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Abstract[*]

The concept of Open Government has emerged as a new public policy paradigm. It is a response to the rise of a better-informed and more demanding citizenry, which seeks to influence public service design and provision. The practical dimension of the components of Open Government, above all those related to citizen participation and collaboration, make implementing this paradigm even more complex. Based on a review of the literature, international evidence, and a specific case of co-design and co-execution of a public service at the local level, this paper analyzes the political challenges that the Open Government model poses. Furthermore, it evaluates the incentives, obstacles, and opportunities that the Open Government agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean will have to tackle if it is to be feasible and successful.

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Introduction

Global and regional democracy finds itself at a crossroads. The democratic governments of the world, and particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, continue to exercise power under the same logic they have used for decades, and many of them have been unable to adapt to a series of changes, both in the surrounding environment and within their own societies.

One example of this is the fact that governments today are faced with a citizenry that is increasingly powerful and better informed, which expects better services and demands greater accountability from its governors. These citizens not only want more but also better information and spaces for participation within the public domain.

It is in this context that Open Government is gaining traction, and appears as an attractive solution to guide the reformulation of democratic mandates. Open government is that which practices and promotes transparency and access to information, and citizen participation and collaboration involving multiple actors, both in public policymaking as well as in service delivery.

Of its three main pillars (transparency, participation and collaboration), the first supposes, on the one hand, that the State has the political willingness to take proactive measures that guarantee the exercise of the right to access to information, by offering citizens data and providing accountability about areas that have hitherto been reserved or secretive and, on the other hand, the required degree of technical know-how to do so. But it is the other two Open Government principles that require more elaborate technical strategies and, more significantly, greater political willpower and consensus, in order to turn them into reality.

Promoting effective participation forums implies actively involving citizens in debating questions of public interest in a way never before seen. Generating collaborative environments for co-designing public policies and innovation implies empowering the citizen although in an incipient way—as a person with co-responsibility for formulating and monitoring public policies, and for delivering the services to which citizens are entitled. It is therefore all about making progress based on more robust conceptions of what democracy is.

Various questions arise. Why do it? What is the political dynamic behind Open Government policies? What political, social, economic and institutional obstacles might delay or impede implementation of these kinds of policies, and what are the opportunities that might favor it? It is reasonable to assume that in political-electoral contexts, and even more so during the exercise of government, the incentives to embrace Open Government policies among the different political and social actors will not be aligned. Faced with such a misalignment, this paper seeks to offer some contributions to the debate on the political dimension (with its incentives, best practices and obstacles) that is implied for the region if it embarks on the difficult, but altogether necessary, task of developing citizen participation and collaboration strategies within the framework of Open Government.

This study consists of four sections. The first section analyzes the specific challenges related to Open Government strategies. It pays special attention to the two latter pillars of Open Government—citizen participation and collaboration—as crucial axes and critical factors for successfully understanding the magnitude of the challenge that this paradigm shift implies. The second section provides elements that help to explain the political context in which this debate is happening. Specifically, it analyzes certain trends in political institutionality in the world at large and in Latin America and the Caribbean in particular, such as the emergence of two new actors—technology and a new type of citizen—that have to be taken into consideration when it comes to understanding, designing and implementing any Open Government policy. The third section, based on a specific case, delves into the practical implications of implementing participatory and collaborative policies. It contains a critical review of best practices, and the obstacles and opportunities associated with Open Government policies at the local level. The fourth, and final, chapter presents the paper's conclusion and is set out in two sections. The first reflects on the attitude that civil servants must adopt in order to facilitate Open Government strategies. The second section summarizes the questions that have arisen throughout the course of this study.

This paper does not seek to resolve all of the questions that are bound to exist at present with regard to the political dynamic behind Open Government policies. It is, however, a preliminary analysis that will enable an honest debate to be tabled about the challenges facing Open Government policies in the region.

Section 1
Citizen Participation and Collaboration: The Real Challenges facing Open Government

Open Government is a concept that recent literature has dedicated various papers and reports to explaining (OGP, 2014; Ubaldi, 2013; Concha and Naser, 2012; Ramírez Alujas and Dassen, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2012). Open government can be understood to be the way in which the task of governments is institutionally constructed and erected on the basis of three pillars: transparency, citizen participation and collaboration, in order to improve both the quality of governance and the quality of the public services that citizens create and receive (OGP, 2014).

The first of these elements—transparency—implies political willingness and institutional capacity that enables governments to provide "access to information via the disclosure of public data (for the purpose of social monitoring and accountability) and the reuse of public sector information (to promote economic innovation and development). The second presupposes "facilitating citizen participation in designing and implementing public policies, and in influencing decision-making". The third "encourages the creation of spaces for collaboration between the diverse actors" (Ramírez Alujas and Dassen, 2014). This implies that not only citizens, but also businesses, associations and other organizations should participate in the co-design and/or co-execution of public services.

The notion of Open Government leads to two essential questions. The first, at the conceptual level, is to ask in what ways can Open Government be distinguished from the already extant ideas of electronic government, which already presupposes a certain degree of governmental openness toward citizens. The second relates to this paper's central theme: where, specifically, does this paradigm shift in the concept of politics that Open Government offers reside?

With regard to the first question, it is understandable that the boundary between the two concepts becomes hazy. According to both the OECD (2014) and the World Bank (2014), the concept of electronic government refers to the use that governments make of information technologies to transform the relationships between citizens, businesses and other public agencies, in order to improve the general level of governance. This definition might perfectly well be explained on the bass of the three pillars of Open Government. Moreover, electronic government presupposes a direct dialogue with citizens, which is mainly guided by the new technologies. Therefore, as Ramírez Alujas and Dassen point out, "e-government [electronic government] fails to resolve the pending task of extending the spaces for citizen participation and collaboration, nor does it offer a profound change in the way that the paradigm of modern public bureaucracies has traditionally been maintained" (Dassen and Vieyra, 2012: 48). Although both concepts share the potential application of technology for establishing virtuous interactions between citizens and governments, the mere fact that technology has been incorporated into this interaction does not necessarily imply a political paradigm shift. It is about simply using technology to ensure a more fluid relationship between various, already established actors; rather than about changing the axis of power in a democratic state (which is what Open Government does do, as shown below).

Although this argument might be debatable for many, this paper shares the idea that Open Government is a concept that is much wider and more complex than electronic government. The first incorporates other demands (not merely technical ones) on the State in its relationship with the other actors that make up a modern democratic system. This suggests a new distribution of power in each country not only on paper, but in real terms, as will be demonstrated below.

After the first point has been cleared up, the second question opens an even more complex debate. What does the practical and political novelty of Open Government consist of? Specifically, why does it represent a paradigm shift in the way that the governmental task is structured? Each one of the three pillars of Open Government is in itself a challenge for the exercise of politics. However, it will be argued that it is the practical dimension, particularly in the realms of citizen engagement and collaboration, which challenges the State and governments to radically amend the way in which the exercise of democracy has been developed in the region.

Transparency presupposes a measure of political willingness to disclose the data pertaining to public institutions. This is illustrated by the hundreds of cases in Latin America and the Caribbean in which governments, whether national or sub-national, have the economic resources at their disposal to incorporate the technological innovations that would enable data, decisions and information to be shared with citizens, but have failed to do so. Is this, then, a technological problem? Obviously not.

This is not about minimizing the actions that both multilateral organisms and governments themselves have carried out to strengthen transparency and to thereby tackle, among other things, corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, promoting transparency is a one-way activity whereby only governments can modify their behavior in order to achieve changes in society as a whole. One reasonable response to this argument is the evident situation in which the mere implementation of pro-transparency policies (however one-way they might be) directly influences the behavior of an entire society.

It also does not mean that implementing transparency policies is not a complex process, or one without challenges. The evidence provided by the IDB points out that in some countries in the region, the willingness expressed in legal and institutional arrangements does not necessarily translate into more transparency. There are various obstacles encountered during the design and implementation phases that mean that the transparency component becomes a challenge in itself (IDB, 2014). The fact that this paper focuses on the two latter components of Open Government is due only to the often theoretical and rarely practical (and realistic) treatment given to managing citizen participation and collaboration.

However, the mere fact that there are transparency policies is far from being a paradigm shift in the democratic system. The combination of the three pillars is the real challenge due to the complexity of specifically incorporating other actors into the public value creation process and in directing energies into explicitly executing participatory and collaborative practices.

With the inclusion of the practical dimension of citizen participation and collaboration, Open Government begins to be seen as a powerful challenge for governments. Participation with regard to "the right of citizens to collaborate in policymaking, paving the way for governments to benefit from citizens' knowledge" is undoubtedly a challenge of greater political complexity. Likewise, seeking "to get citizens to commit to the effort to work together to resolve national problems" provides another angle to the approach that not only policies, but also the public institutions that enable them to be undertaken, should have.

In contrast to what occurs in the case of the aforementioned pro-transparency policies, incorporating citizen participation and collaboration, does not merely imply a change inside governments but, more difficult still, it supposes establishing institutions and mechanisms wherein social attitudes also change. If what is meant by Open Government is to be taken seriously, it must be understood that it is a complex, multi-directional action. The definitions of these concepts imply that it is no longer sufficient for a government to take the sole initiative when it comes to formulating and designing public policies.

The paradigm shift does not stop with these three pillars, either, which makes the debate even more complex. As Ramírez Alujas and Dassen point out, Open Government does not merely imply transparency, participation and collaboration. "It also includes new forms of governing alongside the citizen to achieve greater efficiency in the public sphere (…). Although in the regional priorities these are the matters that overwhelmingly underpin the plans of action, it must not be forgotten that the basic idea is to move from the space of openness and transparency toward a crystallization of practices aimed at reforming the State and modernizing public management toward a citizen-based approach" (2014: 31) (i.e., to move from being a "citizen-receiver" to becoming a "citizen-manager").

This signifies that it is no longer just the State and governments that exercise power. Open government presupposes a change in the axis of power and proposes new ways for the democratic exercise of power wherein governments can share power with society. This constitutes, at least in theory, a clear paradigm shift in the way that the citizens' role is managed in our democratic system.

In any case, these are not new issues. The international literature has been pointing out for some time that citizen participation and collaborations are key pillars for modern democratic systems (Bunker, 2006; UNDP, 2008b; Sajuria, 2013; Levine and Molina, 2007; FLACSO, 2013). A large part of the literature agrees that modern democracies "presuppose that citizen engagement is at the heart of public activity [and] one of the most important characteristics of political systems is that of providing mechanisms for interacting with their constituents or, in other words, effective representative and participatory democracy (…) whereby the greater the level of citizen participation in the political and social processes in a country, the more democratic the system" (Bunker 2006, p.2). Likewise, Araníbar, and Vázquez—in *Crisis global y democracia en Latin America*—argue "a democracy that is deficient in building citizenship and in its capacity to extend it to the whole of the population is not sustainable over time. If the democracies fail to prioritize effective citizenship-building, they may fall beneath the minimum thresholds, and will therefore lose legitimacy" (2012 p. 17). Grynspan states that "in order to consolidate and deepen democracy, then free and transparent electoral

processes must be accompanied by policies that offer opportunities for the expansion of citizenship" (UNDP, 2008b: 22).

It might be argued that the legitimacy of democracies will, consequently, also be at stake through citizen participation and collaboration. Levine and Molina recognize that a large part of any democratic system's credibility rests on the conditions in which its citizens can participate in public decision-making (2007: 2).

P*articipation* has to be understood through two axes: the first means distinguishing participation according to the administrative level at which it is developed and promoted. Experience shows that promoting citizen engagement at the local or subnational level is very different to promoting it at the national level. As will be discussed in Chapter 3 below, it is at the local level where it is more easily promoted, due to the State's proximity to its citizens at that level.

The second axis is related to the kind of participation and what we understand by it. Participation can be several things at once and the different levels of its practical application "vary according to the degree in which the citizens determine the final product or process whereby a specific public policy is defined" (Orrego, 1999: 27). Orrego adapts the typology that Arnstein developed as the 'ladder of participation' and suggests seven levels of participation: (1) Manipulation: whose aim is to manage support for the community, taking "nominal participation" only as a public relations vehicle; (2) Information: providing información about rights, responsibilities and options can often be the first important step; (3) Consultation: is when the citizens voice their opinions; (4) Representation: implies a certain degree of influence, mainly through the citizens' representatives on the directing (or consultative) organs of the community organizations, schools and/or police forces; (5) Association: this level consists in redistributing power following negotiations between citizens and authorities; (6) Delegated power: the citizens dominate the decision-making or implementation process regarding a particular program; (7) Citizen control: the citizens administer the program or institution (1999: 27–28).

This definition of the levels of participation helps to relieve the pressure that the concept of Open Government suggests with regard to participation, as it offers differing degrees of citizen engagement in a democratic system. However, emphasis on the citizen-as-manager would situate the citizenry between levels four and seven on the aforementioned ladder. This generates clear tensions regarding what would be expected in turn from citizen participation in this new public policy paradigm, and will be examined in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

There are also tensions with regard to the emphasis that collaboration (or co-design of public policies) presupposes. The most evident relates to the problems of collective action. Specifically, the costs of participation and the dilemmas of collective action refer to the fact that in general people tend to let other organizations wield influence on government and public decision-making on their behalf (Olson, 1971). This represents a significant dilemma when it comes to embarking upon Open Government policies. Specifically, how can citizens become organized and collaborate together considering this important obstacle? What role can be attributed to trust in the authorities as a mechanism that facilitates collaboration?

Putnam has exhaustively researched the formation of social capital and its link with the trust that exists between citizens and authority. He defines it as "expressions of trust, rules and social networks that can improve efficiency in certain sectors of society" (1993a: 167) and suggests that it is the community organization and the networks between citizens that enable social changes to be generated such as, for example, the power to influence a given public policy. Putnam's approach rests on an assumption that makes the emergence of a new paradigm rather complex. He studied the creation of social capital in Italy and came to the conclusion that it was precisely the historic networks of community bonding that made certain communities more successful than others with a weaker tradition of collaborating when it came to overcoming problems of collective action (Putnam, 1993a). A recent study of a case of co-design of public policies in Indonesia (Lussier and Fish, 2012) reaches similar conclusions, attributing to longstanding cultural and social relationships the contemporary achievements in processes of community organization aimed at influencing public policymaking.

This poses a question for the collaboration component of Open Government: if it is recognized that societies experience problems of collective action, how can community organization be generated to influence public policies in societies that do not necessarily have historic community collaboration networks? To put it more succinctly: is it possible to "artificially" generate social capital in societies that lack preexisting past social ties, or in those societies wherein the old relationships have broken down? The challenge is of a greater magnitude than the one facing the participation component. It is all about trying to understand how to promote community organization in order to co-design public policies when most of the evidence has demonstrated that social capital is principally generated in instances where there is a rich tradition of past social ties. What happens in fragmented, unequal and relatively non-cohesive societies, such as many of the ones found in Latin American and the Caribbean? As with the concept of participation, many of these questions will be tackled in the final chapters.

As previously seen, both the literature and multilateral organisms and governments have been deliberating about the concepts of citizen participation and collaboration for a very long time. **Why, therefore, should we now believe that a paradigm shift is really underway today?**

In the first place, it is an invitation that manages to incorporate an attractive story that has been unfolding over a long period but, more importantly still, is situated within a political and social context that demands a transformation in public practices **within governments and in their interaction with their communities.** This matter will be dealt with in the following chapter.

In the second place, it is a paradigm shift because innovations in the State have ceased to be one-way and are moving toward becoming a multidirectional practice when it comes to drafting and monitoring policy and providing public services. Open government necessarily implies that governments promote polices whose actions generate transformations not only in the public apparatus, but that also stimulate significant cultural changes in all sectors of the citizenry, above all in a new range of political and social actors.

In the third place, it implies that, as a result of these changes, governments will restructure the existing concentration of power in their societies. This is a radically

new behavior that creates a new institutionality **that enables other actors to also get to manage political power.** Governments must be willing to cede power to other political and social actors. In general, whenever power and democracy are discussed, there is talk about the size of the State. But little or nothing is said about the power that other actors—NGOs, citizens, and businesses—should have when it comes to debating the role of the State in society. The new focus makes the citizen a co-participant in, and co-responsible for, creating public value.

In the fourth place, as previously mentioned, **it stimulates governments to promote new political practices among actors,** whose abilities to associate with others levels are, at least at the regional level, uncertain.

Finally, the concept of Open Government is far from being merely conceptual. It is practical and political. It relates, on the one hand, to how States can institutionalize this new way of exercising power, which entails its own risks and uncertainties. On the other hand, it is about allocating time, resources and leadership in order to put it into practice, with all the costs that this signifies. In summary, it makes tangible the provision of better services with efficiency and transparency while also diminishing the possibilities for fraud and corruption.

As the proposal of a paradigm shift is neither neutral nor anachronistic, the following section addresses the political, social and technological context in which Latin America and the Caribbean finds itself immersed. It reveals an alternative angle on the argument that has been presented regarding who specifically has power in global societies, and particularly in the region.

Section 2
The Global and Regional Context for the Open Government Debate

From 1970 onwards, democracy has been expanding as the political system preferred by citizens, although a halt has been reported in 2012 in both the region and the world at large. Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean shows differentiated levels of development and maturity, with a marked emphasis on representation, while other forms of democracy, mainly the participative kind, remain some way behind, at least on the practical level. These differentiated developments can be in part explained by the dynamics that are particular to each country's internal situation. However, the emergence of the new citizen empowered by the digital revolution that is also growing exponentially in Latin America and the Caribbean offer the opportunity for a qualitative leap forward in how governing and practicing democracy is done.

This chapter analyzes the democratic trends in the world and in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also identifies the emergence of two new actors that make the way in which Open Government should be implemented in the region more complex.

a. Stagnant Global Democracy

In the West, the democratic system has prevailed as the political system that best deals with organizing the interactions of the diverse actors and institutions within society. A recent essay in The Economist argues that "democracies are, on average, richer than non-democratic systems, are less likely to go to war and have better results in combating corruption" (The Economist, 2014).

Toward the end of the twentieth century, the evolution of democratic systems at the worldwide level was explosive. In 1974, there were only 40 democracies in the world (27 percent of the states considered at that time to be free); ten years later, in 1984, the number had risen to 60 (36 percent); in 1990 there were 76 (46 percent) and following the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1991 there were 91 democracies (50 percent); five years later there were 117 (61 percent) and in 1999 there were 120 democratic states in the world, 63 percent of the States classed as being free (Møller and Skaaning, 2013: 99).

According to data gathered by Freedom House, the evolution of States with electoral democracies also underwent rapid growth from the end of 1989 onward. Figure 1 shows the percentage of countries with electoral democracies between 1989 and 2013.

Figure 1: Evolution of Electoral Democracies throughout the World
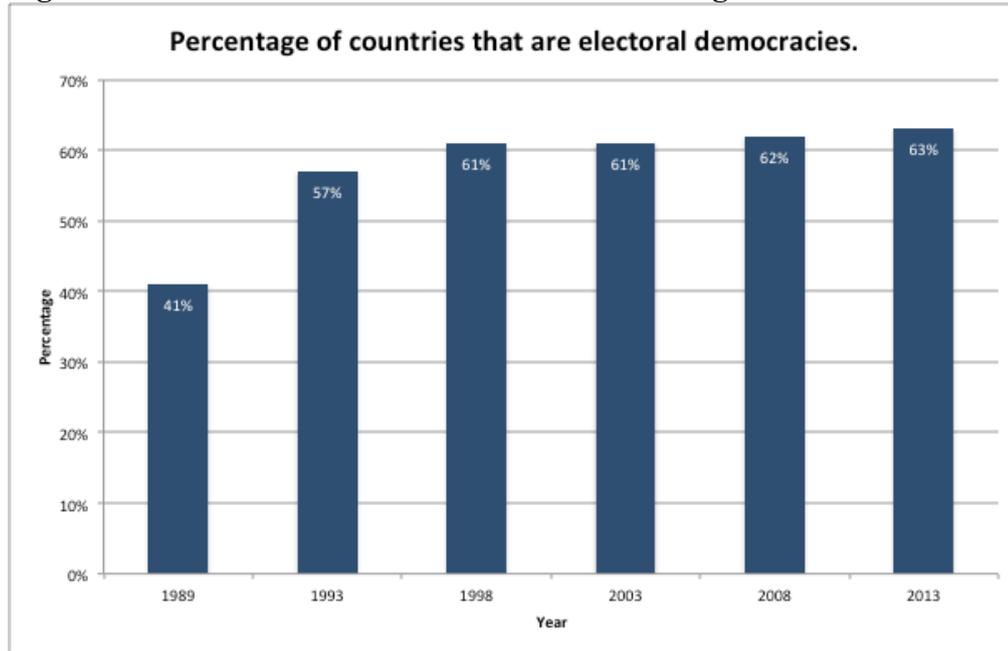
Source: Freedom House 2014.

On the numerical level, at least, this vertiginous wave of democratization is coming to an end. The latest Economist Intelligence Unit report on democracies in 2012 highlights the fact that there has been a halt in the number of new democracies in the world. The report states that "there was a minimal change between 2010 and 2012 and the majority of free countries hold open, fair elections and are well established" (EIU, 2012: 1–2).

However, the problem is far from being a merely numerical one and is related to the type of democracy that exists on the world. The same report announces a latent risk for the democratic systems owing to the fact that the evidence reveals mixed attitudes toward democracy (EIU, 2012).

The aforementioned essay in The Economist suggests that one of the reasons why many of the democratic projects have failed is because they place too much emphasis on the electoral dimension and pay too little attention to the most essential characteristics, and that the power of the State itself needs to be revised (2014).

Irrespective of the number of democracies that exist in the world, the global evidence indicates that satisfaction with democracy has been declining for a long time. It is a process that has been underway for several decades and is not necessarily correlated with economic downturns or other global phenomena (for more details, see LAPOP, 2010).

What is happening is an apparently contradictory phenomenon: "citizens may perfectly well continue to support democracy as an organizational ideal and as the principal form of government but, in practice and on average, they may also feel that democracy does not entail development in their countries" (LAPOP, 2010: 42).

In a recent study, Sajuria points out that "even the citizens living under authoritarian regimes or in transition toward more democratic regimes tend to express high levels of

support for the democratic system as an ideal" (2013 p. 11). It is worthwhile to differentiate the number of democracies existing in the world from the support that the citizenry as a whole expresses for democracy. Diamond (quoted in Sajuria, 2013: 10) suggests, "one of the greatest indicators of the level of legitimacy of a democratic system is precisely the level of citizen support that that democracy enjoys."

In general, it might be said that there is a certain consensus that citizen acceptance of the rules of the game is the source of the State's authority to administrate power, the law, and to enforce certain decisions. The citizens' degree of trust in, and acceptance of, the democratic system is therefore important.

Democracies in Development uses the analogy of a multiple stage race to explain that in order for citizens to accept that they might lose out today, they have to be sure that the political process is fair and equitable, which is, put simply, that those who win have a respected and duly-achieved majority, but that there also exists the certainty that there is a clear possibility of winning the next elections. In summary—the report adds—the legitimacy of a democratic system strongly rests on the legitimacy of the processes and institutions that comprise it (IDB, 2007).

b. Diverse Institutional Maturity in Latin America and the Caribbean

Providing generic prescriptions for diverse problems is a formula that is already worn out in the region. In order for Open Government policies to be successful, they have to understand that policy design and implementation within each country has to adjust to the peculiarities of each political and social system. There can be no possible success if this important factor is ignored.

At the numerical level, the Latin America and the Caribbean region perfectly embodies what has been termed the "third wave of democratization". From 1970 onwards, a gradual increase in the number of democracies in the region got underway (Møller and Skaaning, 2013). This process was headed by Ecuador in 1979, followed by Peru in 1980 and Argentina en 1983. In the 1990s, this process followed the trend seen in the rest of the world and the number stabilized. As Møller and Skaaning point out, the democracies en Latin America and the Caribbean began to become more robust, adopting new institutionality and seeking mechanisms wherein the structural reforms that the countries needed could take place in political, economic and social harmony (2013).

At the level of current democratic institutionality, and in a more or less generalized form, the Economist Intelligence Unit's report on democracy reveals that the Executive's powers are very commanding, and that it plays a much more dominant role in the region than do the weakened legislative bodies. Furthermore, the report states that the judicial branches in many countries are, to a large degree, afflicted by conflicts of interests, and fail to achieve the political independence that such branches of the State require (EIU, 2012).

But, as the same report indicates, generalizations in these matters are not helpful when it comes to understanding the region's complex institutional diversity. The report observes that there is an extremely high variation among Latin American and Caribbean countries

with regard to their democratic index rating. As many as 14 out of 24 countries in the region are listed in the category of "imperfect democracies." However, Uruguay is classed as a "full democracy" with a score of 8.17 (out of 10), the only country in the region in the world's top 20 (number 18), whereas Cuba comes in at number 127 in the global ranking (EIU, 2012).

With regard to support for democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, the evidence shows that it has been on the increase in recent years. According to the 2010 *Latinobarómetro* survey, support for democracy in the region reached 61 percent.

Using data from the *Barómetro de las Américas,* developed by LAPOP and PELA (in Corral 2011), it is noticeable that preference for democracy, as well as satisfaction with it, is higher at the elute level of society than at the ordinary citizen level. Exceptionally, however, in Ecuador and Mexico, it is the citizenry that expresses more satisfaction with democracy than do the political elites in those countries.

According to the same report, the countries that show greatest satisfaction with democracy at the aggregate level are Venezuela (68.8 percent), Uruguay (67.9) and Honduras (67.8). In contrast, the countries expressing the lowest satisfaction with democracy are Haiti (37.8 percent), followed by Mexico and Peru (with 44.6 and 44.7 percent respectively) (in Corral, 2011).

Stein and Tomassi (2006) develop a methodology for analyzing the institutional status wherein public policies in Latin America take place. Figure 2 summarizes four of the indicators that they used to measure the degree of development of the institutions in Latin America compared with other regions in the world. Latin America presents lower degrees of institutional development when compared with East Asia and the developed countries, with *efficiency* being the indicator expressing the lowest level of development.

Figure 2: Development of Public Policies in Latin America
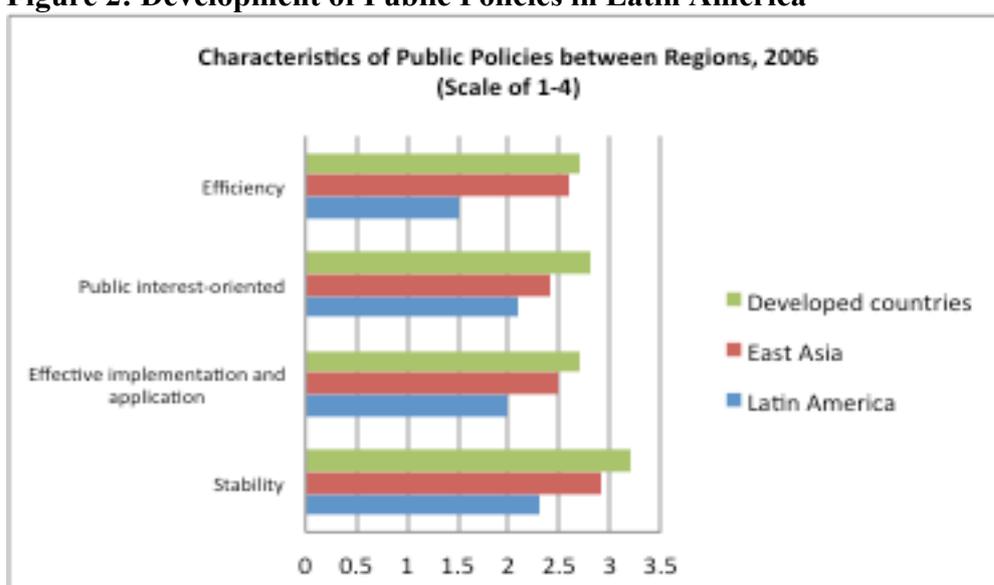
Source: Author's elaboration, based on Stein and Tomsassi, 2006.

In a recent publication, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation presented the results of its *Latin American Democratic Development Index*. In it, two noticeable trends are worth highlighting. The first, reflected in Figure 3, is the fragile democratic stability that is revealed among the sample of 18 aggregate countries between 2002 and 2013.[2] The regional democratic development index has experienced various peaks (close on 5.2 from a total of 5.6), as well as some falls verging on 4.6 points.

**Figure 3: Democratic Development in the Region**
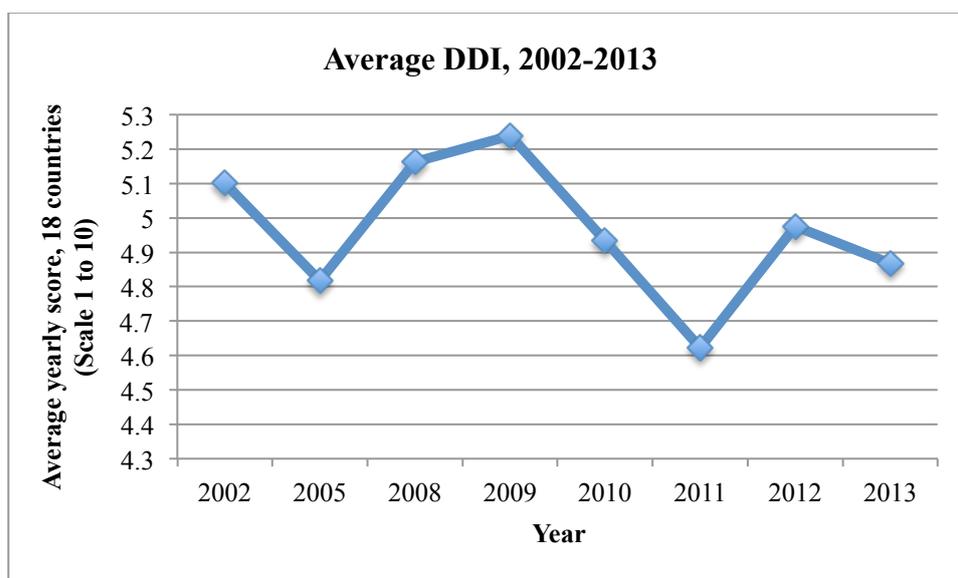
Source: Author's elaboration, based on Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2013.

The second trend, shown in Figure 4, relates to what has been discussed above: the uneven distribution of institutional capacities that exists in the region. Therefore, while three countries (Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Chile) boast a high degree of democratic development, there are three other countries (Paraguay, Guatemala, and Venezuela) that, according to the criteria of the ranking, evince low degrees of democratic development. This presents a challenge when it comes to conducting institutional and political analysis in the region. It is a complex matter to generalize in a region that not only has diverse institutional trajectories, but also has very different national characteristics among the countries.

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[2]Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Figure 4: Democratic Development Index (DDI) by Country
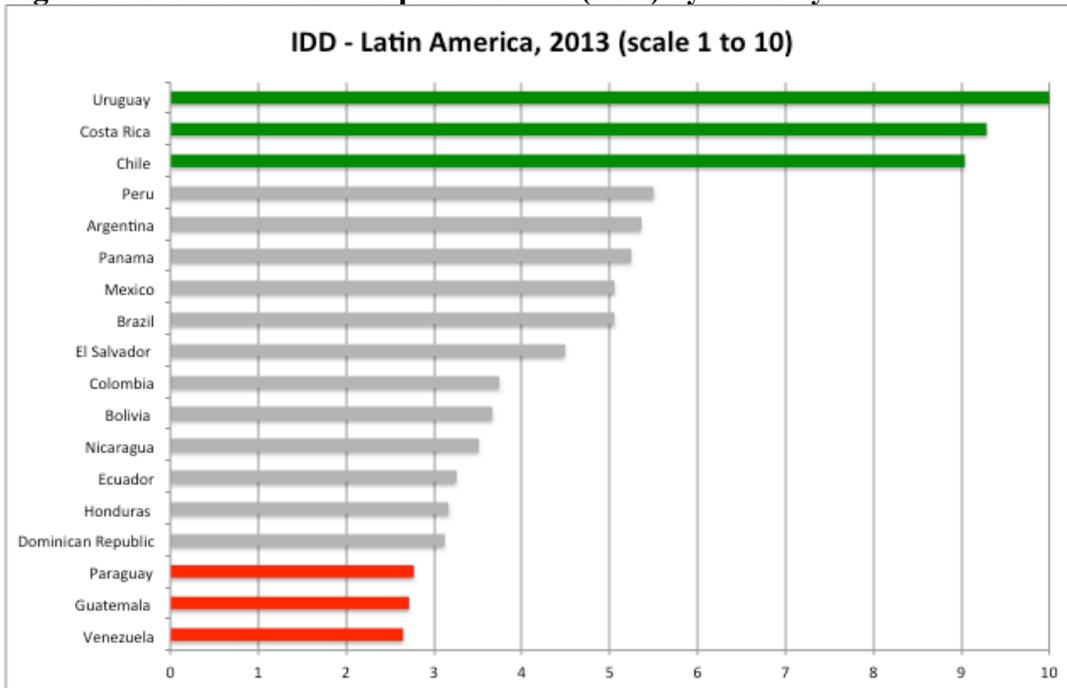
Source: Author's elaboration, based on Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2013.

This regional variation poses a greater challenge when it comes to analyzing the policy that lies behind Open Government policies. If one asks oneself—as the IDB report *La Política de las Políticas Públicas* suggests—"what leads countries to adopt polices that are technically reasonable and well adapted to their context?" (2006: 277), it has to be recognized that a general answer cannot be given for such a specific question. The aforementioned report also points out the "extremely high variation in the policy of public polices in Latin America" (Preface).

As the report Scartascini et al., summarizes, "public policies are not simply items on a menu that governments can choose without restrictions" (2011: Prologue). Neither can they choose unless they are aware of the multiplicity of actors and the context in which they are operating.

The same study points out what many people have perceived for a long time, in the sense that "there is no single list or universal combination of "correct" policies that are independent of the place or the circumstances in which they are introduced. The policies are contingent responses to underlying states of nature (…) and what might work in an instant in a certain country might not function in a different place at a different time" (Scartascini et al., 2011: 9).

How, then, can this problem be tackled? The best solution would be to analyze what comprises the attributes of the various actors intervening in the country's institutional processes, in order to understand what kinds of practices have led to what kind of specific Open Government public policies and actions. This would have to be done country by country, which would be both enormously challenging and outside the remit of this paper, which aims solely to introduce a debate and to provide regional context for it. There are, nevertheless, certain reflections that, irrespective of the general nature, are pertinent in this respect.

The first relates to understanding that the "political process is inseparable from the policymaking process [and] ignoring the link between the two can lead, and in effect has led to, inadequate reforms and disappointments (Stein and Tommasi, 2006: 395).

The second is related to political leadership. As suggested in the aforementioned document *La Política de las Políticas Públicas,* "institutional development is impossible without the development of political, economic and social leaders who can take advantage of the crises that cause changes in the incentives for the main actors"(IDB, 2006: 279).

However, and beyond the general nature of many of the reflections contained in this paper, understanding the regional context upon which a certain range of policies is operating is equally useful and germane.

In this respect, there is one final political (or ideological, if preferred) reflection regarding the political challenge of implementing Open Government. A paradigm shift of this nature is far from being the sole patrimony of one sector or any of particular political leaning. This same debate 20, or even ten, years ago might have been tinged with a certain ideological coloring. In these days, when the borders between what were rigid political ideologies are evermore hazy, the paradigm shift's substance can be perfectly well implemented by any political sector.

Although there are few studies of Latin America and the Caribbean that deal with the ideologies behind the policies (for more details, see Mattera et al., 2010), Europe has indeed been a good laboratory for studying in depth the relationship between ideological typologies and public policies. There are various authors who have arrived at the conclusion that the current political parties, historically associated with certain social groupings, no longer necessarily represent these sectors or struggles. On the contrary, their motivations (above all electoral ones) have more to do with what the literature has denominates the "new social risks" (for more details about the European case, see Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2012; Seeleib-Kayser et al., 2005; and Taylor-Gooby, 2005). The Latin American and Caribbean region is not immune to the phenomenon that has been underway in Europe for several years now. The populism that is prevalent in Latin America and the Caribbean in itself makes the ideological borders more diffuse when it comes to approaching public policies in the region.

What really matters, without getting bogged down in the details that are beyond the scope of this paper, is to understand this global phenomenon in order to better comprehend that implementing this paradigm shift will not necessarily correspond to a triumph for any particular political viewpoint.

All of these ingredients of the regional context demand that the debate should become more healthily complex. Not in vain, the central argument of the document drafted jointly by the OAS and the UNDP—*Los Caminos Diferenciados de América Latina*— suggests that "in the coming years we will witness the drawing up of a differentiated political map of the region" (OAS and UNDP, 2011a: 15). The solutions to the different realities also call for differentiated treatments.

In summary, the evidence put forward in this section at least posits the question as to whether it is possible to refer to the region's institutional maturity as if the region in question were a homogenous one. It would be more realistic and relevant to differentiate the multilayered degrees of maturity present in Latin America and the Caribbean, and how implementing Open Government policies has to be sufficiently flexible to be able to identify this phenomenon.

c. The Other Revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Digital Revolution

The diverse degrees of institutional democratic maturity in Latin America and the Caribbean are not isolated from other phenomena that have, with their defiant energy, taken on key roles in contemporary societies. One of these is technology, and the consequent digital revolution that the world, and particularly Latin America and the Caribbean, is currently living through. The regional evidence in this area demands that attention be paid to a phenomenon that is radically changing the ways that citizens go about debating and influencing the political sphere.

What stands out from the data put forward below is not precisely the growth of specific technological markets. These figures tell mainly of a citizenry that uses these tools on a massive scale throughout the region and suggests new channels of interaction with governments. Technology thereby becomes a key actor that has to be taken into account when it comes to understanding what kind of citizen an Open Government reform will have to deal with.

An estimated 2,400 million people—34 percent of the world's inhabitants—are now Internet users. From 2000 until 2012, users at the global level have grown by 556 percent. Figure 5 shows that Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean are the regions of the world in which the greatest growth in Internet users has been registered during this period (IWS, 2013).

Figure 5: The Explosion in Internet Users (by World Region)
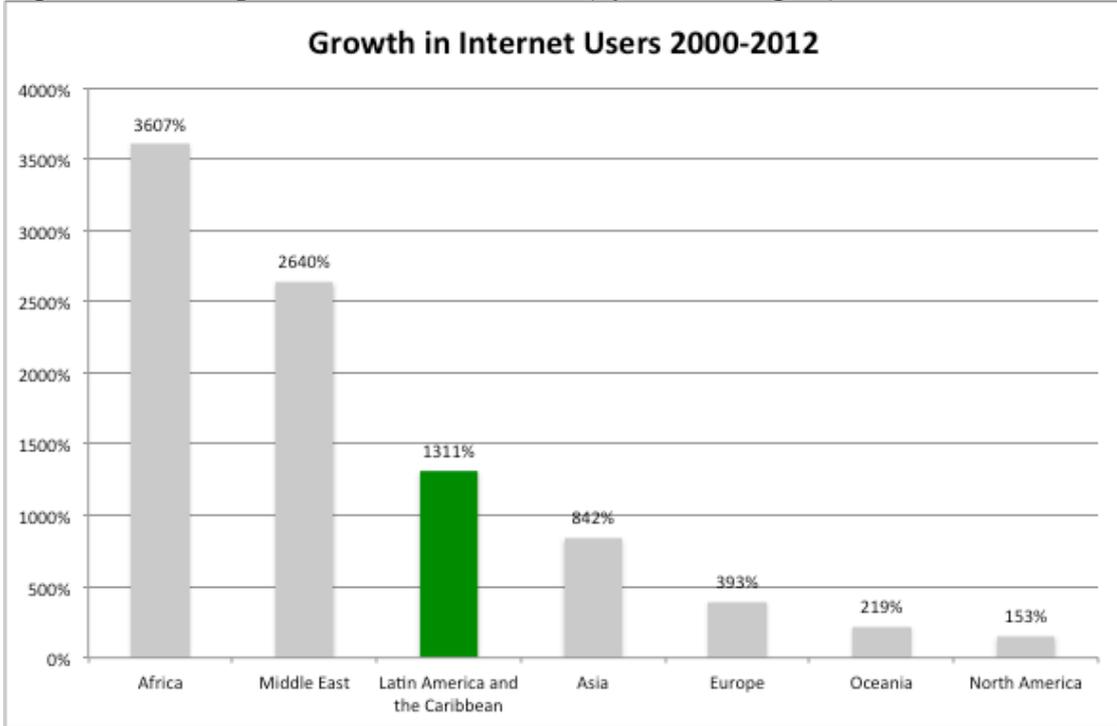
Source: IWS, 2013.

If we consider only the single users—those that only visit a website once during a determined period of time—then Latin America and the Caribbean achieves the greatest growth in 2013. Figure 6 shows that Latin America and the Caribbean grew by 12 percent at the single user level between March 2012 and March 2013. This figure is well above the growth level for single users that other regions in the world achieved during the same period. Colombia was the country with the highest growth in single users (31 percent), followed by Venezuela (with 26 percent), and Mexico (21 percent) (ComScore, 2013a).

Figure 6: Growth in Single Internet Users between 2012 and 2013
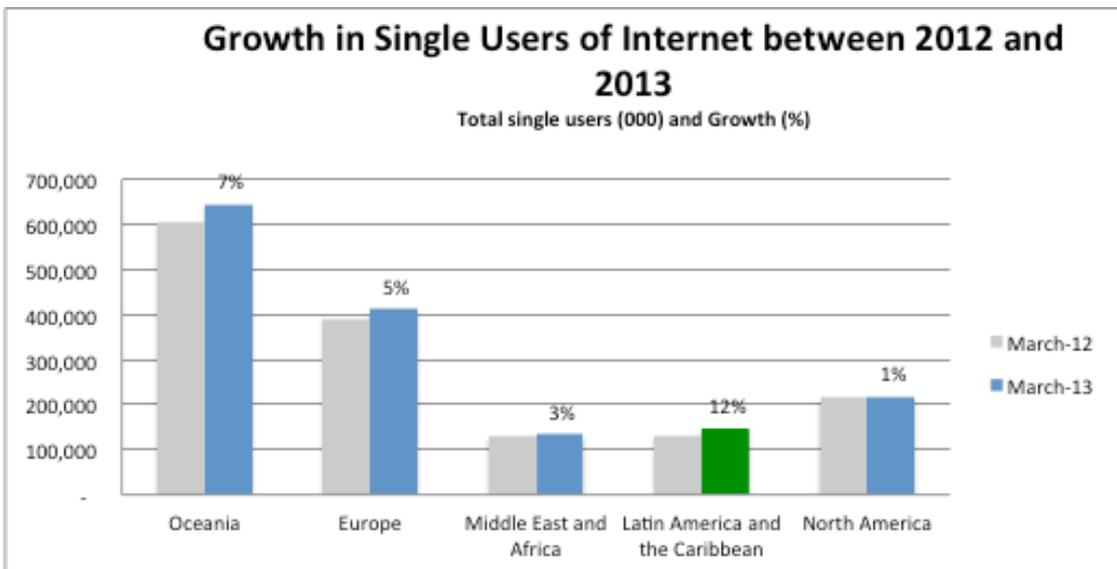
Source: ComsCore, 2013a.

Latin America and the Caribbean also perform well with regard to the world average in at least two areas. While 76.1 percent of people in the world who enjoy Internet access visit news websites, in Latin America and the Caribbean this figure is 88.5 percent. Both the worldwide average and the regional average are close on 31 percent when it comes to accessing banking websites, whereas in Venezuela, Brazil and Chile, the proportion of users who use online banking services reaches 50 percent (ComScore, 2013b). On the mobile telephone level, Latin America is the third biggest market in the world, in terms of volume, after Asia and Africa, with more than 630 million connections up until the final trimester of 2011 (GSMA 2012). The mobile telephone market has proved explosive in Latin America. A study conducted of Peru, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina revealed that between 2008 and 2011 the growth in smartphone ownership in those countries reached a combined figure of 179 percent (Katz and Flores-Roux 2011).

A new phenomenon that has taken giant leaps forward in the region is the use of social networks. Between March 2012 and March 2013, the level of involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean with the social networks has shot up in comparison with average worldwide consumption. In March 2012, Latin America and the Caribbean consumed on average 2.2 more hours of social networks per month than the world average whereas in March 2013 the gap was multiplied by more than five. This signifies, in real terms, that whereas in March 2013 the average number of hours per user each month on the global level was 5.8 hours, the average in Latin America was 10 hours (ComScore 2013b). Brazil is the country wherein users spend most hours per day on the social networks, with an average of 13.8 hours, followed by Argentina (10.2) Peru (8.3); and Mexico and Chile with 7.3 and 7.2 respectively (ComScore, 2013b).

If we take only the example of Facebook use, in 2011 Latin America and the Caribbean was the world region with the greatest penetration in terms of users (84.1 percent). It was followed by North America (82.9), the Middle East, and Africa with 81.1 percent (ComScore 2013a). It is also significant that 25 percent of the time that users in Latin America and the Caribbean spend on browsing the Internet is dedicated to using Facebook. Figure 7 shows the explosive growth in social network use in the region between 2007 and 2012.

Figure 7: Growth in Facebook Penetration
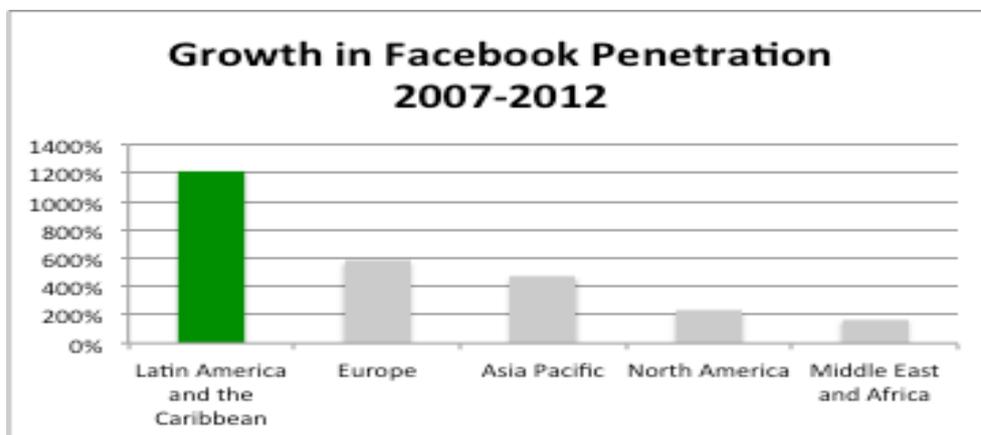
Source: ComScore, 2013a.

This evidence tells us two perhaps contradictory things. First, the public space wherein governments and citizens have traditionally encountered each other is now more dynamic and diffused, which presents practical challenges for any Open Government strategy. Second, figures given are averages. If governments structure all their strategies based on this "tyranny of averages" then the extremes and many specific sectors—above all in a region of such marked contrasts—would be left behind in the interaction between governments and citizens.

d. The Empowered Society in Search of New Consensuses

The implementation of an Open Government policy has to confront two distinct, but connected, dimensions. On the one hand, it has to know how to manage the specific conflict that derives from implementing a political paradigm shift. On the other, it has to deal with a society that has traditionally seen conflict as a way of building citizenship and democracy.

A recent UNDP study—*La protesta social en America Latina*—patently and realistically states what many leaders of opinion have sought to ignore for a long time: "that democracy is, in essence, a conflictive order [and] social conflict is a fact of Latin American social reality, it is part of the political equation in the processes of democratic change that various countries in the region are today experiencing" (UNDP 2012: 15).

An article published in *América Economía* argues that a tension exists at the center of the democratic system, which has its origins in the "maturing of citizen political consciousness". This has meant that the citizenry has been unable to make the political class (or politics in general) respond to its demands (América Economía, 2013a).

Between 2011 and 2013, the region's citizenry has consolidated itself to become a significant actor in the new configuration of democratic systems. Cases 1 and 2 reflect how empowered society is in Latin America and the Caribbean, and how it exercises a kind of active and critical vigilance of the region's democratic institutions.

Case 1: "Thousands take to the Streets in Protest against Everything"

On 10 June 2013, in Brazil, the largest social demonstrations of the last decade took place in Brazil. The immediate cause of the protest was to demand better public services and to protest against the exorbitant public spending that the State has made with a view to the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. The rallies brought more than a million people onto the streets in over 80 cities, an unheard of event in recent times in Brazil.

Although the protests were started by a group of people in Sao Paulo who were unhappy with a hike in bus fares, the demonstrations masked other factors of discontent, which are deeper and more complex. The rise in bus fares was cancelled, yet still the demonstrations continued. This showed that the **street protests – which, as the Folha de Sao Paulo claimed, involved all social classes - were in more in response to structural rather than to situational problems, which governments and their institutions have failed to resolve.**

The protests were non-partisan, attacking not a particular policy, but the political class in general. The headlines on the front page of the Sao Paolo daily *Folha de Sao Paulo* summed it up clearly, stating that "thousands take to the streets protesting against everything".

The President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, was keen to show herself prepared to listen immediately to the demands. A few days after the peak of the protests, she proposed a popular plebiscite within the framework of a wider national agreement to restructure a large part of the country's public services. Furthermore, this plebiscite might become – the President argued- "a specific constituent process for these political reforms".

What is interesting about what happened in Brazil, beyond the specific issue that sparked off the protests, is precisely the structural questioning of democracy as a system of political and social organization.

Sources: BBC 2013, América Economía 2013a and 2013b.

The *Conflict Barometer* developed by the University of Heidelberg in Germany, cited the 54 conflicts that occurred throughout 2013 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The report reveals that Latin America and the Caribbean suffers from a high number of social struggles spread throughout the entire region, with 18 countries accounting for the greatest number of conflicts in 2013: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela (HIICR, 2014).

Case 2: The crisis in the democratic system through the crisis in education.

In May 2011, the largest student demonstrations of recent decades took place in Santiago. Around 80,000 students took to the streets to protest against profit-making in education. In November of the same year, something similar happened in Colombia. A further 100,000 marched through Bogotá calling for a better education. The underlying theme in both countries is related to the marketing of a good, which for the students should be a considered not as a consumer good, but rather as a fundamental right.

In Chile, the pressure exerted by the students throughout the entire presidential term of office meant that there were four Ministers of Education. The first three were removed from office for failing to resolve the conflict.

What the students were proposing was not just modifying part of the educational model. There were proposing to transform the very bases of democratic coexistence upon which many of the public services in Chile have been erected.

Democracy, in Chile and Colombia, had been called into question as a way of providing solutions within the system. This fact had repercussions in Uruguay, Honduras and Paraguay. In November 2011, a continent-wide "Day of Action in Defense of Education" took place, which aimed at reminding people that, in Latin America, education is a non-negotiable right and that the **democracies on the continent must rise to the challenge of facing the new problems of the twenty-first century.**

Sources: Cooperativa, 2011; El Tiempo, 2011

However, there is one case that can be understood as a good example of several of the aforementioned occurring simultaneously: empowered citizens, technology as a catalyst for citizens and social demands, a widespread disenchantment with democratic structures and a crisis of power as traditionally construed. The case relates to the controversy that arose in Chile as a result of the building of a thermoelectric plant in Barrancones, an area bordering on another ecologically protected area.

In 2009, the then-presidential candidate Sebastián Piñera had opposed the thermoelectric plant during his election campaign, promising instead to promote clean and renewable energy sources.

In August 2010, with Piñera already installed in the Presidency, the thermoelectric project once returned to the agenda and the procedures necessary to approve it advanced quickly.

When the news got out, a group of citizens set up an organization—*Chao Pescao*—in order to alert Chile about the President's failure to keep his word. A website was launched containing information and a video, which was spread via the social networks to remind everyone of the campaign promise. During the first five days of its existence, the website received 3,000 single visits every minute, and in less than seven days the video was seen by more than a million people. However, as the issue involved diverse actors and interests, the business lobby and the always-reasonable threat of a power cut won the day. On 24 August 2010, the commission responsible approved the plans for the thermoelectric plant.

The aggrieved citizens then began what came to be known as the "Revolution 3.0": this involved taking to the streets, and mobilizing people through the social networks to call on the President to keep his word. The first national demonstration march to be

organized via Internet in Chile was held. Such was the degree of social mobilization that some of the communications media also left their role as mere "reporters" to one side and began to take action as well. An extraordinary event happened when a program host on the State-controlled TV station squared up to the Minister of the Interior and called on him to reconsider the measure.

Such was the pressure exerted that, in an even more remarkable move that broke all the institutional norms and ignored what an autonomous State organism had already resolved, the President called the head of the electrical company by telephone. They agreed to change the location of the project, to an area that would affect neither the environment nor the President's election promises.

This case illustrates various phenomena occurring simultaneously. On the one hand, the citizens are active, empowered, and can easily organize themselves via the social networks. On the other hand, democracy and the political parties as catalysts for citizen demands under a representative system have exhausted the means they have for resolving structural problems in society. Does this imply that the solution to conflicts between governments and citizens should be resolved in the street? Obviously not. It is rather about trying to find and establish effective popular institutional mechanisms for solving conflicts, because the existing ones are no longer working well enough. A report by the UNDP states that the current challenge facing democracy is precisely knowing "how—in a context of accelerating globalization—politics and the institutions of democracy will have to process the changes that societies in the region are undergoing" (UNDP, 2008a: 16).

Grysnpan sustains that "in the current climate, the appearance of new socio-cultural movements that demand democratization of power, and of citizens who are more critical and autonomous with respect to parties and ideologies, calls for politics of a better quality (…) It is a kind of paradox: more and better politics are demanded within a context of growing skepticism and disbelief in it" (UNDP, 2008b: 36).

As argued at the beginning of this section, conflictiveness lies at the very roots of Latin America and its democracy. Paraphrasing a UNDP study—*Revalorizar la política para fortalecer la democracia*—it might be said that the region has embarked on "the search for new consensuses" (UNDP, 2009). The question that we have to ask ourselves is whether political leaders are willing to consider conflict as an opportunity, rather than a threat.

Section 3
The Practical Implications of a Paradigm Shift

The previous chapters established the preliminary bases for the practical debate regarding the opportunities and challenges that Open Government policies generate in Latin America and the Caribbean. This chapter attempts a critical review of the political economy of Open Government. Based on two specific cases, the chapter analyzes whether it is politically profitable to promote citizen participation and collaboration, as well as their political costs and benefits. Finally, the chapter deals with the importance of confidence in democratic institutions in the new paradigm being proposed. In summary, it offers a critical analysis of what this paradigm shift might mean for the region.

The point of contact between participative citizens and public policies is to be found, mainly, in local contexts. It is hard to structure participatory policies that are implemented from the national level downwards because the point of contact of every policy will always be the level nearest the citizens. In order to understand the practical application of these dilemmas, an example is taken of two kinds of political leadership at the local level, each one with its respective participatory focus. These cases were studied in a dissertation presented at the London School of Economics (López, 2013). The paper discusses two mayors in the Metropolitan Region of Chile, whose terms were between 2004 and 2008. The two communes, Puente Alto and Peñalolén, have similar characteristics in diverse areas: both are among the ten largest municipalities in Chile, with a long tradition of political paternalism in public service provision, with wide socioeconomic diversity, and with a similar geographic situation, given that both are in the eastern part of Santiago and both present significant challenges at the public service level. In spite of these similarities, the two mayors adopted completely opposing approaches in order to deliver a specific public service: the restoration of parks and gardens. Both mayors achieved successful election results.

The first case deals with the Puente Alto commune. The Mayor implemented his park restoration program without any kind of citizen engagement. His approach was entirely "top-down", and delivery of this service was taken to be the municipality's sole responsibility. Consequently, whenever a certain green area was damaged (a lawn was not watered or children's swings were broken, and so on), then the municipality rapidly resolved the problem. The citizens came to understand that the municipality would always repair the damaged parks. The hallmark of this Mayor's term of office—and his electoral commitment—was to provide the fastest possible responses, thereby always negating potential citizen capacity for public service provision. The Mayor was re-elected in 2008 with 70 percent of the votes.

Table 1: Benefits and Costs of Implementing Participatory Policies.

	Benefits	Costs
Non-participatory approach	1. Reduces transaction costs. The reiterated interactions between the authority and the citizens are eliminated by the process. 2. It rapidly aligns management achievements with electoral processes. 3. The authority takes all the credit for its good management.	1. An unstable relationship between authorities and citizens: it mainly depends on how efficient the authorities are. 2. It excludes citizen expertise from the design and implementation of policies that are, precisely, made on the citizens' behalf. 3. In some cases, the solutions, such as the one seen in Puente Alto, do not resolve the underlying problem (mistrust between the democratic authorities and the local community). 4. Economic costs can be high.
Participatory Approach	1. Introduces a new standard of public policy. It makes policies more sustainable over time, given that after the intervention, public service provision rests on an alliance between municipality and citizens. 2. Changes the ownership of future service provision. The citizens acquire an active role in shaping their environment. 3. Reduction of maintenance costs thanks to the new role that residents take on in providing the public service. 4. A new actor takes the stage in the local democratic system: the empowered citizen. This increases the local social capital levels. 5. The empowered, organized residents can develop confidence to undertake further activities: calls for funding, local initiatives, and so on.	1. Requires a lot of time to carry it through. As electoral periods are usually of four years, a solution that takes more than half an electoral term can be politically costly. 2. Requires a continuous presence from the authorities. The evidence shows that the most successful projects were the ones where the Mayor was present to a high degree throughout the process. 3. Risks of frustration if results are not achieved immediately. This can sabotage electoral success. 4. Strengthening an organized community of residents can create an actor that might become an obstacle – or a powerful critic – for the political authority. 5. Very high human resource costs. 6. It is not strictly correlated to electoral success.

The second case is taken from the Peñalolén commune. The Mayor implemented the public park restoration program by including a strong element of citizen participation. However, the Mayor of Peñalolén opted at the beginning to take a "top-down" approach in order to transform informal rubbish tips into parks and gardens, just as the Mayor of Puente Alto had done. As in the neighboring community, this consequently led to a situation where the faster that the cleaning and maintenance service of the public space was carried out, the faster the public dropped litter there. The neighbors understood that the municipality was very efficient at taking away rubbish and, in turn, quickly developed an excellent capacity for throwing it down.

Given the parlous state of the municipal finances, this approach was unsustainable, at least for the Peñalolén budget. It was then that the mayor decided to involve the community in solving the problem and in looking after a public service good. This meant that the citizens had to get involved in building the parks. The town hall would provide the materials and the technical advice, and the residents would have to work on their future park.

The decision was not without its risks: the construction process could take months (or even years) before the park was finished. It also meant rebuilding trust not only in the political authority but also among the residents themselves. Ensuring that the municipality was present with its materials on the days that the residents agreed to work could only restore trust in authority figures, which had utterly deteriorated. Interestingly, the two pillars of this virtuous way of providing public goods were citizen participation and co-responsibility (or collaboration). Once these green areas had been created, it was the neighbors themselves who made sure that the amenities were not vandalized, and in general took care of the new parks. The mayor was reelected in 2008, with 55 percent of the votes.

Although this example cites an experience at the local level, it is valid as concrete evidence for understanding how incentives, risks and costs operate when it comes to taking a participatory approach to public service provision. Table 1 synthetically summarizes and compares the costs and benefits of both approaches. After presenting this evidence for the local level, it becomes necessary to delve a little deeper into at least two of the tensions that have yet to be resolved.

The first tension relates to the electoral benefits that the participatory approach might entail. The evidence reveals that both approaches are electorally profitable. However, one is more costly in terms of time and resources. Furthermore, there are many cases of sub-national administrations that have been involved in cases of corruption and also enjoyed success electorally speaking. The question that therefore arises is: why bother promoting a participatory approach in circumstances in which it is more costly in terms of time and leadership, and calls for much more interaction between authorities and citizens? Moreover, in systems in which vertical practices have become vices, how can these embedded practices be broken with? What incentives will the actors in a political system have to renounce the way that they have always exercised power?

Ferraz and Finan (2009), in their study on Brazilian municipalities, point out that there is a correlation between best political practices (accountability, transparency, quality of policies) and re-election for the authorities.

It would seem that the paradigm shift that Open Government implies is referring to another kind of democracy. It is about, then, its sustainability and legitimacy. Hargreaves and Fink, in *SustainableLeadership* (2006), develop the idea of the moral imperative that society has to change policy design and implementation in a democratic system. For the authors, sustainable leadership or politics is that which undergoes the transition from a sole actor to leadership by multiple actors. In this sense, the emergence of new, empowered social actors, as well as the required form of democracy, should lead one to consider the kind of multi-actor leadership that politics in Latin America Latina and the Caribbean calls for.

In a recent report by the OAS and the UNDP – *Our Democracy in Latin America* – the idea is put forward that if the democracies fail to promote an effective exercise in widening citizen participation, then they will fall below the minimum levels of sustainability, thereby losing legitimacy (OAS and UNDP, 2011b: 28).

It would seem that electoral results couldn't be the sole indicators of the effectiveness of our policies. The challenge, therefore, is to be able to combine electoral success with democracies that are more sustainable over time.

This relates to what has been discussed above about a change in the ownership of public polices and services. The same OAS and UNDP report makes a plea for the creation of sustainable democracies where power is better balanced between the politicians and the citizens.

As seen in the previous chapter, the citizenry, in many spheres, already exercises unprecedented power, which has led governors at diverse administrative levels to react in diverse ways. Given the new social situation, the question that governors should ask themselves is how citizen engagement and collaboration can be institutionalized. At the practical level, it is hard to decide how far citizens should be involved in political processes: there is a clear tension between the speed of the changes and democratization of the decision-making spaces. Participation has to be responsible, in other words, it has to be built upon clear, commonly agreed rules. Neither is it desirable to over-institutionalize participation, as it will lose its richness and will end up being co-opted and, finally, annulled. Furthermore, politics also requires a technical viewpoint. How, then, is it possible to make technical expertise compatible with citizen expertise? How much is required from each one? And on the basis of what criteria?

Given the problems of collective action, the processes of citizen participation and collaboration have to be formalized in some way. But once participation has been formalized and institutionalized, the State is not excused from managing the citizen and ensuring that certain collaborative processes in fact take place. Promoting citizen engagement does not end once the conditions have been created for it to happen. The evidence, at least at the local level, suggests that it has to be stimulated and promoted in regularly repeated processes.

Lahera (in Peñas, 2010) adds that given the multiplicity of actors and interests at stake, achieving political consensus is becoming ever more complicated. The fragility that is inherent in maintaining agreements over time make the participatory processes more complex.

This final point makes the debate even more intricate. Returning to what was put forward in the opening chapter, it is also necessary to define what kind of power citizens are demanding and on which of the seven levels of citizen participation are the new ways of conceiving democracy in the region going to be structured. Without entering into the wider debate about what kind of democracy should be promoted in the region, it is important to define, conceptually and practically, what kind of citizen participation we are talking about when we approach these matters.

The other tension arises from the need to generate participatory policies and practices and the growing lack of confidence in institutions, and among citizens themselves. The aforementioned FLACSO report concludes that on top of the structural challenges facing the region (poverty, security, inequality) "is added the very low level of confidence in the institutions of democracy, which are seen on the one hand as being incapable of resolving and responding to the expectations they have created and, on the other hand, the widespread perception of them as lacking in transparency in public management, while at the same time being recurrently tainted with accusations of corruption" (2013: 7).

The aforesaid study argues that "with greater trust, the willingness to participate and actively contribute increases, with the consequent improvement in public services and in public management in democracy generally" (FLACSO, 2013: 7).

If certain confidence indicators are examined in detail at the world and the Latin America and the Caribbean levels, the challenges that face citizen participation and collaboration as catalysts for a new democracy can be clearly perceived.

At the global level, the latest confidence report put together by *Edelman* reveals that the citizenry has higher levels of trust in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses than in governments. Figure 8 shows the four institutions that enjoy the highest levels of confidence on the global level, with governments generating the lowest confidence levels among citizens.

Figure 8: Confidence in Institutions
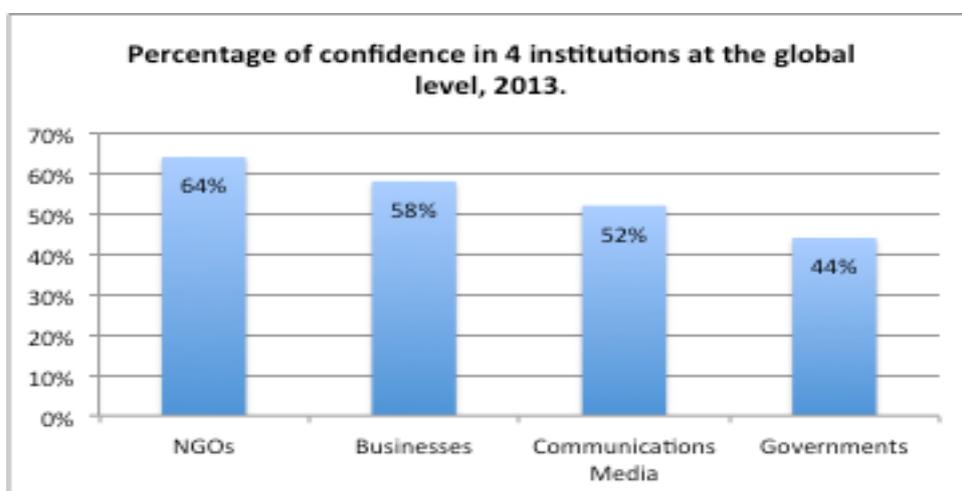
Source: Edelman, 2014

In Latin America and the Caribbean, trust in democratic institutions also throws up some uncertainties. The aforesaid FLACSO study concludes that Latin Americans and Caribbean people "trust the news they see on television more than they trust the President of the Republic" (2013: 7).

The LAPOP (2010) study analyzes the confidence generated by diverse institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Political parties are the institution that inspires least confidence, with a score of just 35.8 percent.

In general, as Figure 9 shows, the majority of democratic institutions score confidence ratings of around 50 percent. It is noteworthy that the Armed Forces are the institution that enjoys highest levels of trust, in circumstances in which in many Latin American and Caribbean countries they either carried out, or supported, military coups.

Figure 9: Confidence in Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010
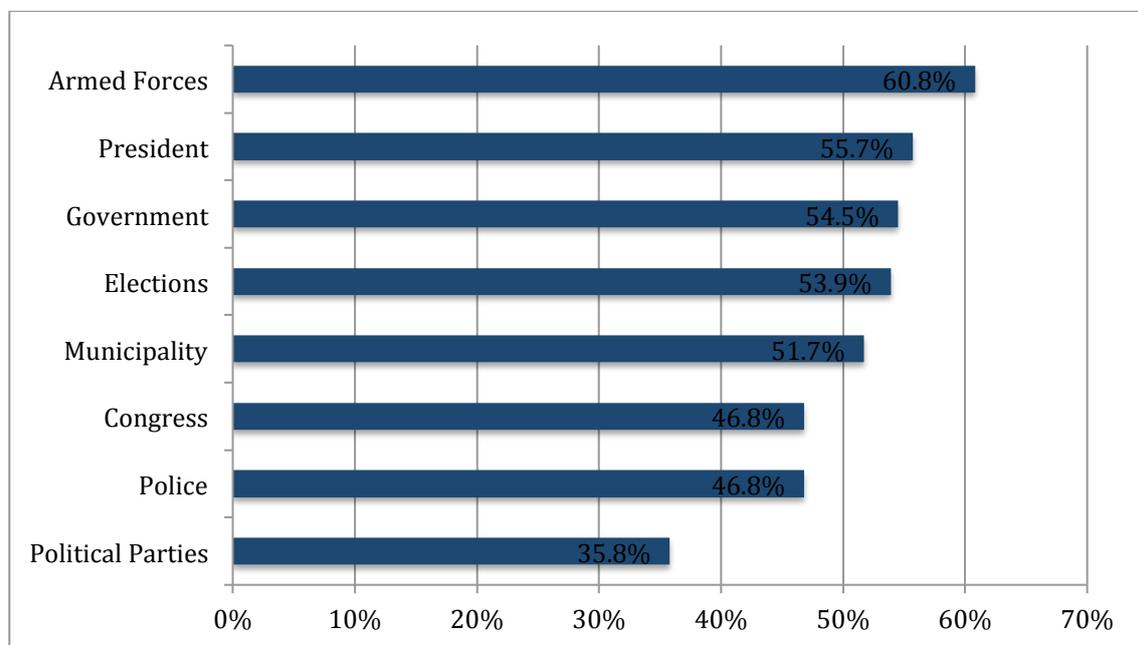
Source: Author's elaboration, based on LAPOP 2010.

By desegregating a sample of 17 countries, Figure 10 reveals the wide variation in citizen trust in the presidents of Latin America and the Caribbean. On average, the average trust in the president, at the aggregate level, is 49 percent.

Figure 10: Confidence in the President

Confidence in the President in Latin America, 2010.
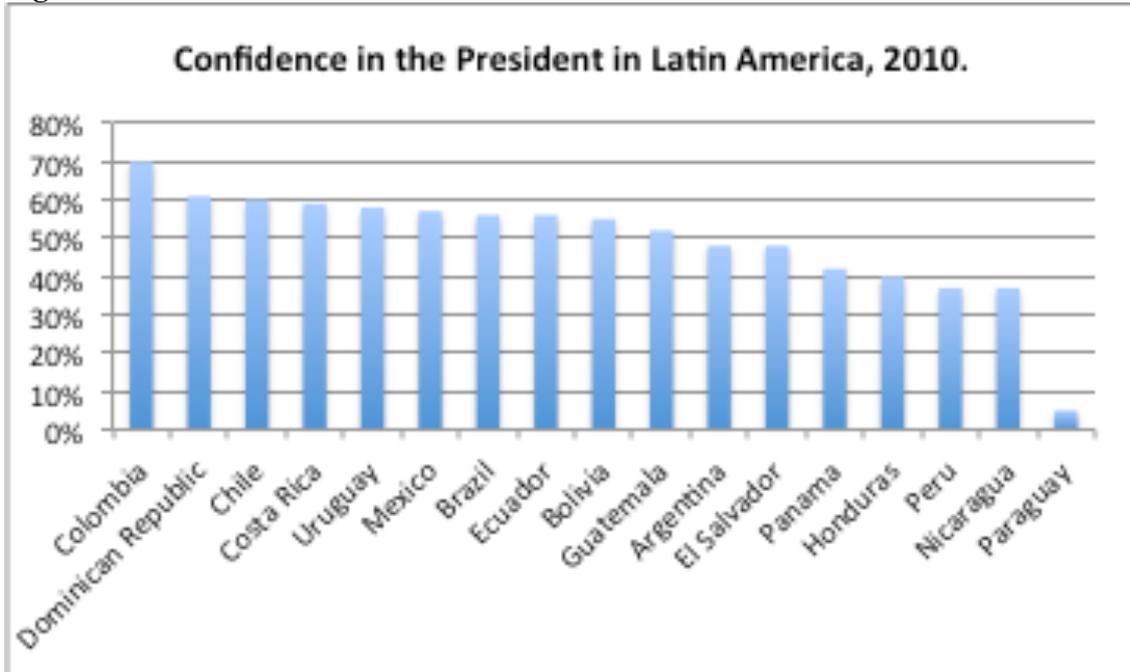
Source: Author's elaboration, based on Corral 2011.

In the same way as there is a virtuous circle involving trust and citizen participation and collaboration, there is an additional element that would help to maximize confidence levels even further: transparency. Although the pessimists and optimists in the literature have yet to reach an agreement as to whether or not transparency generates confidence in institutions (much of this debate is synthesized in Grimmelikhuijsen, 2013), here it will be understood that policies favoring greater transparency do indeed play a part as a catalyst for improved confidence in institutions (IDB 2014).

Likewise, transparency, a fundamental pillar of Open Government enables one of the most important challenges afflicting Latin America and the Caribbean to be tackled: corruption.

This is a matter that is far from being resolved in the world. Transparency International's *Global Corruption Barometer* indicates that political parties are seen as the most corrupt institutions in 51 countries in the world (from a sample of 107). Eight of these countries are found to be in Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay (TI, 2013b).

This report further states that, from a survey sub-sample of 99 countries, it was believed in 88 cases that governments were absolutely ineffective when it comes to combating corruption (TI, 2013b).

Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index 2013* shows that only five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Barbados, Uruguay, Bahamas, Chile and St. Lucia) are among the 25 countries that enjoy the lowest levels of perception of corruption in the world (TI, 2013a).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the perception of corruption on average is very high (73.1 percent). Figure 11 reveals that in all countries in the region the perception of corruption exceeds 50 percent.

Figure 11: Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean

Perception of Corruption en Latin America, 2010.
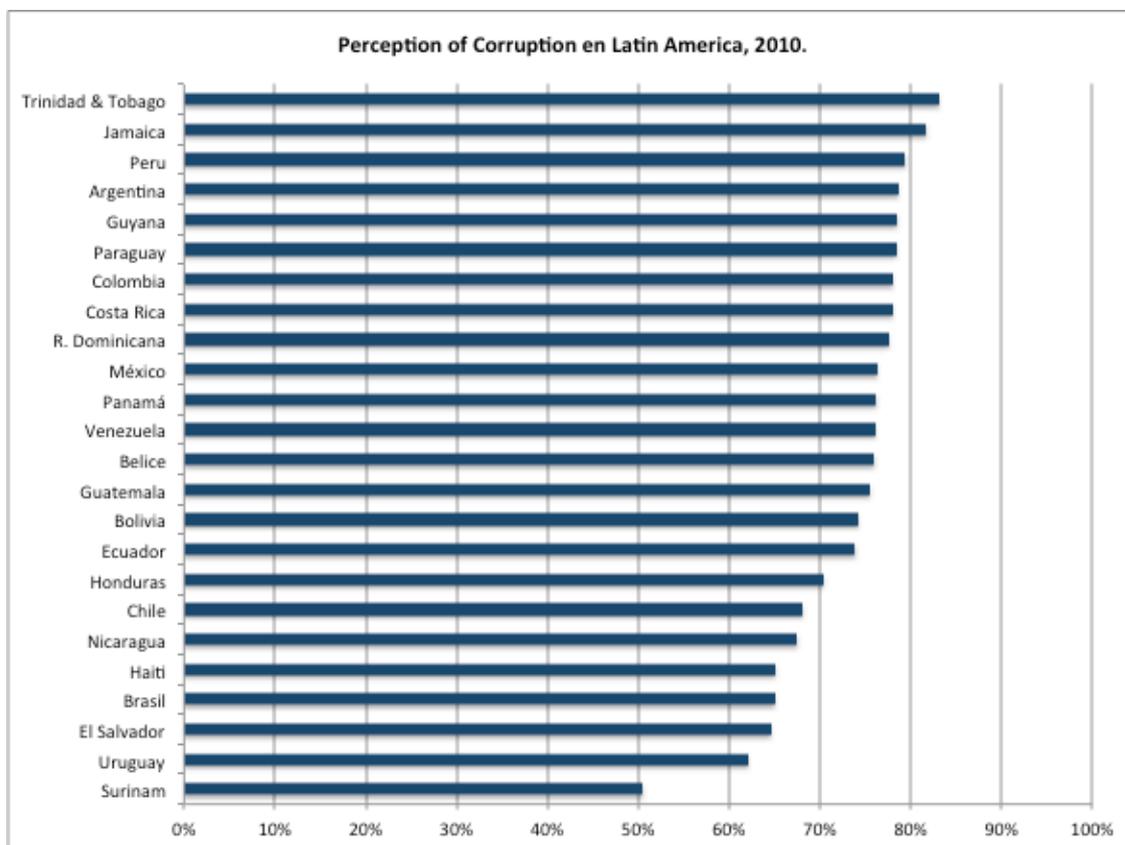
Source: Author's elaboration, based on LAPOP 2010.

Tavits (2007: 218) explains that the corruption levels vary substantially even between countries with similar levels of economic and institutional development "which suggests that there are conjunctural political elements in each democracy that mean that some countries are perceived to be more corrupt than others."

Given the regional and international evidence, and considering not only the challenges still facing the region but also considering the practical difficulties implied by attempting to implement Open Government policies, then what role should the political class assume in the face of these new scenarios and the emergence of new actors? What strategies, at the end of the day, are key for achieving a realistic political implementation of Open Government policies? The following, and final, chapter attempts to make a final reflection to tackle these questions.

Section 4
The Political Challenges of Open Government Policies

If the aim of this paper is to hold a realistic and straightforward debate in order to analyze the strategies of Open Government, then there are still a few questions that remain to be duly addressed. What other change has to be carried out to promote a successful Open Government agenda in the region? What role do government civil servants play in the face of these challenges? This concluding chapter deals with these very questions. The first section reflects on the necessary cultural change that has to be promoted within governments. The second, and final, section summarizes – in the form of recommendations – the ideas have been developed throughout the paper about rethinking, designing and realistically executing an Open Government agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

a. Governments as Publishers

In a recent posting on his blog, the British academic and politician Matthew Taylor (director of the Blair Government's Policy Unit between 2005 and 2006) made a noteworthy reflection about the practical challenges facing public policymaking in the world. Specifically, about the role that design and implementation play when it comes to making changes that will have an impact on public service provision.

Taylor relates the impressions of a British civil servant who, after 15 years working at the local level, was contracted to set up a consultancy for redesigning the process in the national government.

Taylor narrates how the observer, never having been in the British Government, spent several weeks attending meetings and watching how people worked. After a good while, he discovered the objective of working in the national government: "Central government is basically a publisher", just as there are publishers of books. The government is full of people writing things: contracts, papers, regulations and recommendations. And these kinds of texts generally take decades to be completed. As they employ so much time in being written and they are furthermore very complex, they inevitably contain errors that are only discovered when they are implemented.

It is for that reason that innovation in the public sector has different meanings depending on the kind of civil servants who are responsible for carrying it out, argues Taylor. For the functionaries who work under the logic of the central government (those whom the observer calls policymakers), "innovate means writing things and selling them to the people". In contrast, innovation for those who are in direct contact with citizens (whom the observer refers to as designers and implementers of public policies), it signifies trying out ideas on people and for people."

For Taylor, there is an even greater difference between policymakers and designers, which is the way in which they approach errors. Designers and implementers like errors, because they provide useful information that can be used to adapt and improve the policies. Policymakers, on the other hand, who dislike errors because they are difficult to undo, tend to ignore them or suppress information about their failures (Taylor, 2014).

Although some of Taylor's observer's observations might be slightly exaggerated, this does not negate the underlying argument. Above all when it comes to proposing a paradigm shift such as the one put forward in previous chapters, in which one of its most critical factors is precisely the decision to change the way in which power is exercised within a democratic state.

It is unlikely that the public policy paradigm will change if the authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean fail to understand that it is not enough to expend hundreds (or sometimes thousands) of pages on rethinking government and its challenges. What is required is to design a realistic implementation that takes into account both the national institutional peculiarities and the new typology of social actors. Nor is it about implementing a menu of public policies and actions without altering or transforming the axis of democratic power. It is in these matters wherein resides the principal challenge of Open Government. Furthermore, Waissblut argues that "a good many of the authorities in Latin America believe that parliamentary rhetoric and tabling some legislation or, in other words, modifying public policy, will be enough to solve the problems" (2000, p. 7). As Waissblut points out, Latin America and the Caribbean has to make the transition from one notion of public policies (*what to do*), to one of public management (*how to do it and achieve it*). This represents the greatest and most crucial challenge facing the policies of Open Government.

b. The Pathways toward a Complex but Achievable Agenda

1. Latin American and Caribbean countries have the opportunity to make a political paradigm shift for five reasons. (1) It is about a new narrative that goes hand-in-hand with a profound transformation of practices within governments; (2) innovations stop being one-way and public service provision acquires a multi-actor focus; (3) power within countries is restructured, ensuring that governments delegate real power to their citizens, making them co-responsible for generating public value; (4) it implies managing new associative practices; and (5) it is about a call to States to take responsibility for the practical implementation of these challenges.

2. Managing the paradigm shift intelligently. Using Taylor's metaphor, the publishing role of national governments has to learn how to coexist with the designing and implementing role. This is not exempt from problems with regard to the obstacles that innovation encounters in the public sector: administrative rigidities, lack of training, lack of political vision at management level, the budget, political terms that are too short for longer innovation processes, legitimate fears about innovation because it strains the current legislation, or because there is no critical mass to assimilate profound changes.

3. The Open Government agenda is an integral agenda: the three pillars that comprise it have to be at the core of national agendas. If this paper has used up more pages on two of the pillars, it is for the simple reason of airing two concepts that that have often been debated only at the theoretical level, and almost never at the practical level. Open government needs each one of its three pillars if is to make sense.

4. Managing citizen engagement. This is not about invalidating citizens and making them believe that they are participating when, in fact, they are not. Nor is it about trying

to put the brakes on a whole country while waiting for an assembly to decide on a national project. The formula of governing new societies with old political practices is exhausted. Faced with this reality, the evidence shows that citizen participation and collaboration, at least on the local level, can act as mechanisms for structuring a better democracy, with a new logic regarding the distribution of power. Either governments must understand that they no longer have sole possession of power (and manage it in the light of these limitations), or they face the prospect of losing more and more credibility, trust and, at the end of the day, votes. Likewise, building trust in the public authorities and institutions is key for establishing solid foundations for this paradigm shift.

5. The differentiated institutional paths that countries in the region have taken have to be taken into account. No realistic Open Government agenda can afford to ignore this factor. National contexts do matter, and the evidence clearly shows that when it comes to designing and implementing public policies, political and social processes have to be comprehended on a national, case-by-case basis. There can be no successful generalized recipes, given that the region displays such high variation in diverse indicators, above all when it comes to institutional maturity. The theory of the "separate paths" is completely reasonable insofar as it traces a dual path: on the one hand, common Open Government aims and, on the other, customized national strategies (above all at the design and implementation level) for each country.

6. Recognize the role that "technologized" and empowered citizens play in this equation. It is in this context that institutional management of social conflicts must be assumed as a priority in order to turn the Open Government agenda into a realistic strategy. The problems, however, are even more complex. The temptation to resolve conflicts in the street is high and effective implementation of Open Government policies calls for transcending the political, economic and social instabilities and situations that are common in the region. There will always be conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean. Consequently, accepting that there will be conflict will enable it to be managed and incorporated into the agenda, so that implementation of Open Government policies does not suffer from outbreaks of potential uncertainties.

7. Respond and scale up rapidly. Citizen participation and collaboration function best in local contexts (with a so-called bottom-up approach), rather than in national ambits. The problem is that many Open Government policies in Latin America and the Caribbean are being conducted using a "top-down" approach. Governments therefore face the challenge of selecting the local level elements that can be applied to make nationwide Open Government policies successful and really effective.

8. Recalibrate the political success indicators. Political success in Latin America and the Caribbean should no longer be considered solely on the number of votes cast. It has to be transformed into a reasonable mixture of electoral success and democratic quality. However, this brings a new challenge: how can this transformation be managed?

9. Leadership. There is no point in reinventing the way in which the task of government is structured democratically if there is a lack of leadership with the energy needed to implement difficult changes. As in many aspects of human activity, the success of this strategy depends exclusively on how willing governments are to innovate. But, more importantly still, it depends whether the culture within the government manages to put execution and implementation at the very core, so that these

innovative ideas become reality. The new public problems are far from being resolved by greater technological adroitness: they also require broad consensuses and strong political will. This means adopting measures that are often unpopular, and accepting that that a new standard of public service provision requires greater expertise, in order to align these measures with electoral success.

10. Merely opening up the debate on these matters is already an achievement. Although it may seem trivial, straightforwardly debating the practical dimension of what Open Government policies imply—with all their challenges, obstacles, opportunities and incentives—is the first, and often forgotten, step needed in order to turn this agenda into reality. It is now up to governments to take advantage of the opportunity that the situation offers, and to begin governing new citizens using correspondingly new paradigms.

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