

POLI 332. Politics and Governments of Latin America

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Session 11. Quality of Democracy

Plan of the lecture

- What is democracy?
- Our point of departure: liberal democracy
- Problems with liberal democracy:
 - When it becomes less democratic:
 - “Partyarchy” (Chile)
 - Inchoate or fragmented party systems (Peru)
 - When it becomes less liberal:
 - Delegative democracies
 - Competitive authoritarian regimes
- Latin America in search of new models of democratic governance

Quality of Democracy

- What is democracy?
- What can we (or should we) expect from democracy?

Democracy:

- Rule of the people:
 - Direct or representative democracy?
- How to make collectively binding decisions?
 - Elections
 - How much participation? How much competition?
 - Deliberation

Liberal Democracy

- Representative and electoral
- Individual rights
- Separation of powers and checks and balances
 - Presidentialism versus Parliamentarism
 - Majoritarian or Coalition Governments
- Polyarchy (Robert Dahl): participation + contestation, resting upon a list of liberal rights
 - Freedom to form and join organizations
 - Freedom of expression
 - The right to vote
 - Eligibility for public office
 - The right of political leaders to compete for support and votes
 - Alternative sources of information
 - Free and fair elections
 - Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

Two forms of erosion of liberal democracy:

- When representatives are no longer responsive to the demands of the represented.
- When liberal rights are no longer protected.

When liberal democracies become less democratic:

When *representatives* are no longer responsive to the *represented*:

- Partyarchy
- “Inchoate” or fragmented party systems
- Partisan Dealignment

Chile (1989-2014): a “partyarchy”?

Partyarchy: excessively strong political parties, detached from civil society

- Institutional legacies (reformed in 2005) from the dictatorship: veto power for the armed forces, National Security Council, limitations to the president as commander-in-chief, appointed senators
- Binomial electoral system: proportional representation, two member districts, open lists
- The need to engage in coalitional politics (*cuoteo*)
- Continuity with economic model of the dictatorship
 - Private pensions, education, health
 - Free market and macroeconomic orthodox policies
 - Low levels of public spending

Chile: A “partyarchy”

Consequences of having too strong political parties:

- Voter de-alignment: loss of voter-party identity
- Candidates and elected officials are not accountable to the citizenry but to the party leadership
- Legislative gridlock and bias towards status quo
- Democratic stability, policy continuity, and strong checks and balances

Peru (2000-present): An inchoate or fragmented party system?

“Inchoate” party systems: poorly institutionalized parties, little continuity in political agenda, little ideological coherence, little connections across levels of government.

- Between 1985 and 1995 the vote share of the four dominant parties (APRA, PPC, AP, IU) fell from 97% to 6%.
- Election of populist outsider Alberto Fujimori in 1990. Personalistic rule from 1990 to 2000.

Peru: an inchoate party system

- Rise of “independent movements” and use of established parties as “personalistic vehicles”
- In the absence of parties:
 - Who finances campaigns?
How are organizational challenges solved?
 - Problems of political coordination: time-horizons, private interests over public goods
 - Amateur politicians
 - Weak separation of powers
 - Anti-politics

When liberal democracies become less liberal:

When liberal rights are not protected:

- Delegative democracies
- Competitive authoritarian regimes

Delegative Democracies (Guillermo O'Donnell)

- “Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office” (59).
- HORIZONTAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Separation of powers
- Examples:
 - Peru under Fujimori 1990-1995
 - Argentina under Carlos Menem, 1989-1999
 - Colombia under Alvaro Uribe 2002-2010
 - Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, 1998-2013, and Nicolás Maduro, 2013-present

Competitive Authoritarian Regimes (Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way)

- “Competitive authoritarianism is a hybrid regime type, with important characteristics of both democracy and authoritarianism.”
- C.A. regimes are distinguished from full authoritarianism in that constitutional channels exist through which opposition groups compete in a meaningful way for executive power.
- C.A. regimes are distinguished from democracy in that incumbent abuse of the state violates at least one of three defining attributes of democracy: (1) free elections; (2) broad protection of civil liberties, and (3) a reasonably level playing field.
- **KEY: UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD**
 - Harassment
 - Media

Latin America in search for alternative models of democracy:

Deliberative
Democracies?

Participatory
Democracies?