Democracy against Parties: The Divergent Fates of Latin America's New Left Contenders. By Brandon Van Dyck. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021. 288p. $55.00 cloth.
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Democracy against Parties: The Divergent Fates of Latin America's New Left Contenders, by Brandon Van Dyck, is an excellent work that raises provocative questions and significantly contributes to the literature on party politics in Latin America and beyond. It challenges conventional thinking on the relationship between democracy and successful party building. Van Dyck posits that strong party organizations, which are necessary for electoral survival, are not being built in contemporary democracies. He provides a comparative analysis with in-depth case studies of Latin American leftist party organizations to explain successful party building. This issue is of utmost importance; although we know much about the collapse of parties and party systems, there remain many open questions about the conditions that explain successful party building. The author analyzes the role of party organization and how leaders can or cannot keep the party together, which determine the fate of new leftist contender parties. This is a must-read book for anyone interested in understanding what strong organizations look like and the complex relationship between successful party building and democracy.

Democracy against Parties answers the question, "Under what conditions does successful party building occur?" (p. 4). More specifically, it asks, "Why did some of Latin America's new left contenders survive, while others collapsed?" (p. 22). Van Dyck questions the conventional assumption that democracy breeds parties, writing, "I frontally challenge the argument that democracy facilitates party building" (p. 6). Although he agrees with the premise that "parties are good for democracy," he asserts that "democracy is not good for parties" (p. 6).

Van Dyck provides a comparative in-depth analysis of new contender leftist parties in Latin America to show how mechanisms of survival or collapse occurred. "New left contenders" are leftist parties that emerged after the third wave of democratization in Latin America between 1978 and 2005. Van Dyck defines a "contender" as a party that is electorally successful in its early years; it is a case of successful survival if it "stayed above the 10 percent threshold for five or more consecutive national legislative elections" (p. 12). This electoral access, in the absence of an established brand, can essentially be attributed to an externally appealing leader (p. 40).

The theoretical argument advanced in this book is that new parties survive after electoral crises when they build strong organizations—those with large territorial coverage and that have committed activists. When parties have access to state resources and mass media, they do not build strong organizations because the former can substitute for the organization at a lower cost. Because democratic contexts ensure some degree of access to state resources and broad access to mass media, they prevent the development of strong organizations. Access to mass media is even more crucial in contemporary democracies, given the proliferation of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). In Latin America, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok significantly reduce the costs of reaching a broad audience expeditiously. Thus, in a region pervaded by weak parties, new ICTs provide incentives to circumvent the tedious and long-term process of building organizations.

In Latin America, Van Dyck notes that new parties often also collapse when they suffer schisms. Party leaders who are not just externally appealing but also internally dominant are a source of cohesion and prevent such schisms. These leaders have cross-factional ties (p. 42), moral authority (p. 43), or ideological representativeness (pp. 43–44).

The book makes two major theoretical contributions. First, it enriches our understanding of the prospects of building strong organizations and the role parties play in contemporary democracies. The author's theoretical contribution is that good things do not (necessarily) go together. Van Dyck presents a blunt picture: as democracies consolidate, it is extremely difficult for strong party organizations to emerge. He provides convincing reasons and evidence to substantiate this grim prospect for party building under democracy. This theoretical claim is critical because it calls attention to the paradoxes of democratic consolidation and questions voluntaristic attempts to introduce reforms that allegedly favor party building and improve democratic representation.

Second, Van Dyck takes party organizations seriously. The author develops a strong theoretical foundation for the crucial role of robust party organizations in parties' early years (and beyond, we might add). A trend in the literature is to analyze parties qua organizations. Santiago Anria, *When Movements Become Parties*, 2019; Jennifer Cyr, *The Fates of Parties*, 2017; and Laura Wills-Otero, *Latin American Traditional Parties*, 2015, are some recent examples that analyze Latin American party organizations. Van Dyck makes a significant contribution by providing a clear causal mechanism of how strong organizations promote the survival of new contender leftist parties. Moreover, he combines the role of strong organizations with that of leaders who play a key role in keeping the party together.

Van Dyck's operationalization of "strong organizations" emphasizes two dimensions that are especially important in the Latin American context. First, a strong organization is one that develops large territorial coverage. This is crucial for heterogeneous and unequal societies, with diverse and

structural problems. Second, the presence of committed activists is crucial in Latin America (and beyond) because, as other recent works have shown, they ensure a greater capacity to vertically integrate societal interests, which is key for democratic representation.

Methodologically, the book provides an in-depth study of four parties in Latin America. The Argentinean FREPASO and the Peruvian United Left are two of the cases of collapse, whereas the cases of survival include the Brazilian Workers' Party and the Mexican Party of the Democratic Revolution. The author presents sufficient evidence to account for each piece of the theorized mechanism presented in chapter 2. He also discusses several shadow cases and delineates, in the conclusion, potential alternative paths to survival.

Even though it is beyond the scope of the book, long-term survival is still the single most important challenge for new parties in Latin America and beyond. Extending the shadow of the future to political actors and citizens is crucial for democratic governance and democratic representation. Van Dyck considers that access to mobilization structures, broadly understood, is insufficient to explain successful party building. I agree. However, if we consider the parties that have remained alive after the endpoint of his empirical analysis (2005), almost all have access to mobilization structures: they have permanent ties to unions, social movements, and civil society organizations. Specifically, the key to long-term survival seems to lie in the existence of strong ties with society. This is not only because social organizations provide "mobilization structures" but also because they nurture parties with activists and leaders and use parties to channel their interests and demands. Parties thus operate as agents of representation. Organizationally, this is manifested in the presence of committed activists throughout the organizational structure. In contemporary democracies, open access is a critical dimension for the reproduction of a political organization.

Brazilian Authoritarianism: Past and Present. By Lilia Moritz Schwarcz. Translated by Eric M. B. Becker. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. 328p. $29.95 cloth.
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Originally published in 2019 as *Sobre o Autoritarismo Brasileiro*, this was the first book to grapple with the rise of Brazil's far-right president Jair Bolsonaro (2018–22) and the country's democratic backsliding. Now available in English with a new preface and afterword, *Brazilian Authoritarianism* challenges the notion that Brazil is a peaceful, cordial, and racially harmonious nation that only fell victim to extreme authoritarian politics in recent years. Instead, anthropologist-historian Lilia Moritz Schwarcz argues that Brazil's authoritarianism is "intimately tied to the country's five hundred years of history" (p. 15), shaped by colonial and postcolonial violence, racism, and inequality.

The book is organized around what Schwarcz identifies as the principal elements of Brazilian authoritarianism. Chapter 1 looks into the dire consequences of slavery in Brazil's past and present. The last to be abolished in the western hemisphere (in 1888), Brazilian slavery formed a society predicated on strict racial hierarchies, firm social stratification, and extreme inequalities. Schwarcz discusses various demographic and sociological studies that demonstrate the powerful legacies of these structures. Black Brazilians, she shows, still face structural discrimination across social and economic categories. Occupying most of the manual and domestic labor sectors, they are systematically disadvantaged in income levels and underserved in access to education, healthcare, and housing. They also suffer from police killings and incarceration at much higher rates than white Brazilians.

Brazil's slavery and colonial formation also gave birth to a powerful oligarchy of rural landowners whose "bossism" is explored in the next chapter. Schwarcz looks into *coronelismo*, a patriarchal, patronage-based system in which regional authoritarian strongmen wielded significant political and economic power by controlling land and population. Their political authority and concentration of wealth in the nineteenth century shaped the contours of Brazil's state-formation processes and modern government mechanisms. Even after the ratification of a progressive constitution in 1988, Schwarcz notes, the system of bossism survived (p. 45). Much of the current political system in Brazil is still dominated by a few families that have controlled their regions for generations.

The following chapters reveal the consequences of these foundational mechanisms of slavery, bossism, and hierarchies. Schwarcz shows how landowners in Brazil have relied on public resources to enrich themselves from the days of independence and throughout the twentieth century. The land-owning oligarchy not only enjoyed extensive political and economic privileges but also demanded that the state provide and protect its private property. Schwarcz persuasively argues that this type of patrimonialism "remains one of the greatest enemies of the republic" (p. 74), leaving the state economically and politically fragile. Patrimonialist practices also promoted corruption and social inequality, which Schwarcz views as ingrained in Brazilian society and its history. She discusses corruption scandals taking place under the Brazilian Empire (1822–89), the Vargas regime (1930s–1940s), the military dictatorship (1964–85), and, most notably, the recent Operation Car Wash (*Lava Jato*)—one of the biggest mechanisms of bribery and money laundering in Brazilian and perhaps Latin American history. Schwarcz then relies on economic studies, statistical reports, and