

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Campaigns, Elections, and Regimes in Latin America

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This essay reviews the following works:

Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010. Tomo I: Prácticas políticas. Edited by Iván Jaksic and Juan Luis Ossa. Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2014. Pp. 508. \$280.00 MXN, paperback. ISBN: 9789562891653.

Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010. Tomo II: Estado y sociedad. Edited by Iván Jaksic and Francisca Rengifo. Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2017. Pp. 476. \$470.00 MXN, paperback. ISBN: 9789562891691.

Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010. Tomo III: Problemas económicos. Edited by Iván Jaksic, Andrés Estefane, and Claudio Robles. Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2018. Pp. 443. \$430.00 MXN, paperback. ISBN: 9789562891776.

Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010. Tomo IV: Intelectuales y pensamiento político. Edited by Iván Jaksic and Susana Gazmuri. Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2018. Pp. 338. \$440.00 MXN, paperback. ISBN: 9789562891837.

Revolutionizing Repertoires: The Rise of Populist Mobilization in Peru. By Robert S. Jansen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. Pp. xviii + 288. \$37.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780226487441.

Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective. Edited by Noam Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, and Luis Schiumerini. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019. Pp. xiv + 298. \$80.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780472131280.

Electoral Rules and Democracy in Latin America. By Cynthia McClintock. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xi + 336. \$38.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780190879761.

Why Bother with Elections? By Adam Przeworski. Cambridge: Polity, 2018. Pp. 210. \$15.50 paperback. ISBN: 9781509526604.

Política latinoamericana contemporánea. Edited by Godofredo Vidal de la Rosa. Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2017. Pp. 713. Paperback. ISBN: 9786072811225.

Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy. By Daniel Ziblatt. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xvi + 448. \$32.99 paperback. ISBN: 9780521172998.

Elections are central to modern politics, even if they are not always competitive. Only 21 percent of elections between 1788 and 2008 featured the defeat of the incumbent, with

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the share rising above this rate during the last decades of the twentieth century, according to Adam Przeworski in *Why Bother with Elections?* (47–48).

But elections sometimes turn out to be pivotal. If voters get a broad menu of choices, elections will generate excitement and even fear. They will raise fundamental questions about the exercise of political authority. These are what Eduardo Posada Carbó and Andrew Robertson call “revolutionary” or “intensely disputed” contests.¹ Revolutionary elections allow new leaders to enact far-reaching changes. They can be the climax of confrontations that derail political systems and/or produce long-term political cleavages. Of the books under review, Robert S. Jansen’s *Revolutionizing Repertoires* argues that the 1931 elections in Peru were a watershed. They were, Jansen contends, the first to feature populist mobilization in the region.

Most of the elections analyzed in the rest of the books neither have unexpected results nor produce longer-term political legacies. The contributions to *Política latinoamericana contemporánea*, edited by Godofredo Vidal de la Rosa, analyze elections more ordinary than extraordinary since the late twentieth century. The 2015 elections in Argentina were not revolutionary, even if they saw the transfer of executive power from the Peronist president, Christina Kirchner, to the opposition candidate, Mauricio Macri. The collection *Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Noam Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, and Luis Schiumerini, is the most methodologically sophisticated of the ten books that I review. It offers a template for how to study elections, either of the present or even of the past.

Even pivotal elections, however, fade from memory. They become the pop songs of yesteryear, whose tunes became forgettable soon after their popularity crests. One aim of this review is to rescue some of these elections from oblivion. A second is to reflect on the rather different ways that historians, political scientists, and sociologists analyze elections. For example, Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini’s book is replete with surveys and statistics to explain the choices voters make. Jensen’s book makes creative use of population censuses and voter registry data to depict the electorate and the rituals and practice of electoral campaigns in a pivotal period in Peruvian political history. A third goal is to emphasize the importance of the aggregate effects of elections. Their collective impact shapes the political trajectories of nation-states, as demonstrated by Cynthia McClintock’s exhaustive *Electoral Rules and Democracy in Latin America*, the four volumes of the ambitious *Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010*, and Daniel Ziblatt’s magisterial *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy*.

Campaigns and results

If the rituals and routines of elections differ by time and place, how voters, candidates, and parties behave share commonalities. Both Jansen’s book on the 1931 election in Peru and the collection of articles edited by Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini on the 2015 election in Argentina emphasize the contingent nature of electoral outcomes. And the broad sweep of Przeworski’s volume helps us to identify patterns that hold across space and time.

Why Bother with Elections? is one of the latest installments of Adam Przeworski’s pioneering work on democracy and elections. It distills key patterns from a database he has assembled about elections since the late eighteenth century and summarizes key research on elections. Some of the distinctive patterns are that democracies rarely break down once

¹ Eduardo Posada Carbó and Andrew Robertson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Revolutionary Elections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

they become “affluent,” a point he echoes from earlier work.² Figure 11.1 (120) graphs this conclusion, showing that the probability converges to zero at approximately US\$17,000 GDP per capita (though we do not know the index year for these values). Przeworski suggests that the near zero marginal utility of holding state power in richer societies explains why losers accept their defeat in more developed societies. Though the history of elections involves violence, Przeworski is surely right that regularly held and competitive elections with ample suffrage rights lead to, all other things being equal, more peace, even if the short chapter on the “civil peace” does not compile the findings and numbers to substantiate this claim. “In the end,” he notes, “elections are but a framework within which somewhat equal, somewhat effective, and somewhat free people can struggle peacefully to improve the world according to their different visions, values, and interests” (5).

Przeworski notes that “the crucial democratic institutions are those that prevent incumbents from abusing their power to tilt results of elections” (128). Again, he presents tantalizing findings: governments lost fewer than 10 percent of elections when they were indirect and lost almost a quarter of them when they are direct (39). Another is that incumbents win 92 percent of elections held in public and 76 percent of them when they are secret (40). These are findings that uphold conventional arguments about why, as Przeworski reminds us, governments insulate themselves from public pressure. Another important conclusion is that income inequality is not lower in democracies than in dictatorships (105), a finding rich with implications for the credibility of promises made during electoral campaigns. I would have liked to learn more about these topics in Przeworski’s characteristically elegant and insightful prose.

Robert S. Jansen’s book examines the novel campaign techniques that populist parties deployed in the 1931 elections in Peru, the first after a military coup overthrew the Augusto B. Leguía dictatorship (1919–1930). It was the first election, he claims, to deploy populist mobilization, which he defines as tailoring messages in favor of ordinary voters and against the establishment and the use of mass rallies and local clubs to get voters to the polls.

Jansen is not the first to study the 1931 elections of Peru. This election is one of the few that has a historiography, albeit a tiny one.³ It pitted a military officer, Luis Sánchez Cerro, against a quintessential populist, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, the candidate of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). It was also an election that featured the ideas and legacy of José Carlos Mariátegui, the theorist of Marxist- and Indigenous-inspired national liberation, who died prematurely in 1929. The party that he helped to shape was a bit player in the election, in large because it favored the gradual construction of a revolutionary alliance between workers and peasants over electoral competition that would distract from this longer-term goal. While Sánchez Cerro handily defeated de la Torre (by 51 percent vs. 35 percent) in the October 11, 1931, election, APRA refused to accept its defeat. It started to organize insurrections, many with the active participation of its sympathizers in the armed forces. In late April 1933, a disgruntled Aprista assassinated Sánchez Cerro. Rebellions, military coups, and assassination created the blood feud between APRA and the military that kept one of the most famous populist parties out of the presidency and Peru unstable for decades.

² Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³ Steve Stein, *Populism in Peru: the Emergence of the Masses and the Politics of Social Control* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); see Paul W. Drake, “Review: Populism in South America,” *Latin American Research Review* 17, no. 1 (1982): 190–199. Jansen is right to point out (27–28) that research concentrates on the political figures of this period. For a recent study, see Iñigo García-Bryce, *Haya de la Torre and the Pursuit of Power in Twentieth-Century Peru and Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

Jansen makes much of his claim that populist mobilization emerged in Peru and not, for example, in Argentina or Brazil. Though much less urbanized, Peru saw the rapid influx of peasants in Lima and the formation of a working class over the prior decades that set the stage for populist mobilization. Leguía's dictatorship (1919–1930) had marginalized the Partido Civil and other parties of notables founded in the nineteenth century. After Sánchez Cerro mutinied in Arequipa on August 22, a city in the country's Indigenous south, his quixotic effort took hold; five days later, military factions backed Sánchez Cerro, who entered Lima triumphantly. But in March 1931, he went into exile after the other members of the military junta opposed his effort to consolidate his own rule. Once the newly fashioned military junta convened elections, Sánchez Cerro forced his return to Peru in July.

For Jansen, Sánchez Cerro and Haya de la Torre pioneered rhetorical strategies and campaign techniques that changed elections in Peru and throughout the region. Jansen emphasizes social links between parties and voters, which is his book's central contribution to the study of elections. If historians emphasize contingency and political scientists analyze outcomes, sociologists like Jansen explore the social networks that parties activate to win on election day. He also uses scatterplots and elementary statistical tools that historians largely (and unfortunately) eschew to make sense of the political past. But his book is profoundly historical because it also employs narratives to explore the personalities and the chain of events to analyze what was, Jansen contends, a pathbreaking election in Latin America.

A future avenue for research is to document and analyze earlier campaign repertoires. Jansen notes that political clubs played a role in Peruvian elections since the nineteenth century. But he emphasizes that Sánchez Cerro and Haya de la Torre helped transform them into something more than the shock brigades that parties previously deployed to capture polling stations. To draw the contrast with the past, more detailed analyses of prior campaigns will allow to measure the change in campaign repertoire in the 1931 elections.

Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini's collection *Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies* analyzes the 2015 election in Argentina. It was a two-round affair, where the victor, Mauricio Macri, a center-right businessman running under the Cambiemos ("Let's Change") alliance obtained a 34 percent share in the October 25, 2015, election and prevailed against Daniel Scioli, the Peronist standard-bearer, with 51.34 percent in the November 22 runoff (since 1995, a candidate needs a plurality and at least 45 percent [or at least 40 percent with a 10-point lead on the second most voted candidate] of the vote to win in the first round). The book is, curiously, among the most specialized under review while also being the most general.⁴ It is very much a political scientist's view of an election. It concludes that, like the 1931 election in Peru, contingency—how the candidates ran their campaigns—determined their outcomes. It is full of tables and graphs. It tests its hypothesis statistically. Its innovation is to deploy a panel survey; the team relies on two sets of face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of voters living in cities of ten thousand or more residents between June 24 and August 7 and then from November 21 to December 30, 2015 (25–27). By returning to the same voters in successive waves of surveys, panel surveys allow researchers to separate cause from correlation in the study of vote choice. Panels allow researchers to see why, for example, Peronist voters remained loyal and others changed their minds.

This book is a benchmark for how to analyze an election, whether of the past or the present. Chapter 1, by Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini, develops a theoretical approach that points out that vote choice is a product of four sets of factors. First, social identity

⁴ For a review of recent books on campaigns and elections, see Jorge Vargas Culler, "Elections and the Muddled Present of the Latin American Democracies," *Latin American Research Review*, 54, no. 3 (2019), 784–794, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.893>.

groups or parties can create enduring attachments that all but shape a voter's choice. Second, issues can emerge that attract the attention of voters and make them deliberate about whether candidates and parties approximate their own preferences. Third, "valence" means that voters choose on the basis of perceptions of competence. Fourth, campaigns can change minds. If politics is fundamentally about persuasion and process, then campaigns are a rhetoric of words, images, rituals, and information that persuade voters to stick with an incumbent or vote for the opposition. The introduction alone is worth the price of the book. It provides a framework that historians, sociologists, or political scientists can use to diagnose the vortex of factors that ratify or overturn the political status quo.

The contributors to this volume suggest that social identities receded to allow the non-Peronist opposition to win the presidential runoff. In chapter 5, Andy Baker and Dalton Dorr use the two-wave panel to estimate that almost half of survey respondents continued to identify as Peronists by the end of 2015, which by international standards is not that high (109–110). But Scioli, who ran as the candidate of the Front for Victory (FPV), a party assembled by the Kirchners, and the Peronist spoiler, Sergio Massa, who ran as the candidate of the PJ or Peronist Party proper, attracted 37 and 21 percent, respectively, of the vote in the October 25 election. Yes, modern Argentina is known for the struggle between the working-class supporters of Juan Perón and his middle- and upper-class opponents, a point that Lupu analyzes in chapter 4, on the impact of wealth on vote choice. But, after twelve years of Peronist governments led by Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–2015), the 2015 campaign convinced enough Argentines to vote Mauricio Macri, the mayor of Buenos Aires, into office. Both María Victoria Murillo and Steven Levitsky, in chapter 2, and Ernesto Calvo, in chapter 3, deftly examine how the end of the commodities boom set the stage for enough voters to turn against Scioli, governor of the province of Buenos Aires and the Peronist candidate handpicked by the outgoing President Fernández. Calvo, in particular, emphasizes splits among the incumbents in setting the stage for the retrospective calculations that led voters to endorse Macri in the November 22 runoff.

Voters supported Scioli if they approved of the president, thought the economy was doing well, and identified with the FPV, according to chapter 6, insightfully written by Carlos Gervasoni and María Laura Tagina. More educated and wealthy voters were less likely to support Scioli in the second round. And voters with economic ties to the state—essentially, if respondents reported being a beneficiary of social programs—were more likely to support Scioli. But clientelistic or narrow, one-time material rewards like food or clothing had little impact on vote choice. With less than a majority of Argentines approving of President Fernández, however, Scioli could not rely on positive retrospective evaluations of her administration to win. Economic growth had fallen to 1.1 percent and inflation was 30 percent.

However, in chapter 8, Kenneth Greene shows that the campaign made a difference. He estimates that the campaign led 4.5 percent of Peronist voters, mostly voters who cast ballots for Massa, to try their luck with Macri. Campaign effects led a small share of voters to deemphasize redistributive preferences and to reconsider Scioli's competence, which led them to entrust the presidency to Macri. Valence judgements, in other words, became pivotal in a tightly fought campaign where the incumbent candidate failed to hold onto his numerically larger coalition of voters.

Política latinoamericana contemporánea, edited by Godofredo Vidal de la Rosa, provides portraits of the candidates, parties, and cleavages in political systems that do not always attract much attention. If Noam Lupu and his colleagues remind us that few elections in Latin America get panel surveys, it is always the bigger countries like Brazil, Mexico, and, yes, Argentina that develop a cadre of political scientists and survey researchers to plumb the depths of elections. This work is not always easy to write because it demands that a

researcher distill the essence of political dynamics from a blizzard of information. Some of the best chapters in this volume discuss the less explored cases, including Chile (Marcelo Mella Polanco), Colombia (Mauricio Uribe López on the peace process and Gregorio Puello-Socarrás and José Francisco Puello-Socarrás on its political legacies), Cuba (Marlene Azor Hernández), Ecuador (María Inés Arévalo Jaramillo and Santiago Basabe-Serrano), Honduras (José Eugenio Sosa), Paraguay (Marcos Pérez Talia), and Uruguay (Daniela Vairo and José Raúl Rodríguez).

Electoral laws

Cynthia McClintock's *Electoral Rules and Democracy in Latin America* argues that runoff systems are superior to plurality formulas for electing presidents. Requiring candidates to earn at least one vote more than half of the valid vote opens electoral competition to new parties, ensures that successful presidents win the support of a majority of voters (in the runoff), and increases the odds they have the support of the median voter, to use the social choice language that Josep Colomer favors.⁵

McClintock's book deploys a cross-national statistical model to show that runoff systems are associated with higher levels of democratic quality in eighteen Latin American countries between 1990 and 2016. A problem with this approach is that it omits variables that are endogenous to the model. Ideological diversity of party systems or between candidates is missing from the models. And perhaps the lack of ideological diversity explains why plurality is associated with lower-quality democracy in Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Venezuela.

Her solution to the problem of endogeneity is to be encyclopedic. She examines every election in each country between 1990 and 2016 in a search for factors that may complicate her findings. While she does not use matching techniques or paired comparisons to organize her findings, she has exhaustive chapters on plurality systems, runoff systems, and what she calls reduced threshold systems. She is able to demonstrate that noncentrist candidates, given the incomplete cross-national data on ideological placement, have won more often under plurality than under runoff formulas (44–51). She cites every relevant article and book on the topic and talked with a large number of politicians and experts in the big as well as the small countries. This comprehensiveness makes her book an indispensable handbook for presidential elections in Latin America during the Third Wave of democracy.

The book is also cautious in its assessment. McClintock concedes that presidential runoff systems spawn larger party systems, which early observers of the Third Wave like Juan Linz suggested would allow an outsider to be elected with a small legislative contingent (2–3).⁶ This would set the stage for the deadlock of executive and legislative branches of government that they counseled new democracies should avoid. While McClintock shows that the effective number of parties (ENP) index is indeed larger in runoff systems, she points out that the more centrist candidates favored by runoff elections would encourage help them form coalitions in Congress (37–39). Cases like Peru in 1992 or Guatemala in 1993—when quintessential outsiders won in the second round in fragmented party systems and assaulted legislatures where they had little support (with Alberto Fujimori succeeding in Peru and Jorge Serrano failing in Guatemala)—are indeed, she concedes,

⁵ Josep M. Colomer, ed., *Handbook of Electoral System Choice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), which has chapters on the origins of the rules in place for selecting presidents. See also Rafael Martínez, ed., *La elección presidencial mediante doble vuelta en Latinoamérica* (Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 2004).

⁶ See David Doyle, "Breakdown, Cooperation, or Backsliding? A Return to Presidents and Legislatures in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 55, no. 1 (2020): 168–175, <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.886>.

examples where runoff elections damaged democracy. But these are exceptions to the more important pattern. And, she notes, democracy fell in Peru for several reasons.

A comparative drawback of plurality systems, she argues, is that they help established and even quasi-authoritarian parties fend off threats from rivals. A unified bloc of voters organized in a party can prevail by encouraging the fragmentation of their rivals. This turns out to explain why she is skeptical of reduced threshold systems like Costa Rica's or Argentina's.⁷ Yes, reduced threshold systems dissuade noncentrist candidates from running for office, but they also discourage parties with substantial electoral followings from appealing to broader swaths of the electorate. It is not coincidental that Daniel Ortega negotiated an infamous pact with President Arnoldo Alemán (1996–2001) in 2000 to lower the threshold from 45 to 35 percent with a 5 percent margin or at least 40 percent, which McClintock classifies as a qualified plurality system. In the 2009 constitution, the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia also established a qualified majority system to help it retain power (short of a majority, a candidate with at least 40 percent of the vote and a 10-point lead over the runner-up could win).

Elections and regimes

Both Daniel Ziblatt's *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* and the four volumes of the *Historia política de Chile* are rife with implications for how elections shape political trajectories. Ziblatt's central message is that domesticating the forces of the right is the central challenge of establishing democracy. While the multiauthored volumes of the *Historia política de Chile* naturally do not allow for a similar distillation, its chapters ask us to reconsider the sources and nature of Chile's early constitutional development, which I suggest produces a hypothesis worth exploring about the regime-defining effects of elections.

Ziblatt compares political developments in Britain and Germany between the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He embeds the comparison in a broader study of why political systems have what he calls settled or unsettled political trajectories. Britain, like Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, saw the gradual expansion of the franchise and averted having conflicts spiral into regime breakdowns. Germany, like France and Italy, for example, witnessed the early top-down amplification of suffrage rights (in 1871 for males aged twenty-five and older in Reich elections) and repeated breakdowns. The comparison thus reinvigorates the study of the two alternative paths to democracy that Robert Dahl noted decades ago.⁸ It also contributes to a classic question of German historiography: Why did the promise of modernization fail so miserably in Germany?

Despite the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy and the expansion in the size of the electorate, British aristocrats and other members of the old order (e.g., monarchs, high civil servant, military officers, and establishment church clergy) managed to organize a party to win elections. This is one version of Ziblatt's answer to these questions. German landed elites, or Junkers, did not. They insisted on controlling rural voters and relied on a panoply of interest groups, along with the monarchy, to remain hegemonic. Instead of developing a party, they invested in authoritarian enclaves that left them unprepared to battle the left in the electoral arena and to undercut the power of extremist groups on the right.

What is innovative about Ziblatt's book is the use of multiple strategies to test implications of his argument. He uses personal correspondence and other qualitative

⁷ I defined the Argentine variant above as I discussed the 2015 elections. The Costa Rican variant, the first of its kind, requires a candidate to obtain at least 40 percent of the valid vote and a plurality of the vote if no one wins an absolute majority. See Fabrice Lehoucq, "Costa Rica: Modifying Majoritarianism with 40 percent Threshold," in Colomer, *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, 133–144.

⁸ Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971).

information to depict the dilemmas faced by aristocrats in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and upper classes in Chile and Argentina. The book has maps and statistical models to show that allegations of electoral fraud in Germany were more numerous in districts with higher (land concentration) Gini coefficients between 1870 and 1912 (180–188).⁹ These results do not demonstrate, he emphasizes, that unsettled democracy was a product of inequalitarian social structures. Ziblatt points out that land inequality was as great in nineteenth-century Germany as it was in Victorian Britain (52). Rather, they are part of an explanation that shows that landlords, especially in Prussia, penetrated local governments and manipulated the vote instead of organizing parties. Electoral corruption and partisan canvassing are substitutes that have long-term political legacies.

Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy also has statistical models in chapters 3 and 4 that show that British counties or boroughs with politically active clergymen and other Conservative activists helped the Tories win elections. Ziblatt's book has far too many insightful tests of its arguments to discuss here. But all of them, along with reinterpretations of key findings and events and debates with other researchers about the significance of political and social trends, uphold the claim that parties succeed if they do what parties do: field activists, organize clubs, develop a message, and battle with their opponents. It is a supremely political—partisan—story about how conservatives built organizations for electoral success.

Historia política de Chile, 1810–2010 is an ambitious effort to recast the modern history of Chile, Latin America's earliest constitutional system and one where the tension between the establishment and democracy has been epic. This collection is not a series of chronologically driven narratives on "great men" that occupied the attention of traditional (and political) historiography. Neither do these chapters place class struggle or the growth and expansion of the export model at the center of historical development. Most chapters deploy a pair of concepts such as democracy or authoritarianism to make sense of changes and continuities in the practice of politics, of the relations between state and society, and in economic policies and development.

What is striking about the four-volume collection is how elections shaped so many aspects of political and social life in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chile. In his contribution to volume 1, Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz analyzes how disputes about the results of the 1828 elections led *pelucones* (or protoliberals) to start a civil war against the *pipilones* (or protoconservatives). The opposition lost, paving the way for the new constitution of 1833, which led to the establishment of a conservative political order. But, as Ossa Santa Cruz and others note, this order began to open when press and other freedoms allowed the liberal opposition to win the 1849 congressional elections. The tensions between order and liberty, and how we understand the political past, is one of the themes running through this and other chapters.

Two chapters set the stage for understanding the impact of electoral competition on life in the new republic. In volume 1, Eduardo Posada Carbó outlines the trajectory of elections in Chile between 1810 and the 1970 election of Salvador Allende. His main aim is to highlight the continuity of elections. He discusses how institutional reforms reduced the power of the executive in electoral competition. He analyzes the gradual expansion of political participation, despite the persistence of the literacy requirement until 1970 and a gender restriction until 1952. The milestones are too numerous to cite here, but include the 1870 constitutional reform that banned the consecutive reelection of presidents, the 1874 reform that eliminated, in de facto terms, the property requirement on the franchise, and the 1890 law that created the secret ballot and the cumulative vote. The 1874 reform is notable because it was part of an opposition Conservative strategy to win elections

⁹ See also Isabela Mares, *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting: Democratic Electoral Reforms and Voter Autonomy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

and wrest control of the state from Liberals.¹⁰ The slow transformation of a competitive oligarchy into a mass democracy perhaps suggests that the Chilean upper classes had learned, like their British counterparts, to prosper in a more open political system. “It is a record,” Posada Carbó notes, “with few parallels, in the Americas or Europe, that served to forge a democratic tradition, tragically interrupted with the 1973 military coup” (1:209).

In volume 2, Macarena Ponce de León provides a complementary vision of Chile’s electoral trajectory. If Posada Carbó emphasizes democratic conquests, Ponce de León underscores how the struggle for power conditioned the ups and downs of electoral reform. Surely, I take her to say, stripping the executive of its ability, for example, to organize the vote in 1874 (as part of the reform bill of that year) was part of an effort by conservatives to weaken the power of the presidency in elections (2:256–257). But making municipal governments responsible for registering voters, which was another part of the 1890 reform bill, was part of an effort by local and opposition parties to create electoral bastions to advance their own interests. She concurs that the existence of electoral fraud is not a reason to dismiss the importance of elections. But she suggests that the manipulation of the vote was a common enough practice, and that the next stage in research on elections in Chile might benefit from documenting its extent and impact. Ponce de León also notes that the expansion of the vote was gradual. Until the 1960s, the electoral registry included fewer than half of all eligible voters. As a share of the total population, registered voters only rose above 18 percent in 1964. After simplifying registration requirements in 1962, the equivalent of 34.8 percent of the population became registered to vote, and 87 percent of the registered turned out to vote in the 1964 presidential elections (2:267).¹¹

The age of nineteenth-century elections closes, Ponce de León emphasizes, with the “bureaucratization of elections.” This is her way of referring to increasing state regulation of elections, whose first steps include the establishment of an independent agency to run elections in the 1925 constitution. Indeed, the fraud and corruption for which elections in Chile and elsewhere in the Americas have been disparaged—and whose defects Posada Carbó and Ponce de León rightly note are exaggerated to minimize their importance—dissipates when the executive no longer organizes them and the legislature certifies their results.¹² If prior elections were increasingly acrimonious jousts between liberal and conservative “parties of notables,” to use Maurice Duverger’s term, Posada Carbó and Ponce de León emphasize that twentieth-century elections created the mass parties, especially of the left, for which Chile became famous.

The first volume, on “political practices,” shows how the struggle for power shaped continuities and changes among, for example, associations (by Andrés Baeza Ruz), the press (Carla Rivera), the parallel republic constructed by women (by María Rosaria Stabili), the middle classes and the state (by Elizabeth Quay Hutchison and María Soledad Zárate Campos), working-class and popular movements (by Luis Thielemann Hernández), and the political uses of culture (by Patrick Barr-Melej). How electoral competition shaped the strategies of key institutions becomes even more important in the

¹⁰ J. Samuel Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma: La expansión del sufragio en Chile* (Buenos Aires: IDES, 1985). See also Valenzuela’s even more impressive “From Town Assemblies to Representative Democracy: The Building of Electoral Institutions in Nineteenth Century Chile,” Working Paper No. 389 (December 2012), Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame.

¹¹ See also Macarena Ponce de León, “La construcción del poder electoral y la participación política en Chile, siglo XIX y XX,” in *Contribución a un diálogo abierto: Cinco ensayos de historia electoral latinoamericana*, ed. Fausta Gantús and Alicia Salmerón (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2016), 135.

¹² This is what I call the classical approach to electoral governance. See Fabrice Lehoucq, “Can Parties Police Themselves? Electoral Governance and Democratization,” *International Political Science Review* 23, no. 1 (2002): 29–46, and “The Age of Classical Electoral Governance: The Nineteenth Century in the Americas,” in Posada Carbó and Robertson, *The Oxford Handbook of Revolutionary Elections*.

chapters on the military (by Augusto Varas), political parties (by Eliza Fernández), the landed oligarchy and rural life (by Claudio Robles Ortiz), the uses of violence in politics (by Brian Loveman and Elizabeth Lira), and nineteenth-century civil wars (by Joaquín Fernández Abara).

Volume 2 analyzes relations between state and society, tracking how institutional arrangements shaped and reacted to the political practices examined in volume 1. It opens with a chapter by Annick Lempérière on how the absence of an autonomous peasantry and the preeminence of Santiago led to a state that, unlike so many of its neighbors, established its sovereignty early, by the mid-nineteenth century. Volume 2 also contains essays that, in the aggregate, explore how the containment of conflict fueled the construction of a state renowned for its relative professionalism and complexity in the new world. Chapters examine the formation of the state bureaucracy (by Elvira López Tavarne), territorial divisions (Andrés Estefane), science policy (Rafael Sagredo Baeza), international policy (Mark Peterson), Indigenous policy (Rolf Foerster, Jorge Iván Vergara, and Hans Gundermann), the judiciary (by Samuel I. Tschorne), religion (by Lisa M. Edwards), education (by Rodrigo Mayorga), labor policy (by Ángela Vergara Marshall), and social security (by Francisca Rengifo Streeter).

Volume 3 studies economic problems and policy. It also starts with a chapter on the economic aspects of independence (Alejandra Irigoín). Other chapters examine mining (William F. Sater), the political economy of industrialization (Luis Ortega Martínez), external commerce (Ignacio Briones and Gonzalo Islas), public enterprises (Guillermo Guajardo Soto), economic missions (Manual Gárate Chateau), and the history of economic thought (José Edwards). One of the few chapters to cover post-Allende developments is the one on macroeconomic instability since the 1950s (Ricardo Ffrench-Davis).

Volume 4 analyzes intellectuals and political thought. Chapters explore the practice of intellectual life in nineteenth-century Chile (Iván Jaksić), the nature and role of cultural journals in intellectual and national life (Claudia Darrigrandi Navarro), Catholic intellectuals and thought (Lisa M. Edwards), and the role of intellectuals, academics, and social scientists in political debate (Marcos González Hernando). Other chapters examine the republican roots of liberal and conservative thought (Susana Gazmuri Stein), ideas for educational policy (Toro Blanco), mass ideologies and society (Marcus Klein), and a welcome chapter on Mapuche political thought (Joanna Crow). Finally, chapters analyze thinkers and ideas of the left (Ivette Lozoya López), the right (Renato Cristi), and of the post-Pinochet political system (Gonzalo Delamaza).

Several chapters in volume 3 uncover the strict limits to reformism that elites managed to hardwire into Chilean democracy. The chapter on inequality by Gonzalo Durán shows that Chile has some of the highest rates of inequality in the world. Between 1860 and 1970, for example, the richest 1 percent almost always obtained at least 15 percent of national income, with the rate twice as large before 1870, from 1930 to 1925 and 1930 to 1935, and since the late twentieth century (3:256–259). The chapter on the evolution of income taxes by Claudio A. Agostini and Gonzalo Islas helps explain why. Interest groups representing economically powerful sectors of the economy helped extract exemptions and low rates that kept income taxes low. Only about a third of state revenues stemmed from direct taxes, especially income taxes (3:207), a trend evident since the 1930s.

Chapters in different volumes identify the social and political foundations of high rates of income and wealth inequality. The chapter in volume 3 on the transition from a semi-feudal hacienda system (with a captive labor force) to agrarian capitalism (by contracting wage laborers) by Claudio Robles and Cristóbal Kay notes that landlords succeeded in convincing the state to ban labor organizing until 1967 (3:126), which is another way that public policy weakened the bargaining power of labor and subsidized the production of wealth. The chapter by Claudio Robles on politics and landlords in volume 1, in fact, suggests that retainers and rural workers were hardly in a position to challenge the power of

landlords and their allies in local government. In her chapter in volume 2, Ponce de León reminds us that parties distributed ballots (*cédulas electorales*) to their voters until 1958 (2:265), which allowed landlords to dominate rural districts and thus much of Congress well into the twentieth century (2:257–258). Without the Australian ballot (i.e., the centralized production of ballots), the 1890 establishment of the secret franchise did not deter the powerful and their networks from shaping, shall we say, the choices of voters. In rural districts, this was one of the institutional mechanisms that boosted the political as well as economic value of landed estates.¹³

So, while electoral competition became intense by the mid-nineteenth century, voter turnout rates remained low until well into the twentieth century because of the sort of sociopolitical relations in the countryside that are perhaps more like Imperial Germany's than nineteenth-century Britain's. Like Germany, Chile saw its upper class turn against democracy. Large landlords saw the erosion of their ability to control the countryside in the wake of the establishment of the Australian ballot in 1958. Agrarian reform, starting with the presidency of Eduardo Frei (1964–1970) and then intensified by the Allende administration, did little to assuage their concerns. Parties of the right saw their share of the vote decrease from slightly more than 40 percent in 1949 to barely more than 20 percent in 1970. And when Salvador Allende's left-wing government—with the support of less than 40 percent of the electorate and less than half of Congress—insisted on socialist transformation, right-wing interests helped organize the military coup that ended Chile's democratic experiment in 1973. This is not to conclude that the breakdown was inevitable, but that Chile's route to democracy was more unsettled than settled, to use Ziblatt's terms. And that charting the right's partisan strategies is key to understanding the rise and fall of Chilean democracy.

These volumes contain some curious omissions. I note these gaps with respectful trepidation because this collection covers a vast number of topics. While volume 2 has a chapter on the judiciary, it has nothing on Congress. I also wonder whether the emphasis on changes and continuities, the use of concepts to organize struggles over decades deprives the reader of the deep exploration of pivotal moments when, for example, liberty triumphs over order or democracy over dictatorship (or even tradition). The collection lacks a chapter on the 1891 civil war that saw Congress triumph over the executive in a civil war that gave birth to the so-called parliamentary republic (1891–1824), when legislative majorities determined the members of the president's cabinet. Neither is there a chapter dedicated to exploring the watershed decade of the 1920s, even if plenty of chapters refer to its tumultuous politics and outcomes. This was a decade that witnessed thirteen military coups (seven of which toppled presidents),¹⁴ a new constitution in 1925, and the social legislation that underwrote the “compromise state (1932–73).” And the volumes do not contain chapters on the Allende experience. Most chapters, in fact, end just shy of the Allende government.

But there is plenty in these volumes to help us reconsider the political past of Chile. The volumes' use of concepts to identify political continuities over the course of two centuries reinvigorates the study of political history in Chile as well as Latin America as a whole. Among other things, they suggest that elections and the practice of republican politics

¹³ See the pioneering pair of papers by Jean-Marie Baland and James A. Robinson, “Land and Power: Theory and Evidence from Chile,” *American Economic Review* 98, no. 5 (2008): 1737–1765, and “The Political Value of Land: Political Reform and Land Prices in Chile,” *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 3 (2012): 601–619. The crucial and underestimated importance of the Australian ballot is noted by Jan Teorell, Daniel Ziblatt, and Fabrice Lehoucq, “An Introduction to Special Issue: The Causes and Consequences of Secret Ballot Reform,” *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 5 (2017): 531–554. See also Daniel W. Gingerich, “Buying Power: Electoral Strategy before the Secret Vote,” *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 4 (2020): 1086–1102.

¹⁴ This is my count of coups. See Fabrice Lehoucq, *Political Instability and Its Legacies: Regime Trajectories in Latin America*, forthcoming.

were crucial for integrating the right as well as the left into one of the most important republican experiments of the Americas.

Constitutional democracy is unimaginable without elections, even if the right imagines it with fewer suffrage rights and more protections for private property. This is what the history of Chile and Germany shows, as the multivolume set on Chilean political history and Ziblatt's book reveal. But it is full of rules and restrictions that make most elections rather predictable jousts between parties and candidates. This is a finding of all of the books under review, especially McClintock's on the impact of electoral formula on party competition during the Third Wave and Przeworski's on the history of elections around the world. Noam Lupu and his colleagues' study of the ordinary 2015 election in Argentina offers a state-of-the-art analysis of elections that historians, sociologists, and political scientists should emulate, given the resources at their disposal.

Extraordinary or revolutionary elections, however, can upset the balance of power sustaining constitutional democracy. They can lead to unexpected changes in public policy and even breaks with the past. The 1931 election in Peru inaugurated new ways of campaigning. The 1970 election in Chile brought a Marxist government to power. For different reasons, each led to military coups and the triumph of counterrevolutionary outcomes, whose causes Jansen's book on Peru explores and the multivolume study of Chile turns into the final chapter of 150 years of political developments. It will take the tools of historians, sociologists, and political scientists to learn more about a central, but understudied feature of Latin American political reality.

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