TOWARD A THEORY OF LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

By Charles W. Anderson

FOR SOME, it may appear quite bizarre and quixotic to speak about the "policical system" of Latin America. Social system refers to pattern, persistence, and regularity in human behavior. Latin American politics appear to be whimsical, unstable, crisis ridden, and unpredictable. It would appear that what is at issue in the political life of this region is failure to establish political systems, the hardening of a state of crisis when all rules are suspended, into a way of life.

However, though the patterns be unfamiliar to the observer who identifies political system with the processes of constitutional democracy, there do seem to be certain recurrent and persistent patterns in Latin American political life. The intervention of the military in politics, the technique of the *coup d'etat,* the use of violence and terror as political instruments, insecurity of tenure for constitutionally established governments, are all phenomena that appear over and over again in the political history of the region. As K. H. Silvert puts it:

> "Unpredictable" and "unstable" are the two adjectives most often applied to Latin American politics. The implications of both pejoratives are partially erroneous. First, to be "unstable" is not necessarily to be "unpredictable." As a matter of fact, one of the easiest things to predict is instability itself. And second, some types of revolutionary disturbance do not indicate instability. If the normal way of rotating the executive in a given country is by revolution, and there have been a hundred such changes in a century, then it is not facetious to remark that revolutions are a sign of stability—that events are marching along as they always have.[1]

Still more enticingly, we are aware that certain patterns of Latin American politics, such as the generally respected rights of exile and asylum for losers in power struggles, may indicate that there are rules of political activity generally understood by the participants, which are effective in regulating political conduct even where formal, constitutional commitments do not apply. It may be that those versed in the skills of Latin American politics have not yet stated the nature of this art. Perhaps it is not that the term "political system" is inapplicable to Latin American politics, but rather, that we, the outsiders, do not yet know how that system operates.

A second objection to the effort to describe the "rules of the game" of politics in Latin America will be raised. I have been using the term "political system" in the singular. Surely, the same set of propositions cannot be applied to the heterogeneous circumstances of the twenty Latin American nations. Obviously, Costa Rica and Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, Bolivia and Mexico reflect quite different forms of political life. On the other hand, on close examination, it is clear that the simple label "constitutional democracy" does not account precisely for the political history of Costa Rica which has thrice had recourse to violent techniques of adjusting power relations in the twentieth century, nor does the appelative "military dictatorship" reflect the subtleties and complexities of the technique of rule of the Somoza family in Nicaragua. There would seem to be a need for a body of theory, a set of statements sufficiently general to enable us to compare Latin American governments in similar terms, and which could be adjusted to the characteristics of specific situations. Hence, what we shall say is not meant to refer only to the "typical" Latin American political situation, and to exclude such deviant cases as Uruguay or the Dominican Republic during the era of Trujillo. Rather, it is hoped that by adjusting the value of such variables as the "power capabilities" included in this theory, these statements can be applied generally to political life throughout Latin America.

A frequent point of departure for analysis of Latin American politics is to note that in this region there is imperfect consensus on the nature of the political regime, that the "legitimacy" of the formal political order is weak.[2] Political legitimacy is that characteristic of a society which enables men to disagree vigorously over the policies that government should pursue or the personnel that should occupy decision-making posts, yet to support common notions of the locus of decision-making authority, the techniques by which decisions are to be made, and the means by which rulers are to be empowered. For the American student of Latin American politics, the sublime countertheme that ran below shock and grief at the assassination of the President of the United States was the sure knowledge that the system would survive, the republic would prevail. In lands where political legitimacy is weak, the end of a government brings into question not only the person of the successor, but the very form of government that will emerge.

However, imperfect consensus on the nature of political regime is not a problem of politics peculiar to Latin America, nor does it account for the distinctiveness of Latin American politics. Rather, it is on a further dimension of the problem of political legitimacy that we must concentrate. For in Latin America, no particular techniques of mobilizing politi-

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cal power, no specific political resources, are deemed more appropriate to political activity than others. No specific sources of political power are legitimate for all contenders for power.

Of course, this is to some extent the case in every society. In the United States, despite the fact that our own political ideology prescribes the aggregation and mobilization of consent as the only legitimate means of structuring power relationships, we do recognize that possessors of certain power capabilities, economic wealth, or control of armed force, have particular influence in decision making. However, in democratic society, the organization of consent according to prescribed norms is generally reinforced by holders of other power capabilities, and, in the long run, democratic processes serve as a court of last resort in structuring power relationships. In contrast, in Latin America generally, democratic processes are *alternative* to other means of mobilizing power.

The problem of Latin American politics, then, is that of finding some formula for creating agreement between power contenders whose power capabilities are neither comparable (as one measures the relative power of groups in democratic society by reference to votes cast) nor compatible.[3] The political system of Latin America may be described as the pattern by which Latin American statesmen conventionally attempt to cope with this variety of political resources used in their societies, and the way in which holders of these diverse power capabilities characteristically interact one with another.

In restructuring our frame of reference to cope with this unfamiliar state of affairs, we might begin by suggesting that the techniques used in advanced Western nations as means of ratifying power relationships more frequently appear in Latin America as means of demonstrating a power capability. The significance of this can best be seen by examining three prominent techniques which we commonly assume are means of ratifying power relationships (that is, or structuring a regime or government) and reflect on where they fit in the Latin American political scheme of things. These would be: election, revolution, and military dictatorship.

Elections are not definitive in many parts of Latin America. However, they are conscientiously and consistently held, and just as conscientiously and consistently annulled. Few Latin American nations can demonstrate an unbroken sequence of elected governments over any substantial period of time. In a sense, our real question is not that of why elections are ignored, but why they are held at all given their inconclusive character.

Latin American political instability is more comprehensible if we do not view election as definitive, but as part of an ongoing process of structuring power relationships, in which election is important to some contenders, but not to all. Democratic election is really only relevant to those who have specific skills and support, who rely on their capacity to aggregate mass consent through parties and movements and interest groups for participation in the political process. Insofar as such contenders cannot be ignored by other holders of power capabilities, election, which is the device that "demonstrates" this power capability, measures and confirms it, is part of the political process. But since there are other contenders in the political process, whose power is not contingent on this type of support, elections do not define political relationships. Rather, the results of an election are tentative, pending the outcome of negotiations between other power contenders and the groups that have demonstrated a power capability through election.

Thus, when a new political movement which has amassed sufficient electoral power that other contenders must take it into account appears in the political arena, judgments must be made by other political contenders as to whether, on balance, the threat posed by this movement to the position of existing contenders is greater than the cost of its suppression, whether the stability of the system would be better insured by accommodating the power contender into that circle of elites that negotiate for control of the resources of the state or by its suppression.

Similarly, it is conventional to distinguish between "real" revolutions and "typical" revolutions in Latin America. Again, the "real" revolution, in the Western sense of the term, is a technique of ratifying power relationships, of structuring a new regime. The "typical" Latin American revolution, on the other hand, does not demolish the previous structure of power relationships, but adds to it that of the revolutionaries, who may be said to have demonstrated a power capability that other power contenders had found it advisable or necessary to recognize and accommodate into the power structure of the society.

Finally, we generally say that Latin American military dictatorship is to be distinguished from European military totalitarianism. With the possible exception of Perón, political intervention by the military in Latin America does not seem to have the effect of overhauling the power system of the society. Rather, under military governments in Latin America, holders of important power capabilities in the society are assured that their position in the society will not be endangered, and are permitted some participation in the political process. (Certainly, military governments may brutally restrict entrance of other new power contenders into the political arena, and in some nations, they are supported by other power contenders for just this reason.) In general, the effect of military *coup* in Latin America is to add a new power contender to the "inner circle" of political elites, but one whose control is not exclusive or definitive.

One may say that the most persistent political phenomenon in Latin America is the effort of contenders for power to demonstrate a power capability sufficient to be recognized by other power contenders, and that the political process consists of manipulation and negotiation among power contenders reciprocally recognizing each other's power capability.

It is apparent that it is often not necessary for a power contender to actually use a power capability, but merely to demonstrate possession of it. For example, Latin American armies often prove incredibly inept when actually called upon to use armed force in a combat situation. One recalls the fate of Batista's well-equipped military force during the events of 1958. However, except in "real revolutionary" situations, Latin American armies are seldom called upon to actually use armed force. What is at issue is the demonstration and recognition of a *transfer* in the control of the military institution. This may be accomplished by the announcement of a shift in allegiance of certain critical garrisons. That one of the primary targets in a *coup* is control of a radio transmitter so that the insurgents can *inform* the populace of the change in loyalties is a vivid example of what is in fact going on.

Similarly, "manifestation" or "demonstration" is a means of demonstrating the implicit power capability of the mob. Seldom does mob action actually become manifest (as it did in the Bogotazo of 1948), rather, the presence of the multitude assembled before the national palace is generally adequate for existing power contenders to recognize and seek to placate or accommodate the new power capability that has emerged in their midst.

Even the use of noninstitutionalized violence and terror is often designed to show possession of a power capability rather than to use it directly for political ends. More true to the Latin American tradition in such matters than the political assassination or widespread destruction of property or life, is the symbolic act of terrorism or violence. For example, the theft of an art collection in Caracas in 1962, the kidnapping and release unharmed of a U. S. Officer, as components of a rather consistent strategy of the FALN terrorists in Venezuela, were designed to produce the largest dramatic appeal and embarrassment to the regime, without large-scale devastation of property.

While the Latin American political process is becoming more complex, and such acts of civic disruption and violence are growing more serious and threatening in intent, in the classic pattern of Latin American political life, such techniques of demonstrating a power capability seem generally accepted as appropriate to the political system. Thus, when such techniques as manifestation, strike, and even violence are used symbolically, that is, as the demonstration and not the use of a power capability, there would seem to be an *a priori* case that the appropriate response of government leaders should be conciliation and bargaining. However, when use of such techniques actually degenerates into important destruction of life or property, it seems more generally felt that the rules have been transgressed, and that the use of sanctions is called for. Brutal police suppression, with the loss of life and widespread arrests, in the face of a student riot, even one that may have culminated in the burning of automobiles or the breaking of windows, may breed an ugly public mood. On the other hand, persistent agitation that actually disrupts the way of life of the society and is not dealt with firmly by constituted authority may lead quickly to agitation for a stronger, "no nonsense" government.

The characteristic political process of Latin America may then be described as one of manipulation and negotiation among power contenders with reciprocally recognized power capabilities. Seldom is this process overt or public. Often it does not consist of a formal situation of "negotiation" at all, but is rather implicit in the statements of a new government as it takes office, and carefully announces a policy format that accounts for the interests of all prominent elites, or as it delicately pursues a policy which takes account of dominant power contenders.

The character of the system is perhaps most strikingly illustrated in the "learning process" which Latin American reformist movements undergo when they come to power. While "outside" the effective political arena, they build consent on the promise of radical and sweeping reforms. The power of the military will be reduced, large foreign economic interests will be nationalized, a thoroughgoing agrarian reform will be carried out. Having created and demonstrated a power capability on this basis, having assumed political power perhaps on the basis of an election, their attitude changes. They become proponents of "evolutionary change," of "gradual, reasonable, reforms," in which "all social forces must participate and contribute to the welfare of the nation." The army is confirmed in its perquisites. Economic policy becomes more moderate. Strong action contemplated against existing elites is modified or abandoned.

What is at issue is less political cynicism, or the difference between campaign oratory and actual statesmanship, than it is a process by which these newly accepted power contenders learn the conditions of their own rule. In some cases, this learning experience is quite overt and apparent in public pronouncements made before and after entering office. In others, such contenders learn only by hard experience, by being deposed, and subsequently readmitted to power as more docile contenders. Of the former type, Arturo Frondizi of Argentina is a prime example. A fire-eating reformer out of office, committed economic nationalist, and defender of the rights of labor, he became an economic moderate in office, once instructed in the economic "facts of life" of post-Perón Argentina, quite eager to accept the stabilization recommendations of the International Monetary Fund, to invite in foreign petroleum firms, to hold the line on labor wage increases. Of the latter case, the *Acción Democrática* movement in Venezuela is revealing. Coming to power in 1945 on a program of reform, suggestions of action against both the military and foreign oil interests contributed to their replacement in 1948 by a harsh military government. The party returned to power in 1958 chastened and wiser, now seeking a "reasonable relationship" with the petroleum industry, and suggesting no diminution of the power of the army in national life.

The Latin American political system is "tentative." Unlike nations where constitutional provision and the legitimacy of election guarantees a specified tenure for any government, in Latin America, government is based on a flexible coalition among diverse power contenders which is subject to revision at any time if the terms under which the original government was formed are deemed violated. Revision occurs primarily when an existing holder of an important power capability feels threatened by action of government. Thus, in 1954, when the government of Jacobo Arbenz, the second consecutively elected government in recent Guatemalan history, attempted to carry out an extensive agrarian reform, diluted the army's power through creation of a "people's milimia," and permitted overt Communist activity in collaboration with the government, it was overthrown by threatened holders of important power capabilities. Similarly, in Argentina, the government of Arturo Frondizi was deposed when Frondizi appeared prepared to permit *Peronista* electoral participation, adjudged a serious violation of previous "understandings" by important power contenders.

The Latin American political system therefore, accounts for change, and permits change, but only within a rather rigorous context. New contenders are admitted to the political arena of reciprocally recognizing elites in Latin America when they demonstrate a significant power capability, and when they provide assurances that they will not jeopardize the ability of any existing power contender to similarly participate in political activity. Thus, with the exception of "real revolutionary" situations, the normal rule of Latin American

political change is that new power contenders may be added to the system, but old ones may not be eliminated.

IT is this characteristic of the system that gives Latin American politics its distinctive flavor. While, in the history of the West, revolutionary experiences or secular change have sequentially eliminated various forms of power capability, contemporary Latin American politics is something of a "living museum," in which all the forms of political authority of the Western historic experience continue to exist and operate, interacting one with another in a pageant that seems to violate all the rules of sequence and change involved in our understanding of the growth of Western civilization. Politically pragmatic, democratic movements, devoted to the constitutional and welfare state ideals of the mid-twentieth century, stand side by side with a traditional, and virtually semi-feudal landed aristocracy. "Social technocrats" and economic planners of the most modern outlook confer and interact with an institutionalized Church which in some countries is favored with a political position not far removed from the "two swords" tradition of Medieval political thought. Military *caudillos* cast in a role set in the early nineteenth century, and little changed with the passage of time, confront an organized trade union movement, a growing middle class, a new entrepreneurial elite.

The rule that new power contenders will be admitted to the system only when they do not jeopardize the position of established contenders contributes to the tentativeness of the system in operation. Neither the accommodation of a new power contender (such as a reformist political party) nor its suppression is final. There is a marked reticence in the classic pattern of Latin American politics to define for all time who may and may not participate in the political process, illustrated by the rule that exile rather than purge is the appropriate way of coping with an antagonistic power contender. If a suppressed power contender can survive long years of banishment from the political forum, the chances are good that at some future date the patterns of coalition and alliance among established contenders will be revised in such a way that the contender will again be able to participate in political activity, to redemonstrate its power capability in an environment more hospitable to its admission to that inner circle of forces that reciprocally recognize each other's right to be part of the political system. The long and tragic history of the Peruvian APRA party, suppressed and underground for long periods, yet recurrently admitted to the political arena by virtue of its capacity to demonstrate large-scale mass consent to its leadership and program, is illustrative.

New contenders are admitted to the political system when they fulfill two conditions in the eyes of existing power contenders. First, they must demonstrate possession of a power capability sufficient to pose a threat to existing contenders. Second, they must be perceived by other contenders as willing to abide by the rules of the game, to permit existing contenders to continue to exist and operate in the political system. If the first condition is not fulfilled, the power contender will be ignored, no matter what the merits of his case may be. (For example, a strike by a few hundred students over a penny increase in bus fares may bring on a full-scale governmental crisis and immediate concessions to the students, while a full-scale agrarian revolt in some remote province may merely be noted and deplored by decision makers in the capital city. Given the urban bias of the Latin American political system, the former affects the conditions of power in the system, the latter does not.) If the second condition is not fulfilled, efforts will be made to suppress the new power contender.

The ability of established elites to effectively suppress a new power contender depends on a variety of circumstances. Some established contenders are not loathe to support a new contender to strengthen their bargaining position in the political process. Hence, in recent years, some military leaders in Latin America, reading the handwriting on the wall, have adopted a "reformist" or "democratic" posture, seeking alliances with mass movements or middle class parties. Increasingly, the Catholic Church is abandoning its old bases of political alliance, and throwing in its lot with the "modern" political forces. In addition, the basic style of the political process, which resembles a complex game of chess between political forces with reciprocally recognized power capabilities, implies a certain level of conflict and competition between the established power contenders. When such inner circle elites are in conflict or stalemate, a new contender may enter the process by the back door. For example, in 1945 in Peru, the APRA party, for years suppressed by dominant elites, was permitted to participate in an electoral contest. The election itself was in many respects the outcome of a deadlock between the established elites.

When disunity or deadlock among established contenders threatens to admit a potentially dangerous power contender to the political arena, military dictatorship is often the most satisfactory remedy to preserve the system intact. Without jeopardizing the status of existing contenders, the *caudillo* replaces bickering, conflict, and "politicking" among the dominant political participants with order, firmness, and suppression of the threatening new political force. That this is often the basis for military rule in Latin America is well evidenced by the enthusiasm and relief felt by established political groups when an Odría in Peru, or a Rojas Pinilla in Colombia, comes to power to end a "crisis" of enmity and conflict between those elites which dominate the political system, and in which a threatening political force is bidding to come to power in the vacuum thus created. Yet, like that of other contenders, the rule of the military dictator is tentative, contingent on his ability to maintain the coalition of agreements and imputed objectives that brought him to power. Should he fail to maintain his power capability, or to obey the rules of the game that existing contenders are to be permitted to act politically according to the rules of negotiation and coalition, should he, in short, violate the implicit "understandings" that led to his acceptance, he too may be turned out. The fate of Idígoras Fuentes in Guatemala, of Perón in Argentina (particularly in his relations to the Church, the economic elites, and the military), and for that matter, of Odría and Rojas Pinilla, is illustrative.

IT is inappropriate to view this classic political system of Latin America as entirely static. Often, we suggest that the normal course of Latin American politics is designed to reinforce the power of the oligarchy against the forces of change at work in the society. This is not entirely the case, and put this way, is somewhat deceptive. The rule of the system is of course that established elites will be permitted to continue to operate and to maintain many of their political and socio-

economic perquisites intact. But the rule of the system is also that new contenders, new holders of significant power capabilities, will be able to partake in negotiation for a share of the resources and powers of the state if they do not jeopardize the right of established elites to similarly act. Hence, although the landowners, the Church, the military, continue as prominent political economic forces, the terms of their share in the perquisites which political involvement can offer has been adjusted by the accommodations of a burgeoning middle class, new types of interest groups and political parties, a working class elite of skilled, organized, industrial laborers, into political life. It is true that these "new" forces have not achieved as great a share of the political economic resources of the society as have their counterparts in the advanced nations because of the requirements of the system that a substantial part of available resources must be allocated to the "older" contenders, the landowners, the military, and the like. However, it is, in almost all Latin American nations, quite untrue to suggest that these new contenders have been denied any share in political economic rewards at all, for the system has accommodated new power contenders, the system has changed. The conflict and crisis of contemporary Latin America is then more accurately described as one in which newer contenders feel that too large a share of social rewards are allocated to established contenders in fulfillment of the terms of the classic political system, rather than that the political system is one of complete rigidity and suppression, in which the emerging forces of change are unable to participate and derive benefit from political economic life at all. The peculiar character of Latin American political economic change then, would seem to be best analyzed, not in terms of our conventional and oversimplified categories of "class warfare" and "resistance to change," but as product of the distinctive political system of the region, one that permits new power contenders to be added to the system but is so designed that older political factors are not eliminated, one that is—if one can accept a most surprising use of the term—more "tolerant" as to the types of power capabilities that are relevant for political participation than are the political systems of the advanced, Western nations.

Ironically then, Latin American politics are not characterized by "revolution" as we conventionally assume, but by the total absence of any historic revolution that could eliminate some power contenders from the political system, and legitimate certain types of power capabilities as exclusively appropriate in the mobilization of political power. The significance of the great democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century in Western Europe and North America, then, is seen as that of rejecting as legitimate power capabilities those based on the feudal control of groups of serfs and land, or sheer military power, or the divine right of monarchy in which Church and state mutually reinforced the other's claims to legitimacy. The significance of the great democratic revolutions was that they effectively eliminated all power contenders who could not, at some point, base their claim to power on the aggregation and mobilization of consent, electorally tested. Latin America never experienced this democratic revolution. Latin America never went through the process by which those whose skills and resources were appropriate to the mobilization and organization of consent (the middle class) became dominant in the society, and could deny political participation to all those who could not base their claim to power on a type of power capability which was, in fact, only one of many possible in organizing power, and which did, in fact, refer to the political resources available to only one part of the population. Latin America did not legitimate democracy, that is to say, it did not restrict political power to only those who could mobilize consent. In fact, Latin America, as a region, has not undergone a revolution that could legitimate any particular type of power capability. Hence, the power systems of divine right monarchy, military authority, feudal power, and constitutional democacy all exist side by side, none legitimate, none definitive, and the political system that has emerged is one in which all of the political techniques that have been experienced by Western man continue as part of the system, and the system prescribes the rules for their interaction, and for the persistence of the system itself, by prescribing that none of these historic power capabilities may be eliminated entirely.

In saying this, we have implied a definition of revolution, which might be stated as follows: revolution occurs when some power contenders or some types of power capabilities are successfully eliminated from political participation. By this definition, some revolutions have occurred in Latin America, some political forces have chosen not to play according to the rules of the classic system just described, and have been successful in their endeavor.

MOST students of Latin American politics agree that three regimes exist in modern Latin America that could properly be described as "revolutionary" in nature. These revolutions occurred in Mexico in 1910, Bolivia in 1952, and Cuba in 1959. Some note Guatemala from 1945-1954 as a revolutionary situation, and we will define it as a revolution that failed, or is temporarily in abeyance, perhaps going through a Thermidorian phase.[4]

All three of these situations essentially fit our definition of revolution. In each, a large part of the thrust of revolutionary agitation was against foreign control of natural resources or economic institutions. It is to be noted that here the intent was to eliminate certain power contenders (the foreign owners) rather than the power capability (control of economic factors as a political resource). In two of the revolutionary situations, Cuba and Bolivia (the latter in relation to at least mineral resources) the objective was to add the power capability of economic control to other political resources of the revolutionary regime through the device of expropriation and nationalization. In Mexico, the economic power capability previously in the hands of foreign power contenders was eventually allocated both to the revolutionary regime, (nationalization of some basic industries such as petroleum) and to a new private, but national, group of entrepreneurs (Mexicanization). In all three cases, a prime component of revolutionary ideology was "anti-imperialism" which we would define as the intent to eliminate external power contenders from participation in the political system, to "nationalize" the political process.

Agrarian reform in all three revolutions was designed to eliminate both the power contenders and the power capability represented by the semi-feudal control of land and labor through the institution of the *hacienda.* All three revolutions were to some extent successful in thus "modernizing" the political system (e.g., in eliminating an archaic power capability), but in all three, residual traces remained, and in each,

there is some evidence that the power capability of traditional agrarian authority was in some areas merely transferred to the new administrator of the collective or state farm (Cuba) or the agrarian or *ejido* bank (Mexico).

All three revolutions more or less successfully eliminated the traditional military as a prominent power contender. (However, only Costa Rica, which constitutionally abolished its army, can be said to have abolished the power capability of semi-legitimate control of armed force.) In Cuba, this power capability has been incorporated into the other political attributes of the regime through the device of the militia. In Mexico, the military remains as a power contender, though its capacity to use its power capability has been substantially, though always tentatively, reduced by the increasing legitimacy of other types of political resources.

In Mexico particularly, and to some extent in the other two nations, efforts were made, none completely successful, to eliminate the power capabilities of the Catholic Church. In these situations, as throughout Latin America, it is primarily the secular attributes of the Church (the *hacienda* power capability) that have successfully been reduced, while other power capabilities (ideology, capacity to aggregate consent) have remained more intractable.

The revolutionary mystique in Latin America insists that the classic system of politics can be transformed by the elimination of specific power contenders and power capabilities. The revolutionary experience in Latin America suggests that in some instances the characteristics of the older system reemerge, though often in greatly revised form. Revolution may make a great difference in the course of Latin American political life, though generally not all the difference expected by its perpetrators. Thus, the anti-imperialist strain in Cuban revolutionary thought culminated not in the elimination of the foreign power contender, but in the replacement of one set of foreign contenders (the United States interests, public and private) with an alternative set (the Soviet bloc). Similarly, the Bolivian revolution has been kept alive by giant infusions of United States aid, aid that has implied a prominent role for the U. S. in the decision-making processes of that nation. In Mexico, it is to be noted that foreign investors were eventually readmitted to the political economic sysem, though on terms that radically reduced their ability to use economic resources as a political capability.

The present political regime in Mexico, which Mexicans like to refer to as the "institutionalized revolution" is remarkably suggestive of the tenacity of the classic system of Latin American politics. Although the revolution of 1910 eliminated some power contenders, the eventual outcome of the revolutionary experience was the formation of a new set of elites, each recognizing, on the basis of demonstrated power capabilities, the right of the other to negotiate in the allocation of the resources available through the system. The interaction of the various sectors of the official party in Mexico—the campesino, popular, and labor sectors of the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution, or PRI—can only be described as manipulation and negotiation between mutually recognizing power contenders. The eventual inclusion of the new industrial and commercial elite of Mexico into the political system, though not into the official party, from which they are pointedly excluded, and the reconciliation of the revolutionary regime with the Church, in contradiction to a basic theme of revolutionary ideology, reflects the capacity of the informal system to survive and reshape the formal structure of the Mexican revolutionary regime, just as the informal system survives and decribes patterns of political interaction not anticipated in the formal, constitutional, democratic structures of other Latin American nations.

CHANGE is accounted for in the classic system of Latin American politics, but at a pace that is too slow for some of the newer power contenders. For some, revolution, by eliminating some power contenders and power capabilities, promises to change the pace of change, to make the Latin American political system more compatible with those of advanced Western nations, which themselves eliminated certain archaic power capabilities through revolutionary techniques several centuries ago.

However, some Latin American elites see the possibility of increasing the pace of change without revolution, without the drastic elimination of power contenders from the system. The basic conflict between modern power contenders in Latin America concerns the relative merits of "evolutionary" or "revolutionary" change. For proponents of either course of accelerating the course of change, the conflict is with those who would preserve the "legitimacy" of the classic system of politics in Latin America.

The evolutionary route to accelerated change, embraced by such leaders as Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela, José Figueres of Costa Rica, Fernando Belaunde Terry of Peru, and many others, may be described as the quest to legitimate "democratic" power capabilities (those that rest ultimately on some form of aggregated consent) through the conversion of non-democratic power capabilities into democratic ones. In other words, those whose power does not rest on consent will have their actions redirected through structural change of the system, their power capability converted and not destroyed. Hence, the military will be "professionalized," not eliminated from the political arena, but directed toward a role more appropriate to democratic states. The old *hacienda* owners will not be destroyed, but required to adopt modern means of production, and modern forms of labor relations. Traditional authority, binding the patron and peon, will gradually disappear to be replaced by bargaining between responsible employers and responsible representatives of organized labor. The effort, in short, is to revise the classic system in terms compatible with the classic system. Existing power contenders are assured that their position within the system will not be jeopardized, in fact, so the ideology of the evolutionary reformer goes, it will actually be enhanced. The power of the *latifundista,* for example, is on the wane, his economic importance diminishing. He can only preserve his power, and enhance it, by adopting more modern techniques of production and social and political interaction. Other evolutionary leaders argue that such change is essential if the system is to remain the same, that the alternative to reformed performances by existing power contenders is their elimination through a revolutionary movement.

The ideological framework of this approach appears under the aegis of many conventional categories of contemporary political thought, yet it is adequately described by none. The heritage of Marxism, continental Second International socialism, Christian democracy, and the "New Deal," may be invoked to define what these leaders are about, as well as such indigenous strains as Peruvian *Aprismo* and the experience

of the Mexican Revolution. However, none of these describes what really is at issue for such evolutionist movements.

Their prime appeal is to something that can only be described as a notion of the "national interest," made vivid by the awakening of nationalism as a relevant and meaningful notion of reference and interaction for increasing numbers of publics in Latin America. Their vision and context of action is that of the interrelationship of the various sectors of the nation in development. Hence, labor unions must moderate irresponsible wage demands, for investment essential to national industrial development can only be achieved with moderate labor costs, and industrialization is vital if the goal of productivity, welfare, national greatness, and a higher level of industrial employment is to be achieved. However, industrialists must accept extensive programs of education, public health, and social welfare if a "modern" domestic market and pattern of consumption is to be achieved. Agrarian reform is essential if a level of agricultural productivity is to be achieved that will be sufficient to feed increasing urban populations, aside from local subsistence food production, if scarce foreign exchange earnings are not to be wasted on imported foodstuffs, if export agriculture that will provide the wherewithal for industrial expansion is to be developed.

The educational mission of statecraft implied by this approach has made a certain impact. For the modern sector, in some nations at least, the classes seem less antagonistic, the interests of industrialists and workers less contradictory, than they did some years ago. The prospects of the evolutionary approach may be seen by an examination of Betancourt's Venezuela, Rivera's El Salvador, Lleras Camargo's Colombia. Its limitations are also apparent. The pace of change appears faster than that implied in the classic system, but for many, slower than that implied by revolutionary change, particularly that exemplified by the Cuban revolution. The economic shambles of Goulart's Brazil, the demise in frustration of Frondizi in Argentina, bring questions about the validity of the evolutionary approach in these nations. The collapse of Bosch's Dominican Republic and Villeda Morales' Honduras at the hands of the defenders of the "old order" frames the question clearly. The evolutionary style of reform may be undone either from the right or from the left.

VICTOR Raúl Haya de la Torre of Peru, the father of *Aprismo,* has said, "Latin America is not easy to govern." As this notion of the "system" of Latin American politics should make clear, the tasks of statecraft in this region are intricate, complex, and frustrating. Even the most skilled democratic political craftsman, a man of the stripe of Lyndon Johnson or Franklin Roosevelt might pale before the task of "creating agreement" among the diverse contenders and forces as work in the Latin American political milieu. In the classic or evolutionary styles of Latin American statesmanship, politics is supremely the art of the possible, the art of combining heterogeneous and incompatible power contenders and power capabilities together in some type of tentative coalition, one in which the various members feel no obligation to maintain the combination intact for any prescribed term of office. George Blanksten, in his *Peron's Argentina,* likens the task of the Latin American politician to that of the juggler, who must keep a large number of balls simultaneously in the air, and is apt to be hit on the head by the one that he misses.

In view of the complexity and frustration of working within the system, it is no wonder that the apparent simplicity and malleability of revolution has an appeal in Latin America that itself adds to the complexity of government. But the attractions of the revolutionary alternative are often deceptive. Its simplicity is premised on the existence of a revolutionary situation, of a vivid and vital mass desire and capacity to start over again, on new terms, under new conditions, and that situation is exceptional rather than predictable. Certainly, there have been revolutions in Latin America, and there will be more, but there have been more insurgent movements that failed, that captured no following, that could not overcome and replace the going system.

Revolution requires exceptional leadership of a certain style to succeed, and those who have possessed it, the Maderos, Zapatas, Castros, and Bolívars and San Martíns, have entered the ranks of the vivid personal heroes of Latin American history. But there is another style of leadership which is relevant to the conduct of Latin American government, and there is no reason to believe that it is less available in this culture than that represented by the revolutionary politician in arms. The skills at the craft of politics, of working within the system to the end of transcending it, have been exemplified by men like Betancourt, Frondizi, Figueres, Lleras Camargo, López Mateos, and many others. They have their historic predecessors in such figures as Sarmiento and Juárez. Their skills and capabilities are not to be despised. In fact, set within the context of the system in which they have operated, and against the background of man's efforts to govern himself, they often appear as little short of incredible.

NOTES

1. Kalman H. Silvert, *The Conflict Society: Reaction and Revolution in Latin America* (Hauser Press, New Orleans), 1961, p. 20.

2. This is the core concept in the analyses of Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review,* 52, 1, March, 1959, pp. 69-105; and Martin Needler, "Putting Latin American Politics in Perspective," *Inter-American Economic Affairs,* 16, 2, Autumn, 1962, pp. 41-50.

3. Throughout, we will be distinguishing between power contenders and power capabilities. A power capability will be defined as the property of a group or individual that enables them to be influential in political affairs, in other words, a political resource. Examples of prominent power capabilities in Latin American politics would be:

Semi-legitimate control of armed force (control of the military institutions and equipment of the nation).

Capacity to mobilize, organize, and aggregate consent.

Capacity to create non-institutional violence, terror, or civic disruption.

Traditional authority (control of land and labor force through the pattern of social relations involved in the *latifundia* system).

Control of natural resources, or economic institutions.

Skill at the manipulation and recombination of the abstractions, symbols, and processes involved in complex social organization (bureaucratic expertise).

Various power capabilities may appear, of course, in combination. For example, the power of the Catholic Church in Latin America must be defined as an alloy of traditional authority, ideology, capacity to aggregate consent, and in some instances, economic wealth.

A power contender then, is one who uses a power capability to attain certain specific objectives through political activity, in other words, a political actor. For example:

A military "clique," service, or unit.
A political party, interest group, or movement.
A group or association identified with a specific economic interest.
A community or region.
A family, class, or clique.

4. The term refers to the reactionary period of the French Revolution, and in this context is derived from Crane Brinton's discussion, in his *The Anatomy of Revolution.* (Prentice-Hall: New York: 1938).

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