

MANUEL ANTONIO GARRETÓN: *Incomplete Democracy: Political Democratization in Chile and Latin America*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Reading much of Manuel Antonio Garretón's recent work, one cannot help but be reminded of a quote from Antonio Gramsci: "The old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in the interregnum there arises a great variety of morbid symptoms." This is a particularly apt synopsis of *Incomplete Democracy*, the updated and translated compilation of Garretón's *Hacia una nueva era política* (1995) and *Política y sociedad entre dos épocas* (2000). A prolific author on Latin American politics and sociology, and especially on Chilean society, Manuel Antonio Garretón has been a leading figure among the region's academics for four decades. In this laudable book, he analyzes political history, contemporary trends and future directions in both the region as a whole and in Chile in particular.

According to Garretón, the old Latin American politics was rooted in a social context that the author calls "national-state industrial society," while the new politics—increasingly detached from the social—corresponds to a nascent "globalized postindustrial" society, based on "consumption, information and communication" (pp. 25-26). The various dimensions of social life—economy, politics, culture, society—are no longer in sync. Economic models currently in vogue threaten societal integration and prevent meaningful state reform. Identity-based cultural and social movements present a challenge to existing systems of political representation. Politics is becoming more administrative and less political, less concerned with aspiring to formulate a better overall society.

The first half of the book considers Latin America in light of democratic transitions, neo-liberal reform and globalization. But Garretón is quick to point out that grand theoretical approaches to the region are not currently feasible;

instead, he identifies four autonomous yet interconnected "*problématiques*": political democratization, social democratization, the model of development, and the model of modernity. As political democracy has re-emerged in much of Latin America, there has, paradoxically, been a contraction of the political sphere. "Politics in and of itself works better than before, and people participate somewhat more, but its radius of action is becoming smaller and smaller, and to society on the whole it seems more irrelevant" (p. 24). Garretón's chief concern for most Latin American political systems is not so much authoritarian reversal but rather the persistence of low-quality, incomplete democracies.

Some of the most refreshing passages in the first half of the book deal with political institutions and political culture. The author astutely notes that for most of Latin America's history, institutions were not accorded much intrinsic legitimacy by political actors or mass publics. They were utilized by groups seeking to further their interests or were simply circumvented—particularly by more powerful sectors of society. As Garretón puts it, "this was a noninstitutionalist political culture, in that more than being distrusted, institutions were ignored; one was above or below them..." (p. 90). Now, institutions are more highly valued in their own right; actually existing institutions may be immensely distrusted by the public, but institutions in the abstract are increasingly viewed as indispensable.

In the second half of *Incomplete Democracy*, the author shifts his gaze to his home country, Chile. Garretón provides readers with an excellent synthesis of the highly complex period ranging from the Unidad Popular government, through the 1973 coup and the military regime it spawned, to the eventual demise of the military regime, and its democratic aftermath. He also sheds new light on the causes of the coup and its broader social meaning; for example, unlike many analysts, Garretón rejects the notion that the military high command believed its own rhetoric about saving the nation. He also imparts a finely tuned account of the organizational travails of opposition parties and movements under Pinochet, framing the development of a concerted opposition front in the 1980s as a process of "political learning." Garretón disabuses us of the notion that it was obvious or inevitable for anti-Pinochet groups to combine forces, even in the decisive "No" campaign for the 1988 plebiscite.

Looking at contemporary democratization, Garretón takes on both the "transitological" approach (focused narrowly on regime change), and an idealized approach (which disdains procedural democracy and valorizes only social democracy). Instead, the author charts a middle ground, and points to four specific unresolved problems in Chilean democracy: authoritarian enclaves; the weak representation afforded by the center-left majority bloc of political parties

(Concertación); the absence of debate over the most pressing social issues of the day; and the diminution of the state's capacity to address these issues.

In the final chapters, Garretón turns to the arrest of General Pinochet in London, an episode that the author convincingly claims was botched by the Chilean government at every turn. He then updates his analysis with a discussion of the legacy of the 1999/2000 elections, a contest that not only brought Socialist Ricardo Lagos to power but also demonstrated what a media-savvy candidate like the runner-up from the far right, Joaquín Lavín, could accomplish.

The first half of *Incomplete Democracy*, which looks at Latin America as a whole, is rather theoretical and conceptual in nature, while the second half (on Chile) is highly descriptive and empirical. The book might have benefited from a more balanced scope: more empirical evidence in the first half, and a more theoretically informed analysis of Chilean politics in the second half. One also gets the sense that Garretón is comparing the present to an ideal type of sociological past, a past in which political parties effectively represented society and social identities were national and based on class rather than transnational, cultural, gender-oriented, etc. He writes that "the old [sociopolitical] matrix had the advantage of fusing the different problems and dimensions of society" (p. 86), without seriously weighing which groups were included and which were excluded in that era. The chapter on "Civil Society, Social Movements and Democratization" would also have benefited from a consideration of relevant theories of collective action and social movement mobilization.

Overall, however, *Incomplete Democracy* is a valuable and thought-provoking collection of writings by a master Latin American social scientist. Thanks to the University of North Carolina Press "Latin America in Translation" series, Anglophone students and scholars of the region now have access to the recent work of one of the great analysts of Latin American politics and society.

Barry S. Levitt

Emory University