

# Citizenship in Latin America: New Works and Debates

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Carlos Forment, *Democracy in Latin America, 1760–1900*, Volume 1: *Civic Selfhood and Public Life in Mexico and Peru* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Pp.456. \$39/£25. ISBN 0-226-25715-0.

José Murilo de Carvalho, *Cidadania no Brasil. O longo caminho* (São Paulo: Civilização Brasileira, 2001). Pp.236. NP. ISBN 8-520-00565-9; idem, *La formación de las almas. El imaginario de la República en el Brasil* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1997). Pp.215. \$17 (paperback). ISBN 9-879-17310-4.

Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Pp.388. \$85/£50 (hardback); \$37.99/£24.99 (paperback). ISBN 0-521-82746-9 and -53480-1.

Latin America has often been stereotypically described as a bundle of malfunctioning polities, with failing institutions that discouraged citizens' participation or curtailed their entitlements. In part, an image such as this reflected periods of authoritarian and military dictatorships, which reinforced a perceptive bias in some sectors of the core countries of Europe and the United States, ignoring or caricaturing Latin America. Yet, in part, such image reflected Latin Americans' own sense of unfulfilled expectations and disenchantment. Those arose when they compared the *workings* of their institutions with the *images* of those same institutions in the core Western countries.

This outlook had and has much to do with the dependent pattern of development of countries south of the Rio Grande, their peripheral position in the world order and their cultural dependency on Western ideas and models. While alluding to the crucial problem of disjuncture between formal principles and practices in the region, such a bias prevented a systematic analysis of the historical and contemporary paths of citizenship developing there.

While these perspectives can still be found, the past decade has opened wide space for novel introspection and systematic analysis, witnessing the publication of works that shed

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new light on the process of construction of citizenship in Latin America. The change is not merely paradigmatic, that is, a shift from one paradigm to another, but it also involves a more systematic attempt to address the connections between institutions and the practice of citizenship, between power and collective representations.

The works of Brazilian historian José Murilo de Carvalho, Cuban-Argentinean sociologist Carlos Forment and US political scientist Deborah Yashar emerge as key contributions to the changing mindset—and a trigger of forthcoming debates—on citizenship. As third-wave Latin American democracies face a rising tide of extra-parliamentarian political and anti-political movements, in tandem with attempts to build communitarian and bottom-up forms of democracy, these works re-conceptualize the development of citizenship in the region. They signal new interest in the mutual impact of power relations, discursive strategies and citizenship practices. From different angles, they engage Latin American findings and analyses with the hindsight of generalist studies of citizenship, aiming to make a comparative contribution to the latter.

Forment aims to focus attention on the democratic potential of associative practices in early independent Latin America, engaging in a dialogue with Tocquevilleans.

Murilo de Carvalho traces the historical development of citizenship in Brazil with special emphasis on symbolic strategies and representations, linking studies in T. H. Marshall's tradition with cultural and symbolic studies.

Finally, Yashar analyzes the rise of indigenous politicized movements and their impact on the redefinition of citizenship, engaging in a dialogue with the literature on social movements and multiculturalism. Whether providing accounts of contemporary developments or alternative readings of past enactment of citizenship, these studies offer a refreshing perspective on the shifting forms of citizenship in Latin America, challenging some of the taken-for-granted perceptions of the region, while opening ground for new debate and analysis.

After contextualizing the new problem-setting, this essay starts by reviewing the earlier work of Carvalho, which highlights the tensions of citizenship in elitist-hierarchical settings in which the system professes to support the opening of the political system. While following a state-centered approach, Carvalho's work brings to the forefront the central role of symbols and discursive strategies in the construction of citizenship in nineteenth and early twentieth century Brazil.

The article then moves to Forment's work, which follows a practice-centered approach in identifying the early routinization of associative practices in nineteenth century Spanish-American republics, which remained nonetheless unable to eradicate authoritarianism from political life. It next reviews Carvalho's long-term study of citizenship in Brazil, which combines the analysis of post-colonial times and later periods, while stressing the persistent presence of the corporatist state in shaping the sequence of attainment of entitlements and the fragmented forms of citizenship.

Analysis then centers on Yashar's contribution to the recent emergence of politicized indigenous movements in Latin America, stemming from the change from corporatist to neo-liberal citizenship regimes and leading to contrasting visions of accommodation or containment of multiple ethnicities and their consequent citizen entitlements. The essay concludes by suggesting some issues and debates that these works open rather than close in future research on citizenship in Latin America, a region that shares institutional trends with the core Western countries and yet differs in its enactment and dynamics of citizenship.

## **The Context of the New Problem-Setting**

The new analytical outlook on citizenship in Latin America has been prompted by radical changes in the ways in which citizenship is practiced in recent years. In other words, the point of departure of Carvalho, Forment and Yashar are the contemporary issues and challenges that have reopened the analysis of citizenship.

In the late 1980s and through the 1990s models of democracy and neo-liberalism were hailed in major parts of the world, Latin America included, as the models that would lead to full global integration with the core countries of the international system. Democracy was heralded as the harbinger of a new age, differing from previous waves of democratization, in that it was the result of social movements and the strengthening of non-governmental organizations and civil society. The latter had indeed played an instrumental part in both dismantling authoritarian rule and replacing strong *étatist* trends. Very soon, however, it became evident that many NGOs could not endure the loss of international financing. In parallel, following democratization, attention focused on regaining full political and civil rights after their neglect under military rule. Yet, soon it became evident again that although democracy was being embraced, institutions were failing to deliver, even when they resembled democratic polyarchy in their formal structures. Often politics was conducted through strategies and visions that were akin to those of the past, leading to the discredit and loss of institutional trust.

Similar disillusionations characterized the shift to neo-liberal macroeconomic policies. These policies bred new forms of exclusion, growing socioeconomic gaps and marginalization, supported this time by an ideology of retreat of the state. This generated widespread disillusion and protest, often leading to political disengagement or forceful confrontation, as has most recently been seen in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Systemic liabilities have been accompanied by a diversification and fragmentation of the public domain. Various forms of alternative politics and anti-politics in parallel with new experiments in communitarian and bottom-up democracy have come to dominate the scenario of Latin American countries. In the context of growing socioeconomic gaps, impoverishment and marginalization, large segments of the population have practically lost contact with the state or are connected through new forms of clientelism, state corruption and crime.

Equally visible in the public domain are occasional mass protest movements, road blockades, indigenous mobilizations and the occupation of private properties in demands for land reforms. Barter associations emerged as a correlate of deep economic crisis, as in Argentina in the early 2000s. In parallel, new forms of deliberative coordination of public budgets evolved, replacing earlier modes of administrative control, as in several Brazilian municipalities. Finally, the appeal of neo-populist leaders, some of them very charismatic, has been on the rise at both ends of the political spectrum.

In spite of the diversification and fragmentation of the public domain, or perhaps due to it, democracy has endured and there have been no systemic breakdowns. The experience of public disenchantment and mass protest did not lead to a breakdown of civilian rule as was the case a generation and two ago. For once, the shifts in the international scene and the loss of prestige and political positioning of the armed forces resulting from the last authoritarian period of rule have brought democracy to be the only "game in town". Constitutional reforms have further opened space for a "politics of recognition" and "multicultural difference" in unprecedented ways.

These new scenarios of democracy, as complex as they are, have led to reassessments in what is meant by citizenship today and to trace back its uneven development in Latin America. This is a region that is comprised of 20 countries, most of which have been independent since the early nineteenth century. Most have had an institutional trajectory of modern statehood and citizenship which is longer than many other polities, be they those of Africa, the Middle East, various Asian countries or Germany and Italy in Europe.

### **Citizenship in Elitist-Hierarchical Societies**

Citizenship in elitist-hierarchical societies is problematic due to the tendency towards the promulgation of selective entitlements. It is doubly so when the system supports—in its rhetoric and ideology—idioms professing to open the political system. First, as elitist as these polities were, the Republican ideologies that Latin American countries promulgated earlier or later contained utopian elements that were embraced by other sectors willing to widen popular political participation. These attempts could be rather anarchical as in the nineteenth-century civil wars (prolonged in some cases such as Colombia and Central America into the late twentieth century), or more controlled, as during populist periods and in settings dominated by clientelism.

Second, as Murilo de Carvalho shows in *La formación de las almas* (hereafter: FA), the very systemic need to consolidate themselves in government led Republican leaders to project their visions and representations outside the narrow circles of elites. In order to do so, they needed to create images, allegories, rituals and set educational programs aimed at generating a common willingness to abide by the new ground rules and, if possible, instill a sense of membership, nationhood and pride in the fatherland. Individuals become citizens when they realize they become part of a state and a nation.

And yet, as they attacked the prior colonial status in Spanish America or abolished the Empire in Brazil in 1889, the Republicans kept the state as a central power. According to Murilo de Carvalho, in Brazil this was due both to the long statist tradition inherited from the Portuguese and to the interest of many upward mobile sectors in keeping the state as the main provider of employment, especially in the urban areas. Thus, rather than citizenship, what resulted was a situation of *state-ship*, a biased perception of citizenship linked to the overwhelming—more or less paternalistic and somehow coercive—power of the state as the provider of partial and selective rights, hinging on the maintenance of a hierarchical socioeconomic, political and administrative structure of control.

Murilo de Carvalho discusses with brilliancy how Liberals, Jacobins and Positivists alike battled among themselves in terms of different utopian visions and distinct Republican ideologies, each facing variable limits rooted in the traditional and hierarchical character of Brazilian society.

The Jacobin model was not only unattractive due to its destabilizing potential in the socioeconomic structure, but also due to its “Spartan” character, which did not fit the lavish and proto-aristocratic style of the Brazilian elites. Carvalho puts it in even more radical terms, as he depicts the “predatory mentality” of the elites, characterizing it as a “spirit of capitalism without a Protestant ethic”, lacking any concern for the public interest, not even a market-oriented outlook (FA, p. 46).

The Liberal vision meant in the context of hierarchical Brazil the justification of the rule of the strongest, without encouraging popular participation and mobilization, and thus was restricted from the start in its symbolic appeal among the masses.

The Positivist was the only Republican vision with any chance of success (FA, p. 2) as it fitted within the long-standing expectations of “order and progress”, interpreted in terms of the consolidation of the existing structure of elites and linked to orderly progress under the aegis of a state “colonized” by those elites.

In order to project a coherent project intelligible to Brazilians, the Republic had to create its own hagiography, with its heroes, monuments and a version of the past. The only way to consolidate government was to follow the styles and sometimes even the specifics of the Imperial symbols, as in the case of the flag and the anthem. Standing out in their contextualized analysis are FA’s chapters on the failure to incorporate feminine figures as emblems of the Republic (pp. 113–156); the chapter on the manipulation of collective representations by the Positivists (pp. 187–203); and the chapter on Tiradentes, the most famous rebel of the late imperial period.

Through a meticulous reconstruction of historical documentation, Carvalho points out in the latter chapter that the image of Tiradentes was stripped of his anti-systemic potential and made into the martyr-like figure of a hero who prematurely invoked the Republic and died, sacrificing himself for an idea that would fructify in due time. Tiradentes’ reconstructed image was appealing where other images failed to connect with the prevailing cultural representations. Tiradentes was portrayed with a Christ-like look, his fall was due to treason by his co-plotters (again resembling Jesus), he seemingly refrained from resorting to violence (in fact, the movement he participated in aborted before reaching such a stage) and he forgave his executioners. All this served to ease the paradoxical promotion of his plebeian figure as the most prominent hero in the bloodlessly installed Brazilian conservative (“Old”) Republic (FA, pp. 81–112). This is a lucid analysis that tackles the analysis of symbols and meaning in a non-declarative way and makes an important contribution toward understanding the mutual impact of power relations and discursive strategies and representations.

### **Civil Society and Authoritarian Politics: With the Back to the State**

*Democracy in Latin America* presents a bottom-up reading of civic selfhood and public life in Mexico and Peru during the last phase of colonial rule and the first stage of independence (1760–1900). While Carvalho’s work, as innovative as it is—and more on this below— supports a state-centered interpretation of post-colonial life, Carlos Forment suggests instead a practice-centered approach that emphasizes the early routinization of associative practices in nineteenth century Latin America. According to Forment, their participation in associative frameworks “provided Mexicans, Peruvians, Cubans and Argentines with shared standards by which to evaluate each other’s actions in public life. In the course of practicing democracy in daily life, Latin Americans were in fact constituting it” (*Democracy in Latin America*, hereafter DLA, p. xvi). The ability of state officials to monitor public life remained quite limited throughout most of that century, while civil society was constituted behind the back of the authoritarian state.

The state-centered interpretation, says Forment, claims that the process of center formation and economic modernization weakened or even destroyed associative life, leaving citizens in these countries isolated, disconnected, and inclined to act in predatory

and corrupt ways. Through a detailed analysis of originally collected data on associative life, Forment suggests to shift the discussion on postcolonial Latin America from Hobbes and Huntington to Tocqueville and Arendt and identify a specific democratic tradition in Latin America, with a distinct physiognomy.

This is the first volume in a two-volume work, with a focus on Mexico and Peru, to be complemented in the second volume by an analysis of Cuba and Argentina. It is an impressive study of associative life that reflects an originally designed database containing records on 7,056 voluntary groups (Argentina: N = 1,567; Cuba: N = 2,186; Mexico: N = 2,291; Peru: N = 912), the bulk of which Forment derived from newspapers, pamphlets and journals, supplemented by some private letters and travelogues. According to Forment, he built on “a significant body of ‘empirical evidence’ in order, paradoxically, to enable us to look beyond the facts themselves” in reviving the democratic tradition in Latin America (DLA, pp. 12–13). Such an endeavor could provide an anchor to compensate for the state of disrepair the author identifies in contemporary democracy and citizenship in the region. “The mass movements, self-help groups, presidential elections, and economic-legal reforms struck me as the shattered fragments and incoherent remains of what once had been a vital (albeit flawed) democratic tradition” (p. 6).

The findings in Parts 3 (Chapters 5–10) and 4 (Chapters 11–16), which form the empirical basis of the book, provide ample detail on the greater achievements of Mexicans in practicing democracy and nationalism in civil and economic society, even though authoritarianism remained dominant in the political realm. Contrastingly, the vast majority of Peruvians remained attached to their colonial habits, did not develop civic and associative forms of life, and continued to conceive each other as subjects rather than democratic citizens (pp. 99–169). Similarly in the public sphere, Mexicans created a new vernacular, Civic Catholicism (pp. 192–215), while Peruvians did not participate in public debates, and when they did they rarely used Civic Catholicism but rather extremist rhetoric. This hindered the development of a culture of critical deliberation in nineteenth century Peru (pp. 216–235). Unsurprisingly, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, Mexico witnessed the increased incorporation of indigenous peoples, mixed-bloods, women and the working poor into civic and economic groups, making public life far more egalitarian (pp. 239–284). In Peru, civic and economic life remained extremely racist, hierarchical and corrupt (pp. 285–329).

Forment himself provides caveats about the limits of this research, which according to the author “is meant to be a partial rather than an exhaustive account of public life in nineteenth-century Latin America” (p. 19). First, the study focuses on “democratic practices across the core and ignores the fringes where authoritarianism continued to be dominant and widespread”. He acknowledges that in this period most inhabitants continued to live and work on private estates and in indigenous communities as salaried peons (landless laborers), tenant farmers and villagers, under the aegis and control of local and regional power-holders and *capi-clientelae*. Nonetheless, he tries to strike a more balanced picture by reconstructing the various forms of voluntary associative life that evolved secluded from the state officials’ control.

Yet, what is “core” and what are “fringes” is a matter of opinion. Forment recognizes the lack of systematic data on the ratio of citizens who were active in associative life as he quotes an estimate from a 1882 newspaper, one of the few available sources on the extent of associative life, according to which in Mexico City—comparatively the most active associative setting—roughly 20% of residents were dues-paying members in mutual-aid

groups and another 15% were active in other types of voluntary associations: cultural, religious, patriotic, and so on (p. xix, note 5). Similarly, reliance on newspapers and other archival information covered reasonably for associative life in the national capitals and major provincial cities, while “the coverage of associative life in small towns and hamlets across the provinces remains spotty” (p. xviii).

Taking the above into consideration, it is clear that, instead of closing the debate, the current work will be the trigger of research and debates on the extent to which those Latin Americans who practiced democracy were setting a paradigmatic example of great symbolic significance or they were just fleeing as a minority to a “region of refuge” (to use the title of Aguirre Beltran’s book on indigenous communities in the mid-twentieth century<sup>1</sup>), embedded in a sea of authoritarian rule, hierarchical clientelism and individualistic *caudillismo*.

Forment also indicates he did not find reliable demographic data on the class and ethnicity of members, as postcolonial governments banned the use of ethnic and racial categories in public life. Accordingly, he had to rely on indirect—textual—evidence to establish the socio-ethnic composition of associations. Finally, the author had to make reasonable inferences from the practices reported by the associations themselves to decide whether any such association was civic and accordingly should be included or not in the database (pp. xviii–xix). That is, in reconstructing associative life, Forment had to draw inferences from the self-representation and the public images projected by the associations themselves, which may or may not fit actual practices.

With these caveats in mind, what has been accomplished is impressive. Whatever the extent of associative life—and this varies from setting to setting (e.g. Mexicans proved themselves more active than Peruvians) and across periods, as the bulk of this study traces—Forment succeeds in showing that *some* Latin Americans were involved as democratic citizens in voluntary associations, *even when* the political domain was dominated by authoritarianism and anti-democratic governments. When this occurred,

members staged “performative acts” in these groups [...] teaching each other alternative ways of practicing social equality, political liberty, and mutual recognition. Routinization turned these performances into mimetic acts—that is, into ‘twice behaved behavior’—and encouraged citizens to translate their own particular concerns (aesthetic) into intersubjective ones (communicative)... [Such participation provided them] with “tacit knowledge” and “practical skills” they needed to become civic-minded citizens. Those who completed this apprenticeship emerged from it transformed, having undergone a type of *Bildung*. (pp. 434–435)

In such a manner, personal dignity replaced for these individuals what public prestige had been for them under patrimonial and aristocratic-like regimes.

Citizenship was however fragmented during the nineteenth century. It was exclusionary, depriving indigenous peoples, blacks, women and other marginalized groups of public recognition. “In Latin America, the citizenry’s habits pertaining to marginalized groups remained the least changed (most mechanistic), which accounts for the radically fissured and fragmented nature of public life in the region” (p. 437).

Toward the end of the book, as Forment endeavors to rethink Tocqueville from the perspective of the Latin American experience, he reckons that Latin Americans turned these civic groups into what James Scott calls sites of “everyday resistance” (p. 440). With

perceptiveness, the author states that the tendency of citizens to live with their backs to the state was at once the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of democratic life in nineteenth century Latin America. “On the one hand, anti-politics enabled Latin Americans to create and preserve democratic life, but on the other hand, it prevented them from extirpating authoritarianism in political society.” Projecting his analysis into the early twenty-first century, Forment concludes by stating that “Latin Americans remain unrivaled in their faith in democracy” (p. 442).

This is a book that requires dense reading and offers particularly stimulating, refreshing and sometimes controversial insights into a reopened debate on the interweaving of authoritarian and democratic practices in the region.

### **State-Centered Paternalism, Populism and Up-to-Bottom Democracy**

What if Forment is right for the “wrong reasons”? What if Latin Americans “remain unrivaled in their faith in democracy”, not due to its practice but rather due to its unfulfilled promise in the region, subject to the, until-recently, dominant presence of the state as the major catalyst of change? Then those studying the up-to-bottom projection of rights, as Murilo de Carvalho does, have something very important to add to the debate on citizenship.

In *Cidadania no Brasil* (hereafter CB), Carvalho introduces the radical counter-thesis that liberty and participation do not bring about the *universal* achievement of rights and a solution to a wide range of social, economic and cultural problems. His point of departure for this panoramic study of the historical development of citizenship in Brazil is that full citizenship implies freedom, participation and equality for all. While these principles, shared with other nations in the West remain the ideal to be achieved, the fact is that any empirical study of the unfolding of civil, political and social rights in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America indicate the *de facto* co-presence of several categories of citizens; namely, full citizens enjoying all rights along with partial citizens and non-citizens lacking some or most of these entitlements.

Carvalho points out that there is an internal logic in the attainment of such rights. Whereas civil rights (i.e. personal freedoms) are possible without political rights (i.e. representation and participation), the opposite is impossible. Similarly, while social, and economic, rights can be attained without the full implementation of civil and political rights, their content and impact will be, according to the author, arbitrary. This analytical perspective leads Carvalho to claim that the sequence of attainment of the various types of rights, which was identified by T. H. Marshall on the basis of the English case, is crucial in effecting different forms of citizenship in the Western hemisphere. In Carvalho’s words: “when we speak of an English citizen or a North-American or a Brazilian citizen, we don’t speak of the same thing” (CB, p. 12).

In other words, citizenship is contextual. It is related to the varied ways of connecting individuals and groups to states and nations. The ways in which national collective identities and loyalty to states are constructed affects the ways in which citizenship is constructed and how rights are installed. In the specific case of Brazil, historically there were several obstacles to the full development of citizenship: slavery and its cultural and political legacy; the tenure of land in the form of large landholding and hierarchical dependency of the rural masses; the division of the urban working classes between those

radicalized sectors utterly rejecting the state (e.g. the anarchists and Communists) and those sectors unionized under the aegis of the state and closely associated to those in power. For these and other conditioning factors, Brazilians got used to the overwhelming presence of the state shaping the contents of citizenship.

Traditionally such predominance of the state was accepted, especially as the last emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II (reigned 1840–1889) was perceived as the legitimate grantor of “negative rights”—i.e. non-intervention— for the masses and guarantor of privileges for the local and regional elites. Once the Republic was established in 1889 and adopted active policies of intervention (e.g. taxation, vaccination), it triggered widespread unrest and protest. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century popular movements were anti-Republican, with the masses distrusting the government and citizens being “citizens in the negative” (p. 83).

It was only after 1930 that the regime of Getúlio Vargas endorsed the first major attempt of enlargement of citizenship as a means of countering the diffusion of bottom-up mass movements and political mobilization by Leftist and Rightist movements. What characterized this project (similarly to Juan Perón’s regime in Argentina or Lázaro Cárdenas’s presidency in Mexico) was the shift of politics to administration; the heavy controls on politics; and last but not least, the combination of repression and paternalism, corporatism and multi-class alliances. Through paternalist and populist policies, the political center recognized and granted social rights while curtailing the full enactment of political and civil rights. In fact, social rights were granted in an attempt to prevent and control the alternative path of mass mobilization. Thus, citizens attained their rights in a dependent way, in return for loyalty and gratitude to the President. In the context of mounting mass mobilization and pressures, Vargas committed suicide in 1954 and a decade of intense political struggle ensued (CB, pp. 110–126).

In Brazil the onset of 21 years of military rule in 1964 signaled the defeat of the legacy of populist mobilization and radicalization. Carvalho’s research adds important insight on the process of breakdown of democracy and onset of authoritarian rule. He shows, contrary to accepted truism, that two factors were detrimental to sustaining democracy. First, the breakdown of civilian rule was not the result of the lack of democratic support by the citizens (as reflected in voting patterns) but rather of the lack of democratic conviction in the elites undermining democracy by precluding any compromise and negotiated arrangements in Congress and in the parties. Second, the lack of communication between the masses and the political class failed to capture the popular mood. That is, the elitist and hierarchical character of political articulation was detrimental to the health and continuity of democracy.

Carvalho’s analysis of military authoritarianism stresses the resemblance of such rule with the previous strategy of Vargas’ “civil dictatorship” during the Estado Novo (1937–1945). A strategy of enlarging social rights while restricting the hold of political rights, thus carrying out policies of social paternalism in tandem with a lack of political freedoms and civil rights (the suspension of habeas corpus, violation of privacy, censure of media, etc.). Carvalho indicates that in this “second turn”, such a strategy was less efficacious, for several reasons. First, while attempting to enlarge citizenship while controlling it through the state apparatus, populism had radicalized expectations and created a mobilized political domain. Second, in order to retain legitimacy, the authoritarian rulers did not obliterate all the formalities of democracy, such as the Congress and political parties. Third, the socioeconomic format of Brazil had changed into a more urbanized society, which disengaged citizens from rural forms of domination and the traditional clientelistic networks (CB, pp. 155–195).

All this created dialectically the own seeds of the fall of authoritarian rule and the conditions for the mobilization of society, thus effecting the return to democracy in the 1980s. The tragedy according to the author is that, once democracy was reinstalled, the huge socioeconomic gap fractured citizens into full, partial and non-citizens, a trend that has been only maintained or perhaps even exacerbated. Moreover, many of the civil rights continue to be inaccessible to the vast majorities of the citizenry and institutional trust is uneven (CB, pp. 199–208). Even Leftist president Inacio da Silva (Lula) has been quite ineffective in changing this situation.

Carvalho builds on this historical analysis to draw a rather pessimistic diagnostic of citizenship in an elitist-hierarchical polity. According to him, the different path of access to civil, political and social rights that took place in Brazil—and in other Latin American countries — has created a series of traits that die hard. Among them: an excessive valorization of executive power rather than a system of checks-and-balances; expectations of state paternalism; politics oriented to entice the government to concede rights rather than gain entitlements through citizen activism; impatience with the slow functioning of democratic institutions; a corporatist vision of collective interests; and in tandem with low institutional trust, the proliferation of clientelistic networks “colonizing” the formal structure of the state.

Similarly, Carvalho is very critical of the kind of consumerism that has come to replace images of public involvement and citizen participation, which when placed in a context of large inequalities and of ideologies of state retraction, can only sharpen the problems of democracy. The author thus concludes that the best corrective to the actual state of citizens’ disparity and inequality will be to reinforce the role of the state, while jointly democratizing the access of autonomous groups and reducing the corporatist structure of that very state (in CB, p. 226).

### **The Neo-Liberal Citizenship Regime and the Post-Liberal Challenge**

*Contesting Citizenship in Latin America* (hereafter CCLA) by Deborah Yashar departs from the analysis of the new social movements. The book focuses on the relatively recent emergence of politicized indigenous movements in Latin America, a phenomenon that seems to reverse the comparative weak record of ethnic political movements in these countries.<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly perhaps, these movements have been particularly prominent in most countries with large or significant indigenous populations such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador and Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, it is not the mere density of indigenous populations that explains the shift towards the politicization of ethnic cleavages. The indigenous movements have also led to important public debates and reforms in countries with smaller indigenous populations, such as Colombia, Brazil and Chile. Contrastingly, Peru lacked any significant indigenous movement while Chile, with an indigenous population of only 4 to 6%, did witness a change resembling countries with much larger indigenous sectors.<sup>4</sup>

These movements differ from the old *indigenista* frameworks that sought to set a corporatist mode of access and control of peasant populations interacting with the state, while encouraging the assimilation and incorporation of Indians into the official national mainstream culture. They also differ from the class-based guerrilla movements, such as the Shinning Path in Peru, which sought to replace the democratic state with alternative Socialist structures. The new ethnic movements do not seek collective welfare policies as a paternalist

favor on the part of the state and neither do they seek to overthrow the state, even if their mass mobilizations have already toppled several presidents, primarily in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Their importance does not lie necessarily in the most dramatic instances of popular protest, roadblocks and change of political incumbents. It rather lies, as Yashar stresses, in their impact on the setting of a new agenda of citizenship, due to the challenging of institutional boundaries and the practice of citizenship in the region. Until recently, indigenous people in Latin America mobilized from time to time but they rarely advanced ethnic-based claims and agendas. This has changed in radical ways, as we witness indigenous leaders taking an active role in redefining policies, debating institutional designs, running for office and seeing their movements burst into widespread protest.

Yashar's starting point is that institutions matter. In this line, she identifies citizenship regimes (the combination of citizens' rights and duties and the modes of interest mediation and representation) as the crucial institutional core defining "*who* has political membership, *which* rights they possess, and *how* interest intermediation with the state is structured. . . *formally* defining the intersection between national politics, political membership, and public identities" (p. 6). The new movements demand the implementation of those equal rights promised by the neo-liberal citizenship regime since democratization in the 1980s, but also aim at recognition of their special status and rights as native peoples, opening the debate on what citizenship entails.

Insofar as they fight for autonomous representation and for multicultural recognition, and link these demands to claims over collective resources, these movements trigger fundamental debates on the nature of citizenship in Latin America. They do so by rejecting what Yashar calls the neo-liberal citizenship regime that was followed during the third wave of democratization in the region and thus pose a post-liberal challenge to citizenship. They may change its contents in ways that, according to Yashar, "cannot be reduced to the multicultural struggles found in the older democracies of North America, Australia, and New Zealand" (CCLA, p. 34).

Historically, throughout Latin America there have been two citizenship regimes: a corporatist regime, projected within the boundaries of the nation-state mainly but not only by populist leaders, to be followed in the 1980s and 1990s by a neo-liberal regime. Yashar's argument is that the reaction to changing citizenship regimes explains the contemporary politicization of indigenous identities, while trans-community networking and political associational space explain the variation in the comparative capacity and opportunity open to the various indigenous movements to effect changes. The two major areas these movements attempt to impact are: a redrafting of their own entitlements and a parallel shift in the ways in which states conceive citizenship and rights in connection with the politics of recognition. Trans-community networking and political associational space have enabled spatially disaggregated communities and organizations to scale up and confront the state and its incumbents as equals.

Yashar builds this three-factor argument conceptually in Part I (Chapters 1–3), on the basis of the five cases with the largest indigenous populations: Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. In Part II (Chapters 4–6) she selects three Andean cases (Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru) that fit a most-similar systems research design, to be able to formulate an in-depth analysis of variation over time, across cases and across regions.

Corporatist citizenship regimes created a dynamic dualism among indigenous peoples. As the central institutions remained weak and the reach of the state was uneven, indigenous communities could live encapsulated while enjoying *de facto* autonomous

spaces. Within the community locals assumed their identities as Indians but vis-à-vis the state they played their role as peasants, gaining access to the social rights that the state recognized. Ethnic identities were cast aside while paradoxically indigenous culture and localized political practices were kept alive.

The neo-liberal citizenship regime that was fully undertaken in the restored democracies since the 1980s, brought dramatic changes in this mutual accommodation, indirectly challenging older forms of local autonomy and political access. The new citizenship regime advocated individual autonomy and rights instead of earlier corporatist forms of access to resources and the centers of power. As it advocated the retreat of the state from social responsibilities and undertook decentralization, it paradoxically affected the indigenous populations in unintended ways. It threatened to erode previous local autonomy. Moreover, the vision of privatization adopted by the states seemed to herald encroachment on ancestral communal lands, as proposals of land reform were enacted in Mexico (1991), Ecuador (1994) and Bolivia (1996).

Overall, the shift in citizenship regimes brought indigenous communities to realize that they lost their interlocutors with the state, land security and access to resources as a corporation. "Liberalizing states made it clear they will not maintain (in Mexico, Ecuador and Bolivia) or reestablish (in Guatemala and Peru) special forms of property rights, credit and subsidies for peasants" (p. 68). At the same time that the promise of social rights by the corporatist regime crumbled as rural programs were dismantled, the new emphasis on political and civil rights created more possibilities for holding political leaders accountable. It also opened ground for new forms of indigenous organization and demands that politicized ethnic cleavages and catalyzed indigenous movements.

By claiming autonomous indigenous political jurisdiction and authority, these movements have set a post-liberal agenda that can no longer be ignored and seems to affect the contents of citizenship in the region. Under conditions of the promulgation of democracy, of political and civil rights, and a free media, most of these indigenous movements have begun to set a new agenda, reflected and projected by the constitutional reforms which have recognized, at least in principle, the plural ethnic and multicultural character of these countries. They call for the fulfillment of liberal ideas while they question the incomplete implementation of the neo-liberal promise. They do not despair of demanding protection for their members' individual civil and political rights, yet they demand the recognition of autonomous representation in collective terms. Accordingly, these movements have grown to challenge the skewed structure of distribution of resources in these societies. They have moved to challenge national homogeneity and the century-old project of nation-building through assimilation, by demanding legitimate autonomy and constitutional reforms that will recognize the multiethnic and plurinational character of these societies. In such a manner, concludes Yashar, "Latin American societies have started, however haltingly, to confront competing visions of how to accommodate a multiethnic citizenry in a democratic polity" (p. 308).

### **Conclusion: Forthcoming Debates**

More than being a mere paradigmatic change, the contributions reviewed here combine a refreshing recovery of forgotten findings with an eclectic—and therefore non-sectarian—dialogue with generalist theoretical approaches, be they those of Tocqueville, T. H. Marshall or Charles Tilly. In this sense, all three authors attempt to create a fruitful

dialogue with comparative analysis, claiming that the Latin American cases have general significance for the study of citizenship at large. And yet, when facing one another, these works may trigger as many debates and issues as they attempt to solve. Illustrative are the following.

Forment locates the early democratic potential of autonomous associative life in Latin America, in lieu of the state, which has been traditionally authoritarian and corrupt. He stresses that while the latter has been exclusionary, the former has been partial, fragmented and often short-lived, due to its inability to relate to the institutional structures of the state. Due to such a long-standing inability, anti-politics failed in redrafting the format of the political realm and of citizenship in any effective way. Departing from Yashar's analysis one wonders whether the politicized indigenous movements—in themselves important in redressing a centuries-old exclusion of politically and of the economically marginalized groups— will be able to change this institutional trend.

This, in turn, raises the analytical issue of autonomy *from* the state as opposed to autonomy *within* the state, a distinction hinting at the latter as a requisite for an interdependent process of construction of democratic citizenship and the former—under special circumstances—as possibly leading to disengagement and disintegration, to continued life in separate circles, thus perhaps reinforcing ethnic stratification, the lack of positive identification with institutions and a failing sense of shared citizenship among these groups.

In consonance with the insights of the literature on civil society, Carvalho points out that democratic citizenship can only be enacted fully when a strong state meets a strong civil society. Contrastingly, Yashar indicates that what led to the strengthening of civil society—in the form of politicized ethnic movements—was the weakening of the corporatist citizenship regime and its replacement by a neo-liberal regime which favored a further retreat of states from their social responsibilities and from accommodative relationships with indigenous autonomies. Is the latter regime an equivalent of a strong, that is, efficient, efficacious and legitimate, state? Not if one looks at indexes of public opinion. By looking at these data one is tempted to conclude that the region is often still wrangling with projects and visions endorsing a logic of either-or, a tug-of-war structured around idioms of “oppression” and “resistance”. In this context, more research is needed to evaluate the conditions under which both civil society *and* the state would be strengthened as legitimate interlocutors fully committed to the shared ground rules of democratic citizenship.

Another issue concerns leadership and representation. Some of the work on the new indigenous movements posits a congruent and harmonious connection between individual (generic) rights and communal entitlements, and ignores the contradictions that may arise between cultural citizenship and representation. While an emphasis on individual rights may be used to undermine collective rights (e.g. in the form of privatization of communal titles), under other circumstances, the communal basis of autonomy and collective representation can support a situation of unequal internal power that may be oppressive and fail to recognize the rights of individual members, as Will Kymlicka and Alan Cairns among others have analyzed in the case of Canada.

Many questions need to be addressed in this context: Who has the right to represent, and how do leaders who articulate identities play their role as they interact at local, national and global levels? What are the implications of such leadership for the rights of those citizens they claim to represent? What are the consequences of a language of

representation predicated on essentialism<sup>5</sup> for the limits of dissent expressed *within* ethnic communities? Will Latin American states move to defend individual rights of members of communities from being overruled by the latter? What balance will be achieved in various situations between the notion of the individual and the notion of the various communities as the bearers of fundamental rights? The comparative study of such dynamics is still before us.

Similarly, research will most probably have to systematically analyze the interplay between language, meaning and power (e.g. by focusing on the overwhelming power of the contemporary media), to understand the mutual impact of discursive strategies, power relations, and citizenship practices, something that Carvalho has undertaken for the nineteenth century Brazilian case.<sup>6</sup> Particularly, how do the political activists and the intellectuals use the new ideas and cultural symbols of citizen entitlements as they move and address various local, regional, national and transnational audiences, shifting codes and rhetoric to achieve their goals and buttress their causes.

Finally, we will likely continue to ponder whether the new political movements and institutional trends may strengthen the unfulfilled promises of universal citizenship in the region or further disarticulate societies and polities as recent events in Bolivia, Venezuela and Haiti seem to indicate. As one can easily reckon, beyond their empirically grounded contributions, the works reviewed here will certainly open rather than close these challenging theoretical debates.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *Regions of Refuge* (Washington DC: Society for Applied Anthropology, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> This development has triggered a wide array of excellent analyses, among them: Donna Lee Van Cott, *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Rachel Sieder (Ed.) *Multiculturalism in Latin America: Indigenous Rights, Diversity and Democracy* (London: Institute for Latin American Studies, 2002); Alejandro Isla, *Los usos políticos de la identidad: Indigenismo y estado* (Buenos Aires: Editorial de las Ciencias, 2002); Erick Langer with Elena Muñoz (Eds) *Contemporary Indigenous Movements in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Books, 2003); and Maristella Svampa (Ed.) *Desde abajo: La transformación de las identidades sociales* (San Miguel: Biblos, 2003). The launching in 2005 of a new journal, *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, edited by Leon Zamosc, reflects the growing importance of this development.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Bolivia the official figure is 62% and the unofficial assessment stands near 80%. For the other cases, Yashar cites the following figures for 1978–2001: in Guatemala the range is 45–60%; in Peru and Ecuador, between 30 and 40%; and in Mexico, between 12 and 14% (p. 21)

<sup>4</sup> Yashar analyzes in detail the weak indigenous renaissance in Peru in CCLA, pp. 224–278.

<sup>5</sup> Essentialism is an approach that attributes permanence and inalterability to collective identities and groups, usually downplaying the role of variations among individuals or over time.

<sup>6</sup> Other important works in this direction are Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: Nationalism and the Public Sphere* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001) and Elisabeth Cunin, *Identidades a flor de piel* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia y Universidad de los Andes, 2003). See also Tracy L. Devine Guzmán, 'Diacuí Killed Iracema': Indigenism, Nationalism and the Struggle for Brazilianness, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 24(1) (2005), pp. 92–112.