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**The politics of Latin American
development**

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The politics of Latin American development

Third edition

Gary W. Wynia

William Kenan Professor of

Latin American Politics

Carleton College



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Preface to the third edition

I have tried to make this edition more instructive than its predecessors. I rewrote the “president’s report” in the first chapter so that it better addresses current issues. There is also new material in Part I on the foreign debt issue, the Roman Catholic Church, and the armed forces. But, as might be expected, most of the revising was done in Part II. All of the national cases have been brought up to date, with special attention given to the restoration of constitutional democracies in countries that were previously governed by their armed forces. I have also added more information and analysis on Cuba and Nicaragua.

Anyone familiar with the second edition will notice that I have reorganized Part II. In this edition I begin with Mexico because in my own teaching I have found it to be a provocative starting point for students, all the more so after the 1988 elections and the questions they raised about political change. I have also joined previous chapters on populism with those on military authoritarianism in Brazil and Argentina, to facilitate more systematic comparisons of those nations’ movement to authoritarian government and from it, recently, to democracy.

The 1980s have been peculiar and frustrating to Latin Americans. Never have so many countries launched democratic governments in so short a time span, yet never before have so many of them been forced to struggle with enormous foreign debts that they cannot pay. More Latin Americans are voting now, but they are earning less than when the previous editions of this book were published. How much longer they can yield income to their creditors without provoking political rebellion remains uncertain, though no one doubts that discontent will continue to rise.

I am especially grateful to my friends and colleagues in Latin America for the insights they continue to supply. Finally, this edition owes much to my students at Carleton, who enjoy asking questions that I cannot answer, and to my pal Mario, who has dozed through each edition while I wrote it.

G.W.W.

Preface to the second edition

Three things distinguish this edition from the first one. First, each chapter was rewritten and, to varying degrees, reorganized in order to improve the exposition and, in Part II, to make the treatment of each type of politics more complete and the comparisons of countries more meaningful. An entire chapter has been devoted to Mexico, for example, and the discussion of the Allende regime has been moved from the chapter on revolution to the one that deals with democratic reform politics in order to stimulate a discussion of the limits of constitutional government. Second, insights gleaned from recent scholarship are added in several places, including the sections on the Church, the military, authoritarian government, and economic dependency. And third, the analysis has been updated with the addition of new material on the 1982 Brazilian elections, the Argentine military's rise and fall between 1976 and 1983, the Nicaraguan revolution and its aftermath, and the world financial crisis and its impact on the region in the early 1980s.

The book was never intended to serve primarily as a summary of current events, but rather as an introduction to some of the fundamentals of Latin American politics and public policy. That remains its purpose. Nothing has happened to alter these fundamentals. Legitimate governments remain scarce, Latin America is as vulnerable to external forces as ever, the region's militaries – though ruling in fewer countries now than a decade ago – still believe that it is their right and duty to govern whenever they see fit, few of the benefits of economic development have trickled down to those most in need, revolutionaries continue to struggle against heavy odds, and American presidents still believe that they are obligated to block radical change within the hemisphere.

As in the first edition, no effort has been made to present every theory or interpretation of Latin American politics offered by students of the region. No work could do so without sacrificing much of its coherence. The approach taken here is intended to provoke meaningful

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discussion, which I hope will cause those who disagree with it to undertake the kind of study needed to generate conclusions of their own.

Nothing is more pleasing to a teacher than to learn, as I have during the past six years, that many people have gained from one's work. I can only hope that the readers of this edition will discover even more than their predecessors did in the first one.

Preface to the first edition

Latin America is an enduring source of fascination to the student of politics. Within the territory that lies between the Rio Grande and Tierra del Fuego there exist exceptionally diverse forms of political life ranging from the very traditional to the revolutionary. Fundamental issues of politics, economic development, and social justice are still intensely debated throughout the region, and governments continue to experiment with competing forms of political rule and public policy. But Latin America is also a source of frustration to those who try to comprehend its public affairs. Its immense variety and diversity defy simple description, and the behavior of its leaders repeatedly confounds observers. It is no wonder many students of the region prematurely abandon their quest soon after they have begun, convinced that the analysis of Latin America's intrigues should be left to the expert or to those involved in its daily affairs.

Some of this frustration is justified, of course. Latin America is a vast region where 316 million people of European, Indo-American, African, and Asian heritage occupy an area larger than the United States. Its politics are complex, the motives of its leaders often obscure, and its range of experience great. Yet, it is the thesis of this book that Latin American politics, though complex, is comprehensible and that a few basic tools of analysis, consistently applied, can take us a long way toward the development of understanding. To begin with, despite their diversity, the Latin American nations do have many things in common that facilitate systematic analysis. They have, for example, shared a long colonial experience that has had a lasting impact on their social values, economic structures, and political institutions. Most also gained their independence at the same time and spent their formative years struggling with similar nation-building problems. And, most important to the student of the contemporary scene, they now share several conditions, including widespread poverty, uneven and irregular economic growth, and heavy dependence on the more affluent

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industrialized nations, which provide markets for their exports and financial capital and technology for their development.

There is no better place to begin to develop an understanding of Latin American politics and public policy than with these last three conditions and the ways governments have dealt with them. A rich and diverse array of measures has been tried in recent time. You can still find a few traditional autocrats who endeavor to hold back the forces of change even though self-imposed isolation is no longer possible. There are others who have placed their faith in democratic politics, hoping change will come peacefully through citizen participation in the resolution of development problems. Still others have rejected democracy, claiming that their citizens cannot accept responsibility for self-governance or that a firm authoritarian hand is needed to impose the kinds of growth-stimulating policies that can overcome the region's underdevelopment. And some have decided that only through a revolutionary transformation of their societies under the direction of a mass-based political party can development and social justice be achieved.

The purpose of this book is to introduce you to these governments and to give you some of the intellectual tools needed to analyze their conduct and assess the effects of their decisions on the welfare of Latin Americans. When you complete it, you will not only have become familiar with the different ways governments have dealt with poverty, inadequate economic growth, and dependency, but you will also have acquired some of the skills needed to explore the world of Latin American politics on your own.

A book of this kind cannot be written without drawing on the research of others who have studied Latin American politics and economic life. I am especially indebted to the path-finding work of Charles W. Anderson, William Galde, Celso Furtado, Albert Hirschman, Helio Jaguaribe, Guillermo O'Donnell, and Kalman Silvert. Of course, I alone am responsible for the way their ideas have been interpreted and joined in this book. I have spared the reader footnotes and instead have listed at the end of each chapter the principal English language monographs that were consulted. It is my hope that these brief bibliographies will also serve as points of departure for readers interested in pursuing each topic further. Most of the works cited contain excellent bibliographies of relevant material available in Spanish, Portuguese, and English. In addition, maps of Latin America are provided

at the end of this Preface, and data describing each nation's economic and social conditions are included in the Appendix.

This undertaking is the product of several years of teaching Latin American politics to university undergraduates. It represents the culmination of successive attempts to meet the challenge laid down each year by students who insist that they be taught how to understand the political behavior of the Latin Americans who share the hemisphere with them. Had they been less demanding, this project never would have been begun. I have also gained immensely during the past fifteen years from the wisdom of the Latin American public officials and private citizens with whom I have discussed the region's affairs during my visits to their countries. I can only hope that this book faithfully communicates their insights.

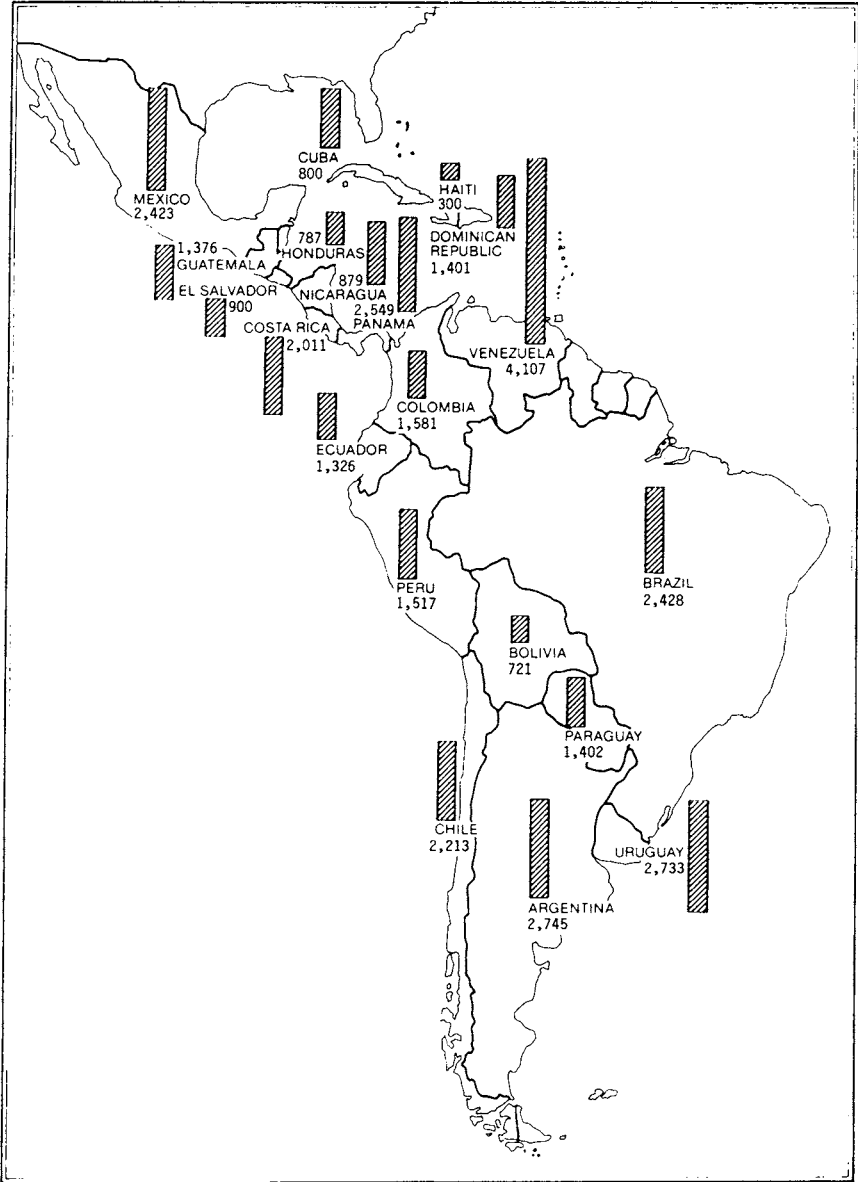
Several colleagues have read the manuscript and contributed to its improvement. In particular I thank Roger Benjamin, Peter Johnson, and Sue Matarese of the University of Minnesota, along with Sue Brown, who typed the many drafts. I am also grateful to Professors Lawrence Graham of the University of Texas, Richard Clinton of Oregon State University, and William Garner of Southern Illinois University, who gave much needed criticism and advice at each stage of the project's development. Finally, I owe my greatest debt to my teacher, colleague, and friend, Charles W. Anderson, whose intellectual influence on this project is greater than either of us cares to admit.

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Map 1. Latin America

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Map 2. Per capita gross domestic products 1987, measured in 1986 U.S. dollars. (Source: Inter-American Development Bank, *Economic and Social Progress in Latin America*, 1988, p. 540.)