

TYPOLOGIES AND APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

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This bibliographical essay represents an effort to analyse how North American scholars are studying Latin American political parties. The author undertakes an in-depth review of the literature and assesses the different approaches used by North American political scientists in the study of parties, concluding with an extensive bibliography on the subject.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1950's Maurice Duverger wrote a systematic work in which he sketched a preliminary general theory of political parties (Duverger 9, Preface). Another major work was published in the same period by Sigmund Neumann in which he attempted to offer a theoretical frame of reference for the comparative study of parties in underdeveloped countries.

Latin American political parties, for exemple, were classified and defined by Duverger as "archaic and prehistoric types", characterized by "followers grouped around an influential protector, clans formed around a feudal family, camarillas united by military leader" (Duverger 9, p. 3). Neumann's conceptualization on the other hand, did not deny the existence of parties in Latin America, although he did not voice any contrary opinion to the limitation imposed by Duverger's formulation. His views of the "contradictory" one-party system of Latin America, as represented by the Mexican model, were baised in so far, as "one might recognize the opposition

of the one-party system versus two and multi-parties the fundamental cleavage of our time: dictatorship versus democracy" (Neumann 21, p. 403). This would naturally lead one to erroneously conclude that if the institution party served as an instrument to an authoritarian government it could not be studied as a party.

The recognition in the second half of the 1950's that "students of comparative politics have usually had a blind spot with regard to Latin American political parties" constituted the first step toward a more systematic study of the various political groupings of the area (Fitzgibbon 44, p. 4). This attitude contrary to the "death sentence" which Maurice Duverger had issued to all Latin American parties in his work, was followed by many scholars, particularly those interested in the study of political parties (Ranis 58, p. 798), (Alexander 46, p. 101), (Martz 61, p. 512), (Angell 48, p. 309), (Anderson 52, p. 128), (Blanksten 47 p. 109).

In spite of the general disagreement to Duverger's theory, most political scientists were trained under the same theoretical orientation as Duverger was, and, therefore, no outstanding innovation appeared. These scholars tended to study comparatively formal structures that indicated little or very little about functions and roles of political parties in "non-western" or western underdeveloped systems. Thus, after more than one decade, the same type of work continues to appear, without producing any relevant contribution to the field of political parties.

This poverty of relevant contributions to the field has been attributed to a failure, so it seems, "to recognize that at some point so many units of scholarly effort and resources would be better invested in the acquisition of new data than in the further analysis of the old" (Sorauf, p. 41).

Those political scientists with an institutionalistic intellectual orientation were probably not prepared to study the grouping phenomena without having the preoccupation in calling them "political parties" as the Western terminology and ideology would require. The result was a proliferation of typologies which say almost nothing about the behavior and the real role of political groupings in Latin America.

Approaches to the study of political parties

The social evolutionism that characterizes modern political theory (Mazrui 25, p. 69) fortified the expectation of some Latin Americanists that they were studying "democracies in formation". (1)

(1) A strong feeling of democracy was found permeating Latin American political thought (Needler 104, p. 157) and politics.

This evolucionistic expectation seems to have open the way to the study of Latin American political parties, which should have evolved from "a set factions, pressure groups or fraternal organizations" (Brandenburg 55, p. 510) to become mature institutions, perhaps following the western model of political parties.

This evolutionism together with the discovery of some formal similarities between the North American and Latin American institutions led political scientists in the USA to use quantitative analysis to measure the democratic achievement of Latin America (Fitzgibbon 98), system stability (Duff 11), and political change (Johnson 97). Under the same influence they used a strange North American terminology of "responsible" parties as if parties would become more responsible by their will, independently of structural factors (2).

The use of quantitative methods to measure political change and democratic achievement in L. A. was also applied to the study of its political parties and to the electoral system in general. These efforts however, had a pale result due to the fact that raw data and pertinent information were still in short supply to the scholar (Martz 99, p. 513). I should point out, though, that these studies left a contribution in terms of aggregating the existing available data and in demonstrating that any study of the area, as a whole, has to deal with such an extreme diversity of variables that, in the present stage, in-depth studies of each country as an individual system are preferable to a broad study of Latin America as a whole.

The approach used to study "responsible" Latin American parties was extremely poor as an analytical tool because it was based on the formal level of written structures, which, in this part of the continent, excel in sophistication and detail without a corresponding basis in actual practice (Gil 96, p. 334). Further, these structures are reflective more of political thought than of a political party itself. The written requirements, for instance, for the establishment of one party, as found by the analysis of the foundation of the Civic Radical Union in 1869 in Argentina, shows the evidence of these statements, both its written structure and the democratic orientation of its program.

The lack of balance between the *ideal* and the *real*, and between the structure and the functioning of Latin American politics, probably induced some scholars of a more formalistic bent to use this formal approach. It could be suggested that this approach has led some authors to interpret the malfunctioning of the Latin Systems

(2) This terminology of "responsible" party was perceptively criticized by Evron M. Kirkpatrick in his insightful article "Toward a more responsible Two-Party System: Political Science, Policy Science or Pseudo Science", in The American Political Science Association, Vol. LXV, n.º 4, Dec. 1971.

through a moral frame of reference, a process which might be efficient to measure effects but not to analyse causes. Some examples of such orientation could be found in the literature, such as references to corruption, lack of moral restraints and opportunism (Needler 104, p. 173), "amiguismo" (Gil 99, p. 337), and personal ambition (Lott 38, p. 233). (3)

The lack of comparative analysis by those formalistic authors, together with a poverty of sociological orientation, contributed to the application of these failures. For instance, no effort was made to establish the amount of expenditures made by these parties to function effectively in the Latin and North American political systems. Neitner has the attempt been made to compare and contrast the concepts of money expenditure in both systems. It is always difficult for a transplanted institution, like a party, to function effectively in an underdeveloped context because if in a developed nation large expenditures represent a normal process, in an underdeveloped country such expenditures, mainly due to the unavailability of funds, could surely be considered as corruptive.

In order to become "responsible", Latin American parties had to wait upon basic economic, social and cultural changes (Christensen 59 p. 505). This view of parties as a dependent variable was accepted by those scholars who were mainly interested in the theoretical classification (typologies) of parties.

A more recent position shifted the direction of classificatory typologies, which will be discussed later in this paper, toward the discussion of the most adequate type of party to handle the fast-moving development that is going on in Latin America (Scott 46).

This position is based on two premisses: 1) most Latin American States do not have internal structures appropriate for rationalizing speedy shifts in the society and economy; 2) the traditional Latin American political process is not very dependent upon auxiliary functions provided by the party system. Based on these two premisses, it is suggested that a nationalizing-integrating "mass" party will be adequate to work as an auxiliary political structure, which could bind together the operations of the expanding system and could also substitute those unstable political parties that continually break down under military "coups".

This new approach is encompassed within a theoretical framework that sees a party, as far as political development is concerned,

(3) If one accepts this approach he has to agree that some Latin American "diseases" are affecting North American Scholars... R. P. Dore has observed that students of Latin America have become too "Latin American", i. e., they are "personalists, irresponsible, disorganized, ideological and preoccupied in demonstrating their "machismo" (Dore in 118 p. 232).

in two ways: 1) parties that are the outgrowth of a development process (although they will later push the system) and parties as an independent institutional force affecting political development itself (La Palombara and Weiner 26, p. 41).

La Palombara suggests that in introducing the concept of a party as an independent variable, "those authors see a party as a force that effects development, different from the other type of party which is influenced by development and which is not as essential feature of a political system" (La Palombara and Weiner 26, p. 22).

Sorauf is critical of this concept of the party as an independent variable:

The argument is more than that the party performs a function. It is that the party initiates or "engineer" a change — that is, rather than the needs and conditions of the system, it determines its own role or function. But the political system it is a much a product and a result of change or development as it is its shaper. The same changes and conditions which produce change or modification in the parties. They cannot set outside of the political system in order to get greater leverage of it. (Sorauf p. 50).

In Scott the concept is not clear. In relation to the (traditional) dependent variable type of party, his views coincide with La Palombara's in saying that the local party system is considered by the Latins themselves less than indispensable. (Scott 46, p. 357) "To replace these parties", he suggests "nationalizing-integrating parties that can act as auxiliary political structures to bind together the operation of an expanding polity" (Scott 46, p. 332). The term auxiliary — also used in the text as "auxiliary function" (Scott 46, p. 376) — seems to determine the limit of the function of the party in the system, since Scott did not make and reference to the "independent" character of the party to "initiate or engineer change" as suggested by Sorauf.

I would suggest this could not be different in that Scott is talking about an individual party of national-integration and not a party system of national integration. He is advocating parties of national integration to work within a competitive and not within a non-competitive party system, such as the African one-party system, suggested by Zolberg, would illustrate. Scott does not say, however, how this "nationalizing-integrating" party will work in countries

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where the party system is characterized by a great variety of competitive political parties.

In emphasizing the pressure for development as the element responsible for the crises of political parties in Latin America (Scott 46, p. 331/337/357), Scott oversimplified the problem, by reducing it to only one major variable. My contention is that the crisis is basically found in the historical and structural conflict between party and political system in Latin America. This conflict, I suggest, began between transplanted "democratizing" parties and "centralizing" governments (4), only to be recently aggravated by the struggle for development. If this is true, it would be necessary to know how Scott's nationalizing party would function within the system and from where it would get its strength to influence the political system. Apparently, this type of party already exists in Latin America, and it is not too different from the traditional parties in their relationship to the political system. Some examples could be found in the "Aprista" parties — which appeared in not less than seven countries in Latin America (Alexander 51, p. 544). These "Aprista" parties were "nationalizing" types of parties and they did not achieve a stable position in the systems in which they existed. Another example, pointed by Grayson, is the Christian Democratic — Party in Chile (Grayson 57, p. 148). This party is relatively young and no one, therefore, can assert its continuity for a long time.

Scott's analysis of Latin American parties seems very accurate in its identification to the parties lack of importance within the political system (Scott 46, p. 336/337). His recommendation, however, is extremely imprecise because he does not define the "auxiliary" function of the nationalizing-integrating party. As I said before, this party appears similar to other parties already existing in Latin America and has to be classified as a dependent variable type of party.

Scott's study, which is characterized by his "western" bias — "pluralistic democracy as well as representative government and maximum individual political participation are ideal goals of political development" (Scott 46, p. 353) — did not offer any clue to the study of the existing parties in Latin America.

PARTY TYPOLOGIES

Typological studies of Latin American political parties have appeared in different forms of 1) general classification applicable to the entire area, 2) studies of parties of one country, and 3) stu-

(4) Some authors suggest that political parties in Latin America have been historically the center of the federal unitary conflict (Rannis 58, p. 799), (Martz 61, p. 323), (Alexander 46, p. 102).

dies of individual parties. These typologies are generally different arrangements of the same general classifications of party, which can be summarized in four basic orientations: (1) historical, (2) institutional, (3) time and (4) ideological.

The first orientation classifies party according to the time they exist in one political system. This is one of the most general orientation and the simplest one. The second orientation serves to separate parties that function as an institution and parties that function as a group which follow one certain leader. The first represent the larger national parties, based on formal and impersonal organizations, and the latter represent personalistic parties in which the main symbol is based on the allegiance to the name and personality of the leader. The third orientation refers to those parties that used to appear, or are still appearing, in the area as a response to a specific political situation. As soon as the situation does not exist anymore in the political scene, those parties disappear through assimilation into another political party or through extinction. The fourth orientation finds the existence or non-existence of ideology in one party as the basis for its classification.

With the exception of a few authors who have dedicated special emphasis to the ideological orientation, all others have used a mixed combination of two to four orientations. It is necessary to make it clear that these orientations are explicitly classificatory of individual political parties.

The typologies based on the first three orientations are simple and do not have much to say. They just localize party historically, legally, or by time of duration in its political system. The historical shows party as traditional and modern. Traditional parties are defined by the length of time they exist and also by the issues of their concern: the temporal role of the Catholic Church, land tenure and by their membership drawn in terms of class system—the upper classes belong to the party and the other classes that form the majority of the population are excluded from party participation (Blanksten 44, p. 111). This view is one of the most common views among North American scholars, but it has been gradually avoided because if this still holds true to some small countries in Central America, like Honduras and Nicaragua (Anderson 49, p. 126) it does not appear true for the rest of the area. In countries like Uruguay (Lindall 38) and Colombia (Martz 58, p. 319), the traditional parties have undergone substantial changes in the issues stated on their programs. Even in Central America, there was found what was called a "modern-conservative" party which embraces in its program very advanced ideas of social reform (Anderson 49 p. 135).

Similarly, typologies of traditional parties which classify membership in terms of class, are also inaccurate because they not cor-

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respond to this class segregation the way it is suggested. In most culturally-integrated countries, party membership is widespread among lower classes, either formally or informally (Angele 45, p. 309) (5). These traditional parties in some countries are assimilating the masses that have begun to participate economically and politically in the nation, although not without problems.

Modern parties are those that have evolved after World War I and differ primarily from the traditional parties by the cohesiveness of their organizations. They usually have well-defined programs and follow one ideology. Within the system, they represent or seek to represent, the interest of particular groups that are evolving in the society (Alexander 43, p. 103).

The classification based on institutional orientation is generally used for the whole area and serves to complement the first and fourth types of typologies or the historical and ideological. It constitutes two types of parties: institutional and personalistic parties. Institutional parties tend to be modern (Anderson 49, 127), although some traditional parties could also be placed in this category (Alexander 43, p. 105). Personalistic parties follow a model in which allegiance to the name and personality of the party leader is the dominant symbol of the group (Anderson 49, p. 129).

The time-based typology classifies parties that appear as a result of a specific situation. They have been more common in the small countries of South America (Blanksten 44, p. 113) or in Central America (Anderson 49, p. 127). This typology is the most insignificant of the four and apparently has been used just to complete the whole classification of parties in some Latin American systems.

For a continent "enamored of ideologies", the ideological orientation is the most attractive and therefore, has been exhaustively used. Certainly this fact was also a result of the close attention given this orientation by the general theory of party, especially by Sigmund Neumann (Neumann 6, p. 554/555).

Ideological parties are the European patterned parties and the indigenous parties that split into national revolutionaries and personalistic revolutionaries (Alexander 43, p. 104). The European types are the Communists, Fascists, Christians, Socialists and Radicals. The indigenous revolutionaries follow either Mexican or the Aprista Peruvian cases. The personalistic are those similar to the Peronist party in Argentina and the Labour Party in Brazil, which had their

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start with Peron and Vargas. Not all scholars, however, follow this scheme and some modifications are considered.

Those authors who assume that Latin American systems are competitive systems (Angell 45), (McDonald, 83), (Ranis, 55), (Martz 96), (Gil 47), follow Almond's typology of "pragmatic-ideological, particularistic" to classify political parties in the area (Blankstein in 1, p. 482). Because of the apparent absence of particularistic type of parties (Blanksten in 1, p. 486), most authors simplify this scheme and use only pragmatic-ideological. This dichotomy, however, seems to me to be inappropriate (Anderson 49, p. 126) because in Latin America a party could never be called "pragmatic" (*) if one takes the United States as the model of a pragmatic system in a historical framework. In other words, in the United States the party has worked to integrate and preserve the system and works within the system, while in Latin America, parties were first an element strange to the system and, second, hostile to it as a permanent agent of conflict.

Considering that major factor in the existence of a party of an ideological character (Duverger 9, p. XXV), it is nonsense to use this typology because it serves more to confuse than to clarify the issues involved. A general ideological classification has been more advantageous in classifying the various ideologies that have oriented parties in Latin America and has either taken the form of informal description (Fitzgibbon 4), (Bray 42) or has been tied to the left-center-right continuum as suggested by the Chilean party system (McDonald 79, p. 463).

The typologies based on left-center-right-ideologies, which are highly recommended to classify parties in Anglo-American systems (Alford 21, p. 72), has been less effective in Latin America because of the ideological eclecticism of Latin American politics (Blanksten 1, p. 491), and because of the inconsistency of ideology in party life (Angell 45, p. 309), (Tannenbaum 102, p. 136). (6) This fact appears to be most prevalent in the combination of different ideologies to form a new "ism" or in the external position of Latin American parties whose doctrinal attachment is an aspect of party strategy but not necessarily a guide to policies, nor an explanation of what holds the party together in opposition (Angell 45, p. 310), (Rannis 55, p. 801). The Communist parties, for instance, became relatively con-

(*) in the sense used by authors

(6) The students of Latin America disagree when they refer to ideology in Latin America. The ideological orientation of Latin American politics has been pointed out by some authors, like Blanksten, Gil & Alexander. Tannenbaum does not agree with this position. (Tannenbaum 102, p. 136). Angell also refers to the fragility of ideological positions in Argentina's party life (Angell 45, p. 310). This point, I believe, must be elaborated on better by the researchers.

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The typologies based on left-center-right-ideologies, which are highly recommended to classify parties in Anglo-American systems (Alford 21, p. 72), has been less effective in Latin America because of the ideological eclecticism of Latin American politics (Blanksten 1, p. 491), and because of the inconsistency of ideology in party life (Angell 45, p. 309), (Tannenbaum 102, p. 136). (6) This fact appears to be most prevalent in the combination of different ideologies to form a new "ism" or in the external position of Latin American parties whose doctrinal attachment is an aspect of party strategy but not necessarily a guide to policies, nor an explanation of what holds the party together in opposition (Angell 45, p. 310), (Rannis 55, p. 801). The Communist parties, for instance, became relatively con-

(*) in the sense used by authors

(6) The students of Latin America disagree when they refer to ideology in Latin America. The ideological orientation of Latin American politics has been pointed out by some authors, like Blanksten, Gil & Alexander. Tannenbaum does not agree with this position. (Tannenbaum 102, p. 136). Angell also refers to the fragility of ideological positions in Argentina's party life (Angell 45, p. 310). This point, I believe, must be elaborated on better by the researchers.

servative when they lost their revolutionary orientation to overthrow system and adopted a "pragmatic" orientation to overthrow the system, while at the same time adopted a "pragmatic" orientation to work within the system.

I suggest this dichotomy is inappropriate for three reasons. First, because as mentioned by Angell, "the notion of a party as a body of men united by a common ideal or set of doctrines is even less adequate as an explanation of parties in Latin America than elsewhere" (Angell 45, p. 309) (7). I also consider it to be inappropriate because the word pragmatical seems to suggest that the party works within the system-interest-aggregation-as the North American case would better illustrate (8). In Latin America, to say that a party is a pragmatic one, is to say that the party is "conservative" and does not make any doctrinal appeal to its members (what is false since the conservatives appeal reflect also an ideology); it is not saying, however, that the party is pragmatic as a reflex of its identification with the system.

Finally the fact is that the Latin American parties are not integrated to the systems, because these same systems are rejecting and destroying these parties permanently.

THE SEARCH FOR NEW TYPOLOGIES

The development that has occurred in the last decade in Latin America and the complexity of some of its political systems, have encouraged some scholars to propose the reformulation of the traditional typologies of party systems (Martz, 96, p. 514). This also reflects the innovations in the general theory of comparative politics, especially in the reformulation of the concepts to classify the party and party system in countries facing problems of development. (La Palombara 23).

Martz has presented an original suggestion for further research, involving three different levels of studies: (1) the study of party system; (2) the study of legal and institutional prescriptions; and (3) the study of intra-party structure and program (Martz 96 p. 514). This suggestion, which has close similarity to what Sorauf prescribes, has the merit of offering a more integrated typology, which, if followed, will force scholars to develop a deeper analysis of individual political systems.

This orientation toward individual countries rather than toward a general view of the whole area, is important from the academic point of view because it will furnish social scientists in gene-

(7) See also (Blanksten 44) and (Anderson 49).

(8) See (Amond 2, p. 102 and 108).

ral with more accurate information. Broad studies of Latin America are too superficial and serve better the immediate interest of North American foreign policy than pure scientific objectives.

This new orientation influenced a recently presented typology based on two variables: mobility and perception. (Ranis 55, p. 804). This typology refers to the study of intra-party structure and programmatic scheme, although it uses mobility as the only structural variable. Mobility, in this typology, refers to the likelihood of a party to ally itself with another party or parties. In this category, three types of parties are suggested: aggregator, resistor and isolator.

These parties are defined as: (1) an aggregator party is extremely flexible and adaptive. It finds itself comfortable in wideranging and loosely-conceived party alliances. It is anxious to maximize the possibilities of "other-party" cooperation. (2) A resistor party is highly competitive and derives the resources for its policies and actions mainly from carefully prescribed internal formulations. It acquires strength from acting in an autonomous manner and usually refuses commitments that it fears are inherent in a multi-party arrangement. (3) An isolator party represents a relative "outsider" in the political arena, both from necessity and choice. Its assessment of political conciliation makes it incompatible with its political competitors.

Perception refers to the manner in which a party views society's problems and their resolutions. In this second category three other types of party are suggested: (1) preservator, (2) innovator and (3) rejector. These parties are defined as: (1) the preservator party resists any deep-seated alterations for society and identifies its political life with the existing socio-economic relationships. (2) The innovator party demonstrates an essentially empirical approach to socio-economic problems. It is willing to experiment with varying political formulae and does not overly commit itself to an absolute view of society. (3) The rejector party does not accept the basic suppositions of other parties and considers contemporary societal adjustments and adaptations as poor substitutes for a profound restructuring of society's institutions.

This mobility perception scheme permits a greater flexibility than the old typologies because it avoids the limitations of the left-center-right continuum or the pragmatic-ideological-particularistic scale. A party, for example, can be left-oriented in its perception and pragmatic-oriented in the way it works to establish coalitions. Beyond this, the mobility/perception typology permits a continuous study of the different directions the various parties take within the system when party moves from an aggregator-innovator to a rejector-resistor position after a change in the government. This kind

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of fluctuation, which is important in measuring the tendency of the various parties and the party system itself, could not be registered in the past typologies.

Apparently, this typology will be difficult to apply to all Latin American countries. Its author applied it to only seven countries that he considers the "more dynamic, larger, more industrialized, wealthier Latin American nations that are maturing both politically and economically" (Rannis 55, p. 798).

Even in those countries, however, some restrictions must be placed. The case of Brazil, for instance, defies any classificatory typology. Brazil has an artificial two-party system that works by decree (Scott 46, p. 358), (Election Fact Book p. 60). In reality Brazil is practicing a kind of one-party system that has a legal opposition just to satisfy the democratic ideals of the Brazilian army and the demands of the international western community. The Mexican case is also forced because the absolute dominance of the PRI which does not leave room for any other party. The supposedly opposition party (PAN) is just an insignificant grouping that "may face the dilemma of absorption" (Ranis 55, p. 813). PAN is working within the system and it has already been partially co-opted into the Mexican single party system (Johnson in 55, p. 811). The Colombian case shows a peculiar two-party system in which a mechanism is working through a parity formula that gives an equal representation in the legislature for the two parties while alternating in the presidential office (Martz 58, p. 514).

From the seven countries chosen by the author to apply his typology, only Chile and Venezuela have, at this time, the "normal" conditions of a stable competitive system. Argentina and Peru, despite their military governments, show a precarious multi-party situation that permits the classification.

Thus this typology, which appears to be the most original contribution to the study of Latin American political parties, has also limited applicability because of the unstable character of the party systems in the area. It constitutes, however, a valuable tool of analysis, if complemented with another element, that can examine the relationship of political parties to the political systems.

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