

## BOOK REVIEWS

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McDonald, Ronald H. and J. Mark Ruhl. PARTY POLITICS AND ELECTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989. Glossary of political parties, index, 386 pp; hardcover \$45.00, paperback \$19.95.

IN DISCUSSING Latin American perspectives on democracy, Lorenzo Meyer recently urged greater attention to the role of political parties. He described the latter as constituting the institutions necessary "to channel the energies of social movements, labor unions, and other anti-authoritarian forces present at the beginning of the reemergence of civil society" (see Meyer in Robert A. Pastor (ed.) *Democracy in the Americas* [New York:NY, Holmes & Meier, 1989]: 34). In a similar vein, Arturo Valenzuela has advocated a return to the study of parties as being critical to an understanding of democracy (see Valenzuela in Christopher Mitchell [ed.] *Changing Perspectives in Latin American Studies* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988]: 82-83). While such remarks accurately characterize the state of scholarship, they have responded largely to hemispheric political realities of the late 1960s and 1970s, during which time the omnipresence of non-democratic regimes lent impetus to the formulation and elaboration of bureaucratic-authoritarian theses to a great extent. It was not always thus.

During an earlier era of democratization, scholars probed both individual parties and national systems. Among those who pursued these themes at considerable length were Russell H. Fitzgibbon, Robert J. Alexander, Robert E. Scott, Edward J. Williams, and John D. Martz. Just as the political pendulum was swinging away from democracies, perhaps the last significant contribution to this