

INTRODUCTION

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THIS BOOK IS about the responses of businesspeople to successful instances of progressive, civil society-based reform in Latin America since the 1990s. To understand whether and how progressive initiatives will endure beyond the first decades of the twenty-first century, we ask, “Can businesspeople endure them?” Latin America is the region of the world with the greatest degree of inequality (Kim 2013). However, the region’s transition to democracy—complex, uneven, and incomplete as it might be—includes new spaces for agency by heretofore excluded citizens. Amid recurring violence and crisis, activists in social movements, neighborhoods, workplaces, and government offices have developed innovative and creative responses to exclusion and inequality. Whether such efforts endure is key to the future of democracy in the region.

For most of the twentieth century, businesspeople in Latin America routinely obstructed progressive initiatives.¹ They did this as part of an interlocking group of elites, including landowners, the upper echelons of the military and the Catholic Church, and leaders of right-wing political parties. Through these alliances, businesspeople supported the use of violence and intimidation to repress efforts by excluded groups—such as labor and peasant unions, electoral coalitions, and indigenous organizations—to challenge the status quo.² Since the 1990s, however, businesspeople’s historical response of hostility and repression toward progressive reform initiatives has become less automatic, mitigated by the economic uncertainties of globalization, the political and legal constraints of democracy, and the shifting cultural understandings of

poverty and race. *Enduring Reform* discerns a new twenty-first-century politics of progressive reform, business responses, and the deepening of democracy.

This new politics has begun to emerge for several reasons. First, dissatisfaction with economic performance under authoritarian regimes, as well as the inability of such systems to deliver security and stability over the long term, made businesspeople somewhat open to the transitions to democracy that began in the 1980s. At the same time, the challenges of neoliberal globalization and the uncertainties it generated brought into question long-held assumptions that progressive grassroots initiatives were incompatible with the imperatives of economic policy making. Second, democracy brings with it constraints on how businesspeople can respond to progressive reforms that they would have rejected in the past. Elites can no longer use the police or military to repress those fighting for social change and count on guarantees of impunity. As a result, businesspeople must grapple increasingly with contestation over progressive initiatives in legal, electoral, and institutional arenas.

Third, as globalization and democracy have changed the orientations of businesspeople, the goals and strategies of social movements and progressive activists in Latin America have changed as well, moving away from revolutionary takeover of the state, overthrow of capitalism, and vanguardist organizational structures. Since the 1980s, Latin American activists have engaged in a mixture of strategies to expand their rights and the quality of their everyday lives, ranging from land takeovers and street blockades to participation in government-run popular councils and participatory budgeting initiatives. Internally, these movements deal in new and often more inclusionary ways with diversity, dissent, demands for voice, and internal democracy. These changes in the positions of progressive activists have produced a language and practice of reform that does not challenge the legitimacy of the state or capitalist markets head-on.

This book explores the front lines of twenty-first-century democracy by analyzing five cases of enduring reform from the small towns of Zacatecas, Mexico, to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to the factories of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Research for these cases was carried out by teams of scholars as part of the Enduring Reform Project, a research initiative funded by the Open Society Foundations from 2007 through 2010. In this volume we demonstrate significant, albeit limited, degrees of openness to these reforms on the part of businesspeople. We claim neither that this openness is widespread nor that it will persist and expand. Rather, by documenting a significant shift in business responses to progressive reform, we offer a tool for political analysis and describe a possibility that might be realized. These responses shape the

trajectories of reform initiatives themselves, alternately deepening them or compromising their central objectives. The major causal finding of *Enduring Reform* is that the ways in which businesspeople respond to progressive reforms do not result primarily from economic interest; instead, a range of cultural and interpretive factors shape how businesspeople evaluate their interests and the actions they take.

The innovations of activists and the responses of businesspeople reflect an unspoken and evolving exchange that will be applauded by some and bemoaned by others, businesspeople and reformers alike. In this exchange, progressive activists accept democracy as well as market structures, and businesspeople begin to “recognize” the basic rights and humanity of all citizens. Our research suggests that a strengthening of this exchange may provide a key path to the deepening of democracy in the twenty-first century.

OVERVIEW OF THE CASES

In 1968, in the midst of tumultuous attempts at democratization and reform in Latin America, Albert Hirschman (1970, 343) suggested that those who look for large-scale social change would best be served by a “passion for what is possible.” While this appealing phrase left the question of what is possible provocatively unanswered, Hirschman made clear his predilection for combining an optimist’s view of progress with a belief that incremental change could deepen and transform the status quo over time, even and perhaps especially when it occurred through unplanned responses to crisis and creative leaps of interpretation. In assessing the prospects for democracy in Latin America two decades later, in 1986, after a dark period of widespread military rule, Hirschman (1986, 42) took up the same position, urging scholars and policy makers not to focus on rules and preconditions for democratic transitions but rather to “be on the lookout for unusual historical developments, rare constellations of favorable events, narrow paths, partial advances that may conceivably be followed by others.”

Today, as democratic politics has survived, and in some cases deepened, the contributors to this edited volume have found “unusual historical developments” in successful reforms that demonstrably improve people’s lives in tangible ways across the hemisphere. These reforms—including the *fábricas recuperadas* (worker-run factories) in Buenos Aires, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, the “three-for-one” migrant remittance program in Zacatecas, the Afro Reggae Cultural Group in Rio de Janeiro, and Maya self-reliance

networks in San Cristóbal de Las Casas—were brought about by the commitments and passions of civil society activists and ordinary citizens.³ They represent unexpected and creative responses to long-term problems and moments of crisis, inspired by the visions of past and current social movements. Often constructed in interaction with politicians and policy makers, and with a keen eye for combining the possible and the improbable, the kinds of reforms that we examine constitute some of the most important focal points for progressive change in Latin America today.

We ask what are some of the most hopeful examples of change—of the sort that recognize, include, and empower poor people—that occur within the world as it now works and perhaps open the way for broader change? We are not talking about the trickle-down effects of improved growth or about national social welfare or economic policies, important as these may be. We are not talking about opposition political movements or revolutionary struggles. Rather, we examine progressive reforms, neither antimarket nor antistate, of the sort hoped for and in many cases expected by theorists and supporters of democratic politics, part and parcel of the “democratic wager” outlined in the early years of democratic transitions in Latin America and the concomitant enthusiasm for civil society (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; and Cohen and Arato 1994).

By “progressive reforms,” we mean projects that promote democratic deliberation and decision making, increase citizen control over resources, and/or foster self-reliance and the expansion of cultural resources among previously marginalized groups. Can the rough and tumble of democratic politics and active civil societies yield new arrangements that change power relations, revise economic structures and cultural representations, and improve people’s daily lives? How do those with economic power, who in the past often supported coups, repression, and military governments, respond to such reforms when they occur in democratic contexts today?

The cases examined throughout this book involve new bargains over who gets what that significantly alter existing power relations, in terms of material goods, voice, and recognition. By “recognition,” we mean a combination of respect for autonomy, esteem for identity, and a distribution of resources necessary for individuals to participate “on a par with one another in social life” (Fraser and Honneth 2003, as quoted in Thompson 2006, 30).⁴ Such recognition fosters what Amartya Sen (1999, 18, 8) has characterized as “the ‘capabilities’ of persons to lead the kind of lives they value,” which he argues can best be achieved when development (or reform) provides “an integrated process of the expansion of substantive freedoms.” In considering not only the kind of voice that addresses power “at the top” but “horizontal voice,” which shapes culture and collective identity, Guillermo O’Donnell has underscored the interconnec-

tion of voice and recognition and their centrality to democracy. Democratic political life, O'Donnell (1986, 266) suggests, depends on people having a "sense of personal worth and self-respect, the feeling that one is not an *idiot*, the hope of achieving valued goals by means of collective action."

Because this book focuses on reforms that alter power relations in a democratic context, we have excluded corporate social responsibility programs, which rarely extend beyond education and training, after-school projects, athletic activities, the provision of goods, and community cultural celebrations (Sklair 2001, chapter 6; and Sanborn 2005). These projects, while providing needed material and technical resources, rarely shift the "terms of recognition" (Appadurai 2004, 66) between businesses and communities. In choosing cases, we have stayed local, though not small, focusing on tangible places and groups of people in cities and their peripheries. The reforms we have studied are knowable, in the sense of having been heard of, seen, participated in, and/or talked about not only by those directly involved or affected but by most people living within a major city or state as well as by significant numbers of others farther afield in adjacent states, national capitals, and international institutions.

Participatory budgeting, for example, which originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil, turns over decisions about infrastructure investment for urban services (such as potable water, pavement, day care, and community health) to neighborhood residents themselves, who meet and deliberate in open meetings that function through democratic procedures. Since 1988, participatory budgeting has become well known and discussed not only across its city of origin but throughout Brazil and in activist and policy-making circles internationally—from the World Social Forum to the World Bank (Baierle 1998; Abers 2000; and Baiocchi 2005). Participatory budgeting has also been replicated in such diverse countries as Mexico, India, and the United States.

In another case, the Afro Reggae Cultural Group fights violence and drug trafficking in Rio de Janeiro's favelas by teaching kids to play drums and dance, do street theater, and perform circus routines. In several of the city's most violent shantytowns, Afro Reggae has provided after-school social centers, local jobs, and access to professional work. For many people, the group has inspired a new sense of self-worth as well as offered protection from violence. Afro Reggae also trains police to negotiate favela streets less violently and to avoid racial discrimination. The group performs with national stars in monthly concerts throughout Rio and in concert halls around the world (Gomes da Cunha 1998; Yudice 2004, chapter 5; Arias 2006, chapter 5; and Neate 2006).

In Argentina, during the catastrophic economic collapse of 2001–2, workers facing unemployment took over the factories where they worked, rather than let those factories close. In so doing, they turned economic crisis into an oppor-

tunity to create worker-owned and worker-run cooperatives that competed effectively in the market. These actions compelled the attention of Buenos Aires's businesspeople and put the possibility of alternative, nonhierarchical production and management onto the global radar screen (Rebón 2007 and Monteagudo 2008).

In San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mexico, the rapid expansion of Indian neighborhoods in the periphery of what was once an exclusively ladino city and the challenge to the status quo posed by the statewide Zapatista uprising have resulted in the claiming of new roles and rights by previously marginalized people. In the city's poor *colonias*, Maya community activists have forged transportation, policing, and marketing networks in their neighborhoods and laid claim to elective office and broader roles in politics and policy making. While outside attention focused on the course of the Zapatista movement and its eventual retreat to autonomous villages in the jungle, businesspeople in San Cristóbal have been grappling with how to employ, do business with, and run the city for and indeed with its now-Maya majority—a process that has pressed them explicitly to reconsider past racist beliefs and policies of exclusion (Peres Tzu 2002; Kovic 2005; and Rus and Vigil 2007).

Finally, migrants from the Mexican state of Zacatecas have carved out transnational lives in cities and towns across the United States. Seen for decades as poor, illiterate, and with no prospects for betterment, thousands of these migrants have turned the tables by forming hometown associations in the United States that collect money from their members and send it back across the border to Mexico. Their successes in repairing churches and paving roads, building sports fields and outfitting ambulances, along with innovative efforts to set up productive businesses (all in Mexico), not only changed the way migrants themselves were viewed on both sides of the border but stimulated Mexican local, state, and federal governments to match the migrants' dollars three-for-one, in Zacatecas and adjoining states. More surprising still, the U.S.-based hometown associations and their Mexican counterparts have succeeded in holding Mexican political officials accountable through transparent, noncorrupt procedures for administering the funds (Goldring 2002; Fernández de Castro, Zamora, and Vila 2007; Smith 2006; Fox and Bada 2008; and Williams 2008).

In the scope of their activities and the reach of the attention they attract, these enduring reforms constitute ideal cases in which to test out the willingness of key actors, and of businesspeople in particular, to countenance the sort of creative and participatory innovation—outside-of-the-box yet constructed from familiar elements—that theories of democracy and civil society promise. Here are significant innovations and experiments, forged in moments of political opportunity, economic crisis, or violence, now working on the ground.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Today is not the first time progressive activists have attempted to promote reform in Latin America. Starting in the 1930s, Latin America experienced a period of growth and development that included increased electoral openness, successful industrialization, land reform, and the political mobilization of previously excluded groups, many of whom nonetheless continued to face poverty and deprivation. By the 1950s and 1960s, in the context of democratic openings and competition for votes, social movements and mass mobilizations pressed for deeper socioeconomic reforms across the hemisphere, focusing on the rules governing investment, growth, land ownership, income distribution, and social welfare. The push for more extensive reforms, which arose at the height of the Cold War, generated widespread opposition from business and the U.S. government on the one hand and spurred revolutionary ideologies and mobilizations among leftist activists on the other. Over time, by the 1970s, most viable reformist projects were opposed and sabotaged by shifting coalitions of political leaders, political parties, and military, paramilitary, and private sector actors. Successfully labeled communist and subversive, nearly all progressive projects were destroyed through decades of military and authoritarian governments.

At the start of the twenty-first century, however, when vibrant and enduring democratic politics is widely seen as essential for international security and human well-being, Latin America is once again a hotbed of democratic experiences. Since the 1980s transitions to democracy, economic and political changes have occurred in Latin America with an unprecedented degree of openness. In the big three Southern Cone nations, as well as in many of their hemispheric neighbors, democratic elections have brought a shift to the left with no dramatic interventions by the military, the private sector, or the United States. Simultaneously, the region emerged from the 1980s debt crisis by adopting (or being forced by northern governments and international institutions to adopt) the neoliberal free-market model, which has led to economic growth as well as significant integration of the formal economies of most Latin American countries with the global economic order.

The confluence of democratization with neoliberal economic reform has yielded paradoxical results. Inequality, exclusion, deprivation, and violence persist on a grand scale, appearing at times to be constitutive components of the new democratic regimes, rather than holdovers from the past (Arias and Goldstein 2010). The market-based economic model has not solved these problems, and Latin American societies remain the most unequal in the world (Castañeda 2011 and Kim 2013). As wealth has increased for leaders of the

formal economy, millions of workers have remained trapped in the informal economy, and the wide gap between rich and poor persists. New opportunities and guarantees for investors have coincided with increasing vulnerability for the majority. In promoting economic growth, governments have eased rules for repossession and foreclosure, facilitated the use of temporary work contracts and the individualization of unemployment savings, and placed de facto limits on the quality of services in public schools and hospitals to reduce fiscal deficits. Under these market-oriented policies, when growth slows, all but the well-to-do are unprotected.

Yet despite the depredations of the free-market system for the majority of Latin Americans, spaces exist (or are carved out) where poor people move beyond merely coping to developing enduring mechanisms to improve their lives—what Mark Goodale and Nancy Postero (2013) have called interruptions to neoliberalism. As the harms of neoliberalism led people to organize, protest, and innovate in this democratic context (Shefner and Stewart 2011), progressive reforms and social changes such as those examined in this book have flourished, aided by several other contextual factors. Trade liberalization and the concomitant increase in direct foreign investment have reshaped the elite by decimating sectors of mid-level businesses. Economic crises—like those in Argentina at the turn of the millennium—have pressed poor and middle-class citizens to take action to survive, at the same time that increased levels of education have provided a platform of knowledge and the ability to connect analysis with action. Changing demographics have enabled formerly excluded groups to have some electoral clout, while cultural globalization has contributed to making racism visible and accorded value to multiculturalism.

The progressive reforms examined here, which have arisen largely independent of legislative processes, are among the most hopeful and innovative solutions to inequality and exclusion in the world today. They demonstrably improve poor people's lives, and the future of democracy in Latin America depends in part on the willingness of powerful social actors, including businesspeople, to tolerate and even promote these reforms. However, despite the existence of incisive scholarly research on the institutional and economic components of democratization (O'Donnell 1993; Ames 2002; and Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005), on social movements (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998a; and Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker 2008), and on innovative policy making (Tendler 1997 and Grindle 2004), there are little scholarly literature and minimal activist knowledge about the nexus between contemporary progressive change and business responses to that change. *Enduring Reform* explores this nexus.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REFORM AND BUSINESS RESPONSES

Conceptualizing Civil Society and Reform

The reforms discussed in this book are neither utopian nor abstract: they are pragmatic, working crystallizations of social movement and civil society visions, hammered out in practice. By “crystallization,” we mean the outcome of a process whereby disparate forces and social actors coalesce into a coherent project. The activists and ordinary people we study seek to enter into mainstream civil and political society, to claim the citizenship and well-being that democracies and markets ostensibly offer. They are not doing politics elsewhere or completely differently, in contrast to Partha Chatterjee’s (2004) findings on India, where he argues that the real “politics of the governed” occurs outside of the frameworks of civil society and electoral democracy. Nor are they seeking “alternatives to modernity”—ways of thinking and living outside of the framework of Western beliefs and practices—of the sort Arturo Escobar (2008) discerns in the knowledge and visions of Afro-Colombian activists on the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Rather, the reforms we examine, and the people who established and engage with them, seek to make the democracies and citizenships, markets and capitalisms that Western modernity offers work on the ground to improve the lives of poor people. In this sense, these reforms are one of the hopes on which the project of an inclusive and egalitarian democratic modernity rests.

In examining to what extent real, working reforms make a difference, along with whether and in what ways businesspeople welcome, tolerate, or oppose them, we follow Barbara Cruikshank (2010) in revising and broadening conventional notions of reform itself, looking beyond the daily workings of reform programs to the cultural and political terrains on which policies are crafted and to the textured knowledges and interpretations that activists and businesspeople bring to and take from reform initiatives. We also identify the differences between the internal dynamics of reform initiatives and the broader systems of which they are a part. Much as J. K. Gibson-Graham (1996) sees multiple capitalisms that establish variety and alternatives within what appears to be a monolithic economic system, we observe that the reform projects studied exist within democracy and neoliberalism, compatible with their practices but differing from them significantly. These reforms function by different internal norms and may, as they endure, challenge and revise political and economic arrangements from within.

In studying the ways in which reform experiences may reshape the institutional relations of which they are a part, this book looks at the interplay between what businesspeople think and what they do. Changes in culture—in the representations through which people make sense of the world—occur slowly and unevenly, in complex interaction with economic and political circumstances. To learn about this process, we asked, among other questions, do businesspeople change their minds? Do those who regulated the presence of Indians in San Cristóbal for centuries—insisting that they move off the sidewalk to allow ladinos by and that they return to highland villages every night, well into the 1980s—ever question their racism and enact a different stance? If so, in what ways and up to what point? Can entrepreneurs in Buenos Aires long accustomed to speaking only in deprecating terms of workers, even to this day, come to recognize the competence and humanity of those workers and do business with them on equal terms, when the workers own and run factories? What makes this sort of rethinking and new actions possible? Conversely, can successful and cosmopolitan business magnates in Porto Alegre decline to see—or in the political theory sense, to recognize—one of the most successful experiences in citizen education and empowerment in the world (participatory budgeting) and replace it, in the 2000s, with a system of corporate social responsibility that they themselves control? What makes it possible to wield false or ignorant claims successfully in the face of widespread evidence to the contrary (Sedgwick 1990, 7–8)? We find that all of these responses indeed occur, pressed forward by rethinking and what Escobar (2008) has called “counterwork”—grassroots efforts to establish new conceptual and practical norms—as well as by ignorance and the rejection of evidence.

At times, this mixture produces ongoing, significant reform, in which the alternative nature of a reform experience not only sets up residence within the world as it is, amid neoliberal practices of economy and citizenship, but revises those practices over time, bringing an alternative society more visibly into being. We evaluate this reform process by looking in a textured, ethnographic, and interdisciplinary way at cases of practical change, providing examples of how different regional societies have forged and grappled with reform. In our analyses, we underscore both the internal ambiguities and contradictions of reform experiences and the limited and partial results they achieve, avoiding romanticization and identifying harms as well as benefits. We are keenly aware that reform initiatives simultaneously accept and challenge the cultural beliefs and political and economic constraints amid which they are enacted. In studying these reforms now, we seek to turn a corner in scholarly inquiry, moving from claims that civil society and democracy necessarily enable reform—or alter-

nately that significant reform is impossible in the context of electoral democracy and neoliberalism today—to the study of working, innovative reforms and the responses of powerful actors to them. In so doing, we identify commonalities regarding the characteristics of successful reform across cases, the factors that shape business responses, and the nature and range of those responses.

Evaluating Civil Society-Based Reform in New Democracies

Scholars from a wide range of political, disciplinary, and methodological positions concur in seeking information about the inner workings of new, emerging bargains and how they compare to “class compromises” or “pacts” in earlier decades (Sandbrook et al. 2006; and O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Those who hope that active civil societies will contribute to well-being recognize that for this to be so, civil society actors must come up with and implement solutions that “[solve] particular public policy dilemmas in ways that are just and effective” (Edwards 2004, 39). In order to be a force for well-being and peaceful coexistence, democracy must enable key actors to “create options for promoting new and viable collective projects” that bring about more equitable conditions in critical economic, social, and environmental arenas (UNDP 2004, 7). Even proponents of democracy who assume the value of neoliberal markets and downplay the question of equity have realized that processes of democratic consolidation do not happen through predictable, rational sequences or technocratic expertise. Instead, “they are chaotic processes of change that go backwards and sideways as much as forward, and do not do so in any regular manner,” so that evaluating the quality of democracy cannot be achieved through an “institutional checklist” but rather necessitates the close examination of actual reform processes and their ability to address pressing problems (Carothers 2002, 15).

Scholars approaching mobilization and reform in Latin America from the perspective of a Foucauldian critique of neoliberalism (Boas and Gans-Morse 2009; Gledhill 2005; and Lazar 2004) reach a similar conclusion. While deeply suspicious of civil society-based reform as part of a project of neoliberal governmentality, such scholars nevertheless underscore the importance of figuring out what actually happens when reform is attempted. The work of the Consortium on Social Movements based at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst, including research institutes, scholars, and activists throughout the hemisphere, takes up this task explicitly, analyzing the results of civil society participation initiatives while focusing on the mixtures of “civil” and “uncivil” actions that promote reform (Alvarez et al. forthcoming b). S. Robins, A. Corn-

wall, and Bettina von Lieres (2008, 3–4), while skeptical of claims that citizenship fosters equality or that “participation” brings results people want and need, nonetheless direct our attention to “the actual processes whereby the marginalized are enabled to enter organized political life and effectively take up wide-ranging issues and causes,” urging us to study “how they work in practice, how and why they last, how and why they transform, and how different forms of authority get differentiated.” And despite his initial mapping of the Pacific Coast of Colombia through an either/or lens of destructive modernity and empowering indigenous knowledge (and a hope for alternatives to modernity), Escobar (2008, 196) goes on to call for detailed study of the on-the-ground results of the reformist development initiatives developed by Afro-Colombian social movements and NGOs in interaction with state and private sector actors.

With the exception of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (from its inception) and the Maya activists in the San Cristóbal colonias (later on in their networking initiatives), the reforms and activists we examine steer clear of political parties and direct involvement in electoral politics. The cases we identify as serving to deepen democracy distance themselves, paradoxically perhaps, from the main arenas of democratic politics. In this way, the reforms are not about “democratic learning” in the conventional sense—learning about the practices of party, electoral, and legislative participation. Rather, they demonstrate other kinds of political and cultural learning—regarding recognition, pragmatism, deliberation, and problem solving—that can take place in democracies. And although these reforms originate and act largely outside of the state, the protagonists in the cases studied here interact strategically and forge partnerships with elected officials and policy makers in order to craft and manage policies necessary for their projects to function and expand.

This book looks at progressive, civil society-based reform—rather than at forms of government or market-induced change—because of the success against great odds of these instances of “innovative crystallization,” because of the attention they garner, and because of the ongoing role they play in public debate and imaginaries as well as in policy making and, indirectly, electoral politics. We do not claim that these reforms expand, scale up, or stimulate broader progressive change (although they may) or that they are the only or primary pathways for progressive change (they are not). We examine these cases of reform because they represent new relationships among societal actors in democracies, lessen inequality and exclusion, and shift the ground of perception, debate, and policy making.

The Centrality of Culture in Explaining Businesspeople's Responses

Our case studies analyze what businesspeople do to understand, describe, negotiate with, outmaneuver, support, or limit the fruits of civil society-based democratic innovation, a topic on which there is little literature addressing the period since the transitions to democracy began in the mid-1980s.⁵ We address this question because of the multiple kinds of power held and exercised by private sector actors and the frequent centrality of business in political and community affairs, including the establishment of what counts as fact and what is judged to have value. In assessing business responses to reform, each of the case study chapters examines, first, whether and in what ways the business sector engages productively or unproductively (or in partial, ambiguous, contradictory ways) with the reform project, including businesspeople's openness to talking and dialogue and the degree of pragmatism in their responses.

Second, the demand for recognition, and correspondingly for new conceptions of citizenship, is a central component of all of our reform cases, and we examine varying degrees and kinds of recognition, including the extent to which the business sector recognizes the humanity, autonomy, rights, and capacities of the previously excluded people who are involved in the progressive changes. Third, the case studies reveal contestation over language in the interaction between businesspeople and reform projects, bringing out the ways in which this contestation develops, shapes responses to reform, and influences the ways in which reform endures and is endured. Finally, the case studies analyze the counterproposals developed by business in order to gain votes and implement policies that simultaneously address, modify, and control the issues made visible by enduring reforms. Counterproposals, we argue, are one of the most visible and consequential responses of businesspeople to reform. Embodying both concessions and constraints, they mark the changing terrain of both electoral politics and enduring reform.

Our research shows that in democratic contexts where forms of outright repression common in the past are not readily available, businesspeople have to "deal": that is, they have to view and confront reformist initiatives using the range of noncoercive mechanisms available to elites in democracies. The line between coercive and noncoercive action is blurred, of course, particularly given the ubiquitous violence and police power in Latin America's cities and rural areas alike and the centrality of policing to Latin America's democratic projects (Huggins 1998; and Arias and Goldstein 2010). In confronting reform that they do not wish to endure, businesspeople can take advantage of violence

(such as the repression of Indians after the Zapatista uprising in San Cristóbal [Rus, Hernández, and Mattiace 2003] or the police attacks in Rio's favelas [Arias 2006]) as well as of institutional practices that favor business and elite interests (such as judicial proceedings regarding land ownership in the same locations [see Bobrow-Strain 2007 and Holston 1991]). Despite these continuing forms of repression and influence, however, democracy has changed the rules of power in Latin America. In contrast to long histories of hostility to progressive, civil society-based reform—and to those who fight for and benefit from such reform—businesspeople today respond to reform with notable kinds of openness as well as with marked refusals and effective outmaneuverings. We hope to focus the attention of scholars and activists on this space of uncertainty and possibility, on its harsh imperviousness to recognition and redistribution as well as its moments of surprising shift and openness.

In highlighting this point of tension in businesspeople's responses to reform, where possibilities of new bargains emerge, we find support for our conclusions regarding the centrality of culture in recent scholarly literature that identifies interpretation and negotiation at the center of the establishment of social democracy and elite views of poverty. In analyzing four twentieth-century examples of the establishment of social democracy in the Global South—Costa Rica, Kerala, Mauritius, and Chile—Richard Sandbrook, Marc Edelman, Patrick Heller, and Judith Teichman (2007) found that it was not the presence of strong labor movements closely linked with socialist parties that facilitated the establishment of new forms of recognition and social welfare, as had been (incorrectly) assumed from earlier European cases, but rather pragmatic compromise over progressive goals. Reassessing the European past, Sandbrook and his coauthors argue that critical political conjunctures enabled negotiation between social classes when elites perceived classes as interdependent, viewed the state as potentially reliable, and understood their own interests to include “human capital productivity, social peace, and superior conflict management” (Sandbrook et al. 2006, 7; and Sandbrook et al. 2007). The authors reach similar conclusions in their studies of non-European countries since the 1960s; social democracies in the Global South happen when business is willing to see commonalities between their interests and those of other groups and negotiate pragmatically (Sandbrook et al. 2006, 81).

Similarly, in their seminal works on successful policy reform in areas of health, education, employment, and urban services in Brazil and Mexico, Judith Tandler (1997) and Merilee Grindle (2004) find that the construction of trust, collaborative decision making, effective leadership, and “policy entrepreneurship” predict reform success more effectively than preexisting configurations

of political power or economic interest. This work supports our finding that culture shapes the ways in which businesspeople understand reform initiatives and determine their own interests and responses. Tandler describes a process whereby state-level policy makers initiated their programs with a commitment to according considerable trust to public workers. Policy makers publicized this trust and implemented it by granting the workers a notable degree of autonomy. The local communities thus came to respect public workers, who felt a greater responsibility and sense of duty. As a result, they made the most of their relative autonomy in the implementation of their programs, using their discretion to further the communities' interests rather than their own (Tandler 1997). The virtuous circle Tandler describes, much like the successful aspects of Enduring Reform cases, occurs at the intersection of culture, representation, and the politics of leadership and innovation.

The unique survey work of Elisa Reis and Mick Moore (2005) on elite views of poverty reinforces this point about the importance of representation and interpretation to reform.⁶ Through survey research, they have found that the ways in which elites perceive, understand, and respond to poverty differs significantly among five countries across the Global South. These differences, they argue, stem from trajectories of belief and the interpretation of experience, rather than from differences in national economies or the wealth or vulnerability of elites themselves. In addition, Reis and Moore (2005, 18) observe that “many of the perceptions of poverty conveyed to us were in some way or another ‘unreal’—so highly abstract, idealized or generalized, or so at variance with the facts, that we are tempted to label them ‘misperceptions.’” This misperception recalls what Eve Sedgwick (1990) has described as “open secrets” whereby key social facts can be simultaneously known and unacknowledged, by individuals and in the public sphere.⁷ In Reis and Moore’s (2005, 7–8) analysis, both technocrats and activists interested in reform have ignored the tenacity and significance of these misperceptions: “The former bet on technical skills and the latter on moral determination. Both tend to forget that ongoing perceptions may constitute powerful obstacles to policy effectiveness as well as promising conditions for successful initiatives.”

Our comparative analysis underscores the centrality of what might broadly be called cultural factors—of representation and interpretation, of what is seen and how, of the construction of fact and value—in shaping the course of reform projects in Latin America today. In using the term “culture,” we borrow from poststructuralist and cultural studies notions of culture as multiple, competing strands of representation and interpretation that may or may not cohere or endure in the form of cultural systems but that emerge

out of and influence material and political phenomena, exerting power and shaping events (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1994; and Rubin 2004). The major causal finding of *Enduring Reform* is that culture—understood in this way to encompass the images and narratives that shape how people perceive and understand their own and others' experiences—shapes outcomes significantly, together with factors of economic interest and political institutions. How businesspeople react to progressive reform depends on culturally constructed beliefs about politics, poverty, and democracy, including beliefs about the identities and capacities of poor people and the relationships between elites and the reform projects themselves. Our cases demonstrate that these beliefs are shaped by such factors as crisis, surprise, visibility, media representation, experiences of invitation and inclusion, and contestation over language.

Our research highlights a potential exchange, with crucial and open-ended consequences, that comes into view as reform endures: as the left and progressive members of civil society in Latin America accept and work within a framework of democracy and markets, the right and the private sector may *recognize* with greater force and clarity the citizenship, humanity, and competence of people who are poor and marginalized, along with the justice of their claims to material well-being and inclusion.⁸ Such an exchange of market acceptance for deep human recognition—the latter rarer and more difficult to achieve even than reform itself, as our case studies demonstrate—would change the terrain on which reformist initiatives are enacted to favor enduring reform. The possibility of this exchange presses us to ask what happens as reforms endure and businesspeople endure reform. Does the act of enduring involve negotiation and conflict that produces cultural change? In a world of global free trade, this exchange of market acceptance for recognition is perhaps the exchange of greatest potential consequence for a future of inclusion, equality, and well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Enduring Reform is the culmination of a multicountry research initiative, the Enduring Reform Project (www.enduringreform.org), funded by the Open Society Foundations from 2007 to 2010. The project was directed by Jeffrey W. Rubin and Vivienne Bennett with a research team of twelve (four from the United States and eight from Latin America) working on six cases, five of which are presented here. Each case was carried out collaboratively by a team of two

researchers who had many prior years of direct experience in their research location and a deep familiarity with the evolution of her or his reform case. Researchers conducted interviews for the Enduring Reform Project (ten to twenty interviews in each case location) with progressive activists and local businesspeople using an interview template that was prepared in Spanish and Portuguese (see Appendix A for the interview template in English). The template provided open-ended questions from which researchers could explore activists' and businesspeople's knowledge, opinions, and actions with regard to the reform case itself and the larger context of democratization and economic change in which it occurred. The use of the same template by all the Enduring Reform researchers means that comparable questions were asked of the activists and businesspeople across all cases. Research was conducted from May through September 2008; researchers wrote fieldwork reports in the fall of 2008; and the entire Enduring Reform Project team met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in November 2008 for a four-day conference to present and discuss the research findings. Two external discussants attended the conference as well, one with expertise on the role of social movements in progressive reform and the other an expert on the history and views of the business sector in Latin America.

All but one of the contributors to this edited volume are original members of the Enduring Reform Project.⁹ The coeditors of the book directed the project. The analysis in each case study chapter, based on original research that has not been published elsewhere, derives its strength from the researchers' long-standing experience with their cases as well as the multiyear process of focused collaborative research, discussion, and writing for the Enduring Reform Project.

Our selection of cases was based on finding places where civil society-based progressive reforms had endured within democratic and market systems. We chose cases where the reforms had demonstrably improved daily life for a significant number of local residents in terms of their economic well-being, political voice, and/or cultural identity. Because of the newness of our subject of inquiry and our interest in identifying commonalities of response across cases, we chose examples that focused on different objectives and occurred in a range of national contexts. These cases include different kinds and degrees of challenges to elite economic interests, from music and antiviolenace programs in favelas, which do not challenge business interests directly, to factory take-overs in Buenos Aires, which defy private property norms. In proceeding in this fashion, we agree with Judith Tandler (1997) about the value—indeed the necessity—of comparing different cases for which one has potentially incommensurate data. Tandler (1997, 13) has observed, with regard to the cases of

government-led reform she studied in the Brazilian state of Ceará, that “each of these four cases represents a sector for which a self-contained literature and a corresponding body of advice exists. . . . No one writes in the same breath about agricultural extension agents, barefoot doctors, small-enterprise assistance agents, and drought relief workers. While this book [Tendler’s 1997 book] grounds each case in the debates of each of these sectors, its greater significance lies in the findings that run across the cases.”

Our ethnographic methodology facilitates comparison across cases. Our conclusions reflect the combination of extensive on-site experience and multihour, open-ended interviews on which our key informant, small-sample method is based. We sought to understand the views that shaped businesspeople’s responses and actions as well as track and analyze those actions. We also wanted to understand the evolution of the progressive reform experiences from the perspective of their leaders and participants. Our interviews enabled us to connect beliefs and experiences—as reported by interviewees and evaluated by researchers familiar with the context—with the trajectories of reform initiatives.¹⁰ Through open-ended conversations with businesspeople, we discerned ideas usually hidden beneath the surface, outside public view and often inaccessible to scholars, and identified connections between businesspeople’s ideas and the actions they took toward reform initiatives. In Porto Alegre, for example, it was only far into our interviews that some businesspeople expressed the frank realization that they could effectively be outvoted in the democratic procedures of participatory budgeting (Rubin and Baierle, this volume). From unexpected jumps in our conversations, we learned that the city’s businesspeople were willing and able to travel to confront and reevaluate their prejudices about people in other regions of Brazil, but they were unwilling to engage with poor residents in their own city at civic meetings and reevaluate their prejudices at home. Our understanding of this construction of ignorance, and the power relations out of which it occurs, in turn helped us unravel the puzzle of why cosmopolitan businesspeople in a prosperous city so fiercely opposed an internationally renowned reform that served to regularize property rights and provide basic services in poor neighborhoods.

All the activists and participants from the progressive reforms who were interviewed for the Enduring Reform Project were founders of the reform or had participated extensively in its process. Therefore they were knowledgeable about the history, goals, strategies, setbacks, and/or successes of the reform experiences in which they had participated. In selecting the businesspeople to be interviewed in each case location, we looked for a range of characteristics, such that some interviewees were among the entrepreneurial elite in

their locations, others had high levels of involvement or influence in business associations or community affairs, and still others had little or no knowledge of or direct involvement in public affairs or the reforms under consideration. Because of the range of case locations—from a major pole for domestic and international investment to a provincial commercial and agricultural city—the characteristics of our business interviewees vary from case to case, from industrial producers for domestic and international markets (Buenos Aires and Porto Alegre) to providers of medical services and merchants of artisanal goods (San Cristóbal de Las Casas). The characteristics of businesspeople varied within cases as well; thus our interviewees in Porto Alegre ranged from the owner of a restaurant in an upscale neighborhood, to the owner of industrial plants in both Brazil and the United States, to a high official in the statewide business association, himself a successful executive. In some cases, we carried out interviews among a somewhat broader category of elites who exercise economic power and influence but whose primary current activity is not business. In all of these cases, our interviewees held positions of relative economic power and political influence in their cities and regions.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The first two chapters of *Enduring Reform* present an analysis of Latin America's economic history and development models since the 1940s and provide a discussion of social movements in the region since the 1980s. In chapter 1, Ann Helwege explores reasons for businesspeople's economic fears and for their hostility to progressive reform in the past; she links these to business support for political repression. Helwege turns conventional wisdom on its head, however, when she demonstrates that even the ostensibly pro-business policies that governments pursued from the 1940s to the 1990s, in the context of this repression, did not in many cases effectively promote the economic interests of business. Precisely because of their awareness of these past failures, Helwege argues, the private sector in Latin America has exhibited openness to the economic policies pursued by democratic governments since the 1990s and, correspondingly, a newfound willingness to tolerate progressive initiatives. In chapter 2, Wendy Wolford provides a brief history of the ways in which Latin American social movements have changed over time, outlining their shift from antistate and antimarket projects and visions, including revolutionary movements, to engagement with existing democratic politics and markets. Wolford shows how the variety of social movement tactics, as well as movements'

frequent engagement with state actors, mirror the worldviews and approaches of the reforms and reform participants.

Chapters 3 through 7 of *Enduring Reform* present the case studies: indigenous self-reliance networks in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, worker-run factories in Buenos Aires, the three-for-one remittance program in Zacatecas, and the Afro Reggae Cultural Group in Rio de Janeiro. In these chapters, the contributors make their cases for the innovative and far-reaching character of each of the reforms, explain how and why they occurred, and delineate business responses. In chapter 8, we compare the cases in detail. We set out four conclusions: that cultural factors of language, belief, and perception shape business responses to reform; that economic and political crisis can facilitate reform; that businesspeople are more open to progressive reform goals of economic betterment than political empowerment; and that enduring reforms today involve an exchange of acceptance of democracy and markets by activists for recognition by businesspeople. We apply these conclusions to the reform cases, summarizing the successes and limits of the reforms in each location and tracing the impact of these four factors on the evolution of business responses.

One of the great, unresolved problems of the current world order is how to address inequality, poverty, and exclusion through constructive and affirmative actions. With an understanding of social movements and civil societies as nurturing grounds for progressive change, we hold the conviction that democracy in Latin America will be meaningful and enduring over the long haul only if it enables significant progressive reform to occur and endure. This book focuses on those innovations that foster progressive reformist results in democracies and encourage people to move from the “streets” to the “institutions” to secure basic political rights and economic well-being. By examining the responses of businesspeople, we problematize the notion that active civil societies and democratic political systems foster well-being and inclusion. Whether they do so hinges on the “enduring” of reform in the two senses we have set forth—that reforms continue through time and that businesspeople tolerate or withstand changes that they may neither welcome nor like. Our research shows that to understand the prospects for progressive reform in Latin America, we must look to cultural factors of representation and interpretation, of what is seen and how, and of the construction of fact and value. Representation in the cultural sense, and thus cultural politics and the creation of meaning (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998b), are as central to the politics of reform and the prospects for democracy as representation in the conventional electoral sense.

Groups with opposing interests—economic, political, and cultural—must battle it out, with greater or lesser tempestuousness, for a more socially just world to come into being. Our research shows that such contestations are happening on the ground without the high levels of violence of previous decades and with significant shifts in business worldviews and practices. By identifying the possibilities and limits in business responses to reform and the centrality of culture and meaning in shaping them, we seek to explain the trajectories of a striking set of progressive initiatives and, by delineating the stages and pathways by which they proceed, to make further recognition, negotiation, and enduring reform imaginable.

NOTES

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1. By “businesspeople,” we mean individuals who are engaged in the production or sale of goods and services for profit (Bernstein, Berger, and Godsell 1996).

2. While on rare occasions subgroups within business elites took the lead in crafting reform, and some business sectors joined in progressive and populist coalitions during the mid-twentieth century, most reverted quickly to an underlying hostility to progressive change as reformist governments proceeded (Brennan 1998; Hamilton 1982; and Schneider 2004). In his pioneering archival work on Colombian elites in the mid-twentieth century, E. Sáenz (1992) has shown that in defining and lobbying for their economic interests, Colombian industrialists routinely allied with the most reactionary elements of the Conservative Party, opposed progressive reform initiatives as well as Colombia’s then fragile democratic institutions, and supported U.S. Cold War policies in Latin America, including attacks on leftist labor groups. B. Weinstein (1996) has presented an important contrasting case of commitment to social welfare training and education programs on the part of an elite subgroup of businesspeople over a relatively long period of time in São Paulo.

3. We refer to “civil society” in the Gramscian sense of actors outside of the state, acting on a terrain of legitimation and contestation where a counter-hegemonic project could but need not emerge (Alvarez et al. forthcoming b). We do not assume that civil society necessarily exhibits characteristics of civility in the Tocquevillean sense but rather that civil society is itself shot through with power relations (Buck-Morss 1995 and Edwards 2004). For a useful account of the political and scholarly development of the concept in recent decades, see Alvarez et al. 2012b. For further elaboration of the concept and connections between civil society and progressive reform, see Edwards 2004.

4. In Charles Taylor’s (1995) words, “A number of strands of contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition” (cited in Thompson 2006, 2).

5. There is ample literature on business responses to national and regional progressive initiatives and protest before the democratic transitions. See, for example, O'Donnell 1973, Williams 1986, Winn 1986, Maxfield 1990, and Schlesinger and Kinzer 2005 on national initiatives. On regional cases, see Bennett 1995, Weinstein 1996, and Rubin 1997. Also see note 2 in this chapter. Correspondingly, there is broad literature on business responses to government transitions and reforms at the national level since the 1980s (Payne 1993; Weyland 1996; and Kingstone 1999).

6. Reis and Moore (2005) note that no previous research has been done on this topic.

7. On the phenomenon of the "open secret," Sedgwick draws on D. A. Miller (1989). Sedgwick's discussion of ignorance suggests a way of approaching the "unreal" perceptions of poverty Reis and Moore confront in their interviewees: "perhaps there exists instead a plethora of ignorances, and we may begin to ask questions about the labor, erotics, and economics of their human production and distribution" (Sedgwick 1990, 8).

8. We draw here on the political theory of recognition (Thompson 2006).

9. Ann Helwege joined us during the preparation of the manuscript to write the chapter on business and economic change (see chapter 1).

10. Sherry Turkle (2008) has described this as intimate ethnography, because it seeks to link big social changes to the ways people experience and conceptualize these changes.

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