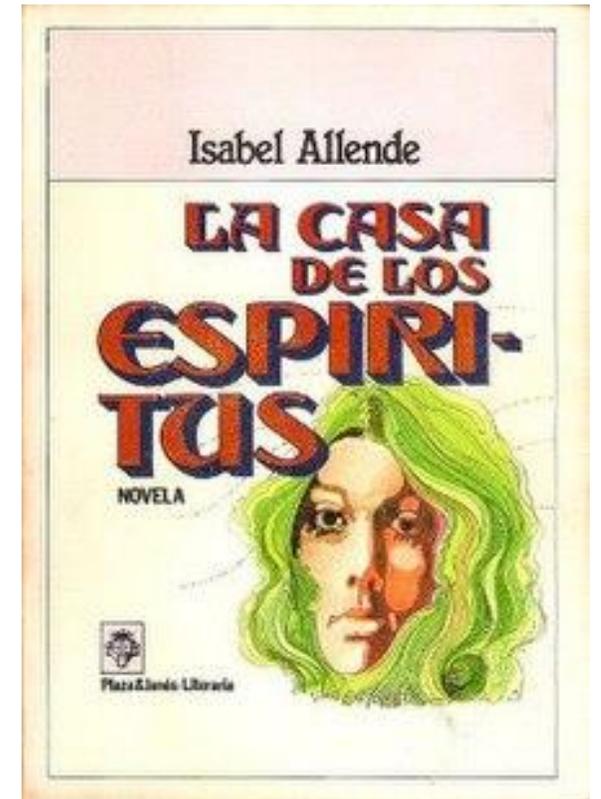


Democracy in Latin America

Second Session

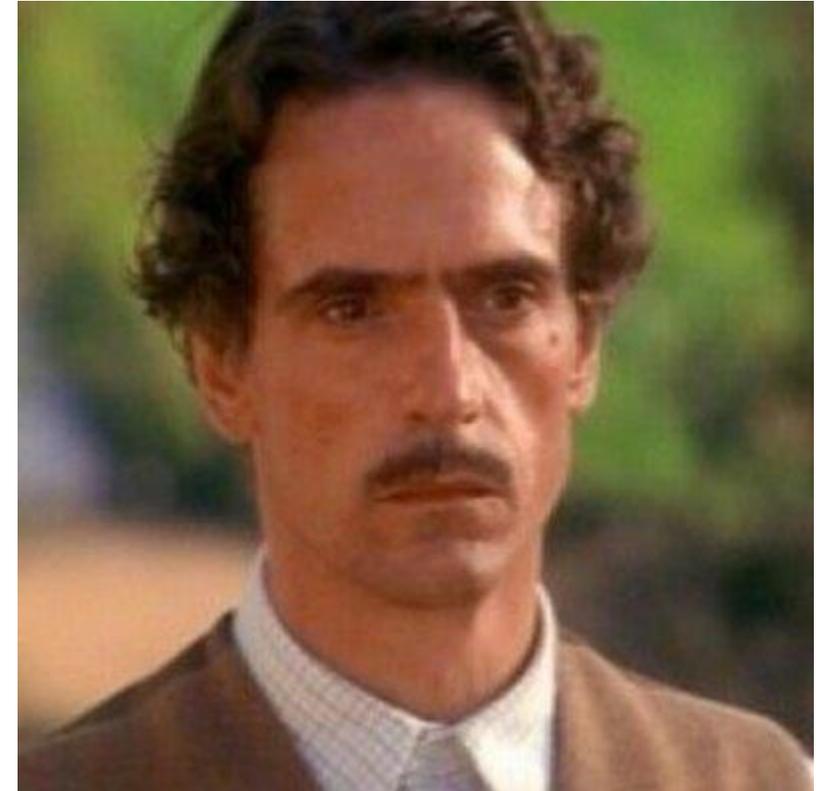
House of the Spirits

- Published in 1982.
- Allende wrote it when she received the news that her 100-year-old grandfather was dying.
- Magical realism.



Understanding Esteban Trueba

- Personality traits.
- Profession.
- Development over the years.



Understanding Pedro Tercero Garcia

- Personality traits.
- Profession.
- Development over the years.



What is the plot?



Society in House of the Spirits

- What are the characteristics of the society in which Esteban Trueba lives in the first third of the book?

Traditional societies

- Agriculture, resource extraction. Almost no industry.
- Rural, concentrated land ownership.
- Fixed social roles.
 - Limited participation of women.
- Hierarchical
- Religious.
- Patron-client relationships: a type of social relationship that facilitates exchange and maintains order.

Clientelism vs. Pluralism

Clientelism

Exclusionary

Encompassing

Obligatory (semi-legal)

Pluralism

Multiple and overlapping

Partial

Voluntary

- Hierarchical. Mutual obligations/benefits, but unequal and asymmetrical
- Inequality is perpetuated.
- Perpetuation in modern politics: vote mobilization, political patronage, populism.

Obstacles to change

- Fear, habit, ignorance. False consciousness.
- Risk aversion.
- Collective action problems.
- Institutionalized domination.
- Educational trends.

How does change become possible?

- It all starts with economics (Marx). In traditional societies, politics was a function of the fight between landlords and peasants.
- Industrialization promotes changes in class structure.
- But when did industrialization happen in Latin America?

A brief history of economic development

- 1830-1930: Economic expansion through exports.
 - Law of Comparative Advantage
- 1930-1940: Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). Development was equated with industrialization.
 - Subsidies to select industries
 - Favorable exchange rate to those needing to buy inputs for the industrial sector
 - High tariffs on manufactured goods that were produced domestically
- 1950-1960: Exhaustion of ISI
 - The problem of backward linkages and the difficult phase of ISI

Steel → engine → cars

Thinking comparatively: ISI in Asia

- In East Asia, industries were initially protected, but were gradually exposed to trade and international competition.
- Government policies not only assisted the development of domestic industry, but also provided incentives for technological upgrading.
- These countries also invested in human capital, which is fundamental for technological upgrading and innovation.
- Would it have worked in Latin America if it was a temporary quick-start policy?

Economic changes cause political mobilization

- Changes in class structure: middle class (merchants, lawyers, etc.) and working class (rail, dock, mining, factory workers).
- New classes can read (peasants such as Pedro Primero could not). They are not tied to the land and can move around. Better communication in urban areas.
- New social groups demand share of power + old elites do not want to give up power = class conflict between rich and poor, owners and workers.
- Also, the need to engage in capital accumulation.

Authoritarianism

- Several authoritarian regimes appear at this point in Latin America, especially in the Southern Cone (these were called bureaucratic authoritarian regimes).
- Characteristics (as compared to totalitarian regimes):
 - They do not have a comprehensive ideology
 - Indoctrination is not a priority
 - Prefer political apathy
 - Accept limited pluralism

Chile

- Economic growth and industrialization starting in the 1880s.
 - State-labor conflicts in early 1900s.
- Military coup in 1924
 - Military forces concessions to labor, but also cracks down on labor mobilization.
- Democracy reestablished in 1931
 - Gradual inclusion of the working class (expanded franchise). Why would elites do this?
- Stable, multi-party competition between 1930 and 1973.
 - Loss of center. Polarization.
- Military coup in 1973. Support of the U.S.

Brazil

- Overthrow of President Joao Goulart in 1964. Military coup (“socialist threat”).
- Institutional Act 5 (1968) institutionalized torture, suspended any constitutional guarantees, closed the legislature, allowed the dictatorship to intervene in municipalities, and many other authoritarian provisions.
- Support of the U.S.
- Number of casualties: 434 people confirmed killed or went missing, and 20,000 people tortured.

Argentina

- Overthrow of President Isabel Peron in 1976. Military coup.
- Military junta.
- “Dirty war”: about 30,000 people were killed or forcibly disappeared.
- Support of the U.S.

Side note: transitional justice

- Argentina
 - Public trials in 1985 during the Raul Alfonsin years. In all, 481 military and police officers were indicted; 16 were tried – 11 of whom were top-level officers – and 11 were convicted. General Videla was among them: he was jailed for life.
 - President Carlos Menem pardoned him in 1990.
 - He was jailed for life again in 2010.
- Brazil
 - Amnesty Law in 1979.
 - In 2014, a National Truth Commission identified 377 state agents, almost 200 of them still alive, as responsible for torture, killings, and disappearances.
 - Only in 2021 a court issued the first conviction of a state agent for human rights abuses committed during the dictatorship.
 - No public trials.

Luis Moreno Ocampo

“While I believe the passage of laws and the pardon which limited the reach of the prosecutions undermined the process of serving justice, I am convinced that no judge or system of justice can replace civil society’s role in forging its own path toward justice. Punishment cannot be the only answer. (...) Based on the example of Argentina, I propose that the information revealed about past crimes in public trials may be as important as the punishment. Punishment is one part of the criminal justice system, and its application does not guarantee the reformation of society or its authority.” (2009)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xOqgolOHPg>

Note: other types of convulsion

- In other countries, civil wars, guerrillas and counter-insurgency took place.
- Sources of conflict: economic, ideology (communism during the Cold war), international (U.S. intervention in Central America) and ethnic/racial.
- Prolonged, violent civil wars in: El Salvador (1980-92, 75,000 killed), Guatemala (1960-96, 200,000 killed) and Nicaragua (1980-87, 40,000 killed).

Wrapping up: Latin America circa 1979

- Military dictatorships.
- Civilian authoritarian regimes: Mexico, Paraguay, Dominican Republic.
- Civil wars in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, El Salvador.
- This would change in the 1980s. Why?

Democracy from 1945 to 2003

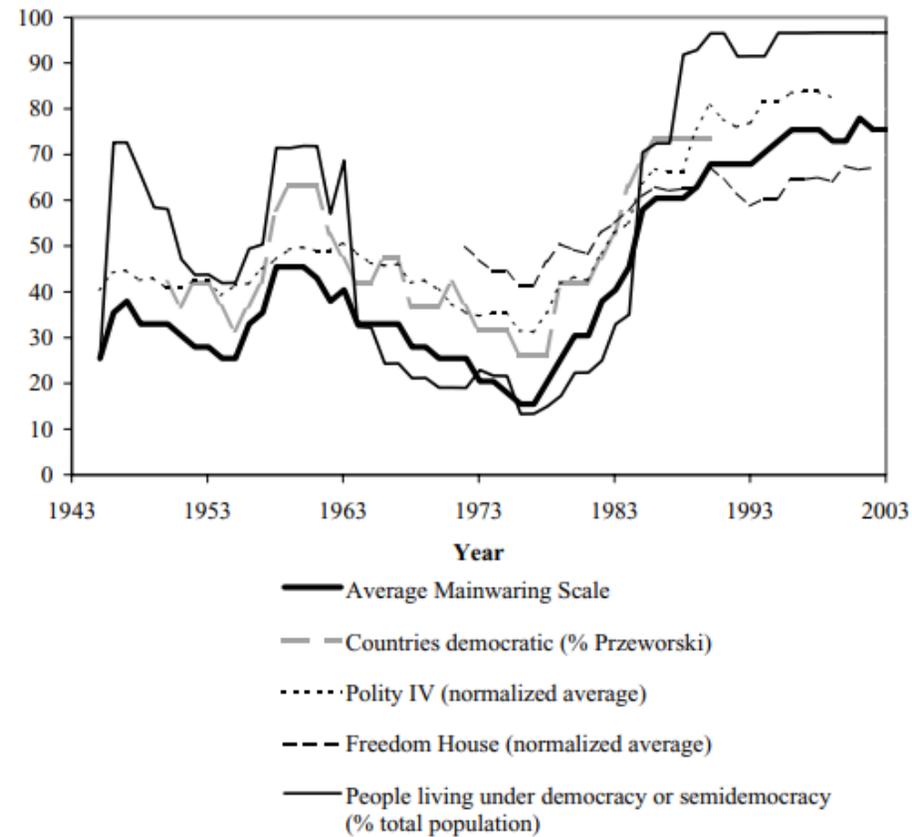


FIGURE 1.1. Evolution of Democracy in Latin America, 1945–2003.

Key Concept: Democracy

- Minimalist definition 1: a system in which parties lose elections (Przeworski 1991)
- Minimalist definition 2: the method by which people elect representatives in competitive elections to carry out their will (Schumpeter 2008)
- Broader definition: a regime that meets four characteristics: (1) the government was elected in free and fair elections; (2) there were good protections for civil liberties; (3) the electorate included most of the adult population; and (4) there was no encroachment of the military or other nonelected actors in the domain of elected powers (Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez-Lián 2005).

Why does democracy matter?

- Authoritarian regimes
 - Use of violence in political competition and/or as means of control.
 - Limited freedom.
 - Oligarchic (only small groups of people at the top rule). Arbitrary.
- Democracies
 - Less violent (electoral competition, open to dissent).
 - Greater freedoms.
 - Rule of Law.
 - No famine (“No famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy”, says Amartya Sen). Think of Holodomor or the Great Chinese Famine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rq45JKeypA>

Waves of Democratization

- First wave: 1828-1926.
 - Suffrage extended to white males in France, Britain, Canada, Australia, Italy and others.
- Second wave: 1943-1962.
 - After the Allied victory in WW2.
- Third wave: 1973-1991.
 - Carnation Revolution in 1974 in Portugal. Also, Spain.
 - Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan from 1986 to 1988,
 - Latin America starting in 1978.
 - There were two waves of democratization in Latin America: one from 1956 to 1962 and the most recent, from 1978 to 1992.

Democratization/Theories of regime change

- Cultural

- Cultural determinism or heritage (example: Catholics are authoritarian by nature).
- Civic culture: attitudes about political and social life (tolerance, equality, trust, participatory nature, civic spirit, rule of law).

- Socioeconomic

- Modernization theory (a modern society is urban, educated, wealthy, industrial). There is a change in culture, in beliefs when you transition from traditional to modern societies. Many anomalies.
- Distributional theories: higher levels of inequality, lower probability of democracy (fear of income redistribution).
- Actor-centered theories: structured choice. Focus on strategies under institutional contexts.
 - Important: these authors highlight the role of “pacts” during transitions. These are “explicit agreements of mutual guarantees”. Example: Amnesty Law in Brazil.

Regime change in Latin America

- Theories of modernization, class structure, and economic performance are poor explanations of the post-1978 transformation.
- What is important:
 - Regional political environment: favorable international ideological context.
 - Decreasing polarization: shift from zero-sum polarized politics to the politics of compromise and moderation.
 - Stronger commitment of political elites to democracy: the revolutionary left became a nonfactor by mid-1980s. Also, the right became more democratic as the specter of communism faded.
 - International factors can alter the odds for or against transition: the role of the Catholic Church, the U.S. government and governmental agencies, the OAS and other multilateral organizations.

Democratic Consolidation

- Regime solidity: the extent to which competitively elected regimes are full democracies and appear to be relatively immune to breakdown or erosion.
- International actors help democratization but are less effective to improve the quality of democracy.
- Poor economic growth is a roadblock.
- The economic, social, and security performance of most countries has been poor, reinforcing problems of democratic legitimacy.

Other problems for consolidation 1

- Electoral rules
 - Some allow for more representation than others.
- Government structures
 - Federal vs. unitary, hyper presidentialism, merit-based or patronage-based civil service.
- Party systems
 - Fragmented? Clear cleavages?

Other problems for consolidation 2

- Elite attitudes
 - Military continues to insert itself into politics.
 - Corrupt, venal, self-interested elite.
- Traditional power structures
 - Agrarian or rural-based landowners. “Authoritarian enclaves” that poison the democratic process. Clientelism, patronage, corruption, block reforms.
 - Informal institutions prevail. Incongruence between law and practice.

More economic development: neoliberalism

- Rejection of state intervention.
- Privatization of state-owned enterprises.
- Trade liberalization.
- Reduction of government deficit.
- Evidence that it increased inequality, but also positive outcomes.