
Review

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Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy J. Power, eds., *Democratic Brazil Divided*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. Figures, tables, acronyms, notes, bibliography, index, 296 pp.; paperback \$29.95, ebook.

This volume, the editors' third tracing the state of Brazilian democracy since 1985, is again a valuable contribution, assessing areas of both progress and challenge. The editors have assembled scholars with deep knowledge of Brazil to confront the unenviable task of characterizing Brazilian democracy during unusually turbulent times. In the wake of a major corruption scandal, a president's impeachment, mass street protests, and a severe economic crisis, the editors changed the book's working title from *Democratic Brazil Ascendant* to one more reflective of Brazil's shifting reality.

In their introduction, Kingstone and Power summarize key events since 2013, identifying both continuities and uncertainties. They caution us not to overreact to the recent hard times, as "Brazilian democracy is not as bad as the worst-case scenario suggests, nor was it ever as good as the excessively optimistic version made it appear" (8). Signs of a maturing democracy include successful policy innovations, greater citizen participation, deeper civil society networks, and progress against impunity through improved accountability and transparency. Political stability increased with the dominance of the Workers' Party (PT) and Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) in presidential contests and the modernization of these two programmatic parties. However, party fragmentation in Congress has continued, along with governing via coalitional presidency. Furthermore, the emergence of predictable voting patterns by region and class has been accompanied by less foreseeable effects of political polarization.

Turning to the economy, Kingstone and Power briefly describe Brazil's tumble from a period of robust growth and poverty reduction into a state of crisis. They blame this reversal on both conjunctural and structural causes. Inadequate investment in infrastructure, weakness in the manufacturing sector, and insufficiencies in the education system will probably delay the resumption of steady growth, they say. However, the impressive rise of state-financed Brazilian multinationals, the country's ascent as an agricultural export powerhouse, and real improvements in social welfare stand out as positive achievements.

To appraise the current state of Brazilian democracy, the editors adopt a middle-range approach. Following Philippe Schmitter, they disaggregate democracy into "partial regimes." The empirical chapters are presented in four parts, each addressing one of four partial regimes—electoral, policymaking, participation, and global projection.

Two chapters in part 1 evaluate the PT's 12 years (2003–16) in power. Oswaldo do Amaral and Rachel Meneguello identify important signs of successful governance, including more stability and predictability in electoral politics, a prolonged period of strong economic growth, a decline in economic inequality, greater social inclusiveness, and increased support for democracy. However, the PT's need to engage in multiparty alliances to govern with a highly fragmented congress, the severe economic crisis, and the *Lava Jato* corruption scandal cost the party both

status and adherents. The PT failed to end the traditional politics embodied in clientelist, patrimonial, and corporatist practices. Instead of building respect for public institutions, the authors fear, the PT may have undermined them.

In their incisive analysis, Benjamin Goldfrank and Brian Wampler emphasize the “schizophrenic” disconnect between the PT’s “effort to improve transparency, participation, and accountability and its ongoing use of corrupt practices” (71). External pressures associated with the expense of political campaigns and the difficulty of governing as a minority party, coupled with the internal choices of the party’s dominant group, *Campo Majoritário*, pushed the PT toward corrupt practices. Ironically, the improved mechanisms of accountability and transparency advanced by PT presidents ensnared their own copartisans. The authors predict that the PT’s “politics as usual” behavior will undermine its electoral appeal. Moreover, in the absence of renewed ethical leadership and greater accountability, the party may lose its programmatic coherence.

Each of the five chapters in part 2 evaluates a significant policy innovation or aspect of state capacity, weighing areas of genuine progress against disappointing or limited outcomes.

Matthew M. Taylor contests the popular view that corruption is “endemic to the political culture” and “embedded in government institutions” (77). For Taylor, this narrative both underestimates corruption at lower levels of government and overstates the prevalence of corruption when Brazil is compared internationally. He blames these misperceptions on weak enforcement and oversight, which allow large scandals to develop, and an inadequate court system, which allows perpetrators to escape punishment. Taylor argues that democratic governance has brought real progress in countering corruption and punishing wrongdoers through structural changes, animating anti-corruption activism and expanding the “accountability bureaucracy.”

Reviewing environmental politics under the PT, Kathryn Hochstetler draws attention to the conflicts arising from the simultaneous pursuit of broader democratic participation, rapid economic growth, and greater prominence for Brazil as a global power. She examines these tensions through the contested spaces of environmental licensing and responses to climate change. Environmental licensing pits the rationale of expert decisionmaking against the democratic rationales of citizen participation and collective rights. In Brazil’s energy sector, the confinement of debate to licensing disputes has short-circuited development of a much-needed national energy policy. Hochstetler attributes the inconsistencies in Brazil’s policy toward climate change at home and abroad to the push and pull of shifting domestic political coalitions.

Marcus André Melo details the real gains in Brazil’s educational equity and performance during the presidencies of both Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Melo attributes these improvements to better cooperation among institutional actors in the federal system, increased funding for basic education, and the successful resolution of the “delegation dilemma” entailed in transferring more power over basic education to local governments while also maintaining control over the use of funds. Strengthening institutional checks and realigning electoral incentives inhibited mayors’ diversion of transfers to inappropriate uses.

In their chapter, Wendy Hunter and Natasha Borges Sugiyama enumerate the many successes of Bolsa Família (BF), Brazil's best-known policy innovation. Besides reducing poverty and inequality, BF has enriched democracy by treating the poor as "citizens" instead of "clients." Unfortunately, the authors argue, the celebrated program has not enhanced the quality or quantity of health and education services or sufficiently improved the lives of poor women.

Anthony W. Pereira explains Brazil's distinctive approach to transitional justice through a close analysis of the National Truth Commission's 2014 report. Pereira sees the NTC as a "liminal institution" attempting to bridge the contradiction between Brazil's 1979 Amnesty Law and its ratification of international human rights treaties. While the NTC represents a step forward, Brazil has not deviated from its gradualist and moderate approach to confronting past human rights violations.

Shifting the focus to "politics from the bottom up," the two chapters in part 3 explore recent mass political mobilizations and the rise of the "new" middle class. Both chapters alert us to a growing politics of antipolitics that threatens democracy's gains. Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida and Fernando Henrique Guarnieri examine the political attitudes and electoral behavior of Brazil's middle class, which grew impressively during the boom years. Despite significant differences among them, this group played a major role in the mass protests of 2013, and the authors warn that political parties need to reckon with this new force. Alfredo Saad-Filho delves more deeply into the economic, social, and political factors behind the 2013 protests that rocked Brazilian politics. In a prescient analysis, he lays bare the alienation of a traditional middle class that felt both displaced politically and unrewarded by neoliberal economic policy.

Part 4 addresses aspects of Brazil's growing global engagement. Sean Burges and Jean Daudelin note that Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty) has seen its longstanding monopoly over foreign policy challenged by new political demands, a more open economy, and deeper global involvement. Recent presidents seeking greater influence over foreign affairs, along with the technical dimensions of economic integration, have led experts to displace Itamaraty's generalists in international trade negotiations. Overall, however, democratic influence over foreign policy remains limited and Itamaraty's control robust.

In contrast to Itamaraty's stolid resistance to change, Leslie Armijo emphasizes the agility and flexibility of Brazil's National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) in the volume's final chapter. Armijo frames her discussion of the tensions over BNDES's changing role in development financing as a "trilemma" among the competing goals of autonomous expertise, democratic responsiveness, and free markets. Armijo uses this framing to explain the debates surrounding the BNDES's oversized role in financing industrial development and promoting the internationalization of Brazilian business.

Two events that occurred after the book's publication—the imprisonment and electoral disqualification of former president Lula da Silva and the election of a right-wing populist, Jair Bolsonaro, as president—illustrate well the difficulty of intercepting the "moving target" of Brazil's democratic evolution. *Democratic Brazil*

Divided will no doubt be read in light of these dramatic developments. Understandably, some of its predictions were incorrect: certainties, such as the PT and PSDB's dominance of presidential elections and enduring governance by programmatic parties, have been upended. The country's achievements in addressing climate change, transitional justice, impunity, poverty, and inequality are now thrown into doubt. The book does, however, analyze some of the forces underlying the current turmoil. Conflicting class mobilizations and ideological polarization seem likely to deepen. Corruption will remain a central theme, as will the overlooked issue of police impunity. For many, Brazil's worst-case scenario has come true. We can hope that Kingstone and Power will have good reasons to challenge this bleak diagnosis in their next volume.

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Ada Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Maps, figures, bibliography, index, 392 pp.; hardcover \$85.99, paperback: \$32.99, ebook \$26.

When U.S. students are taught the history of slavery, they are often schooled in one very limited, albeit important, time of enslavement. A comprehensive narrative of slavery however, does not begin or end with the United States. In *Freedom's Mirror*, readers learn about the history of slavery and resistance in Haiti and its subsequent effects on Cuba and ultimately the rest of the world. Whereas historians have analyzed slavery through a national lens, Ada Ferrer chronicles the stories of Haiti and Cuba with a transnational perspective, demonstrating that the histories of these two nations are intrinsically linked and stressing the power of black freedom in an antiblack world.

In the opening chapters, Ferrer chronicles the transformation of Cuba from a society with slaves to a slave society in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The British occupation of Havana in 1762 laid the groundwork for economic and social transformation within Cuba's borders. In only ten months, Ferrer estimates, British traders brought close to four thousand Africans to Havana, a number that is striking considering that only about eight thousand had entered in the twenty-year period immediately before occupation (18–19). While the period of British occupation was short-lived, the economic gains substantiated the already significant calls coming from the local elite pushing for slave trade reform. Although Haiti had once held a monopoly on sugar production, recent uprisings had resulted in a “sugar-shaped hole” in the world market. Aided by the Haitian Revolution, Cuban planters looked to fill this gap in production and increase their own profits.

These first chapters provide key insight into the minds of Cuban planters and policymakers, who yearned to grow the sugar plantation economy through mass enslavement long before the Haitian Revolution. Through the use of census data and material from national archives, Ferrer negates any presuppositions that the Haitian Revolution inadvertently led to the growth of mass chattel slavery in Cuba,

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