

Reflections about the Kellogg Institute at its 40th Anniversary

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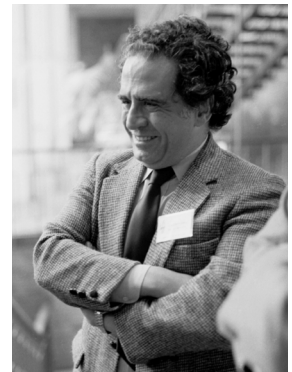
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The Kellogg Institute was born out of a normative concern for democracy, good governance, and human development. At a time where military dictatorships and human rights abuses were still too common in Latin America, those who founded it thought of it as a space to think about, study and envision democracy. The Kellogg Institute was to be a place for rigorous research about “big” questions, guided by a normative commitment to democracy.

In the past forty years, the Kellogg Institute has built an academic community that has been at the forefront of the analysis of democratic transitions, the problems of new democracies and the challenges of democratic governance and integral human development. Kellogg is an interdisciplinary institute with wide-ranging, yet interconnected, research agendas. While it remains a globally recognized center in Latin American Studies firmly anchored in this region, it is also true to its name as an institute for international studies. This all-encompassing nature makes it difficult to comprehensively map the ways in which the institute has contributed to debates across fields and regions. We therefore focus on the impact that the Institute has had not only in shaping debates about democracy in Latin America, but also forging new generations of scholars. This is by no means an exhaustive account, rather, a bird's eye view of some of the key areas in which the Kellogg community has contributed to the scholarly study of Latin American politics.

Kellogg affiliated faculty, alumni, and visiting fellows have been pioneers in thinking and theorizing democracy since the early days of the institute. In the 1980s, Guillermo O'Donnell, the Institute's founding academic director, sought to make sense of the growing wave of transitions to democracy in the region and co-edited the highly influential series *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. The ambitious five-volume project became a theoretical and empirical reference for the gigantic agenda on transitions to democracy since. In the volume “Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies,” Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter outlined the tensions of authoritarian regimes, the opportunities these provided for authoritarian breakdown, and the potential pathways for democratization. The modes of transition described and theorized in the volume became a guide to understand democratization processes in Latin America and Southern Europe, and later in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa. More than 35 years after its initial publishing, the ‘green book’ is required reading for anyone who wants to seriously engage with the literature on transitions to democracy.





As the challenges to democracy in the region have changed, so did the scholarship of the institute. In the 1990s and 2000s, as more and more democratic regimes became established, the concern was less with democratization and more with the difficulties many new Latin American democracies faced. Many of these new democracies seemed to take paths that diverged from those of liberal democracies. In developing his path-breaking concept of *delegative democracy*, O'Donnell theorized about the dire consequences of hyperpresidentialism amidst institutional weakness—i.e. the delegation of power in presidents to the detriment of other democratic branches of government. Following in his footsteps, subsequent generations have studied different dimensions and iterations of regime dynamics, including breakdowns, erosions, and successes. Key to assessing progress but also shining a spotlight on the shortcomings of these new democracies, was the edited volume “The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America,” edited by two former directors of the Institute, Frances Hagopian and Scott Mainwaring.

Many institutional features also hindered democratic governance and shaped the response to the severe economic and social crisis in the region. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully's influential edited volume on party system institutionalization in Latin America not only developed a concept that is now firmly established in the global literature of political parties, but also served as a guide to understand the political crises experienced by many Latin American countries. The study of political parties in the region is inextricably linked to work done

at the Kellogg, which has flourished through a range of methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, survey research), and deeply influenced comparative research in this area more broadly.

The advent of democracy did not bring about the enjoyment of the full promise of democratic citizenship for all Latin Americans. Shaped by O'Donnell's concern with the importance of the state and institutions—and, in particular, the judicial system—for fuller democracy and citizenship, newer generations of scholars have since studied and theorized different phenomena at the intersection of law and democratic politics. Ranging from studies of state responses to violence against women, rule of law, transitional justice and the politics of rights, the interdisciplinary work coming out of the Institute has also been key to our understanding of Latin American democracies in all their unevenness and complexities.

The Kellogg Institute was also an early supporter of one of the most ambitious contemporary efforts to measure democracy across the globe: the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) project. Numerous members of the Kellogg Community, led by Michael Coppedge and including faculty, students, and alumni, have contributed to this global project which offers arguably the most disaggregated data to measure multiple dimensions of democracy. Today, the institute is the V-Dem Regional Center in North America and works closely with the V-Dem Regional Center for Latin America at the Catholic University in Chile.

Despite being democracies, many Latin American countries endure pervasive forms of violence ranging from vigilantism to human rights abuses, to police and organized criminal violence. These persistent legacies also gave rise to new forms of punitive sentiment across public opinion, as well as militarized policing practices. Kellogg scholars have sought to address these new challenges in Latin American democracies by exploring how violent coercion coexists with electoral democracy, how criminal governance impacts democracy or why public opinion supports the militarization of public security, despite its negative consequences in terms of

human rights. These new questions required supporting the development of multi-disciplinary research agendas that were connected to issues of democratic transitions, but that also identified new drivers and implications for democracy. The Kellogg Institute has been a convener of talks and forums with invited speakers, and actively funded research from PhD students and faculty in this field.

True to its normative commitment with democracy from its early days and throughout its existence, the Kellogg Institute has been dedicated to the production of rigorous research as well as the engagement with civil society and policy actors. Throughout the years, many of the institute's visiting fellows have been recognized politicians, practitioners, and activists, providing a unique venue for their dialogue with academia. The recent establishment of policy and practice research labs, such as the Violence and Transitional Justice Lab and the Notre Dame Reparations Design and Compliance Lab, seeks to institutionalize this feature of the Kellogg Institute.

While the research of Kellogg faculty has certainly made a considerable academic impact and is a reference in the study of Latin American politics, the institute has been as or even more successful in creating a welcoming academic community in which faculty, students, and visiting fellows engage in constructive academic exchanges. Since the Institute's inception, its visiting fellows program has been a foundation of Kellogg's intellectual life. Over 380 scholars and practitioners—many of them established figures from Latin American institutions—have found throughout the years a place to pursue their research interests and in the process enriched the institute's life.

Perhaps less noticeable from the outside is the tremendous impact the institute has had in fostering new generations of scholars, many of them Latin Americans. Even though the institute does not grant degrees, it has supported nearly 100 graduate students through its PhD fellowship program and many more students through research and professionalization grants. It has

also embraced and supported student's initiatives like the Comparative Politics Workshop, the Workshop on New Research by Women Studying Violence, the Research Workshop on Thirty Years of Democracy in Brazil, among many others. As a result, the institute now boasts an extensive network of alumni who work in universities and research institutes across Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Through many members of the Kellogg community, particularly the network of alumni, the Kellogg Institute is not limited to its physical location at Notre Dame. It exists across the world.

At a time when democracy in Latin America, the United States, and the world, faces new threats, the Kellogg Institute's combination of a normative commitment to democracy and rigorous research makes it an indispensable venue to bridge academia with the worlds of policy, politics, and activism in search for solutions to the challenges that lie ahead. //



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