranging from less than 30 per cent in the capital city to more than 80 per cent in rural areas.
Existence of discriminations	Discrimination (economic, educational and political) against Afro-descendants and homosexuals is prominent. Gender discrimination also persists, despite improvements observed since the Sandinista Revolution.

Social, economic and cultural rights	Social/public policies are extremely dependent on external/international aid. Policies aiming to improve citizens' access to housing, nutrition and to enhance labour conditions have been implemented. Relatively successful education and health policies have led to improvement in the relevant indicators over the last two decades.

Country	Paraguay
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is close to the average in the region (Gini Index is stable at around 0.5). Around 40 per cent of the population is below the poverty line.
Existence of discriminations	The indigenous population suffers from economic and political discrimination in practice. There is also gender discrimination, especially as regards income, education and job opportunities. Other groups (homosexuals, disabled) also experience various forms of discrimination in practice.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Some social policies aimed at guaranteeing access to basic needs exist on paper, but they tend to be ineffective. Recent epidemic outbreaks highlighted the inefficiency/unpreparedness of the state's health bodies.

Country	Peru
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is close to the average in the region (Gini index around 0.55). Roughly 30 per cent of the population is below the poverty line, indicating an important decrease (from almost 50 per cent) since 2004.
Existence of discriminations	Discrimination against Afro-descendants, indigenous people and women is prevalent. Discrimination and racism are entrenched in the society, and their incidence is probably among the highest in the region. Various measures and pieces of legislation against discrimination and racism have been introduced in recent decades.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Labour legislation is relatively advanced, although usually not applied—in part due to the importance of informal labour. Disability pensions do not exist. The quality of education is among the lowest in the region, despite recent reforms. Similarly, public spending in health programmes is absolutely insufficient to satisfy the needs of the population.

Country	Uruguay
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is the lowest in the region (Gini Index is 0.42). Poverty affects 20 per cent of the population, and its incidence shows a considerable decrease since the return of democracy.
Existence of discriminations	Afro-descendants are subject to diverse forms of more or less veiled discrimination in the labour market, the education system and the political life. Most Afro-descendants are among the poorest segments of society. Gender discrimination persists, and domestic violence is on the rise. Immigrant workers—mainly from the Andean region—also suffer discrimination. There are few policies aimed at addressing racism/discrimination.
Social, economic and cultural rights	The welfare state is stronger than in most other countries in the region. There are no evident restrictions affecting unions or the right of strikes, social security has high coverage levels, and programmes aimed at facilitating access to basic needs among the most vulnerable sectors of society have been implemented in the last two governments. The proportion of doctors in the population is the highest in the region—with the exception of Cuba, and new health programmes are being implemented to reduce infant mortality—already among the lowest on the continent.

Country	Venezuela
Allocation of economic, cultural, social resources	Income inequality is among the lowest in the region (Gini Index is roughly 0.43), with slightly less than 30 per cent of the population living under the poverty line. Venezuela is the country in the region with the largest decrease in poverty and income inequality over the last ten years.
Existence of discriminations	Afro-descendants and women suffer discrimination in the labour market, the education system and political life. Discrimination against homosexuals is even more marked, including repeated episodes of physical violence. HIV-positive people are also subject to discriminatory conducts/practices.
Social, economic and cultural rights	Despite advances in public/social policies, access to basic needs is still restricted among the poorest sectors, and the public provision of health services is largely insufficient. The number of doctors is still relatively low, and infant mortality is fairly high.

Responsiveness

Country	Argentina
Perceived legitimacy	Democracy is perceived as the best possible form of government by a vast majority of the population. After a decline in the confidence in democracy following the 2001 economic and political crisis, trust in democracy has risen again in the last decade. Despite concerns about corruption, the latest surveys indicate that about 40 per cent of the citizens are satisfied with the way democracy works, and more than half of them trust democratic institutions.
Constraints to responsiveness	Budgetary constraints, corruption and lack of professionalization of the political actors hinder responsiveness. Less than 10 per cent of the citizens believe that the policies implemented by political actors are for the people.

Country	Bolivia
Perceived legitimacy	The support for democracy is quite high: roughly 70 per cent of the population believes that it is the best possible form of government. However, only 34 per cent are satisfied with the way democracy works in the country.
Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints, due in part to insufficient/inability to generate tax revenues, hinders investment in social programmes. Together with the inefficient administration/management of the existing programmes and the technological backwardness of the country, this constitutes a severe obstacle for increasing responsiveness. It must be stated, however, that the majority of the population has a positive opinion about the capacity and willingness of the current president (Morales) to cater to the people's needs.

Country	Brazil
Perceived legitimacy	The majority of citizens prefer democracy to any other form of government, although 20 per cent believe that dictatorship is justified under some circumstances.
Constraints to responsiveness	Budgetary constraints, corruption, lack of infrastructure and the sheer dimensions of the country somehow limit responsiveness. There are, however, successful examples of specific policies aimed at tackling some of these obstacles, as well as some of the countries' most urgent problems (for example, zero hunger programme, introduction of e-voting to enhance participation, etc.).

Country	Chile
Perceived legitimacy	Popular support for authoritarian rule is not negligible. In particular, traits like efficiency, good management and low criminality, are linked to the memory of the dictatorship for a non-negligible segment of the population. In addition, since the democracy/authoritarianism cleavage structured party competition during much of the 1990s, support for democracy (or lack of it) is still perceived in some sense—although increasingly less so—as an expression of partisan attachment.
Constraints to responsiveness	Unlike in most of the other countries in the region, economic/budgetary constraints are not binding. Rather, restrictions to responsiveness are more related to political considerations (for example, political stalemate due in part to the binomial electoral system hindering the implementation of public policies, certain inability of the government to represent particular sectors, etc.)

Country	Colombia
Perceived legitimacy	The country has lived under democracy for the last 50 years. However, around one-third of the citizens do not believe that democracy is the best form of government, and roughly 50 per cent are disappointed with the way democracy works in the country. The state's inability to solve the endemic violence and economic problems is one of the most important causes undermining trust and satisfaction with democracy.
Constraints to responsiveness	Clientelism, corruption, the fragmented and unstable party system, and the protracted internal conflict are some of the main obstacles to responsiveness in the country.

Country	Costa Rica
Perceived legitimacy	One of the countries with the highest perceived legitimacy of democracy in the region, second only to Uruguay. Satisfaction with democratic performance has fluctuated over the years; it has remained consistently high in the regional comparison.
Constraints to responsiveness	Constraints exist due to lack of administrative/managing skills and lack of planning, rather than economic restrictions. Also, a certain increase in the 'authoritarian' style of government and a decline in political debate/bargaining might have hindered responsiveness in the last couple of years. Between 20 and 40 per cent of the population believes that policies are implemented 'for the people's well-being'.

Country	Ecuador
Perceived legitimacy	The perceived legitimacy of democracy is quite low: in the last 15 years, support for democracy has been less than 50 per cent among the population (Latinobarómetro), and less than 12 per cent of Ecuadorians believe that democracy works better than in the rest of Latin America.
Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints (high poverty rates, lack of infrastructure) are the main impediments to democratic quality.

Country	El Salvador
Perceived legitimacy	Even though the vast majority of the citizens (7 out of 10) believe democracy is the best form of government, a growing dissatisfaction with democracy has been observed in the last couple of years. Less than half of the population is satisfied with the way democracy works, and almost 40 per cent believes that the country is not very democratic.

Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints impose severe limits to responsiveness. Very low investments in essential public goods (education, health), technological backwardness and a political culture in which responsiveness is not seen as a priority of elected officials, explain the severe obstacles to implementing more responsive policies.
Country	**Guatemala**
Perceived legitimacy	Roughly 50 per cent of the population expresses support for democracy, with an increasing trend in the last five years. At the same time, however, less than 30 per cent is satisfied with the way democracy works.
Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints, coupled with the multi-ethnic composition of the population and the systematic marginalization of indigenous people, impose severe constraints on responsiveness.
Country	**Mexico**
Perceived legitimacy	Support for democracy has dropped by about 14 percentage points between 2004 and 2010. And satisfaction with democracy is quite low (less than 30 per cent) Still, more than 70 per cent prefers democracy to any other form of democracy, even though recent years have witnessed an increase of those who justify authoritarian governments under 'certain circumstances'.
Constraints to responsiveness	The prevailing view among citizens, academics and politicians is that Mexican politicians fail to represent the interests of the electorate. This failure is due in part to the electoral system/legislation. For instance, since representatives cannot be re-elected, and because their political career thus depends on whether they can move to other political offices once their term finishes, constituency service is less important than allegiance to the party leader. The budget constraints faced by regional and municipal governments, and the potential conflicts between the different government levels, also hinder responsiveness.
Country	**Nicaragua**
Perceived legitimacy	Support for democracy is similar to that in other Central American countries, below the Latin American average. Recent years have witnessed an increasing discontent with democratic performance.
Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints and the lack of education/professionalism of political elites impose notorious limits to responsiveness.
Country	**Paraguay**
Perceived legitimacy	Support for democracy is among the lowest in the region (46 per cent). Furthermore, less than 30 per cent believe that democracy works well in the country, and most citizens believe the country is not very democratic.
Constraints to responsiveness	Responsiveness has little relevance in the country's political culture, where clientelism and personal favours of the local party boss (*caudillo*) are seen as more important than efficient administration. Lack of experience/professionalism and economic constraints also hinder responsiveness.
Country	**Peru**
Perceived legitimacy	Support for democracy is around 60 per cent. Moreover, more than 50 per cent of the citizens would justify an authoritarian government under certain circumstances; this is among the highest rates in the region. The high perceived level of corruption and the lack of opportunities are the main reasons explaining this result.

Constraints to responsiveness	Lack of education/professionalism and interest of the political actors—especially at the sub-national level—have been mentioned as important reasons hindering responsiveness. Economic/budget constraints and faulty infrastructure are other reasons limiting responsiveness.

Country	**Uruguay**
Perceived legitimacy	Support and perceived legitimacy of democracy are among the highest in the region. More than 80 per cent of the population prefers democracy to any other form of government, and a similar proportion expresses that they would not justify a dictatorship under any circumstance. Also, the proportion of citizens that believes the country is very democratic is the highest in Latin America.
Constraints to responsiveness	Economic constraints and administrative/management/coordination problems are the main obstacles for an increase in responsiveness. In addition, in recent years, ideological contradictions within the leftist coalition in power and disagreements regarding the main policy priorities (for example, paying the external debt or implementing policies to reduce poverty) have also somewhat contributed to limit responsiveness.

Country	**Venezuela**
Perceived legitimacy	Support for democracy is very high: more than 80 per cent of the population believes that democracy is better than any other form of government. At the same time, more than 50 per cent believe that the country is not democratic or that democracy is not very democratic, and trust in democratic institutions is relatively low.
Constraints to responsiveness	A significant proportion of the population attributes the lack of responsiveness to the lack of interest of political leaders. Economic constraints are also an important obstacle to responsiveness.

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Morlino was Professor of Political Science at the University of Florence and at the Institute of the Human Sciences [Istituto di Scienze Umane] in Florence and has held a number of visiting professorships. In 2002–03 he was the Bechtel Visiting Professor at Stanford's Graduate School of Business; in 1995 Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution; and in 1989–90 NATO Fellow of the Center for European Studies, Stanford University. His academic credentials also include stints as the Monte dei Paschi Fellow at St. Anthony's College, Oxford (2010); the Jemolo Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford (2007 and 1998); Visiting Professor at the Juan March Institute, Madrid (1995–96);

and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Political Studies [Institut d'Etudes Politiques], Paris (1993–95, 2006, 2009, 2013).

Morlino is a leading specialist in comparative politics with an expertise in Southern and Eastern Europe, with a focus on the phenomenon of democratization. Now he is directing a new research project on the impact of the 2008–14 economic crisis on the six European large democracies.

Juan Rial

Juan Rial is a political analyst and consultant for international organizations, among them, International IDEA, United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and RESDAL (Latin American Network on Security and Defence). He is a specialist in democratic governance, political parties and elections. Until the 1990s he was Professor of Political Science in Montevideo's University of the Republic [Universidad de la República] and ORT University Uruguay [Universidad ORT Uruguay]. Rial is the author of more than 200 articles and reports on the subjects of his specialties.

He has done field work as a consultant and researcher in every country of Latin America, as well as in Angola, Bosnia, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Timor Leste, Haiti, Lebanon, Nigeria, Mozambique and Palestine (West Bank). He has made regular appearances in different media as an analyst.

Among his recent publications is the *Index of Public Security in Central America*, Buenos Aires, 2015.

Manuel Alcántara Sáez

Manuel Alcántara has been full Professor of Political Science at the University of Salamanca since 1993, director of FLACSO España since 2014, former Director of the Ibero-American Institute [Instituto de Iberoamérica], University of Salamanca (1994–2007) and former Vice Provost of this University (2007–09). He has been also founder and First General Secretary of the Latin American Political Science Association [Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política] (2002–09). After a PhD about the Andean process of regional integration (Complutente University, 1984), his research has focused on representative democracy and the role played by political elites in Latin America, having published four major pieces on different approaches to the topic: *Latin American Political Systems* [Sistemas Políticos de América Latina] in two volumes (four editions); *Governability, Crisis, and Change: Institutions or Ideological Machines?* [Gobernabilidad, crisis y cambio; ¿Instituciones o máquinas ideológicas?]; *Origin, Programme, and Organization of Latin*

American Political Parties [Origen, programa y organización de los partidos políticos latinoamericanos]; and *The Political Profession* [El oficio de politico].

Massimo Tommasoli

Massimo Tommasoli has been the Permanent Observer for International IDEA since 2007. Prior to that, he was Director of Operations at the IDEA headquarters in Stockholm (2004–2007); Head, Good Governance and Conflict Prevention Unit, Development Cooperation Directorate (DAC Secretariat), OECD, Paris (1999–2003); and Gender and Social Development Adviser, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome (1988-1999). Holder of a doctorate at the École de Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, he has held positions at UNESCO (Addis Ababa), and has lectured at Italian Universities (Bergamo, Chieti, Milan, Pavia, Pisa, and Rome), the European Training Foundation (ETF) as well as the UN System Staff College in Turin, Italy. He has evaluation and fieldwork experience in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania), Latin America (Colombia) and the Russian Federation.

He is author of nine books, including *Participatory Development: Social Analysis and the Rationale for Planning (in Italian, Rome, 2001; translated into Spanish and French), In the Name of Development: Resettlement Policies and Conflicts in East Africa (in Italian, Rome, 2013) and International Cooperation Policies: Analysis and Evaluation* (in Italian, Rome, 2013).

Daniel Zovatto

Daniel Zovatto is Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). He holds a Doctorate in international law from Universidad Complutense and a doctorate in government and public administration from the Ortega y Gasset Graduate Research Institute [Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset], as well as a Master's in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University (United States of America), and Master's in Diplomacy from the School of Foreign Service (Escuela Diplomática) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain.

He is a Political analyst, international lecturer, and visiting professor at universities in Latin America, Europe and North America, as well as an adviser to several Latin American governments. In addition, he is a member of the International Advisory Board of Latinobarómetro; a member of the Latin America Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution; a member of the International Advisory Council to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (United Kingdom); a member of the Council

of Arab World Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (CARLAC) and of the editorial board of the journal *Foreign Affairs* in Spanish. Daniel Zovatto is the former chair of the Advisory Commission for Electoral Reform of the province of Córdoba and of the Strategic Planning Council of the province of Córdoba and is author of more than 20 books and 100 articles on law, democracy, elections, political parties and governance in Latin America.

About International IDEA

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with a mission to support sustainable democracy worldwide.

The objectives of the Institute are to support stronger democratic institutions and processes, and more sustainable, effective and legitimate democracy.

International IDEA is the only global intergovernmental organization with the sole mandate of supporting democracy; its vision is to become the primary global actor in sharing comparative knowledge and experience in support of democracy.

What does International IDEA do?

International IDEA produces comparative knowledge in its key areas of expertise: electoral processes, constitution building, political participation and representation, and democracy and development, as well as on democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security.

IDEA brings this knowledge to national and local actors who are working for democratic reform, and facilitates dialogue in support of democratic change.

In its work, IDEA aims for:

- increased capacity, legitimacy and credibility of democracy;

- more inclusive participation and accountable representation; and

- more effective and legitimate democracy cooperation.

How does International IDEA work?

Because democracy grows from within societies, it is constantly evolving. There is no single and universally applicable model of democracy; the critical choices are best made, and the quality of democracy best gauged, by the citizens themselves. IDEA's work reflects this; the Institute's work is organized at the global, regional and country levels, focusing on the citizen as the driver of change.

IDEA's work is non-prescriptive and IDEA takes an impartial and collaborative approach to democracy cooperation, emphasizing diversity in democracy, equal political participation, representation of women and men in politics and decision-making, and helping to enhance the political will required for change.

The Institute brings together a wide range of political entities and opinion leaders. By convening seminars, conferences and capacity-building workshops, IDEA facilitates the exchange of knowledge at global, regional and national levels.

Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, the Institute has offices in the Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia and North Africa regions. International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

Member States

International IDEA's Member States are all democracies and provide both political and financial support to the work of the Institute. The Member States include Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Ghana, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Japan has observer status.
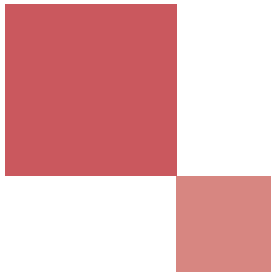
Governance

International IDEA is governed by a Council composed of its Member States and assisted by a Board of Advisers. Yves Leterme, Belgium's former Prime Minister, is the Secretary-General.

About LUISS

The Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali (LUISS) is a renowned university in Rome devoted to education in politics, law, economics and management.

Founded in 1974, LUISS is dedicated to the education of the brightest in economic and political thinking and is characterized by trusted relationships with companies and firms.

Enrollment in the university is only possible through a special admission exam as the number of matriculated students is limited.