

democracy will no longer be threatened by military intervention or populist revolts' (p. 173).

University of Missouri-St. Louis

EDUARDO SILVA

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 40 (2008). doi:10.1017/S0022216X08004227

Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz (eds.), *Enforcing the Rule of Law: Social Accountability in the New Latin American Democracies* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), pp. xiv + 362, \$29.95, pb.

Social accountability refers to civil society and media initiatives to promote public accountability. As Peruzzotti and Smulovitz put it, these campaigns 'address some of the intrinsic limitations of elections as tools of political accountability, and they are crucial in activating the often reluctant network of intrastate agencies of control' (p. 4). Framed in terms of O'Donnell's spatial metaphor of vertical and horizontal accountabilities, social accountability complements electoral (vertical) accountability – while bolstering the government's own oversight agencies of (horizontal) accountability.

Batista Calvancanti's chapter addresses one of Latin America's most notable cases of mutually-reinforcing synergy between institutional innovation and civil society action: Brazil's public prosecutors, which have become significant since they were embedded in the 1988 Constitution. Because of their enforcement powers, they have 'become a key element in the process of conversion of formal rights into actual ones' (p. 37).

Catalina Smulovitz's chapter pursues the issue of the judicialisation of politics by addressing the judicialisation of protest in Argentina, focusing on the case of the government's intervention in the banking system known as the Corralito. A new movement complemented traditional street protests, 'organized around the use of legal tools to demand protection of property rights and to regain access to frozen and devaluated bank accounts' (p. 56). Smulovitz notes how the 'legal architecture' of the conflict helped the savers' associations to sustain their resistance (pp. 66–7), while providing media coverage and political legitimacy that leveraged both material and symbolic gains.

Ana Tezera Lemos-Nelson and Jorge Zaverucha analyse the connections between horizontal and vertical accountability through the experience of Parliamentary Commissions of Inquiry (CPIs) in Brazil's northeastern state of Pernambuco. CPIs function as investigative task forces. The mutually reinforcing interaction between the citizen action and the CPIs 'forms a triangular dynamic aimed at opening up the executive branch and making it more responsive and accountable ...' (p. 77). The empirical study of three diverse CPIs in the Recife area begins to address an important gap in the literature on accountability agencies.

Cunill Grau surveys social accountability issues by comparing a range of institutional design issues, with a focus on constraining and enabling factors. She emphasizes the distinction between ad hoc forms of societal oversight, such as Latin America's many kinds of community public works watchdog groups, and legally empowered oversight agencies, which actually have formal attributes and sanctioning powers. Claudio Fuentes analyses police abuse and accountability in post-transition Chile, focusing on the human rights movement's 'progressive decline in its ability to check and control the state' (p. 138). His incisive analysis of both public

institutions and the social networks that ground civil society organisations persuasively problematises Chile's puzzling lack of social accountability.

Alberto Olvera Rivera addresses one of Latin America's most notable and broad-based social accountability initiatives, Mexico's Civic Alliance electoral oversight campaign in the 1990s. He shows that electoral democracy 'is ... a result of certain forms of social accountability' (p. 181). Olvera effectively pinpoints the challenges posed both by the resilience of state impunity and civil society divisions. His nuanced analysis reflects his simultaneous role as analyst and insider. Jacqueline Behrend addresses how the 'Cabezas' case in Argentina, involving the murder of a press photographer, sparked a wave of civil society mobilisation for accountability. The campaign brought results, and underscores the importance of 'paradigmatic cases' to activate pro-accountability forces (p. 233).

Peruzzotti's chapter highlights the rise of the watchdog media in Latin America, with a focus on a 1990s bribery scandal in Argentina's senate. He notes that scandals can have contradictory effects on civic life, but stresses that they are crucial to systems of checks and balances – especially when they reveal systemic flaws rather than individual idiosyncracies. Silvio Waisbord's media analysis also probes watchdog journalism in Argentina and does so comparatively, distinguishing between three different kinds of scandals: official corruption, human rights violations and tabloid stories. The relative weight of the media in Latin American politics has clearly grown, providing the context for Waisbord's point that 'scandals require a certain institutional architecture' (p. 284).

The collection concludes with a set of theoretical chapters, beginning with Andrew Arato's discussion of the central role of civil society in making accountability work. Adam Przeworski then underscores the weakness of elections as instruments of popular control, and the only occasional effectiveness of protest. He carries out a quantitative exercise that compares institutional features of Latin American and OECD democracies, concluding that the chief executives do not appear to be less accountable in the former than in the latter.

Guillermo O'Donnell, a founder of the recent wave of Latin American research on accountability and the quality of democracy more generally, adds his 'Notes on Various Accountabilities'. He explores the relationship between horizontal and social accountability, noting that while the basic idea behind social accountability dates back to Locke, the initiatives addressed in this volume are new and distinct in the Latin American context insofar as they both address public rather than material interests, and they frame societal demands in terms of the rule of law. Peruzzotti and Smulovitz conclude with a useful synthesis, posing the central question of 'under what conditions do social accountability mechanisms produce positive accountability outcomes?' (p. 350). This insightful and agenda-setting collection provides a robust empirical and conceptual platform for taking on this challenging analytical question.

University of California, Santa Cruz

JONATHAN FOX

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 40 (2008). doi:10.1017/S0022216X08004239

Marieke Riethof, *Responses of the Brazilian Labour Movement to Economic and Political Reforms* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2002), pp. 240, €22.50, pb.

What role can unions in the developing world play in the era of globalisation? Taking the case of Brazilian labour unions since the transition to democracy in the