
REPORTS

TRENDS IN RESEARCH ON LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS: 1961–1967*

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IN THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF POLITICAL SCIENTISTS have turned to Latin America as their principal area interest. Many of these academicians have been trained in the various sub-disciplines of political science and turn to Latin America as a meaningful laboratory for the study of specific political groups or processes.

Both the breadth and depth of such studies has, in turn, considerably expanded the scope and deepened the interest in Latin American political systems. The proliferation of different research designs and methodologies has had the impact of making Latin American studies more meaningful for those doing research in other developing country political systems.

There is little doubt that this emergence of interest in Latin American politics was caused to some extent by the Castro-led Cuban Revolution and, what is more important for subsequent research focus, its subsequent impact on continental Latin American political development. The inaccessibility of Cuba for conducting research and yet the wide implications in Latin America of the Cuban revolutionary experience, has directed the energy of many graduate students in political science.

Though much research is still of the descriptive, historical type, there is sufficient evidence of the growth of investigations which seek to test hypotheses, develop explanatory factors and isolate political processes for purposes of cross-national comparisons.

This compilation lists, by various categories, research in progress and completed Ph.D. Dissertations in Latin American politics. The sources examined were *The Dissertation Abstracts 1961–1967*, *The Latin American Research*

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Review Supplement, Vol. II, No. 2 (Spring 1967), *The Latin American Research Review* (Fall 1965 to Fall 1967), *U. S. Department of State, External Research: American Republics 1964–1967* and *The American Political Science Review* 1961–1967.

Included in this compilation are several political studies on the West Indies and the Caribbean countries. International titles with some relevance to Latin America or Inter-American titles were not included in this survey in order to focus on internal politics in Latin America.

The purpose of the categorization is to make apparent specific sub-disciplines within political science as well as geographical foci. The analysis is based on 674 entries, representing a preponderant majority of research conducted between the years 1961 and 1967—some of the research begun before 1961 and some of it on-going. In general, the tables are meant to represent a profile of contemporary political science research interest in Latin America. The entries have been tabulated into general subject and specific research topics as well as cross-tabulated by area focus.

Latin America as a geographical area apparently is sufficiently pluralist in structure and orientation to merit a sustained scholarly inquiry into its variety of interest groups. For example, approximately one out of every six studies deals with one or another type of interest group. Over 70 per cent of these interest group analyses focus special attention on the military, the students, or the Catholic Church—the military alone accounting for 33 per cent. Another area in which research is most often undertaken is the history of political institutions and the reasons for political, social and economic changes in certain countries. A third major focus of research preference centers around the nature, development and influence of political parties within political systems. Descriptions of parties, both in the historical and contemporary context, involve two of every five studies on political parties. Interest groups and political party research directly account for almost one-third of all political science investigation on Latin America; this does not include peripheral and secondary investigations into political parties and interest groups.

As one might suspect Latin America as a general geo-political unit is the most researched area with a little more than a quarter of all political science research conducted. This does not take into account research consciously cross-national and comparative in nature. It is not surprising that Mexico, Brazil and Chile are the most researched individual countries, though in terms of population, wealth and national power, one might not expect to find Chile in a more favored position than Argentina, with its relatively good research facilities and high standard of living. Mexico, Brazil and Chile receive about one-third of all the political science research attention.

There is no way of determining the precise causes for this trend without

survey data on Latin American political science researchers. One can conjecture that factors such as university research commitments to specific countries, better on-site physical facilities and the general attractiveness of doing research in relatively developed areas are some of the reasons. Also, political scientists still conduct their research among participant groups and within developed institutions in the more modern urban environments. This places emphasis on Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Santiago and other conducive metropolitan centers. It is interesting to note that individual research on eleven small countries (see table III) makes up only 8 per cent of all political science research on Latin America.

In relating research focus to area (see table IV) several interesting factors seem to emerge. Under the subject category of political evolution and change, analyses of Mexico seem to be most concerned with economic development and its impact on political change. In historical studies of political systems Argentina is clearly the focus. Favorite topics in Argentine political history are political leadership and nationalism.† Chile has become the center for political party research as well as studies of contemporary political systems. Public administration research is being done primarily on Brazil, Mexico and Peru. Sociologically-oriented political studies tend to concentrate on Chile. Political ideology, elites and socialization studies focus on Mexico. Mexico is also the site for most studies on the office of the presidency, within general research on government structure and functions. However, it is important to recall that the general area of Latin America is the research choice in nine out of the fourteen subject categories.

Conversely, focusing on the types of studies done in individual Latin American countries (see table V), one finds that in Mexico the subject chosen most often by political scientists is the problem of administrative and political organization in general and the question of decision-making in particular. This general interest in administrative processes is also apparent in Brazilian research. The researcher who travels to Chile will most likely be studying political parties and interest groups. Those political scientists drawn to Argentina have demonstrated more than average interest in historical studies of the political system—this involvement in past institutions existing in about two of every five studies. In Peru studies on administration and the political process and in Venezuela the studies of political parties and political history are most prevalent. Understandably when research is conducted on Bolivia and Cuba, the specific topic most likely to be chosen is an analyses of the 1952 and 1958 revolutions. One-third of the political scientists interested in Colombia analyze political evolution and

† In the original manuscript, tables were included with tabulations for specific topics and areas of selection, along with relative percentages of studies in the specific topics themselves. This information is available from the author.

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change. Finally, close to one-quarter of both broadly-framed Latin American studies and cross-national comparative approaches focus generally on interest groups in various countries.

TABLE I
General Subjects by Order of Selection

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A—Interest Groups	107	16
B—Political Evolution and Change	94	14
C—Historical Studies of Political Systems	91	14
D—Parties	81	12
E—Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	56	8
F—Administrative and Political Organization and Process	54	8
G—Social Structure and Values	40	6
H—Ideology and Thought	32	5
I—Political Socialization and Integration	28	4
J—Government Structure and Functions	22	3
K—Revolution and Violence	22	3
L—Elites	21	3
M—Bibliographies, Handbooks and Others	17	3
N—Issues and Problems	9	1
Total	674	100

TABLE II
General Subjects and Specific Topics by Order of Selection

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Percentage within general subject</i>
A—Interest Groups	[107]	
1. Role of Interest Groups in the Political Process	23	21
2. Military: Political Roles and Behavior	15	14
3. Students: Politics	15	14
4. Church-State: Contemporary Political Roles	11	10
5. Interest Groups: Description	8	7
6. Military: History	8	7
7. Military: Civic Action	8	7
8. Students: Attitudes and Characteristics	8	7
9. Church-State Relations: History	5	5
10. Military: Arms Control and Counterinsurgency	5	5
B—Political Evolution and Change	[94]	
1. Political Evolution	31	33
2. Economic Development as Related to Political Change	20	21

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<i>Topic</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Percentage within general subject</i>
3. Political Change	19	20
4. Social Change: Reform and Development	14	15
5. Political Modernization	6	6
6. Industrialization and Political Change	4	4
C—Historical Studies of Political Systems	[91]	
1. History: Foreign Policy	15	16
2. Political History: General	15	16
3. History: Revolutions	13	14
4. Political History: Leadership and Power	12	13
5. Political History: Crisis Studies	11	12
6. History: Development of Nationalism	9	10
7. History: Studies of Presidential Regimes	9	10
8. Political History: Elections	7	8
D—Parties	[81]	
1. Parties: Description; Contemporary	22	27
2. Parties: Systems	14	17
3. Parties: Description; History	13	16
4. Parties and Interest Groups	7	9
5. Parties: Miscellaneous	7	9
6. Parties: Ideology	6	7
7. Parties: Influence on Political Change	5	6
8. Parties: Elections	4	5
9. Parties: Attitudes	3	4
E—Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	[56]	
1. Descriptive Contemporary Governmental and Political Studies	34	61
2. Government: Politics and Political Systems	22	40
F—Administrative and Political Organization and Process	[54]	
1. Administration: Decision Making	21	39
2. Administration: Institutional Organization; Local and Federal	20	37
3. Administration: Bureaucracy	13	24
G—Social Structure and Values	[40]	
1. Social Structure and Politics	18	45
2. Social Values and Politics	13	33
3. Class and Politics	9	22
H—Ideology and Thought	[32]	
1. Ideology and Political Thought	14	44
2. Marxism and Communism	10	31
3. Nationalism: Contemporary	8	25
I—Political Socialization and Integration	[28]	
1. Political Recruitment and Politicization	10	36
2. Political Socialization	8	29
3. Political Integration	7	25
4. Political Sociology	3	11
J—Government Structure and Functions	[22]	

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Percentage within general subject</i>
1. Government: Congress and the President	9	41
2. Role of the President in Politics	9	41
3. Government: Instability and Stability	4	18
K—Revolutions and Violence	[22]	
1. Revolutions: Politics and Change	13	59
2. Violence and Guerrilla Warfare	6	27
3. Process of Revolutionary Change	3	14
L—Elites	[21]	
1. Elites: General Description	14	67
2. Elites: Political Roles	7	33
M—Bibliographies, Handbooks and Others	[17]	
1. Bibliographies and Handbooks	10	59
2. Others	7	42
N—Issues and Problems	[9]	
1. Politics: Social and Agrarian Reform	9	100

TABLE III
Areas of Research by Order of Selection

<i>Area</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>
LATIN AMERICA	172	26
Mexico	77	11
Brazil	76	11
Chile	65	10
Argentina	38	6
Peru	34	5
Venezuela	32	5
CROSS NATIONAL	29	4
Bolivia	25	4
Colombia	22	3
Cuba	22	3
CARIBBEAN	12	2
Guatemala	12	2
Dominican Republic	12	2
CENTRAL AMERICA	11	2
Costa Rica	7	1
WEST INDIES	7	1
Uruguay	5	.74
Panama	4	.59
Ecuador	4	.59
Paraguay	2	.29
Honduras	2	.29
El Salvador	2	.29
Haiti	1	.14
Nicaragua	1	.14
Total:	674	100

TABLE IV
General Subjects and Area Most Often Selected‡

<i>Subject and area</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Percentage within general subject</i>
A—Interest Groups	[107]	
Latin America	40	37
Brazil	12	11
Chile	12	11
B—Political Evolution and Change	[94]	
Latin America	27	29
Brazil	11	12
C—Historical Studies of Political Systems	[91]	
Argentina	15	16
D—Parties	[81]	
Latin America	16	20
Chile	15	18
E—Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	[56]	
Latin America	13	23
Chile	6	11
F—Administrative and Political Organization and Process	[54]	
Brazil	14	26
G—Social Structure and Values	[40]	
Chile	8	20
H—Ideology and Thought	[32]	
Latin America	14	44
Mexico	7	22
I—Political Socialization and Integration	[28]	
Latin America	8	29
Mexico	4	14
J—Government Structure and Functions	[22]	
Mexico	6	27
K—Revolutions and Violence	[22]	
Latin America	15	68
Cuba	2	9
Mexico	2	9
Cross National	2	9
L—Elites	[21]	
Latin America	5	24
Mexico	3	14
M—Bibliographies, Handbooks and Others	[17]	
Latin America	8	47
Central America	2	12
Cuba	2	12
N—Issues and Problems	[9]	
Peru	2	22
Venezuela	2	22
Latin America	2	22

‡ When "Latin America" is the most "selected area," the leading Latin American country is also included.

TABLE V
Areas and General Subject Most Often Selected

Area	Subject	Number of projects	Percentage within studies on area
Argentina	Historical Studies of Political Systems	15	39
Bolivia	Interest Groups	7	28
Brazil	Administrative and Political Organization and Process	14	18
Chile	Parties	15	23
Colombia	Political Evolution and Change	7	32
Costa Rica	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	3	43
Cuba	Historical Studies of Political Systems	6	27
Dominican Republic	Parties	2	17
	Political Evolution and Change	2	17
	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	2	17
Ecuador	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	2	50
El Salvador	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	1	50
	Interest Groups	1	50
Guatemala	Interest Groups	4	33
Haiti	Political Evolution and Change	1	100
Honduras	Parties	1	50
	Elites	1	50
Mexico	Administrative and Political Organization and Process	12	16
Nicaragua	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	1	100
Panama	Historical Studies of Political Systems	4	100
Paraguay	Parties	1	50
	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	1	50
Peru	Administrative and Political Organization and Process	10	29
Uruguay	Political Evolution and Change	2	40
Venezuela	Parties	8	25
	Historical Studies of Political Systems	8	25
West Indies	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	2	29
	Elites	2	29
Caribbean	Historical Studies of Political Systems	2	17
	Parties	2	2
	Contemporary Studies of Political Systems	2	2
Central America	Political Socialization and Integration	3	27
Latin America	Interest Groups	40	23
Cross National	Interest Groups	7	24