

Introduction

*The Politics of Participation
in Latin America:
New Actors and Institutions*

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At the start of 2019, the struggle for citizenship across Latin America includes a remarkable tally of fragile victories. Social policies and protections have unexpectedly expanded to benefit more individuals than ever before. Governments have granted official recognition and new citizenship rights to previously neglected ethnoracial, gender, sexuality, and employment-based groups. What explains such inclusionary shifts in public policy, and can these tenuous legal advances translate into durable practice?

Contemporary scholarship has sought to understand these changes by focusing on the effects of Latin America's dual transition toward democracy and free market economics in the 1980s and 1990s. Many works have shown how the backlash against neoliberalism led to new class-based and indigenous movements (Arce and Bellinger 2007; Rossi 2015; Silva 2009; Simmons 2016a, b; Yashar 2005), and in some cases to the rise of new party systems (Anria 2018; Cyr 2017; Roberts 2014). Some have even called the early 2000s a "new incorporation" period, pointing to new relationships of mutual support between popular sector movements and political parties (Silva 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018; Wolff 2018). According to these scholars, the expansion in social citizenship stems directly from changes in party systems in Latin America in response to neoliberal reforms.

Seeing the recent expansion of social citizenship as dependent on these shifts in the party system, and in particular on the rise of left-wing populists, some scholars recently have questioned the durability of these advances in social citizenship. Following this logic, the end of the commodity boom (Campello 2015), the slip of left-wing populist governments into illiberal democracy or competitive authoritarianism (Anria 2016; Conaghan 2016; Cameron 2018; Levitsky and Way 2010), and the return of right-wing parties to power (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser 2014) threaten to unravel the political foundations of these policy changes.

By focusing primarily on partisan politics and a narrow set of civil society activists, however, conventional political science approaches capture only part of the story behind the recent expansion of social policy and citizenship rights. In many cases, new social rights and policies expanded before the commodity boom and

under right-of-center governments (Garay 2016; Holland and Schneider 2017, 989–90). Demands for citizenship recognition were often organized independently of political parties and traveled through the bureaucracy or the courts, rather than through the legislature. Traditional approaches that focus on the relationship between political parties and class-based movements overlook the significance of activism that focused on other routes to policy change. Moreover, these accounts overlook some of the threats to citizenship and social development that come from other actors and institutions inside the state.

This issue of *Latin American Politics and Society* sets out a roadmap for understanding the new politics of participation in Latin America by exploring the intersection between two important but underexplored transformations in society and the state. First, it highlights new actors in state and society who are pressing for policy reform. Whereas the existing literature focuses on interests organized around social class and indigenous identity, we reveal a rainbow of societal actors, spanning class lines, who have organized in the wake of democratization to demand greater social inclusion and policy change. Furthermore, in contrast to the dominant literature's emphasis on the role of politicians and political parties, we bring into focus the role of bureaucrats inside the state, who have shepherded some of Latin America's most prominent policy reforms.

Second, this issue highlights new institutional channels within the state for activists to influence policy. The extant literature focuses on representative institutions as the main site to advance policy change. We depart from this conventional wisdom by revealing the crucial ways that activists leverage new openings in the executive and judicial branches of government—underexplored political arenas that have emerged as central for interest representation and demandmaking. Moreover, whereas existing scholarship focuses on mobilization around issues related to neoliberal reforms, this special issue highlights the importance of activism across a broader set of policy issues. While important participation has occurred around economic policy and social protections, a narrow focus on these issues overlooks important developments across other policy areas, including the environment; the rights of women, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities; and crime. Together, we argue, new actors and institutions are redefining the politics of participation today in Latin America.

In the following sections, we consider each of these two transformations—new actors and new state institutions—in turn. We then review the arguments and contributions of the six articles included in this special issue. We conclude by exploring the contributions of this special issue to theories of participation in policymaking and institutional change, and by considering the durability of the fragile victories that have emerged under Latin America's new politics of participation.

NEW ACTORS IN POLICYMAKING

The contemporary politics of participation in Latin America has incorporated new actors from society and the state in the policymaking process. In addition to class-based and indigenous movements, activists have mobilized around new identities and policy issues, adopting new organizational forms and developing cross-class and intersectional coalitions in the process. These civic actors have worked with new activist bureaucrats who leverage their positions inside the state to advance policy change.

New Actors in Society

At the same time that neoliberal reforms provided grievances to motivate workers to organize around class-based issues (Arce and Bellinger 2007; Rossi 2015, 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018; Silva 2009, 2012, 2017; Simmons 2016a, b), democratization provided space for a wider array of historically excluded groups in society to make demands on the state. As a well-established body of scholarship has noted, these grievances and political opportunities gave renewed vigor to indigenous movements across the region (Brysk 2000b; Lucero 2008; Madrid 2012; Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005). New identity-based groups also emerged as relevant political forces, organized around issues such as gender (Álvarez 1990; Ewig 1999; Thayer 2009), LGBTQI+ rights (Díez 2015; Wilson and Gianella this issue), and black rights (Paschel 2016).

New modes of activism also emerged around diverse policy issues, such as public health (Gibson 2017; Niedzwiecki 2014; Niedzwiecki and Anria this issue; Rich this issue), the environment (Abers and Keck 2013; Abers this issue; Botero 2018; Hochstetler and Keck 2007), housing and land reform (Donaghy 2015, 2018; Dosh 2010; Tarlau forthcoming), planning (Mayka 2019a, chap. 6), and crime (Bateson 2012; Eaton 2008; Gallagher 2017; González this issue; Moncada 2016). Many of these new organized interests are cross-class and intersectional, bridging traditional political and social cleavages. At the same time, new working-class interests based on employment categories that were historically unrecognized, such as street vendors, waste pickers, domestic servants, and sex workers (Blofield 2012; Hummel 2017, 2018; Millar 2018; Murray et al. 2018), have also emerged as political forces.

Civil society activists also have adopted new forms of organizing. Whereas earlier generations of civic organization centered on unions and neighborhood associations, more recent waves of civic advocacy include a more diverse range of organizational structures. As previous scholarship has highlighted, territory-based interest groups emerged in the wake of decentralization and neoliberal reforms (Collier and Handlin 2009a; Rossi 2015, 2017; Silva and Rossi 2018). At the same time, however, issue-based civil society organizations—often referred to synonymously as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—also spread across the region.

Even as neoliberal reforms undercut traditional state resources for labor unions, they introduced new pockets of funding for other types of civic organizations to

manage social development programs. Citizen entrepreneurs took advantage of such funding opportunities by creating new civil society organizations or by entering new issue areas (Álvarez 1990, 1999; Brysk 2000a, 158–59; Chalmers et al. 1997, 562; Friedman and Hochstetler 2002; Nelson-Núñez and Cartwright 2018; Thayer 2009). As a result, a new wave of semiprofessional NGOs swept Latin America. While some of these organizations focused narrowly on service provision, others entered into advocacy (Boulding 2010; Chartock 2011; Gallagher 2017; Nelson-Núñez 2019; Rich 2013).

These civic activists also developed new types of social movement coalitions. As previous scholarship has described, activist networks—looser and more decentralized than traditional labor federations—thrive on the very same processes of democratization and neoliberal reform that threatened the old corporatist model of civic organizing (e.g., Chalmers et al. 1997; Collier and Handlin 2009b, 53–57; Della Porta and Diani 2006, 2; Diani 2003, 301–2; Jelin 1997; Kahler 2009, 5–6). In addition to the seemingly spontaneous street protests that emerged through public outrage, new movements of NGOs were also emerging, composed of semi-professionalized organizations with relatively small numbers of individual members. Some of these movements used government funding for civil society strengthening and social development implementation to build national umbrella coalitions (Rich 2019a). Such coalitions allowed them to pursue hybrid strategies for making demands on the state—using street protest as a central strategy at the same time that they pursued strategies of lobbying and negotiation with the government. These new movements bridge the traditional outsider-insider divide between social movements and interest groups.

New Actors in the State

New kinds of bureaucrats have also gained prominence and power in state agencies, engaging in activism from inside the state. As various scholars have illustrated, politicians across Latin America responded to the demands of newly organized societal interests by creating state programs to benefit them (Niedzwiecki and Anria 2016; Garay 2007, 2016; Pribble 2013). At the same time, ideologically committed experts and activists entered the state to build and manage these new programs from the inside (Abers this issue; Chartock 2011, 2013; Falleti 2010; Mayka 2019b; Rich 2019a). Compared to their counterparts in the predemocratization period, these new bureaucrats had fundamentally different objectives: to build national policies that advanced interests and causes that had been sidelined in the past. These bureaucrats formed a new set of institutional change agents inside the state who could advance policy reform and implementation from within (Mahoney and Thelen 2010a, 22–28).

With activist bureaucrats, civil society groups found new allies inside the state. In contrast to traditional bureaucrats, those who entered government to build Latin America's new social development programs were often deeply committed to particular policy issues. These bureaucrats tended to share broad goals with civil society activists, and in some cases they had close personal connections to allies in civil soci-

ety (Abers this issue; Díez 2015; Falletti 2010). As a result, new political coalitions arose that bridged the gap between state and society (Abers and Keck 2009, 2013; Rich this issue). In some cases, social movements received resources and training from these new bureaucrats, who sought to strengthen their civil society allies as leverage to help them overcome political opposition from clientelistic politicians and other conflicting interests within the state (Rich 2019a; Mayka 2019b). These coalitions blur the boundary between state and society in Latin America.

NEW STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR POLICYMAKING

New institutions inside the state broadened opportunities for these new actors to engage in policymaking. The executive branch has grown larger and more complex as the state has tackled new policy problems, leading to new points of access for activism. Moreover, the state has created new openings for citizen participation in the policy process. Executive branch agencies have created new participatory institutions to channel citizen and civil society input into public policy, while the judiciary has emerged as a crucial site for both citizen engagement and policy oversight.

New Institutions Through the Expansion of State Responsibilities

State agencies have branched into new policy areas and have created new initiatives in existing policy areas, expanding the opportunities for participation. The state has tackled emergent policy challenges that were not on the agenda in the past, such as HIV/AIDS (Rich 2019a; Rich this issue), environmental issues (Abers and Keck 2013; Abers this issue; Amengual 2016; Herrera 2017b), and violence against women (Htun and Weldon 2018, chap. 2; Walsh 2008). Furthermore, over the past 30 years, Latin American countries have expanded social citizenship rights for previously excluded groups, including indigenous and Afro-descendant citizens (Brysk 2000b; Htun 2016; Paschel 2016; Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005), women (Blofield and Haas 2011; Blofield and Martínez-Franzoni 2015; Htun 2016; Htun and Weldon 2018), and LGBTQI+ citizens (Díez 2015; Encarnación 2016; Wilson and Gianella this issue).

The expansion of social citizenship has also led to new efforts to incorporate previously excluded groups into “old” policy areas, such as universal health systems and noncontributory pensions (Niedzwiecki and Anria 2016; Castiglioni 2018; Garay 2016; Holland and Schneider 2017; Mayka 2019a, b; Niedzwiecki and Anria this issue; Pribble 2013); the expansion of labor rights for workers in the informal sector, such as domestic servants (Blofield 2012); and the rise of participatory security models that engage the community in policing (Arias and Ungar 2009; González 2016; González this issue; Moncada 2016).

As the state moves into additional policy areas and adopts new programs in existing areas, activists encounter more opportunities to advance their agendas. In

the past, the interest arena had been restricted to industrial policy, labor policy, and social policy for formal sector workers (Collier and Handlin 2009a, 74–78). In contrast, today, there are many more sites for political participation within the state. To be clear, we do not mean to suggest that activists will necessarily gain access to these new arenas of state policymaking. Nevertheless, it is important to take stock of the diverse sites where civic activism and civil society mobilization may be directed to analyze overarching patterns of participation and incorporation.

New Institutions in the Executive Branch

New institutions within the state apparatus also have emerged for civil society groups and citizens to contribute directly to policymaking. This shift is part of a broader global trend in governance that deconcentrates public authority away from the state and shifts it toward state-society synergies to address increasingly complex public problems (Evans 1996; Rhodes 2000; Pierre 2000). In developing countries, and particularly in Latin America, this shift toward collaborative governance has taken the form of participatory institutions, which are formal venues that engage citizens or civil society organizations in developing, designing, or overseeing public policy. Participatory institutions are created and sanctioned by the state through constitutional mandates, laws, or decrees. They operate within the state, yet are also sites of civil society activity, serving as a formal conduit to channel citizen participation into policymaking processes.

Participatory institutions have been adopted at all levels of government. While local initiatives adopted by mayors have received the most scholarly attention, nationally mandated participatory institutions—those based in national constitutions, laws, or decrees—have been adopted in every country in Latin America except Panama (Mayka 2019a, 1). For example, Brazil has created nationally mandated councils and committees at all levels of government across a range of policy areas, including health, social assistance, the environment, the rights of children, and HIV/AIDS (Mayka 2019a, 29–30; Niedzwiecki and Anria this issue; Rich 2019a; Rich this issue). National laws mandate participatory budgeting at the municipal level in Peru and the Dominican Republic (McNulty forthcoming; Vazquez Durán 2014). Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, and Mexico require planning councils for all municipal and state governments (Hevia de la Jara and Isunza Vera 2012; Mayka 2019a, chap. 6; McNulty 2011). Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have passed national laws establishing councils for civil society engagement in an array of policy issues at the local level.

This proliferation of participatory policymaking throughout Latin America has expanded the opportunities for civil society actors to shape policymaking processes. In some cases, participatory institutions have been granted official rulemaking authority or budgetary powers, and thus can translate citizen participation into direct policy outputs (Mayka 2019a, 39–40). Yet as Rich shows, participatory institutions without formal decisionmaking authority also can play a crucial role in

developing and deciding on policy proposals, given that many participatory institutions operate more through information sharing and persuasion than through official institutional decisionmaking levers (Rich this issue).

Through participatory institutions, citizens and civil society organizations can craft much-needed policy proposals, provide expertise, and offer insider information that the state depends on to develop appropriate and effective policy interventions (Mayka 2019a; Rich this issue). Participatory institutions also open the door for activists to disseminate ideas about policy, build coalitions behind policy reform, and engage in persuasion to advance policy change (Abers and Keck 2009, 17–19, 2013; Mayka 2019a; Rich this issue). Moreover, participatory institutions offer citizens new channels to communicate policy failures to government officials, as well as a venue to pressure government officials for a policy response, both in ways that can enhance state capacity (González this issue; Mayka this issue; Touchton and Wampler 2013, 3–4; Wampler 2015, 16–22).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that participatory institutions often fail to create effective channels that connect civil society to the policy process. In what Yanilda González calls “thin” participatory institutions, participatory councils may serve a purely symbolic function, offering citizens and CSOs a site to vent their frustrations that stands to have no impact on policy outputs (González this issue). Thin participatory institutions can demobilize civil society by dampening public demands for substantive policy reform; they can make only a token gesture toward inclusion while consuming activists’ time and energy. Alternatively, participatory institutions may be used to refashion old systems of clientelism and patronage under the more palatable guise of deepening democracy without opening up the state to new voices (Herrera 2017a, 484–85; Montambeault 2011). Participatory institutions offer a promise for civil society engagement in policymaking, but this promise often goes unfulfilled.

New Institutions in the Judicial Branch

Activists and civil society groups are also finding new modes of access through the judiciary to advance their agendas. As Wilson and Rodríguez Cordero note, “Where supreme courts have been created, reformed, or taken on a more activist role, citizens are often able to pursue governmental violations of their rights and to advance their policy agenda” (2006, 327). Although courts remain conservative forces in a number of Latin American countries, the region also has been the site of important openings in the judiciary for citizen participation to advance policy reform and push for accountability.

Over the past 30 years, a number of Latin American countries have adopted a range of legal mechanisms, sited in the judicial branch, that have expanded the “legal opportunity structure” (Wilson and Rodríguez Cordero 2006, 326–28; Wilson and Gianella this issue). For instance, the *amparo* (called a *tutela* in Colombia) is a writ of protection that individuals can file against state or private actors when their con-

stitutional rights—including economic and social rights—have been violated (Brewer-Carías 2009). Latin American countries have also introduced mechanisms to lower the barriers to filing class action suits or group petitions (such as Colombia's *acción popular*) to pursue redress for a violation of collective rights (Rodríguez-Franco 2017). These legal institutions have not only engendered immediate redress for grievances but also have spurred longer-term policy reforms (Botero 2018, 2015; Brinks and Forbath 2014; Rodríguez-Garavito and Rodríguez-Franco 2015).

Mechanisms of prior consultation and environmental impact assessments trigger legal proceedings to ensure community consultation (and ideally, input) on decisions about resource extraction (Falleti and Riofrancos 2018; Jaskoski 2014; Li 2015; Riofrancos 2017). Moreover, courts have created initiatives for participatory oversight of court rulings, which engage civil society in monitoring and evaluating the government's compliance with judicial orders (Botero 2018; Rodríguez-Garavito and Rodríguez-Franco 2015, chap. 5).

With the expansion of legal mechanisms and shifts in the courts' receptiveness to adjudicating claims related to social and economic rights, the judiciary has grown in importance as a site for citizens to mobilize for policy change and accountability. Courts have emerged as vital sites within the state for the expansion of economic and social rights (Gauri and Brinks 2008; Langford et al. 2017). Citizen participation within the judiciary has played an important role in pushing for reforms in policy areas ranging from healthcare (Hoffmann and Bentes 2008; Lamprea 2014; Rodríguez-Garavito 2014; Yamin and Gloppen 2011) to the rights of displaced people (Rodríguez-Garavito and Rodríguez-Franco 2015), housing (Botero 2015, 143–58), and the environment (Botero 2015, 67–90, 200–211, 2018). The judiciary has proven particularly important in rights expansion for stigmatized groups, such as LGBTQI+ people (Wilson and Gianella this issue) and sex workers (*Semana* 2010)—groups that face difficulty in mobilizing public opinion in favor of rights expansion. Moreover, activists have turned to the courts to seek justice for human rights abuses and to push for state reforms to prevent future violations of human rights (Couso and Hilbink 2011; Gallagher 2017; González-Ocantos 2016; Walsh 2008).

In sum, Latin American states have undergone major shifts in the past 30 years that have opened up new opportunities for citizen engagement in the policy process. The state addresses a greater range of issues that might be of interest to citizens, while the executive branch and the judiciary have established new mechanisms for individuals and civil society organizations to push for greater state responsiveness to their demands.

OVERVIEW OF ARTICLES IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

Each of the articles in this special issue highlights a different type of interaction between new actors and institutions in Latin America. They all highlight new actors—either outside or inside the state, or both. They all also focus on institutions other than the legislature. New political arenas—participatory institutions—take center stage in the first five articles, whereas the last article focuses on the judiciary as a new site for demandmaking. Together, they shed light on how new actors and shifting institutions are redefining the politics of participation in Latin America today.

The agenda-setting article by Rebecca Abers makes the compelling claim that participatory politics does not necessarily happen through civil society mobilization: activists can advance causes by working within the state as bureaucrats. This article develops the concept of “activist bureaucrats,” public officials who engage in “the proactive pursuit of opportunities to defend contentious causes.” Abers analyzes the curious case of activist bureaucrats who managed the Green Grants program in Brazil’s Ministry of the Environment, demonstrating that these activists were more committed to their cause of environmental protection than to budgetary incentives or party loyalty, as predicted by existing theories of bureaucratic politics. Abers’s article calls on researchers to examine the new ways that activists work within the state to advance policy change.

Jessica Rich’s article builds on Abers’s concept of the activist bureaucrat by exploring the crucial and overlooked role that these bureaucrats can play in establishing powerful participatory institutions at the national level. Through her analysis of Brazil’s AIDS sector, Rich demonstrates that activist bureaucrats within the state created and strengthened participatory policymaking in order to advance policy reform and implementation. Bureaucrats saw AIDS civil society activists as key allies, whose expertise would be invaluable in designing effective AIDS policy and ensuring its implementation throughout the country. Moreover, these bureaucrats made the investments needed to expand civil society’s geographic reach, network ties, and resources to contribute to participatory policymaking, thereby strengthening the capacity of participatory institutions in the AIDS sector. Rich’s article highlights that participatory institutions can play important roles in advancing policy agendas promoted by activists who cross the traditional boundaries between state and civil society. Rich also makes an important contribution to the literature on participatory policymaking, which has overlooked the crucial role that bureaucrats can play in building strong participatory institutions.

Whereas Rich focuses on the ways that state actors can build powerful participatory institutions as a means to advance policy change, Yanilda González reveals that some participatory institutions are adopted to prevent major reforms to public policy. González argues that politicians sometimes create these institutions strategically to “disaggregate and decentralize societal discontent”—in other words, as an attempt to demobilize society. Through analyses of participatory security reforms in Buenos Aires Province, São Paulo State, and Colombia, González demonstrates that

embattled politicians in all three cases used participatory governance as a “safety valve” to relieve pressure from public dissatisfaction with insecurity. One implication from González’s provocative study is that participatory policymaking may sometimes be a tool of societal exclusion to block much-needed reforms, thereby serving to hinder democratic quality rather than to deepen democracy.

As does González, Lindsay Mayka shows that politicians can create participatory institutions as a gesture toward political inclusion to shore up legitimacy, rather than to incorporate civil society voices in policymaking. Yet Mayka’s study of the Colombian planning councils diverges from the dominant wisdom in scholarship on participatory institutions, which takes it as a given that state neglect will preclude participatory institutions from gaining policy access. In contrast, Mayka shows that civil society can take over the job of implementing participatory institutions throughout the country, even without support or engagement from state actors. These “society-driven participatory institutions” may lack access to decisionmaking, but they can contribute nonetheless to other stages of the policymaking process, including agenda setting and monitoring and evaluation. However, Mayka’s article also shows the threat that hostile governments pose to participatory policymaking, given the power of state actors to cut off resources and to restrict policy access. State neglect may not doom a participatory institution to failure, but active state hostility closes the space for civil society engagement.

Instead of examining what happens within participatory institutions, the article by Sara Niedzwiecki and Santiago Anria examines why social policy expansion develops through participatory policymaking in some cases while emerging through contentious channels in others. Niedzwiecki and Anria show that in Brazil, health policy reform happened through the “insider” channels of participatory health councils and conferences. The Bolivian case, by contrast, is one of “outsider” influence via street protests and other forms of contentious action to expand access to noncontributory pensions for the poor. To explain the divergent paths toward civil society engagement in the two countries, Niedzwiecki and Anria point to two factors: the class background of civil society activists and the level of institutional stability. Niedzwiecki and Anria’s article makes an important contribution by bringing together the literatures on participatory policymaking and contentious politics, examining why contexts of high mobilization sometimes yield new participatory institutions while resulting in alternate routes of incorporation elsewhere.

Whereas the other articles in this special issue emphasize political participation within the executive branch, the article by Bruce Wilson and Camila Gianella highlights the important role of the judiciary as a site for participation and activism. Wilson and Gianella explore why same-sex marriage (SSM) has been legalized through the courts in Colombia while it has stalled in Costa Rica, as that country’s domestic courts have deferred to the legislature. This article reveals the potential of participation within the judiciary as a strategy for activism while underscoring courts’ wariness of expanding certain kinds of rights—in particular, those that challenge dominant religious beliefs and moral orders. In the process, Wilson and Gianella call our attention to the need to develop distinct institutional strategies and

coalitions to advance different types of policy change, depending on the threat to the established order in society posed by the new policy.

SETTING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Taken as a whole, the work represented in this special issue offers several implications for future studies of participation, institutional change, and social citizenship in Latin America.

First, the articles suggest that political participation has expanded beyond the conventional domain of electoral politics. Political parties are no longer the only state actors relevant to expanding the political arena. Instead, the articles in this issue reveal the crucial role of bureaucrats in the executive branch (Abers; Rich) and judges in the judicial branch (Wilson and Gianella) in incorporating societal interests into policy processes. Moreover, class-based and indigenous groups are not the only societal actors relevant to expanding the political arena. Instead, the articles in this issue highlight a more complex web of subaltern and elite groups that have organized to demand collective rights (Mayka; Niedzwiecki and Anria; Wilson and Gianella).

While participatory institutions are often portrayed as vehicles for left-wing party mobilization, the articles in this issue suggest that implementing participatory policymaking often has little to do with support from politicians (Mayka; Rich). Certainly, these new forms of participation have not replaced representation through political parties. Yet to understand the politics of participation in Latin America, we must expand our analysis to consider the complex array of institutional sites for participation and the broader range of activists who push for policy change.

The articles in this issue suggest, furthermore, that neoliberal policy reforms have not closed down the possibilities for societal groups to make claims on the state for new benefits and rights. Implemented in the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal reforms were designed to strengthen markets and minimize the role of the state. Since neoliberalism, however, Latin American states have taken on new functions in promoting development, advancing citizen well-being, and expanding the rights of marginalized groups. As the articles in this issue reveal, the state apparatus has actually expanded in some policy sectors, adding new government agencies and programs to address issues such as public health (Niedzwiecki and Anria; Rich), non-contributory pensions (Niedzwiecki and Anria), policing (González), the environment (Abers), and LGBTQI+ rights (Wilson and Gianella). Together with constitutional social rights guarantees, this expansion of state responsibilities has opened new political opportunities for participation in policy reform. Shifts in the state's role in macroeconomic policy and industrial policy should therefore not be interpreted as a retreat of the state altogether.

At the same time that this issue makes the case that we must look beyond neoliberalism and democratization to understand the contemporary politics of participation, it offers a new perspective on the impact of neoliberalism and democratization on state-society relations. It is often claimed that neoliberal reforms reduced the capacity of state actors to provide resources and subsidies for civil soci-

ety in return for political support, while such reforms simultaneously fragmented societal interests along subnational territorial lines (Kurtz 2004; Roberts 1998; Shadlen 2004). Yet the articles here suggest that the combination of neoliberal reforms and democratization offered new incentives and resources for state actors to support civic organization and mobilization, even as it undermined old ones. The traditional corporatist model of state-society relations did not disappear entirely. Instead, it developed into a new collection of bargains between state and society—ones that were compatible with a democratic political model and a neoliberal economic model. These bargains centered on newly salient sectors of policy, thereby bringing together new actors in state and society and resulting in new dynamics of mobilization and control.

In addition, this special issue builds on and expands the theoretical framework developed by James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (2010a), which explores the roles of change agents in driving gradual institutional change. We share Mahoney and Thelen's exhortation to focus not only on the big, splashy legislative victories that either establish or overturn new policies, but also on the subtler shifts that develop over time through institutional layering, conversion, and drift. Rebecca Abers's article adds to Mahoney and Thelen's framework by exploring the characteristics of activist bureaucrats who come to embrace the role of institutional change agents, considering when and how these change agents rise to positions of influence. Moreover, Jessica Rich's contribution deepens our understanding of how state change agents can develop feedback loops for ongoing institutional change through the construction of new participatory institutions that can ensure successful policy implementation. Bruce Wilson and Camila Gianella, in turn, call our attention to the role of judges as change agents by defining which citizenship rights should be subject to majority rule decisions in the legislature and which fall under the purview of the courts, triggering distinct paths toward institutional change.

The articles in this special issue also underscore the importance of civil society actors and state-society coalitions—not just state actors—in driving institutional change and policy reform. Mahoney and Thelen's framework emphasizes the role of state change agents in driving institutional and policy change (2010a, 22–28), yet it overlooks the ways that societal actors can also advance institutional change from within the state. In the new politics of participation, the dividing line between state and society is blurred. Civic activists can push for institutional and policy change through participatory institutions sited in the executive branch (González; Mayka; Niedzwiecki and Anria; Rich), through mechanisms for citizen participation in the judiciary (Wilson and Gianella), and by forming alliances with activist bureaucrats who can advance the cause from inside the state (Abers; Rich).

The works presented in this special issue also offer us new ways of thinking about the fragile and contingent nature of recent victories in the struggle for citizenship. On the one hand, these studies reveal new fault lines that threaten advances in social citizenship citizen participation. Just as there are more actors and institutions driving the expansion of citizenship than previous scholarship suggests, there is also a more complex set of factors that limit and threaten it. As these articles emphasize,

civil society groups, bureaucrats, and judges all affect whether policy changes are translated from parchment into practice.

New right-wing politicians, along with illiberal left-wing politicians, may restrict the authority and discretion of activist bureaucrats who support policy change and citizen participation in policymaking. For instance, even while Brazil's leftist Workers' Party remained in office, opportunities for citizens to participate in environmental policymaking closed after interested bureaucrats left government (Abers). Moreover, participatory institutions may be stripped of their authority in the face of state hostility, as were Colombia's planning councils during the presidency of Álvaro Uribe (Mayka). Alternatively, change agents within the state may decide against engaging in political battles for rights expansion; Costa Rica's efforts to legalize same-sex marriage stalled when judges chose to defer to the legislature (Wilson and Gianella). Together these articles reveal the tenuousness of openings for participation in policymaking.

The inclusionary achievements of the recent past are therefore neither linear nor cumulative, and the new avenues for participation analyzed in this special issue can be used to stifle and reverse rights expansions. As González's article shows, politicians can use participatory institutions as a tool to restrict civil society participation and reduce pressures for much-needed reforms. Political actors can seize new institutional openings to advance policy projects that roll back citizenship rights. Activist bureaucrats do not necessarily embrace progressive ideologies, and activists may enter state agencies with aims of slashing state budgets and promoting social conservative causes. Conservative groups in civil society—including Evangelical churches, which have taken a leading role in political socialization (Boas and Smith 2019; Smith 2017, forthcoming)—may take advantage of institutional spaces for participation within the executive branch and the judiciary to unravel social policy expansions and new rights for identity-based groups. In other words, the right-wing backlash against social citizenship rights that has emerged in the electoral arena may migrate to other arenas of participation in policymaking. To understand recent advances in citizenship rights—and the potential reversals of these rights—we must expand our focus to consider policymaking processes that happen outside of partisan politics, and how both old and new actors in state and society engage them.

On the other hand, the works in this issue provide a source of optimism that political participation may continue to expand in certain realms despite the recent electoral backlash against the left. Just as the gains of the recent past were not reducible to electoral victories by leftist parties, we should expect that their durability is not entirely contingent on leftist politicians' remaining in power. As seen in the contributions by Rich and by Wilson and Gianella, bureaucrats and judges can play a key role in opening up new avenues for participation—meaning that these openings are not entirely dependent on enthusiastic support from ruling politicians. In addition, as Mayka's article shows, civil society can strengthen participatory institutions even in the face of state neglect. Support from partisan actors can facilitate civil society participation in policymaking, but it is not a necessary condition.

The experience of participating in policymaking also produces feedback that can strengthen civil society actors, increasing their capacity for further engagement in the policy process (Fox 1996). Serving in participatory institutions has strengthened the organizational resources and political skills of civil society organizations in ways that make it easier for them to organize supporters and make demands on the state in the future (Abers and Keck 2013; Altschuler and Corrales 2012; Baiocchi et al. 2008; Rich this issue). The expansion of social policy and citizenship rights has mobilized new constituencies through policy feedback effects (Niedzwiecki and Pribble 2017). The emergence of new actors and new state institutions has thereby left an indelible impact on Latin America, making it impossible to return to the old status quo—even if existing institutions for participation are shut down and policy advances are reversed.

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