Chile’s Transformed Party System and the Future of Democratic Stability

Chile today is experiencing a new sociopolitical compromise no less significant than the so-called “compromise state” of the 1930s and 1940s. A central feature of the new arrangement has been the performance of Chile’s party system. This role should be understood in terms of how it reflects, and helps to mitigate or aggravate, the tension between capital accumulation and the struggles over sociopolitical inclusion and distribution.

Party System Deinstitutionalization: The 1997–98 Colombian Elections in Historical Perspective

Taking the 1997–98 electoral season as its case study, this article seeks to determine whether Colombia’s party system is undergoing deinstitutionalization. The resilience of the Liberal Party and the lack of an organized alternative to the traditional parties may mean that Colombia is in the process of party system transformation.

Democratization and Changes in the Pattern of Association in Brazil

The results of a survey of 311 members of voluntary associations in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte suggest that members of voluntary associations incorporate the values introduced by social movements during the democratization process: they claim organizational autonomy from the state, and they defend more participatory forms of decisionmaking. These findings are important for the debate between democratic consolidation and delegative democracy. Democratization might benefit from the incorporation of these actors into new participatory designs.

Crafting Civilian Control in Emerging Democracies: Argentina and Venezuela

Democratic transitions create an opportunity for elected officials to maximize their leverage over the armed forces and create institutions that permanently shift power away from the military. This article develops a theoretical argument about how civilian control is established. Venezuela institutionalized weak civilian control in the wake of its 1958 democratic transition, allowing the regime to survive the 1992 coup attempts. Argentina moved close to strong civilian control by 1995, although such control is exercised through questionable institutional channels.
Scholars of democratization today tend to agree that the transitions to democracy in Latin America are over. Regular elections are taking place in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. In countries such as Venezuela and Peru, where attempts to break with democracy have occurred, durable forms of authoritarianism have failed to hold and the democratic order has been rapidly restored. Even in the octogenarian Mexican regime, opposition candidate Vicente Fox’s presidential victory on July 2, 2000, and other political reforms point clearly toward broader electoral competition (Olvera 1995; Aguayo 1995). Hence, an ex-ante or ex-post veto over the results of political competition is no longer one of the variables in analyzing Latin American politics (Przeworski 1988, 1991).

Along with the rough consensus, however, has come growing disagreement on what point the recent Latin American democratization processes have reached. A debate between two different analytical positions has emerged. On the one hand, authors such as Linz and Stepan argue that the region has achieved “democratic consolidation,” which begins at the moment when democracy becomes “the only game in town.” The most important dimension of this game is that it is played exclusively by political actors and involves only one activity: different political groups struggling for political power. “Democracy becomes the only game in town when all the actors in the polity become habituated to the fact that political conflict within the state will be resolved according to established norms” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). They also attempt to integrate an attitudinal dimension into their analysis: “democracy becomes the only game in town when, even in the face of severe political and economic crisis, the overwhelming majority of the people believe that any further change must emerge from within the parameters of democratic procedure” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 6).

Linz and Stepan’s position is based on the assessment that no group among the so-called political elites is willing to challenge political results ex-post, and that no group representing public opinion is eager to resort to extra-institutional means to seize political power. Yet Linz and Stepan’s definition of democratic consolidation misses one central point: democracy is not only a form of interelite political competition but also a form of societal organization (Habermas 1989; Calhoun 1992; Melucci 1996). It is at this level that many nondemocratic practices, such as clientelism, human rights violations, hierarchy, electoral fraud, and penetra-

A second approach is represented by theories of delegative democracy, most prominently that of Guillermo O’Donnell. In his view, delegative democracies are not consolidated democracies, but they can endure nevertheless (O’Donnell 1994, 60). O’Donnell breaks with the “theology” of democratic consolidation by pointing out a gap between the norms of democratic institutionality and the practices of social actors.

New polyarchies do not lack institutionalization, but a fixation on highly formalized and complex organizations prevents us from seeing an extremely influential, informal and sometimes concealed institution: clientelism and, more generally, particularism. I will use these terms . . . to refer broadly to various sorts of nonuniversalistic relationships ranging from hierarchical particularistic exchanges, patronage, nepotism, and favors to actions that, under the formal rules of the institutional package of polyarchy, would be considered corrupt. (O’Donnell 1996, 40)

This analysis leads to the widespread perception that patterns of interaction are established not only at the institutional level, but also by practices that bypass the private-public dichotomy, leading to the establishment of hierarchical relations among formally equal individuals.

Despite its more realistic appraisal of many existing Latin American democracies, O’Donnell’s argument is as conceptually narrow as that of democratic consolidation. Both regard democracy as a form of political competition or interaction conducted by political elites; therefore, examining the elite “political culture” (Almond and Verba 1963; Mainwaring and Viola 1984; Putnam 1993; Sommers 1993) is sufficient to evaluate a political system. Thus, O’Donnell seems right to point out the incompatibility between polyarchy and many of the dominant characteristics of Latin American political systems, such as widespread particularism (Cammack 1990; Gay 1994; Avritzer 1995), the gap between legal and effective social relations (Morse 1982), the persistence of hierarchical relations, and a unaccountable political system (Avritzer 1998). Still, this perspective overestimates the political impact of continuities in elite political culture because of the superiority it assigns to elite behavior (Peruzzotti 1997). Given the democratic elitist assumptions underlying his theory, O’Donnell does not bother to inquire whether there have been changes at the societal level.

The debate among advocates of democratic transition theory, with its focus on political elites, involves a contradiction. If, for instance, O’Donnell’s theory retrieves a central dimension of Latin American democracies, it overemphasizes this dimension by neglecting to theorize the emergence of an independent civil society and forms of renewal at the societal level (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Alvarez et al. 1998; Avritzer
The insistence on democratic consolidation by authors such as Linz, Stepan, and Diamond represents the other side of the contradiction. Despite the continuity between their assumptions and those of democratic transition theory, the polities they designate as consolidated democracies have very little in common with the democracies consolidated in the West during the so-called "second wave of democratization" (Huntington 1991).

This article aims to introduce the societal variable into the debate between delegative democracy and democratic consolidation. Presenting the results of empirical research on voluntary associations in Brazil, it shows that there has been a significant process of renewal at the civic level in Brazil, and that the potential of this movement has not been adequately incorporated by either of the two major theories of recent Latin American democratization.

After considering the existing literature on the relationship between associations and democracy, particularly that which suggests that Latin America lacks a propensity for association, the article discusses the recent associative drive in Brazil, showing that it has not been adequately subsumed either by theories of democratization or by theories which emphasize the Iberian cultural tradition. Brazilian society has new potential at the civic level, particularly the strong drive for autonomy and the emergence of democratic practices at the societal level. This article therefore proposes an alternative to the current debate between the "consolidationists" and "delegationists."

POLITICAL CULTURE, ASSOCIATIVE PATTERNS, AND DEMOCRACY

The relationship between democracy and associations has been part of the literature on democracy since Alexis de Tocqueville. In Democracy in America, the French observer argued that the strength of democracy in the United States was directly linked to the strength of the country's associative life.

There is only one country on the face of earth where the citizens enjoy unlimited freedom of association for political purposes. This same country is the only one in the world where the continual exercise of the right of association has been introduced into civil life and in which all advantages which civilization can confer are procured by means of it. (Tocqueville 1966, II, 213)

Tocqueville not only linked democracy with patterns of association; he also introduced a comparative framework that reveals how the lack of an active associative life might hinder attempts to construct democracy. Edward Banfield transferred Tocqueville's framework to the domain of social science by trying to connect low associative density with the failure of political and economic modernization in non-Western countries.
There is some reason to doubt that the non-Western cultures of the world will prove capable of creating and maintaining the high degree of organization without which a modern economy and a democratic political order are impossible. . . . If there is to be more than a superficial overlay of industrialization in China, India and other underdeveloped countries, their ethos must be such to allow the establishment of corporate forms of action. (Banfield 1958, 8)

The empirical evidence Banfield provides to illustrate the obstacles to democratization in a nonassociative culture was a study of Montegrano, a village in southern Italy, which, according to Banfield revealed a pattern of socialization he called amoral familism. For Banfield, the population of Montegrano in their social relations pursued the maxim “Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family. Assume that all others will do likewise” (Banfield 1958, 85). Thus Banfield was the first author to establish a broad contrast between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon cultural practices. His conclusion was that the lack of broader and impersonal structures of trust influenced a country’s capacity to become democratic.

The discussion of the relation between culture and patterns of association is a standard practice with Banfield. His large generalization about the differences between democratic and nondemocratic cultures was at the root of the concept of civic culture introduced by Almond and Verba in the 1960s. This concept allowed the establishment of a broad cultural divide between Anglo-Saxon and Iberian political cultures, the former having a high propensity to associate and the latter having a low propensity. In the so-called Latin or Iberian cultures, individuals tend not to act collectively because of their attachment to pre-political institutions, such as the family, and their rejection of a logic of collective gains (Reis 1995).

The attempt to associate culture with readiness for democracy has encountered three lines of criticism. First, on a methodological level, Barry (1970) argues that Almond, Verba, and other authors (for example, Rosenbaum 1975) do little more than enumerate democratic and nondemocratic elements in different national cultures and fail to relate these elements to the existence or breakdown of democracy. Barry argues that Almond and Verba failed to relate the cultural variable to the institutional variable, being thereby unable to establish a relation of causality between the existence of a noncivic culture and the breakdown of democracy (Barry 1970, 48). Mann (1973) criticizes the political culture approach’s anti-institutional bias, arguing that it carries an analytically untenable anti-action attitude by failing to connect the cultural element it singles out with the actual working of the political system. According to Mann, it is not clear whether culture played the role of a background influence in the breakdown of democracy or if it produced the antidemocratic actors willing to break with democracy.
Last but not least, many authors have criticized the political culture approach for adopting an overwhelmingly structural analysis that cannot distinguish long-term from short-term elements in a specific political culture (Sommers 1993). Thus, variables such as the role of the church or the family in the Latin American tradition become responsible for explaining short-term events, such as the breakdown of a democratic regime. Yet it is not clear in these critiques how democracy has ever been possible, given the existence of such cultural traditions. In light of such criticisms, democratization studies largely abandoned the concept of political culture, probably, as Moisés (1995) has argued, because of the transition theories’ search for nonstructural variables capable of explaining the change in political actors’ attitudes toward democracy.

The attempt to relate culture to democratization regained momentum as a general consensus emerged that most recent processes of democratic transition were more or less complete (O’Donnell 1994; Cavarozzi 1992). Recently, however, the relationship between culture and democratization has been approached in a completely different way, based mainly on two insights by Putnam. The first is that countries can have more than one political culture and many structures of trust. Italy, in Putnam’s argument, has had both civic and uncivic regions. Second, and perhaps more important, Putnam analytically relates political culture not to the presence or absence of democracy, but rather to its quality: “a dense network of secondary associations embodies and contributes to effective social collaboration. . . . In a civic community associations of like-minded individuals contribute to effective democratic governance” (Putnam 1993, 90). For Putnam, therefore, a nonassociative political culture need not foster the breakdown of democracy; instead, it leads to poor administrative performance and the political system’s inability to utilize new and positive elements of a specific culture in order to improve its legitimacy.

Democratization theory has largely ignored Putnam’s approach, despite its potential to open a completely new understanding of democratization, according to which the quality of new democracies depends on existing societal practices. Still, the attempt to apply Putnam’s framework to democratization settings faces one major problem: Putnam does not tell how civic cultures are created when a specific country’s historical formation did not cause them to emerge. In this sense, his work leads to a comparative attempt to identify civic and noncivic cultures rather than proposing a pattern for analyzing changes in civism.

Thus, Putnam both contributes to the renewed debate on democratization and, at the same time, cannot move beyond standard political culture tradition to trace the roots of civism in the long-term elements of the political culture. Putnam’s remarks on the quality of democracy,
however, can be connected to a framework to explain short-term changes in associative patterns.

**DEMOCRATIZATION AND ASSOCIATIVE PATTERNS IN BRAZIL**

Historically, Brazilian society was built on a lack of differentiation between public and private. Relations between individuals have been predominantly hierarchical (Damatta 1979, 1985), and political mediators have assumed the role of connecting society and the state (Cammack 1990; Gay 1994; Avritzer 1995, 1998).

Brazil's democratization was marked not only by the reestablishment of political competition, but also by a sharp reversal from its traditional lack of associative life. The Brazilian democratization produced a marked increase in the propensity to create voluntary and independent forms of association. Boschi (1987) shows that more voluntary associations were created in Rio de Janeiro between 1978 and 1980 than during the entire previous democratic period. Santos (1993) shows a similar phenomenon for all categories of voluntary associations in the country's largest cities. Table 1 shows the increase in the number of voluntary associations created in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte, especially during Brazil's long transition to democracy, 1974 to 1985.

Several aspects of this phenomenon are notable. The total number of associations doubles in São Paulo in the 1970s and triples in Belo Horizonte in the 1980s. The increase is lower in Rio de Janeiro than in Belo Horizonte and São Paulo because Rio, for historical and political reasons, started with a higher number. Brazilian associative life, furthermore, enjoyed a qualitative as well as a quantitative increase. (In Belo Horizonte and São Paulo, the number of associations grew at almost twice the rate of the population during the same period). Some forms of voluntary association that were not very strong before the mid-1970s grew in number and influence; for instance, the number of neighborhood organizations in Belo Horizonte increased from 71 to 534. The increases in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were also very impressive: of the neighborhood associations in the two cities, 97.6 percent and 90.7 percent, respectively, were created after 1970 (Santos 1993, 84). Other types of associations were also relatively new in all three cities: 92.5 percent of the health professionals' associations in São Paulo were created after 1970, as were 76.2 percent of the lawyers' associations in Rio de Janeiro (Santos 1993). In the case of Belo Horizonte, all the associations dealing with environmental, human rights, and ethnic issues (29 associations) were created during this period.

Thus it is possible to speak of a very impressive change in the pattern of association in all three cities, a process that involved an increas-
Table 1. Number of Associations Created in the Major Brazilian Cities, 1940–1990

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>2,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>1,233</td>
<td>2,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belo Horizonte</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>1,597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Santos 1993; Avritzer 1998.

ing propensity to associate; a greater number of associations; new associations for claiming material benefits, such as community improvement; and the emergence of associations dealing with postmaterial claims, such as environmental protection and human rights.

The change can also be seen from the perspective of social actors. In the survey our study conducted among 311 leaders of voluntary associations in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, it is impressive how recently most of them joined their associations: 38.8 percent of the respondents in São Paulo and 39 percent in Belo Horizonte had participated in their associations for less than five years. Thus both a general overview of the associative sector and a study of its participants confirm a recent and pronounced change in Brazilians' associative habits.

This changing pattern poses important challenges for both political culture analysis and theories of democratization. For political culture analysis, it shows clearly that political culture, particularly patterns of association, is not only a long-term variable related to a process of historical formation, as Almond and Verba and even Putnam have claimed, but can change relatively quickly in response to political circumstances.

In Brazil, the trigger for this change was an authoritarian experience in which the state deeply interfered with the poor population's everyday way of life. It removed slums from the central areas of Brazilian cities or encouraged a huge migration from the countryside to the cities, but it did not provide adequate health care, education, or infrastructure for the poor. In the midst of this process, two discourses emerged: the discourse of citizenship (Dagnino 1998) and the discourse of societal autonomy in relation to the state. It is possible to state that the two processes led to the reinvention of Brazilian society. The constitution of independent voluntary associations was part of this process.

Our data on the emergence of voluntary associations also call into question democratization theory's nearly exclusive focus on the political system, which leads it to overlook important societal changes (Esco- bar and Alvarez 1992; Jelin and Hershberg 1996; Alvarez et al. 1998). An organized and independent society can play a much greater role in a democratic social order than most theories of democratization assume.
The values and political practices of associative actors differ significantly from what the current literature reflects.

**ASSOCIATIVE PRACTICES AND VALUES**

Our study conducted a survey of 311 members of associations in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte to answer various questions, including how social actors conceive of their associations; how they see their political participation; why they participate; how they propose to organize their associations internally; and how they see their relation to the political system. Table 2 shows the categories in which the associations were classified.6

First, we inquired into the nature of the work performed in the associations and their relations with political mediators. We wanted to know what importance members gave to the organizational autonomy of their associations, an issue that has been discussed in Brazil since the beginning of the liberalization of the former authoritarian regime (Costa 1997; Avritzer 1995). One of the reasons given by the democratic opposition for the success of authoritarianism in Brazil in 1964 was the weakness of existing societal networks. During the previous democratic period, the paramount issue for many social actors was to foster national autonomy in relation to the world economic system.

This understanding of democratic politics led to an overall instrumentalization of politics (Weffort 1989; Moisés 1995) and to the perception that the goal of democratic politics should be the integration of societal actors into the state. More than a decade later, during the reconstruction of an autonomous civil society and an independent opposition, social actors in Brazil sought to break with the corporatist tradition (Schmitter 1971) of fusing society and the state and to create an autonomous public space.

Voluntary associations and new social movements were part of this new space.7 Human rights movements in the 1970s, environmental movements and feminist movements in the 1980s (Mainwaring and Viola 1984), urban social movements in the 1980s and 1990s (Jacobi 1986; Boschi 1987; Gay 1994) renovated the Brazilian public space in two important ways: they challenged the tradition of clientelistic political intermediation, and they replaced the idea of concessions by the state with the idea of public political claims.

Members of voluntary associations reflected this tradition by relying on their own labor and insisting on a sharp separation between their associations and the political system. Asked about the predominant form of labor in their associations, 73.6 percent of the respondents in Belo Horizonte and 56.6 percent in São Paulo defined it as voluntary. Asked whether they belonged to a political party, 79 percent of the respondents in Belo Horizonte and 78 percent in São Paulo answered that they...
Table 2. Types of Associations in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, 1997
(by percent of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>São Paulo</th>
<th>Belo Horizonte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve health conditions</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-help</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend specific causes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal philosophies</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 2,964

Table 3. Association Membership and Party Links
(by percent of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>São Paulo</th>
<th>Belo Horizonte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: Would you continue to participate in your association if it established links with a political party?

did not. More significantly, asked if they would stop participating in their association if it became linked to a political party, 67.3 percent of the respondents in Belo Horizonte and 49.3 percent in São Paulo said they would, as table 3 shows.

These responses suggest an analysis not yet approached by the literature on democratization. A large part of the literature on democratization suggests that societal organization during democratization was episodic. The overwhelming literature on social movements, by contrast, adopted an anti-institutional stand. Our data suggest a third way of thinking about the relationship between social movements and institutionalization. The organizational drives of social movements do not
vanish; nor are they incorporated by political parties. They are institutionalized at the associative level, and they remain ready to be utilized in participatory experiences of institutional innovation.

Members of voluntary associations were also asked about their reasons for participating (table 4). Two important elements appeared in their responses. The first was a significant departure from what the literature maintains is a self-interested pattern of collective action (Reis 1995). Members of voluntary associations identified improving their material conditions as the third most important reason for participation in São Paulo and the fourth in Belo Horizonte. (Each respondent was allowed to name more than one motive, although the results were enumerated in order of relevance).

Even for associations clearly related to material issues, such as community associations, members' main reason for participation was not improving material conditions. In Belo Horizonte, only 16 percent of the respondents said that they joined such associations in order to achieve material aims, whereas 48 percent mentioned working for some form of social change. The main reasons cited did not vary significantly across different income groups, but they did diverge according to level of education: 26.3 percent of those with incomplete elementary schooling said they participated to improve their material condition, a motive cited by only 10 percent of those with higher levels of education.

The second area in which very significant differences appeared was in relation to associations' internal practices. We focused on members' conceptions about this to evaluate how democratic they were. Members of voluntary associations were asked which form of internal organization they preferred for their association. In all cases, respondents preferred more democratic forms and rejected outright more personal forms of leadership, as table 5 shows.

The very strong preference in both cities for democratic forms of organization confirms that the forms of democratic organization introduced by social movements in the 1970s and 1980s did not vanish, but were preserved as values and institutionalized at the civil level. Thus, it

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Table 4. Motives for Participation in Voluntary Associations (percent of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>São Paulo</th>
<th>Belo Horizonte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To work for some form of social change</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join a collective environment</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reach the material aim proposed by the association</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To strengthen the association internally</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Organizational Preferences (percent of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>São Paulo</th>
<th></th>
<th>Belo Horizonte</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest deliberative level should be the president</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest deliberative level should be a members' assembly</td>
<td>73.05</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: What is, in your opinion, the best form of organization of a voluntary association?

It is possible to argue that members of civil associations in Brazil preserved and legally institutionalized the two main elements introduced by social movements during the previous decade: organizational autonomy from the state and democratic forms of participation. Brazilians have broken with the tradition of making material claims through political mediators, fusing the state and society, and favoring personal forms of political leadership. In all three cases, a democratic potential has been renewed at the civil level. The question is how this democratic potential can be utilized to broaden existing democratic arrangements.

**Associations' Democratic Role**

Even before the debate between consolidation and delegative democracy, democratic transition theory misunderstood the nature of social movements in Latin America by considering them a provisional occupation of the public space to be superseded by a fully democratic political society. Two main analytical arguments were presented to explain the high level of societal activity throughout the liberalization period. The first, advanced by O'Donnell and Schmitter, was based on rational choice theory and related to the decreasing cost of political participation. They argue, that “once the government signals that it is lowering the cost of engaging in collective action and it is permitting some contestation on issues previously declared off limits . . . former political identities reemerge and others appear ex-novo to expand, beyond anyone’s expectations” (O'Donnell et al. 1986, 4: 48–49). This understanding of the relationship between liberalization and participation combines a democratic elitist view of governance with a rational choice interpretation of the motives for collective action. In the initial moments of liberalization, collective action increases because of the lowering of the cost of political participation; whereas at the moment of redemoc-
ratization, collective action decreases because is weighed against other forms of representation at the political level.

A second line of explanation for the increase in public participation during liberalization is the substitution approach. For authors such as Stepan (1988), participation at the public level during the process of liberalization was motivated by the unavailability of the instruments of political competition and representation. Thus, collective action increases when political society is outlawed and decreases when political representation is restored—an analysis that would, in the first place, require that Latin American political parties indeed be organized forms of political participation.

Against these two lines of explanation, this paper has tried to show that Brazil—and, although space does not permit developing the case here, Latin America more generally—has seen the emergence and consolidation of a permanent sphere of independent associations. Voluntary associations have incorporated and institutionalized the values and practices that emerged at the public level during the process of democratization. Social movements have sought political autonomy, and their reactions to political mediators have been institutionalized in the practices of associations. Analyses that focus on democratic consolidation or delegative democracy fail to see this dimension because they do not look for change at the societal level. At most, they incorporate publicity in the form of public opinion polls.

It is at this level that Putnam’s analysis of the relationship between patterns of association and administrative performance can help us to propose a different framework for analyzing the recent Brazilian democratization. It allows us to move beyond simply diagnosing a clientelistic political society, as the delegative democracy argument has done. Even if we conclude that elite political culture changed very little in Brazil, as the evidence suggests, we can still work with the idea of two political cultures differentiated not by region, but by the changes and continuities that might prevail at the level of Brazilian civil and political societies.

The connection between democratization and political culture can move the recent discussion of democratization beyond the debate between consolidationists and delegationists beyond the Huntingtonian matrix. This matrix assumes that the contradiction between mobilization and institutionalization that led to the breakdown of democracy in Europe during the 1930s is a general case and should be extended to all cases of democratic construction. According to this matrix, which is shared by both consolidationists and delegationists, the central task of democratization is institutionalizing democratic practices among the elites. Consolidationists believe that democracy’s being the only game in town is enough to argue for the institutionalization of democratic practices, whereas delegationists consider the practices institutionalized at the political level too narrow to lead to consolidation.
The problem is that both approaches look at elite practices to evaluate institutionalization, whereas the events that led to the third wave of democratization in Latin America manifest a different phenomenon: the emergence of democratic forms of collective action. Movements as different as the human rights movement in Argentina and community movements in Brazil renovated the available stock of democratic practices. Thus, a more productive approach to democratization should look not only to the issue of institutionalization but also to the renovation of the stock of democratic practices, particularly at the nonelite level.

Once we concentrate on the latter issue, we can focus on a different process: how new democratic practices that emerged at the public level try to enter the political system in the form of institutional arrangements capable of further democratizing existing state policies. Two recent examples show that this is the direction in which Brazilian politics is now moving.

- Participatory budgeting. This amazingly successful practice has been introduced in Porto Alegre and has been adopted in 71 Brazilian cities and 4 states. Participatory budgeting regional assemblies in Porto Alegre have been attracting more than 10,000 people a year, involving neighborhood associations in decision-making on budgetary priorities. According to most evaluations, participatory budgeting has improved equity in the distribution of resources and administrative efficiency in the implementation of decisions (Abers 1998).

- Councils on social policies. These are required by the 1988 Constitution when federal resources are transferred to the local level. Most of the legislation on such councils requires the participation of health or education associations as equal partners in the deliberative process. Just for health policies, there are today more than 4,000 councils and 60,000 council members in Brazil. Councils have deliberative powers, and have successfully used both power and influence to advance social actors’ concerns (Tabagiba 1999). These councils have blocked special interests and have produced more efficient decisions on policies related to health and children.

These new experiences show the capacity of the recently organized actors to innovate at the institutional level and to propose new forms of public deliberation. The autonomy of the associations is preserved, showing that these institutions do not represent a return to the old corporatist model. Public participation allows the involvement of more actors. Participatory designs at the societal level allow an alternative entry point for the current debate about the nature of the new democracies, one that focuses on different forms of organizing state and society relations. This debate can no longer drive Latin American countries back to authoritari-
anism. Yet the assignment of a larger role to associations in public life can significantly improve the performance of these new democracies.

NOTES

The data on associations presented in this paper are part of the results of a project called “O novo associativismo latino-americano.” Several people and institutions were part of this project. In Brazil, Ilse Scherer-Warren, Sergio Costa, and Pedro Jacobi participated at different times. Several institutions financed the formation of the database and the survey, especially Fapemig, Fundação de Amparo a Pesquisa de Minas Gerais; Fiemg, Federação das Indústrias de Minas Gerais; and Anpocs, Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pos-graduação em Ciências Sociais. I am very grateful to the three anonymous reviewers for this journal who decisively contributed to the final format of the paper.

1. O'Donnell's break with the democratic consolidation approach is also a self-critique, because the idea of a second transition involves the teleological assumption of a move from a democratically elected government to a democratic regime. The actors or processes that led from one moment to another have never been singled out. See O'Donnell 1993.

2. O'Donnell and Schmitter's classic book on democratic transitions regards the formation of civil society in Latin America as a provisional phenomenon caused by the outlawing of political parties and political competition. In their account, organized actors emerge during liberalization, each supporting the demands of the others; this leads to what they call the “explosion of the popular.” Latin American reality did not correspond to this description; it involved pluralistic mobilization of different movements, leading not to an explosion but to the formation of plural identities at the public level (see Laclau 1985; Evers 1985). O'Donnell and Schmitter also believe that mobilizations diminish once elections are called. Again, they assume a contradiction between occupation of the public space and the organization of political society. This assumption, which contradicts the principle of democratic participation, was also empirically wrong: human rights movements, urban social movements, or campaigns for political reform persisted in Latin American countries after democratization came to a close.

3. One major exception in the transition literature is the work of Philip Oxhorn on Chile. Oxhorn operates within the transition to democracy framework and also deals with the formation of civil society, arguing that civil society in Chile emerges as a result of the abolition of all spaces for the operation of political society. While his argument illuminates the Chilean case, this is the easiest case for reconciling the transition to democracy literature and an analysis of civil society, for two reasons. Authoritarianism in Chile was more concerned with curbing the organization of political parties than of social organizations; and historically, Chilean political parties served as effective forms of societal organization. These factors make it difficult to extend Oxhorn's model to other Latin American cases, in which authoritarianism has been more concerned with curbing societal forms of organization and political parties are instruments to aggregate electoral majorities. In these cases, the relationship between civil and political societies in the aftermath of democratization becomes a pressing issue.
Oxhorn’s most recent work on Chile (1999) notably shares the conception advanced in this paper that social actors remain active at the public level in post-democratization settings.

4. Some authors continue to approach the concept of political culture in the old way. Huntington (1996) uses the term civilization, which he unsuccessfully tries to distinguish from culture, to distinguish Latin America from the West by saying that “although an offspring of European civilization, Latin America has evolved along a very different path. . . . It has had a corporatist, authoritarian culture, which Europe had to a much lesser degree and North America not at all.” It is not clear whether the authoritarian and corporatist culture Huntington is talking about is an ontological or a structural condition. In any case, he provides no data to corroborate his theory. See Huntington 1996, 46.

5. Few data are available on voluntary associations in Brazil before the twentieth century. The best source is Conniff 1975, who retrieved data from a census on voluntary associations made in Rio de Janeiro in the late nineteenth century. His data indicate that the propensity to associate was low but not entirely absent. Rio had a significant number of associations at the turn of the last century. His data show, however, that most of these associations were religious brotherhoods, corroborating the idea of a nonseparation of private and public issues (Conniff 1975; Avritzer 1997).

6. In Brazil, voluntary associations must register with a local notary, and a description of their constitution must be published in the official city or state newspaper (diário official). In Belo Horizonte, where the empirical universe is comparatively small, all associations registered between 1940 and 1990 were searched through the state diário, and the results used to form a database. From this were subtracted recreational and religious organizations, following Diamond’s 1994 definition of civil society as excluding “inward-looking group activity” (Diamond 1994, 5). Associations representing outward forms of collective action were included. This yielded 2,964 voluntary associations, from which a stratified proportional sample of 159 associations was made. In São Paulo, one of eight local notaries who register associations provided a list of the 1,718 voluntary associations created between 1970 and 1990. Given São Paulo’s much larger universe, we decided to leave out four categories of associations already included in the sample from Belo Horizonte: self-help associations, associations with specific causes, academic, and personal philosophy associations. Belo Horizonte’s sample is closest to the overall configuration of the universe; São Paulo’s sample overrepresents associations that emerged after 1970. Among the respondents, 50 percent were presidents of voluntary associations and 50 percent members of the board.

7. A huge debate exists over whether new social movements have ever appeared in Latin America. This debate involves two misunderstandings: one about the nature of social movements in general and the other about the nature of Latin American social movements. The general misunderstanding lies in the stress on postmaterialism. If it is true that many new social movements, such as the peace and the environmental movements, emphasized postmaterial issues, it is nevertheless a mistake to reduce social movements to this element. Many new social movements involved a clear material dimension; the feminist movement, for example (see Melucci 1997). Other authors, such as Azevedo and
Prates 1991, reduced urban social movements to the claim for material goods or political integration into the state. They missed the dimension of autonomy and the changes in forms of participation.

REFERENCES


Oxhorn, Philip. 1999. When Democracy Isn’t All That Democratic: Social Exclusion and the Limits of the Public Sphere in Latin America. Paper delivered at the American Political Science Association Conference. Atlanta, August.


