

Acknowledgments

This book has been ten years in the making. It began as a study of the struggle for democratic consolidation in Latin America during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Early on, however, I realized that the countries with the strongest democracies in the region today (e.g., Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay) were also among the first Latin American countries to establish democracy. Thus, to understand why some countries had strong democracies today, it seemed important to examine what led to the emergence of democracy in the early twentieth century. And to understand why democracy arose in some countries in the early twentieth century, it became necessary to explore why nineteenth-century efforts to establish democracy had failed. Thus, through historical regress, I embarked upon a study of the struggle for democracy in the region from independence until 1930.

To make the study more feasible, I decided early on to limit it to South America alone. Nevertheless, it has still seemed an overwhelming task at times. If a graduate student had proposed carrying out a dissertation on ten countries over 100 years of history, I would have summarily thrown them out of my office. But one of the advantages of having tenure is that I cannot be easily thrown out of my office. Tenure makes these ambitious projects possible.

My location at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) also made this book feasible. We are blessed to have the finest Latin American library in the country: the Nettie Lee Benson Collection. Over the last ten years, I have checked out so many library books on this topic that I have come to refer to my office as the Benson Annex. I am also thankful to have had access to the congressional libraries in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, which are beautiful and fructiferous places to carry out archival research.

UT Austin provided me with a variety of other essential resources, and I hope this book represents some return on its investment in me. The College of the Liberal Arts awarded me two semester-long research leaves, which were

necessary to make significant progress on this book. The Harold C. and Alice T. Nowlin Regents Professorship in Liberal Arts, which I have held since 2019, financed the hiring of research assistants. The Teresa Lozano-Long Institute for Latin American Studies funded my field research in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, as well as trips to various conferences where I presented my ideas. I am also grateful to my current and former department chairs, Dan Brinks and Robert Moser, for many forms of support along the way.

I am fortunate to have brilliant and generous colleagues in the Department of Government at UT Austin. John Gerring and I had many helpful chats about this book while our dogs frolicked. The members of the Latin Americanist Faculty Working Group – Dan Brinks, Zach Elkins, Ken Greene, Wendy Hunter, and Kurt Weyland – provided frank and insightful comments on various chapters of this book, as did John Gerring, Amy Liu, and Xiaobo Lu.

I also owe a debt to several UT Austin graduate students, namely, Danissa Contreras, Jonatan Lemus, Matthew Martin, Alex Norris, and Daisy Ward, who contributed to the elections and revolts data sets that I have used in this study. An army of undergraduate interns helped with the construction of these data sets as well. Special recognition goes to Leonardo Di Bonaventura and Bianca Vicuña who worked with me for multiple semesters and are well on their way to becoming accomplished political scientists.

Various colleagues outside of UT Austin have provided excellent comments on parts of this book, including Diego Abente, Elena Barham, Asli Cansunar, Michael Coppedge, Jennifer Cyr, Michael Hirsch, Alisha Holland, Evelynne Huber, Calla Hummel, Robert Kaufman, Fabrice Lehoucq, Steve Levitsky, Scott Mainwaring, Vincent Mauro, Jana Morgan, Gerardo Munck, Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, Eduardo Posada-Carbó, Luis Schenoni, Dawn Teele, Daniel Treisman, and Samuel Valenzuela. I am especially indebted to Luis Schenoni, who co-authored an earlier version of Chapter 3, in addition to providing helpful comments on the entire book.

Chapter 3 originally appeared in a slightly different form as an article in *International Security* (Vol. 48, No. 3, Winter 2024, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00479). Parts of Chapters 5 and 6 were published as articles in *Comparative Politics* (Vol. 51, No. 2, 2019) and *Comparative Political Studies* (Vol. 52, No. 10, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830738>) and as a *Kellogg Working Paper* (No. 441, December 2020, <https://kellogg.nd.edu/emergence-democracy-colombia>). I thank these journals for allowing me to reuse material from these articles.

This study builds on the fantastic work that historians and social scientists have done on democracy, elections, parties, and the military in Latin America before 1930. These scholars are too numerous to name here, but their work is cited extensively throughout this manuscript.

I was lucky to be a Visiting Research Fellow at the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame during the fall of 2019 where I wrote first drafts

of some of the chapters of this book. I benefitted enormously from Kellogg's top-notch facilities, helpful staff, and terrific Latin Americanist faculty and students. There may be no better place to get work done than the Kellogg Institute where my apartment was located fifty feet from my office!

I presented parts of this book at Harvard University, Tulane University, the University of Chicago, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as at annual meetings of the American Political Science Association and the Latin American Studies Association. I am grateful to those who attended these talks for their thoughtful questions and comments.

At Cambridge University Press, Rachel Blaifeder did a terrific job of steering the book through the publication process. To her credit, she chose the two best reviewers I could have wished for: Evelyne Huber and Scott Mainwaring. I am grateful not just for their enthusiasm for this manuscript but, even more importantly, for their detailed suggestions, which have significantly improved this book. Carrie Parkinson and Claire Sissen of Cambridge University Press and Vidhya Ramamourthy of Lumina Datamatics Limited efficiently supervised the book through production. Dan Harding of Spartan Eloquence carefully copyedited the manuscript and Doreen Anderson of Arc Indexing compiled its lengthy and thorough index.

I had my first exposure to democratization studies as a graduate student at Stanford University during the 1990s where I was fortunate to take classes on the topic from some of the leading figures in the field, including Terry Karl, Larry Diamond, and Philippe Schmitter, all of whom subsequently served on my dissertation committee. As an undergraduate at Yale University in the 1980s, I also had the opportunity to take a class from the late great James Scott, whose support proved crucial for my subsequent decision to do a PhD in political science. I am thankful to these eminent scholars for planting the seeds that I am still harvesting today.

I also owe a debt to the good people of Pitas de Bejuco, Costa Rica where I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 1990s. Long before I was aware of Winston Churchill's dictum, I learned from my community development work in Costa Rica that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.

My greatest debts are to my family. My parents encouraged my intellectual interests from a young age and have served as role models for me throughout my life. My mother, who is in her eighties, also served as an (unpaid) research assistant for this project, editing the entire manuscript, photographing archival records, coding data on elections, and transcribing consular dispatches. Other members of my family provided emotional support. My children, Nico and Bela, have been a great joy and distraction from the day they set foot on this planet. My wife, Paloma Díaz, has been a source of fun, support, love, and inspiration since that fateful day that we met at *carnaval* in Brazil thirty-two years ago. I am so thankful to have her in my life, and I dedicate this book to her.

