the book as an overview of democracy in the region, and the mostly descriptive nature of many of the chapters, that leaves one with the feeling that it is already dated.

There is one additional, relatively minor, issue. At least in tone, several of the book's contributions all too clearly take sides with the 'good guys' who pursue liberal, market-based policies – Bachelet, Lula, even Alan García – and against the 'bad guys' who pursue populist, authoritarian, statist, economic-nationalist policies – Chávez, Correa, Morales, López Obrador, Ollanta Humala. Uribe's concentration of power and elimination of re-election barriers, for example, gets a much easier pass than similar events in Ecuador, Bolivia or Venezuela. To be sure, there are often good reasons to prefer the former over the latter – the weakening of institutions, the strengthening of the executive at the expense of the legislature, the use of legal institutions to stifle opposition. But there is in some chapters an over-identification of liberal economic policy with democracy, so that the authors seem to lose sight of the fact that serious failures of 'market-based' policies and a persistent exclusion of subordinate groups under previous governments played a role in bringing these new leaders to power. This is more a matter of emphasis and tone than a serious analytic flaw, but it might call into question the objectivity of the authors of some of the most critical pieces in the volume.

In summary, the book includes a good many insightful analyses of recent events in Latin America and usefully begins a series of conversations. Many of its chapters most certainly deserve to be on the reading lists of classes in Latin American politics. However, readers, instructors and students are left to do much of the work of pulling these various contributions together, tying up loose ends, updating with more recent events and making sense of the whole.

University of Notre Dame DANIEL M. BRINKS

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **42** (2010). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10000659

Gerardo Munck, *Measuring Democracy: A Bridge between Scholarship and Politics* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. xix + 178, $55.00, $28.00 pb.

The quantitative measurement of democracy has a long tradition in the social sciences, whose genesis was actually in Latin America with the regular publication of Fitzgibbon and Johnson's *Image-Index Survey of Latin American Political Democracy*. The index developed an assessment framework and coding system that used academic opinion on the relative degree to which Latin American countries upheld in practice different principles of democracy. The instinct behind the index has stayed with subsequent efforts dedicated to providing systematic measures of democracy. From Seymour Martin Lipset's dichotomous classification of regimes to the latest democracy scales and indices, democracy measures apply a theoretical construct of democracy to a set of empirical observations across countries and time to provide scores that can be used for mapping, description, ranking, secondary analysis, prediction and policy prescription. For those frameworks that do not yield comparative quantitative measures, such as in the International IDEA guide *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, the move from higher-level theoretical concepts and democratic principles to analytical categories and search questions represents an adoption of virtually the same principles.

Gerardo Munck's *Measuring Democracy* draws on this rich tradition and provides a comprehensive guide to the issues and methods associated with measuring democracy. His book includes a full discussion on the issues of specifying the concept of democracy, the relative merits of minimalist and maximalist definitions, how definitions provide the basis for identifying attributes of democracy, the choice of indicators for those attributes, the trade-offs associated with aggregation of measures, the use of source material and problems of validity and reliability, and the application of measures in social scientific research and policy analysis. He evaluates the ten most popular measures of democracy, discusses his own Electoral Democracy Index (EDI), and provides the full data for Latin America. The book is rounded out with three final chapters on frameworks for electoral observation and the need for conceptual reflection for anyone engaging in this kind of work. The book thus serves as a useful primer that shows the steps required in any effort to measure democracy that aims to maximise validity and reliability while minimising systematic error and bias.

I am particularly impressed with Munck's inclusion of several chapters on concept specification and operationalisation, which show the many trade-offs that scholars and practitioners must face in devising measurement frameworks for such concepts as democracy, good governance and human rights. As he rightly shows, the new era of donor demand for such frameworks often ignores the theoretical and methodological challenges associated with providing valid, reliable and meaningful measures that can be used for research, policy analysis and programme implementation. Munck takes the reader through a series of necessary and significant steps in thinking about how to define democracy and its attributes, as well as how to reflect on why and for what use such measures are to be produced.

Munck's argument and exposition follows the logic laid out by David Collier and Robert Adcock in showing that any attempt to measure democracy must move from the idea of a 'background' concept to one of a 'systematized' concept, then to the choice of indicators, and then to the actual provision of 'scores' on units, which in this context refers to countries and time. His evaluation of existing measures, a chapter that presents a revised version of his article in *Comparative Political Studies* with Jay Verkuilen, shows that many of the existing measures of democracy have one or many fundamental problems as discussed in his conceptual chapter, where measures such as those provided by Freedom House have problems with validity, reliability, aggregation and transparency about coding procedures and source materials. He also shows that these measures have many trade-offs associated with relying on minimal or maximal conceptions of democracy that vary in their logical coherence. While not dismissing these measures, or the volume of comparative research that is based upon them, Munck's review does suggest caution in using only one measure, and he highlights the need for robustness checks against alternative indices and careful attention to the definitions of democracy that underpin them.

The book then provides an overview and discussion of Munck's work with the United Nations Development Programme, the development of the EDI, and the EDI's application to the countries of Latin America. Munck outlines his conception of electoral democracy, the attributes that comprise it, how those attributes have been operationalised, and how his measure of democracy compares to other indices that he has reviewed in the earlier chapters. This presentation of the index thus follows the logic of his argument and shows exactly how his measure was developed. He is intellectually honest about the strengths and weaknesses of his measure.

It relies on a narrow and minimal definition of democracy that includes four main attributes: (1) the right to vote, (2) clean elections, (3) free elections, and (4) elected public offices. Munck aggregates the indicators for these different attributes through simple multiplication and shows a high degree of correlation between his measures and other measures of democracy. The appendices contain all the raw data for 18 Latin American countries between 1960 and 2005 (albeit annually only for the 1990–2005 period).

The final three chapters offer a discussion on a framework for assessing elections, a recapitulation of Munck's main argument about concept specification and its links to measurement, and a short discussion on how to extend his logic to other concepts. The assessment chapter provides a comprehensive method for electoral observation missions to collect systematic data on many different elements of an election. The penultimate chapter revisits Munck's discussion of concepts and examines the boundaries between democracy and other concepts, such as the rule of law and human development. The book ends with a final examination of the processes involved in developing measures in general, with good rules of thumb and steps to follow for any project that seeks to measure such an 'essentially contested concept' as democracy.

Overall, there is something for everybody in this book. Political theorists and methodologists will enjoy the chapters on concept specification and measurement. Comparative politics and international relations scholars will enjoy the evaluation of existing indices and the development of the EDI. Policymakers will enjoy the comprehensive and well-written review of the issues and methods associated with measuring democracy. Finally, Latin Americanists will enjoy the book because the arguments and discussions throughout are underpinned by regular references to the political history of the region, while raw data have been displayed and analysed for 18 countries from the region. This book is highly recommended.

University of Essex TODD LANDMAN

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. **42** (2010). doi:10.1017/S0022216X10000660

James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *What's Left in Latin America? Regime Change in New Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 256, £60.00, hb.

Most analyses of the recent wave of left-wing governments in Latin America in the Anglo-Saxon academic literature have come from scholars who can be roughly placed within the liberal, pluralist tradition. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer's *What's Left in Latin America?* looks at the so-called Pink Tide from the standpoint of the radical Left, or as they rather differently put it, from a class analysis perspective. Their overall assessment of the left-of-centre (LOC) governments that have come to office over the past decade is highly critical. Leaving aside the governments of Cuba and Venezuela, to which they are more sympathetic (although by no means uncritical), they subject LOC governments to a number of charges that can be summarised along the following lines: by the turn of the century conditions were exceptionally favourable for truly progressive regimes to set in motion processes of revolutionary change. The economy, and in some places the state, was in crisis, the right was in disarray and neoliberalism was on the defensive. And yet, far from being the gravediggers of neoliberalism, LOC governments became its saviours. Enjoying some of the most favourable economic and fiscal conditions in recent history to