

# Democratization in Asia: Lessons from the Americas

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Pro-democracy activist Rome Rangsiman (C) holds up a Thailand flag as anti-government protesters gather during a protest to demand that the military government hold a general election by November, in Bangkok, Thailand, May 22, 2018. REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha - RC1CA4507CE0

Democracy, or the concept of rule by the people, is the idea of a system of government where individual preferences become public policy. It is called “liberal democracy” when the system protects the rights of individuals. Democracy is valued for both moral and functional reasons. The *moral base of democracy* is that it gives humans freedom. It gives citizens the power to express their creative imaginations while exercising their preferences and, in doing so simultaneously to govern and to be governed.

The *functional bases of democracy* are that, by allowing citizens to express preferences: it can strengthen social integration by motivating individuals to participate in collective projects; it can reduce uncertainty and encourage creative experimentation by maintaining the rule of law; and, by aggregating diverse preferences, it can offer a variety of choices for confronting challenges that societies inevitably face. The availability of diverse choices is made more likely in liberal democracy since individuals receive protections when expressing diverse preferences and are thus more likely to sustain them, and make them available to others, over time.

Democracy can take many forms. Europeans credit Aristotelian Greece with creating elite-direct democracy (slaves and women were excluded from participation) 2,500 years ago, but other forms were independently created outside Europe as evidenced by examples as diverse as the Iroquois “Great Law of Peace” and the Pashtunwali Loya Jirga. National democratic political systems are usually representative (not direct) with citizens selecting agents who form a governing body, often with a set of guiding rules (a constitution) to make collective decisions. Representative democracy is the usual form for political systems of more than miniscule size as direct democracy tends to weaken as polities grow. Guided democracy,<sup>1</sup> as opposed to liberal democracy, is a form of government in which democratic practices are formally enacted but the state’s use of propaganda and restrictive practices prevents the electorate from effectively impacting public policy. In extreme cases with guided democracy, a *de jure* liberal democracy can function as a *de facto* oligarchy.

Following WWII, the idea of liberal republican democracy became ascendant world-wide culminating, in 1989, with speculation that, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it would become universally adopted. However guided politics, of which the Soviet Union’s central planning was an extreme form, did not die and contemporary political systems include a number of countries which, while democratic in form, are controlled by elites and are thus essentially oligarchies. In fact, the “Founding Fathers” of the United States Constitution feared that liberal democracy would not produce good government and thus included in it elements which they hoped would create a “natural aristocracy” capable of sustaining freedom, particularly for established elites. Hence their limiting voting rights to white property-holders, specifying an equal number of senators for each state, mandating election of senators by state legislatures, and creating the electoral college. While these elements are less restrictive than those in Russia’s “sovereign democracy,” China’s “People’s Republic,” or Vietnam’s “Democratic People’s Republic,” there are strong elements of elite guidance in the democratic government that was established with the Constitution in 1789, some of which remain to this day.

This article traces the post-colonial history of politics in Latin America, emphasizing the forms of governance that have evolved in the region as well as the processes of which they have been part. The final section attempts to identify themes and lessons of relevance to democratization in other regions, especially South East Asia, as well as concepts that can help with that understanding.

### *Democracy in Latin America*

While the same Enlightenment ideas that spawned the American and French revolutions stirred some Latin American impulses for citizen power, it was the Napoleonic conquest of Spain and Portugal in 1808 that brought democracy to most of the region. Unwilling to tolerate rule by Napoleon’s brother Joseph, armies were raised throughout Spanish-speaking Latin America, and political control was wrested from Spain led by the Venezuelan “Liberator” Simon Bolivar and Argentinian “Protector of Peru” Jose de San Martin beginning in 1808 and lasting through 1822. While the independence of the rest of Latin America was achieved through separate actions, by 1825, with few exceptions, the countries of the region had separated from

Spain and Portugal.

With independence from Napoleonic Spain the victorious Latin American creoles had a variety of ideas regarding their precise forms of government. Those advocating reversion of control to re-Bourbonized Spain were quickly disabused of that intention. Bolivar viewed Spanish Latin America as a natural homeland but thought that its heterogeneity would make impossible a federation like that which had been established by the United States. He thus advocated for a centralist form of government which included, among other elements, a lifetime presidency. He attempted to formalize this view in a constitutional convention held for Gran Colombia in 1828.<sup>2</sup> Unable to achieve his objective in the face of opposition from delegates uncomfortable with this centralist model, no great South American federation was ever created, and separate countries of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina were created. Brazil achieved its independence in 1822 when the Portuguese royal fled a constitutional revolution, which declared the "Empire of Brazil" independent from Portugal.

The process of post-colonial democratization in Latin America thus has a nearly 200 year-long history. Most of the 19th century was consumed by national civil wars and a phenomenon known as *caudillismo* in which a charismatic local figure would come to power in a nonconventional way and would rule through authoritarian means. Accompanying this *real politique* were lively Enlightenment-inspired debates about the nature of governance in the region. Local political forces emerged advocating popular politics, democracy, and the rights of the poor.<sup>3</sup> While this was framed by political rivalries between liberal and conservative forces, it continued as an indigenous form until the last decades of the 19th century when European and United States industrial interests became more involved with the region and marginalized these popular forces. These foreign powers effectively imposed the view that political modernity could only be found in the United States and Europe and that Latin American nations should develop these forms.

Late 19th century Latin American politics thus was largely an elitist game focusing on issues of marginal consequence imported from abroad. Conservatives advocated for a national church, centralist government, and support for privileges of the landed elite. Liberals argued for a secular state, federalist government, and support for private entrepreneurship. When elites began to be challenged by middle class groups in the early 20th century they closed ranks in support of established privilege and conservative positions. These middle-class challenges came in many forms. In the Southern Cone (the southern part of the continent) by the 1910s middle class interests began to share power through the ascendance of "Radical"<sup>4</sup> political parties in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. This was spurred by European migrations that brought with it the liberal ideas of French rationalism, including socialism and anarchism, and created vast bureaucracies, expanded public education and even, in Uruguay, a social security system created years before that of the United States. Socialist and communist political parties also appeared on the scene but never achieved the importance of the more centrist Radical parties. This incipient democratization of politics was buoyed by pre-WWI commodity booms in beef, wheat, copper, and other primary products, making, for example,

Argentina wealthier by some measures than European countries including Italy.<sup>5</sup> However, when Southern Cone economies were disengaged from international markets by WWI they stagnated. The result was the degeneration of political parties into patronage mills for party loyalists and widespread populist sentiment culminating in military coups.

Twentieth century Latin American political change was also spurred by indigenous ideas, perhaps most notably by the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), founded by Peruvian Victor Raul Haya de la Torre in Mexico City in 1924. It eventually became a continent-wide political movement with significant influence in the mid-century Democratic Action (AD) Party in Venezuela, the National Liberation (LN) Party in Costa Rica, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) in the Dominican Republic and Peru's own APRA Party. Initially APRA-linked parties strongly opposed oligarchic interests, military dictators, and the interests of the United States. However, after engaging in myriad political compromise with local conservative forces and, by the time of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, which "discovered" them as the region's democratic left opposition, they had lost much of their appeal and had taken on the slow-moving and bureaucratic forms of their Southern Cone counterparts.

Another political form was created in three Latin American countries where social revolutions took place—in Mexico in 1910, in Bolivia in 1952, and in Cuba in 1959. In each of these countries the result of the revolutionary overthrow of the existing social order was the establishment of an "Official Party"—the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico; the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) in Bolivia; and Cuba's Communist Party. The PRI was founded in 1929 to stabilize Mexico's post-revolutionary politics. It held continuous power until 1990, by which time it had become a center-right political force and was rejected by Mexico's middle class. The MNR held power for only 14 years until 1968 when it was overthrown by Bolivia's armed forces. However, its impact on Bolivian society is visible in the current democratically elected government that has instituted far-reaching policies to engage Bolivia's alienated indigenous population with national political life. Cuba's Communist Party, which overthrew the government of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, continues to hold power evolving its distinctive political form. Gestures have been made to achieve a transition of power from Cuba's original revolutionary leadership and to diversify the nation's economy, but the official party retains strong control of national politics and shows no sign of abandoning its national project. Despite initial attempts, it has not spread its revolutionary ideals, due to pressures from its former patron the Soviet Union and its regional antagonist the United States as well as the inability of its regional ally Venezuela to continue support. The Republic of Cuba is Latin America's only Marxist-Leninist socialist country and, according to its constitution, the Communist Party continues to be the "leading force of the society and the state."

Brazil's politics has followed a different course. Members of the Portuguese royal family presided over the Empire of Brazil from 1808, when it fled Napoleonic forces in the Peninsular Wars, until 1889 when Emperor Pedro II, who had ruled the country since 1831, was ousted by a military coup d'état. In 1889 the country became "The United States of Brazil," with direct elections, a four-year presidential term, and separate executive, legislative, & judicial powers.

Despite this formally democratic structure, the politics of this “First Republic” were based on an alliance between politicians and big landowners (called *coronelismo*) that was periodically and unsuccessfully contested by popular movements led by, among others, junior military officers and messianic religious leaders. In 1930 a military junta led by General Getulio Vargas took power, promoting industrialization and modernization and supporting urban middle-class interests. The junta remained in control until 1945 when Vargas was democratically elected president. The democratic regime presided over an economic boom with expanded state capacities until the abrupt resignation of President Janio Quadros and the leftist politics of his Vice-President Joao Goulart led to a 1964 military coup supported by traditional Brazilian politicians and the government of the United States. The military government lasted until 1985, beginning with another economic boom but ending in shambles of inflation, national debt, increasing inequality, and anti-government insurgency. Since 1985 Brazil has elected five men and one woman to the presidency and has had three vice-presidents assume power, one due to a death (Jose Sarney succeeded deceased Tancredo Neves in 1985), and two, due to impeachments (Itamar Franco succeeded impeached Fernando Collor in 1992 and Michel Temer replaced impeached Dilma Rousseff in 2016). Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994 to 2002) and Luiz Ignacio Lula DaSilva (2002 to 2010) served out their terms although DaSilva was later prosecuted for corruption and was thus ineligible to run for office in 2018. Despite this political volatility, through policies initiated by the Cardoso government and continued thereafter, Brazil survived significant financial crises and brought tens of millions of its citizens out of poverty. This took place despite a legislature fragmented by representatives from more than three dozen political parties and massive political corruption that was unearthed by resolute prosecutors. In 2018 Jair Bolsonaro, a conservative populist, was expected to be elected president in a second round of voting, promising a new start for Brazilian politics and an end to corruption. Whether Bolsonaro moves Brazil’s politics into illiberality and whether he is able to move Brazil out of economic doldrums caused by huge public sector debt, is of great concern to a nation of more than 200 million people with expectations for personal freedom, security, and prosperity.

With the engagement of the United States and European powers with Latin American economies in the early 20th century, foreign influences competed to shape their political character. This was particularly true for Latin America’s armed forces. The United States, Germany, France, and Britain sent military missions to help these institutions professionalize and, at the same time, conservative political elites used their armed forces coercively to restrain, often brutally, middle-class political aspirations. When post-WWII attempts by Latin American nations failed to produce economic prosperity through democratic means and the Cuban Revolution appeared to be providing basic public goods such as health care and education to non-elite groups, a series of coups d’état took place starting in 1964 with the overthrow of President Joao Goulart by Brazil’s armed forces. By 1979 all countries on the Latin American mainland from Guatemala to Chile, with the exception of Venezuela, were ruled by *de facto* military governments. The motivations for these take-overs were many, including elite fears of abrupt loss of privilege, as had happened in Cuba, and military fear that political systems could not continue to provide the officer corps a respectable post-retirement middle class life. The public policies of the military governments varied from state capitalism initiated

in Brazil to Chile's free-marketizing, to Peru's experiment with Christian Socialism, to gangsterism and illegal activities in Argentina. Civilian rule began to be restored in 1979 first by Ecuadorian forces which had taken control in the face of fierce violence in its two proximate neighbors – a politically-initiated brutal civil war in Colombia and the Sendero Luminoso insurgency in Peru. By 1991, with the election of Patricio Alwyn as president of Chile, civilian control had been restored to the countries of the region. By the time electoral democracy returned to these countries, many had also created instruments to assure that retired military (potential coup-makers) would have funds for a dignified retirement. Examples of such instruments were funds created with revenues from copper sales in Chile and the designation of a broad set of domestic industries to be managed by the armed forces in Ecuador.

### *Factors Impacting Democratization in Latin America*

Since the withdrawal of the military from politics in Latin America electoral democracy appears to have been well established. It has been buttressed by a variety of regional factors, most notably the Inter-American Charter adopted by the Organization of American States in 2001. This document obliges all 34 members of the OAS to take specific actions in the case of "an unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order or an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state." The actions include suspension from the OAS of a nation experiencing such an "interruption" and the imposition of an economic embargo by the 34 OAS members. This charter has been invoked or has been threatened to be invoked on a number of occasions thus preventing or shortening interruptions of democratically elected government in Latin American countries. It was formally invoked in 2002 when there was an attempted coup in Venezuela, in 2009 after a coup in Honduras, and it was requested by Venezuela's National Assembly in 2016.

A second phenomenon of regional import has been the reformation of national macro-economic practices due to the negative experiences of Latin American nations during the 1970s and 1980s. The policies that were enacted related to a set of 10 described by the economist John Williamson as the "Washington Consensus."<sup>6</sup> While there was much popular protest against the United States appearing to set the rules of the macro-economic policy road, in fact policy makers in most Latin American countries had begun to institute Washington Consensus-type economic policies well before the appearance of Williamson's article. By the time of the 2008 financial crisis these policies had been so widely adopted that the short-term impacts on Latin American countries were substantially less than that which afflicted the United States and many countries in Europe. Since 1960s hyper-inflation in a number of Latin American countries had contributed to military perceptions that political power should be removed from civilian hands, policies that stabilized countries economically have been another factor removing pressure for limiting democratic freedoms.

A third positive factor has been improved civil-military relations. No longer are the region's civilians and military living in completely separate worlds. It is rare that an active duty military officer is a nation's minister of defense. Defense ministries are now populated with civilian defense professionals and most of that nations' armed forces have published "white books"

and other documents making public military assets and military budgets, necessary information for effective subordination of the armed forces to civilian authority. Further, with funds reserved for military pensions and somewhat improved salary scales for security forces, there are fewer incentives for the people with guns to use them to try to advance the interests of their own professional institutions.

A fourth factor mitigating against retreat from democracy has been the resolution of border disputes between countries and the ending of intra-country civil wars. Marxist insurgencies in Southern Cone countries were a pretext for military intervention in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay in the 1960s. Civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, and Peru encouraged authoritarian responses to these threats to domestic peace, and border disputes, including Argentina and Chile; Peru, Bolivia, and Chile; Ecuador and Peru; and Guatemala and Belize at times threatened to provoke populist or militaristic politics. The resolution of most of these disputes (with some exceptions including that of Bolivia and Peru with Chile) has lessened that pressure.

A fifth factor impacting democratic consolidation has been respect for the rule of law. This factor has contradictory manifestations. Latin American countries have the highest incidence of many categories of crime in the world. Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have the highest homicide rates per capita in the world. Venezuela has the lowest rating world-wide for respect for the rule of law according to the World Justice Project (2018). The massive *lavajato* corruption scandal uncovered by Brazilian prosecutors has revealed tentacles throughout Brazil's political system as well as in other countries throughout the hemisphere. In contrast, awareness that popular support for democracy requires government control of crime has caused governments throughout the region to increase investments in judicial system reform and policing. Having these investments pay off in the face of tenuous human security and widespread concern with government corruption will be critical for future popular support for democracy.

A sixth factor has been increased transparency, especially the difficulty of concealing machinations against elected governments from the general population or from policy makers in neighboring and other nations. Threatened coup attempts, for example by General Lino Oviedo in Paraguay in 1989 and a 1993 self-coup in Guatemala by President Jorge Serrano, were halted by the OAS and member states warning incipient coup-makers that such acts would have severe consequences. In earlier times other countries in the hemisphere would only learn about potential coups after they had been carried out.

Overall, however, there are reasons to be concerned about the depth of commitment to democracy as a system of government in Latin America. AmericasBarometer, a survey of citizens' political views that has been carried out in the Western Hemisphere since 2005 shows that, while there has been a clear decline in support for some elements of democracy in recent years, there continues to be a solid level of support for others.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, in terms of declining support, between 2014 and 2017 abstract support for democracy as a form of government declined sharply as did trust in political parties and support for coups against

national executives increased. In contrast, support for elections as a way to select leaders remained stable, and support for the expression of minority viewpoints in politics increased. One way to interpret these findings is that citizens are frustrated with their political systems' inability to provide citizen security, to prevent corruption, and to generate economic development, but their solution, reported by AmericasBarometer, can be interpreted as greater citizen participation.

### *Will Southeast Asia Have a Monroe Doctrine?*

Latin America has been seen traditionally as the region in which a hegemonic nation (the United States) has the most power. A totemic point for this is President James Monroe's articulation of "The Monroe Doctrine." Developed in 1823 to prevent European whalers from competing with New Englanders in the South Atlantic, it stated that the United States would prevent European powers from exercising influence in the Western Hemisphere. Notably this happened just as South American countries had wrested political independence from colonial Spain. While the United States largely ignored domestic political debates in Latin America through the mid-19th century, when it endeavored to deepen economic ties and exercise political influence in the region, imposing its military force and ideas about politics. It pursued its "Manifest Destiny" by expanding its national territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific and, turning south, annexed 40% of Mexico's national territory in 1848, occupied Cuba and Puerto Rico as a result of the 1898 Spanish-American War, and, in the 20th century, sent Marines and surrogate forces to align national politics with US interests in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and elsewhere. Marines were not sent to South America except to populate military bases and to guard embassies, but economic pressure was brought to bear on countries in the region thought to be flirting with politics not aligned with United States democracy. Projects were developed to reinforce US influence with its neighbors. Theodore Roosevelt's "Big Stick" was evident with visits by the "Great White Fleet" to Latin American ports and by the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine explicitly stating the right of the United States to intervene in Latin American affairs. Softer approaches were used with Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy," and John Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress." More explicit messages were delivered by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan's support of military regimes in Latin America. Barack Obama's Secretary of State John Kerry dramatically repudiated the Monroe Doctrine in a 2013 speech at the Inter-American Dialogue, but Donald Trump's counterpart Rex Tillerson asserted its continuing relevance in a 2018 speech at the University of Texas.

While repugnant, especially to previously colonized countries like those of Southeast Asia, this assertion of US authority in the Western Hemisphere did seem to fit with some definitions of manifest destiny during 20th century wars with Germany and during the Cold War with the Soviet Union as well as with US unipolar power at the end of the Cold War. While not explicitly mandating democracy, US influence in the Western Hemisphere, in addition to shared enthusiasm for Enlightenment ideas, encouraged the development of democratic politics.



Having similar political systems makes it easier for nations to cooperate,<sup>8</sup> and shared nominal commitment to democracy has made it easier for mutual trust to develop between leaders of the region's hegemonic power and those of other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

With the rise of China, the destiny of the United States and its democratic political system is less manifest. The end of the Cold War ushered in an accelerated process of social change labelled "globalization" and a corresponding rise in countries forming governments through democratic elections. This created the impression in many quarters that democracy would spread world-wide, perhaps even to China, in order to facilitate peace and prosperity in a US-led world. However, the post-2008 economic slowdown and the example of China's continued economic growth with limited political freedom have changed things. This has led a number of countries to curtail liberal democratic protections to enhance citizen security and economic growth. In fact, China has evolved what Joshua Ramo has called a "Beijing Consensus" counter to the "Washington Consensus."<sup>9</sup> This has made it clear that China's national political objective is not US-style democracy but "socialism with Chinese characteristics," among which are the unquestioned authority of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the requirement that other nations not interfere in China's domestic politics.

How will that impact politics in Southeast Asia? Will China follow the United States in Latin America and attempt to impose its hegemonic will on its southern neighbors? The Democratic People's Republic of Vietnam, like Mexico, has a centuries-long history of fearing and combatting incursions from its huge northern neighbor; the Philippines, like Cuba has a narrow stretch of ocean separating it from its larger neighbor but, curiously, its history of having been occupied is with the United States, not China. These two nations and 8 others have formed ASEAN with much larger populations and much more dynamic economies than US neighbors in the Caribbean. Should one then expect that China's neighbors will be influenced to shape their political systems to engage more easily with the PRC?

Chinese officials have explicitly rejected the idea that their foreign policy will resemble those developed by Europe or the United States in earlier centuries. In March 2018, prior to the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Zhang Yuyan asserted that there is a marked difference between China's overseas relations and the colonial relations of Europe and the United States. He stated, "the Belt and Road Initiative seeks mutual benefits and sustainable cooperation, rather than predatory exploration. Chinese businesses care about local sustainable development and have actively fulfilled their social responsibilities."<sup>10</sup>

While officials widely assert that the core of Chinese overseas relations is non-interference with the affairs of other nations and commitment to activities of mutual benefit, China does insist that its partners "commit to its One China policy, limit relations with Taiwan, cooperate in countering Uyghur nationalists and jihadists, keep silent about Tibet, at times support China's position in the United Nations Security Council, and give Chinese companies priority in China-funded projects."<sup>11</sup> Public statements aside, China's foreign involvements, including BRI, involve expanding its influence to become a regional, if not a global player. This is necessary for China's one trillion dollar plus BRI to serve as a vehicle for the ambitious national

development plans announced by Xi Jinping at the 19th CPC Central Committee Meeting, plans whose achievement will be important for sustaining the legitimacy of CPC leadership. While the rhetoric of BRI and other Chinese initiatives stand in marked contrast to that of James Monroe, Theodore Roosevelt, and European leaders involved in “the Scramble for Africa” or “the Great Game,” the asymmetry of Chinese power will be perceived by other nations as a new colonialism unless China takes extreme measures to collaborate with and support economic development with its partners. The impact of the reduction of grain purchases in Latin America, of Sri Lankan indebtedness, and of details of contracts with Malaysian authorities has not created the impression that China’s bilateral power will be qualitatively different from those of previous international powers.

### *Threats to Democracy*

It is common to state that support for democracy requires that democratically elected governments successfully provide public goods for their citizens—especially public goods that allow for growing economic prosperity and for national and personal security. However, paradoxically, successful democratization itself has long been seen as a potential generator of anti-democratic reactions. This was noted by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835 in *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville saw democratization as part of a centuries long trend in which social and economic conditions of men were becoming more equal, that aristocracy was disappearing, and that this was creating a virtuous circle in which the growth of commerce and trade increased economic opportunity. However, he also observed what he described as a paradox which later became known as the “Tocqueville effect,” in which “social frustration increases as social conditions improve.” He argued that growing hatred of social privilege would be seen as a threat to political stability, thus leading to the state arrogating more power to itself, thus diminishing the quality of democracy. Tocqueville described other threats to democracy stemming from its success: the possibility of a “soft despotism” in which citizens allow a state they see as benevolent to set public policy unchecked; the possibility of the development of a “tyranny of the majority” in which minority rights are not protected; and that the prosperity produced by democracy would create an “industrial aristocracy” based in the ownership of capital.

All of this led de Tocqueville to observe that a “science of democracy” would need to be developed to curb these potential dangers and to continue to enhance citizen capacity to impact public policy.<sup>12</sup> The paradoxical results of democratic success can be seen in the Western Hemisphere, perhaps even more clearly in the country de Tocqueville visited 200 years ago as well as in Latin American countries. Similarly, they are a threat to continued democratization in Southeast Asia.

A second category of threat to democracy is the heterogeneity (of identities) that Simon Bolivar observed in 19th century Latin America. Articles in this Special Forum have observed that increasing citizen capacity to impact public policy is easier when there is a coherent national identity supporting a national project. Lacking this coherence, disputes may more easily lead to irresolvable conflicts that impede the institution-building needed to allow nations to agree to hold free and fair elections and then build additional institutions that will protect

basic rights and sustain national peace and prosperity. Such disputes prevented the formation of Bolívar's hoped-for South American Republic and made difficult the progress made by Latin American elites and middle classes to create the democratic institutions they have (or do not have) today.

A third threat to democracy is organized crime, which often subverts the rule of law that many analysts have seen as essential for deepening democracy. Organized crime operates drug cartels, human trafficking rings, and other elements of illegal industries that are kept from the public eye. Hence, they are subject only to their own particular justice, creating privilege and *de facto* policies that do not respond to public preferences. In Latin America public policy is often said to be set by the choice between "*plata o plomo* (silver or lead / bribery or bullets)." These rather than public preferences can all-too easily be determinants of what should be political outcomes when organized crime goes unchecked. Threats to democracy can be seen in parts of Mexico, Colombia, and other Latin American countries where organized crime controls swaths of national territory and of the national economy. While large so-called "drug cartels" have been dismantled in a number of countries and their leaders prosecuted, organized crime can create political space that prevents public preferences from becoming policy.

A fourth threat to democracy in Latin America and Southeast Asia is corruption. It may appear inappropriate to separate corruption, or the unauthorized use of public resources for private gain, from organized crime. However, corruption does take place within state structures whether or not non-state organized crime is present. Corruption can diminish the efficiency of the state and its public policies and, if perceived as rampant, can seriously undermine faith in government and the legitimacy that is essential for state functioning. Combatting corruption as the basis for building rule-of-law based democracy was essential for Ivan Velazquez's efforts to transform Medellín, Colombia from an organized crime headquarters to a thriving democratic metropolis. It is similarly essential for his leadership of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), where the United Nations supports that nation's efforts to end impunity, to prosecute corruption, and to advance democratization. That that effort is being contested by Guatemala's president Jimmy Morales to protect his own private interests further underscores the fact that democratization can be either accelerated or slowed down by corrupt leadership.

A fifth threat to democracy in Latin America and Southeast Asia is sharp power. Of course, hard power (military or economic) and soft power (the attraction of alternatives) can be used to strengthen or weaken democracy, but sharp power (disruptive forces such as propaganda or cyber tools) can also be effective. New technologies, especially social media have enhanced its capacity to create "alternative facts" to undermine the credibility of political opponents and/or to create safe silos in which political partisans are not exposed to alternative positions.

*Democracy Diversity in Latin America and in Southeast Asia*

The nature of national politics and processes of democratization are diverse both in Latin America and in Southeast Asia. One way to demonstrate this is to simply list seventeen propositions that can be derived from the above reflections on the histories of democratization in Latin America. They are that democratization in Latin America and Southeast Asia:

- Can be reinforced by democratic nations providing public goods that allow for growing economic prosperity and for national and personal security
- Can be reinforced by region-wide agreements that oblige nations to sanction disruptions of democratic governance
- Can be reinforced by national macro-economic policies that provide economic stability domestically and in global context
- Can be improved by positive civil-military relations that enhance civilian capacity to manage and set priorities for national armed forces
- Can be improved by eliminating border disputes and civil wars, both of which can generate forces which undermine government support
- Can be improved by strengthening the rule of law thus providing predictability in the processes through which public preferences become public policy
- Can be improved by domestic and international transparency thus revealing threats to democratization before they can be put into action
- Are threatened by the success of democratization because social frustration increases as conditions improve
- Are threatened by the success of democratization because the state will arrogate too much power to itself to reduce social privilege
- Are threatened by the success of democratization since citizens may see successful democracy as benevolent and thus allow too much power concentration
- Are threatened by the success of democratization since a tyranny of the majority may develop suppressing the rights of minorities
- Are threatened by the success of democratization because it may produce a new aristocracy
- Are threatened by national and regional heterogeneity that may weaken national coherence
- Are threatened by non-state actors that may develop foci of power that rival the state
- Are threatened by corruption that may undermine the rule of law
- Are threatened by sharp power that may undermine national dialogue
- Can lead to regional hegemonic control of national politics unless regional hegemons make consistent efforts to develop collaborative international relations

With such diversity of effects political change is likely to be continually dynamic. Conceiving of ways to characterize that dynamic diversity is likely to be challenging, but important for generating understanding of underlying processes and developing mechanisms for sustaining democratization, given its moral and functional value. Two such concepts do exist however: one new, one classic.

The classic concept is that of “cross-cutting cleavages” most notably developed by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, who explain, based on the classic work of Georg Simmel, that a cross-cutting cleavage exists when groups on one dimension of interests overlap with groups on another dimension of interests.<sup>13</sup> “Cleavages” may include any number of divisions in society including religious, civil-military, racial, and political (liberal-conservative). Formally, when members of a group on a given dimension of interest belong to groups on a second dimension of interest with members of other groups from the first dimension of interest cleavage, the cleavage would be cross-cutting. In contrast, if individuals were arrayed in the same distinct groups for a wide range of dimensions of interests, the divisions would be “reinforcing,” thus generating conflict and eventually autocracy. If countries hope to develop sustainable processes of democratization, their interest cleavages, reflected in the above effects, need to be “cross-cutting.”

The newer concept is that of multiplexity, developed by Amitav Acharya.<sup>14</sup> Multiplexity in international relations is the number of separate connections between any two actors (state or non-state), i.e., the interaction of exchanges within and across relationships. It is to be contrasted with multipolarity which assumed the primacy of great powers. Acharya argues that, “As with a multiplex cinema...a multiplex world gives audiences a wider choice of plots, actors, producers, and directors.” He also argues that, with the decline of the American-dominated international order, this multiplexity will become increasingly complex with more choices being available to an increasing number of actors across more issue areas (not just trade, but also environment, security, social development, governance, and connectivity) and at multiple layers of governance. Multiplexity will give nations in Southeast Asia and Latin America more opportunities to resolve political issues without necessarily needing to be dependent on a specific set of great powers. Democratization will be more sustainable if national interest cleavages are cross-cutting and if nations anticipate that they will be operating in a multiplex world.

1. Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1922).

2. *Gran Colombia* (Greater Colombia) is a name used today for the state that encompassed much of northern South America and part of southern Central America from 1819 to 1831. It included the territories of present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, northern Peru, western Guyana and northwest Brazil.

3. James E. Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

4. At the time these parties were seen as radical as they espoused middle class ideals. They also independently adopted the name “Radical” in Argentina, Chile, etc.

5. Carlos F. Díaz-Alejandro, “No Less Than One Hundred Years of Argentine Economic History, Plus Some Comparisons,” Center Discussion Paper, No. 392, Yale University, Economic Growth Center, New Haven, CT, 1982.

6. John Williamson, “What Washington Means by Policy Reform,” in John Williamson, ed., *Latin*

*American Readjustment: How Much has Happened*, (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 1989).

7. Mollie J. Cohen, Noam Lupu, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, *The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Democracy and Governance* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 2017).

8. John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1994), pp. 87-125.

9. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004).

10. Xinhuanet News, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/02/c\\_137011819.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/02/c_137011819.htm)

11. James M. Dorsey, *China and the Middle East: Venturing into the Maelstrom* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 2.

12. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

13. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 1–64.

14. Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).