

# EVALUATING THE POLICY IMPACT OF MILITARY REGIMES IN LATIN AMERICA \*

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A central issue in the analysis of military regimes in Latin America is their policy impact. How successful are military governments in promoting economic development? How do their policies and performances compare with those of civilian governments? The sheer volume of research on the causes of military takeovers in Latin America implies that regime changes have important consequences. Yet to date we are far from having satisfactory answers to the questions posed above. As a recent study of public policy in Latin America noted, "If students of Latin American politics were to inventory verified propositions regarding the performance of Latin American regimes, the resulting list might not exceed zero" (Ames and Goff 1975, p. 175).

The purpose of this essay is to explore the reasons for this state of affairs. It reviews some of the basic theoretical arguments linking regime type to public policy in Latin America, examines the manner in which these have been tested by recent empirical studies, and underlines basic methodological and conceptual problems in the evaluation of regime performance. It will attempt to show that our current ignorance about the policy consequences of military rule is related not only to a paucity of research and/or data, but to the use of inappropriate research strategies. Finally, an attempt will be made to offer suggestions for recasting future research.

## THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Highly plausible arguments have been advanced to support the proposition that military governments tend to pursue distinctive public policies. To date most of this discussion has centered around the relationship between military rule and general developmental outcomes, with one group of scholars arguing that military governments tend to promote socioeconomic development and a second arguing just the opposite.

The first position was clearly delineated some fifteen years ago by the historian John J. Johnson, who pointed to the social class and professional back-

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grounds of officers and argued that concern for national defense and prestige, technical proficiency, and middle-class orientations create a tendency for the military actively to support economic development (1962, pp. 121–27). Thus, Johnson noted that in the more developed countries, such as Argentina, where professionalism was well advanced, “the armed forces are in the forefront of those most concerned with the desirability of industrial growth” (1964, p. 138). More recently, the propensity of the military to pursue economic development has been related to a variety of other factors: a concern for institutional survival and internal security (Einaudi and Stepan 1974); linkages with incumbents of other technocratic roles who perceive popular demands on civilian regimes as an obstacle to further development (O’Donnell 1973); the cohesiveness, efficiency, and coercive capability of the military as a political institution (Fidel 1975, pp. 6–7; Lissak 1975, p. 48); and the insulation of the military from the demands of particularistic interests that may compromise national development efforts (Fidel 1975, p. 10).

Although the military-as-economic-modernizer position never engendered more than limited support among Latin Americanists, it gained a new respectability in the aftermath of the Brazilian and Peruvian coups of the 1960s. Analyses of these regimes lent concrete support to the view that corporate self-interest might lead military officers to be more concerned than civilians with basic developmental problems (Einaudi and Stepan 1974; Stepan 1973; Clinton 1971). Although their policies have differed considerably, the Peruvian and Brazilian cases have also illustrated that the centralized power structures and coercive capabilities of military regimes may prove useful in carrying out basic structural reforms, imposing austerity, creating internal stability, and, in general, pursuing a focused and determined developmental effort.

In this connection it is argued that developmental success in the Latin American context of late development is likely to demand not only a determined effort, but also the ability to ignore or repress both the resistance to reform of entrenched interests and the pressures from below for immediate gains in consumption. Especially in the Brazilian case, where relatively high economic growth rates have been linked with coercive limitation of consumption (Fishlow 1973), the experience of the past decade could be cited in favor of the view that “if there is to be development, the military institution and military personnel are most likely to be its handmaidens” (Fidel 1975, p. 11).

Despite, and even in some cases because of, the developmental efforts of the Peruvian and Brazilian militaries, most Latin Americanists remain skeptical about the willingness and capacity of military regimes to promote economic development. This negative perspective on the relationship between military government and economic development was also presented in the early 1960s by an historian, Edwin Lieuwen (1961). The military was pictured as a conservative and even reactionary force, preoccupied mainly with preserving its corporate self-interest and generally lacking the political and administrative resources necessary for the pursuit of a successful developmental effort (1961, p. 145). A more recent examination of the Latin American military arrives at a similar position: “It is clear that, if one has to generalize about the role of the Latin American

military as a whole, one must consider their role, on balance, still to be a conservative or reactionary one" (Needler 1972, p. 45).

Other arguments advanced to support this second general position include the following: (1) characteristics of military institutions, such as discipline and internal cohesion, are not retained in a nonmilitary context of action (Willner 1970, p. 263); (2) the professional expertise of the military is not readily transferred to civilian politics, which requires skill in communication, compromise, and bargaining (Lissak 1975, p. 49; Willner 1970, p. 263); and (3) the developmental programs of military regimes are undermined by propensities towards corruption, waste, excessive military spending, and alliances with reactionary civilian groups (Lieuwen 1961, pp. 148–51; Needler 1969, pp. 242–43). The implication of these arguments is that civilian governments are more likely to possess the political skills, experience, and resources necessary to check abuses of power, encourage rational planning, and engender public support for developmental efforts.

It should be noted that there is a third perspective on the relationship between military regimes and economic development that dismisses both the negative and the positive arguments outlined above on the grounds that regime type is irrelevant. One version of this position stresses ecological constraints and suggests that socioeconomic variables are more important in explaining policy differences than political variables. Although this argument has wide applicability, it appears particularly plausible in the Latin American context. As the dependency literature (Bonilla and Girling 1973; Cardoso and Faletto 1969; Bodenheimer 1971; Cockcroft et al. 1972; Frank 1971, 1972) has emphasized, the dynamics and structure of economic development in Latin America cannot be understood without taking into account factors such as imperial domination, foreign investment and technology, foreign aid, and export demand—factors that domestic policymakers cannot control directly. A major variant on this argument suggests that civilian and military regimes do not even have different policy orientations, either because the civilian-military dichotomy is totally artificial (Ronfeldt 1974), or because the same class, sectoral, or status group interests control the government no matter who occupies the top positions (Nun 1967). Finally, the policy relevance of system-level characteristics has been questioned on the grounds that factors such as operational style and formal institutional arrangements, which may account for policy variations, are not systematically related to regime type or regime orientation (Ayres 1975).

In short, the literature is deeply divided on the basic theoretical question. Do the policies and performance records of military regimes differ from those of civilian regimes? Much of the literature suggests that they do, but disagrees on how, and much suggests that they do not. In such a situation empirical studies play a key role in choosing between theories.

#### EMPIRICAL STUDIES

The empirical studies of regime type, public policy, and policy outcomes conducted so far, whether focused on Latin America or including other areas as

well, tend to support the conclusion that regime differences have little or no impact on public policy. As Philippe Schmitter (1975, p. 37) comments in summarizing this research:

The conclusions have tended to be similar whether arrived at by statistical inference from synchronic correlations across units, or descriptive evaluation based on diachronic counter-factual assumptions within units. We have been led to believe that the relatively constant features of ecological setting and underlying class interests and/or the persistence of subtle machinations by informal cliques and patron-client dyads impose such narrow and fixed parameters upon performance that it makes no "real" difference if political structures are more or less centralized, more or less competitive, or more or less participatory. Such an overdetermined system (provided the three layers of determinism are self-reinforcing) will produce the same outputs and outcomes—i.e., benefit the same interests—in any case short of violent revolution.

To determine whether or not to accept this conclusion, it is necessary to examine how recent research has approached the study of regime differences. Rather than undertake an extensive review of the literature on the Latin American military, which has already been surveyed (e.g., McAlister 1966; Rankin 1974), the subsequent discussion will focus on recent comparative studies that have explicitly and systematically investigated the relationship between regime type and policy.

To begin with the most ambitious efforts, several cross-national aggregate studies have examined the relationship between military rule and economic development throughout the Third World. The earliest of these studies, conducted by Eric Nordlinger (1970), was based on a population of seventy-four countries and attempted to test the relationship between military strength and seven indicators of economic and social change. These indicators included relatively standard measures of economic change such as the rate of growth of per capita GNP as well as somewhat more unusual and subjective indices such as "leadership commitment to economic development." Finding relatively weak correlations between military strength and indicators of socioeconomic development, except for the least developed countries in his sample, Nordlinger concluded that "within a particular social and political context (when there is hardly a middle class to speak of, and when workers and peasants have not been politically mobilized), soldiers in mufti sometimes allow or even encourage economic modernization." However, in other contexts (i.e., outside sub-Saharan Africa) "officer-politicians are commonly unconcerned with the realization of economic change and reform" (p. 1134). It should be noted that Nordlinger explicitly ruled out the claim that civilian regimes are necessarily more successful in carrying out modernizing changes (p. 1134).

Nordlinger's conclusions have been reconsidered in a recent study by Robert W. Jackman (1976), who applies a covariance analysis model to Nordlinger's data as well as a new set of data covering the decade 1960 to 1970 for seventy-seven Third World countries. The use of a more sophisticated statistical

model leads Jackman to conclude, in contrast to Nordlinger, that "military intervention in the politics of the Third World has no unique effects on social change, regardless of either the level of economic development or geographic region" (p. 1096).

Two recent cross-national aggregate data studies by McKinlay and Cohan (1975, 1976), based on an initial sample of 115 countries, reach conclusions that are very similar to Jackman's. In the first of these studies, McKinlay and Cohan compare the performance of military and civilian regimes over the 1951–70 period, using indicators of annual change in per capita GNP, cost of living, food production, exports, primary education, military spending, and military size. Like Nordlinger, they find that military regimes perform significantly better than civilian regimes in the poorest countries (p. 21), although their evidence also suggests that in Latin America military regimes perform somewhat better than civilian ones (pp. 21–22). However, McKinlay and Cohan conclude that "military regimes do not in aggregate form a distinctive regime type in terms of performance" (p. 23). They find that the rate of growth of primary education was the only overall significant performance difference between military and civilian governments.

The second study by McKinlay and Cohan (1976), covering the 1961–70 period, uses different data and statistical techniques to arrive at the same basic conclusion. In this study, McKinlay and Cohan found evidence that military regimes tend to occupy a weaker international trading position than their civilian counterparts, but that their economic performance rates, measured in terms of the rate of growth of per capita GNP, cost of living, and exports, compared favorably with nonmilitary regimes (p. 863). Military regimes were clearly distinguished from civilian regimes only by their lower levels of political activity and higher levels of political change.

The most extensive study to date of the consequences of regime differences in Latin America, a study by Philippe Schmitter (1971), partially confirms the findings of these cross-regional studies. Using both cross-sectional and longitudinal data, Schmitter concluded that no regime type was exclusively linked with developmental success as measured by such indicators of performance as average annual percentage increases in inflation, exports, industrial production, and per capita GNP. Military and noncompetitive regimes were slightly more successful in curtailing inflation, increasing foreign exchange earnings, and promoting economic growth, especially in industry; however, environmental factors, particularly dependence on foreign capital, aid, and trade, were more important in understanding performance variations than regime type. Regime type only appeared relevant for understanding variations in governmental allocations (*outputs*) as distinct from system performance (*outcomes*). In particular, Schmitter found that military regimes in Latin America tend to spend less on social welfare, rely more heavily on indirect taxation as a source of government revenue, and extract fewer resources for the pursuit of public policies than civilian governments. However, most correlations between regime type and policy outputs were weak, supporting the view that regime differences are relatively unimportant for understanding policy differences in Latin America.

Other recent studies of public policy in Latin America have also cast doubt on the relevance of regime differences. Margaret Daly Hayes' detailed work (1973, 1975) on longitudinal changes in Brazilian national expenditures, for example, indicates that military and civilian regimes in Brazil have not differed extensively in their economic goals and policy outputs. Compared to their military counterparts, civilian governments in the 1950–67 period were more likely to spend money on social development and the civilian bureaucracy and less likely to spend funds on military equipment; but all regimes in this period gave priority to national development with an emphasis on infrastructure development (1975). Moreover, ecological constraints, particularly GDP, political conflict, primary export earnings, inflation, and debt service, explain a high proportion of the variation in expenditure patterns over time (Hayes 1973).

In summary, recent research clearly suggests that underlying socioeconomic conditions impose such basic constraints on political actors that it makes little difference whether they are civilian or military. Similar conclusions have been reached by studies employing very different units of analysis and research strategies. However, before concluding that Latin Americanists, who have expended considerable time and effort explaining the causes of regime variations, have been totally misguided, some of the weaknesses of these studies should be underlined.

#### CENTRAL RESEARCH PROBLEMS

To begin at the most basic level, serious problems of data availability, comparability, reliability, and validity impose definite restrictions on the generalizations that can be derived from the public policy studies described above. The problem of data availability alone has produced some rather unorthodox and questionable research procedures. Nordlinger (1970), for example, correlated indicators of regime type measured at one period of time (1957–62) with indicators of policy measured over an earlier time period (1950–63). While various leaps may be necessary in drawing causal inferences about policy outcomes, simple logic excludes attributing responsibility for policy outcomes at Time<sub>1</sub> to regimes and policy outputs at Time<sub>2</sub>.

To mention some other data problems, national ministry expenditures have been used as indicators of policy commitment to basic areas such as education and defense, despite tremendous cross-national variations in accounting procedures. In some Latin American countries education is funded by autonomous agencies and state governments as well as the national ministry; similarly, defense expenditures funded by outside aid or other ministries go unreported in defense ministry totals. Data on policy outcomes, although often more readily available, are not necessarily better. Governments do manipulate data for political purposes, and different standards are used in different countries for measuring everything from school enrollments to inflation.

Even more serious, the search for comparable indicators has restricted policy analysis to crude and readily quantifiable variables. As studies of public policy in Latin America have routinely noted (Schmitter 1971, p. 20; Hayes 1975,

p. 50; Ames and Goff 1975, p. 195; Baloyra 1973, p. 26), the assumption that allocative policies provide an adequate inventory of policy outputs is theoretically unsound, particularly since common sense suggests that some of the major differences between military and civilian governments have to do with regulatory and symbolic policies. The right of workers to organize and strike, price and wage controls, the regulation of foreign investment, land reform, expropriation of private industry, control of the media—all these are policies that involve tremendous political conflict and affect economic development; yet none of them is likely to be directly reflected in government budgets. Enrique Baloyra's longitudinal study of public policy in Venezuela (1973) underlines this point. Baloyra found major contrasts between the oil policies of military and civilian regimes, but these contrasts were not reflected in the expenditures of the Ministry of Mining and Hydrocarbons. In short, government allocations provide, at best, a very partial guide to public policy.

In addition, it should be emphasized that indicators such as the proportion of the budget derived from indirect taxation or spent on education provide very little information even about allocative policies. For example, it makes a difference whether government revenues are derived from import or export taxes, although both are indirect forms of taxation. It also makes a difference whether import taxes are levied on luxury goods, raw materials, or industrial equipment. If indicators are too insensitive to monitor such differences, it is questionable whether we can draw any conclusions about the impact of political variables.

Problems also develop in drawing inferences about either the causes or the consequences of allocative policies. High levels of spending on education, for example, do not necessarily reflect a reformist orientation or even a regime priority. As Robert G. Drysdale and Robert G. Myers (1975, p. 257) point out in a perceptive essay on Peruvian education, government expenditures over time have been strongly influenced by factors such as growth in the school-age population, rapidly rising aspirations for education, previous regime commitments, relative and absolute increases in teachers' salaries, and the level of external financing from international development agencies. In short, simple contrasts between current spending levels and those of the previous regime may tell us little about regime priorities.

Education policy also illustrates a basic difficulty in drawing conclusions about the consequences of government allocations. High levels of educational expenditure may retard or promote growth, encourage or discourage income redistribution, and break down or maintain social privilege (Drysdale and Myers 1975, p. 254). Hence it may be misleading to assume that "compared to other areas of the federal budget, education is relatively beneficial to the lower classes" (Ames and Goff 1975, p. 179). By themselves, rough indicators of government expenditures and revenues just do not tell us enough about public policy. Complicating this problem, of course, is the fact that our general knowledge of the impact of alternative policies is limited.

The use of indicators of policy outcomes such as the rate of growth in GNP also raises numerous difficulties. First, policy outcomes are a very indirect

reflection of regime preferences and policy decisions. While some studies have assumed that “extraneous factors” such as foreign investment, foreign aid, and export prices are distributed randomly (see especially Nordlinger 1970, p. 1138), it is necessary to control for a whole host of environmental factors to draw conclusions about the impact of regime type on system performance. The difficulty is that we have no neat list of such variables; moreover, serious statistical problems arise in analyzing the impact of a very large number of variables with a limited case base. The large gap that exists between regime type and policy outcomes also points to the importance of treating policy outputs as intervening variables—something that few studies have attempted to do.

A second major problem in using outcome indicators is that time lags occur between policy decisions and policy outcomes. High rates of investment under civilian regimes may not be reflected in indices of economic growth or energy consumption until another government is in office. To cite another example, an indicator of policy outcomes such as the annual percentage change in the number of physicians per 1,000 population, one of the four measures of social change used by Jackman (1976), will be very unresponsive to policy change in the short run.

The erratic growth pattern of Latin American countries also raises questions about the findings of cross-national studies of regime impact. A “snapshot” approach or examination at a single point in time may provide very misleading evidence. The table below illustrates the difficulty. Whereas in 1969 and 1970 the average per capita increase in GNP was higher for the civilian regimes in Latin America, in 1971 and 1972 the reverse was true. It should be noted that only one country shifted regime categories during these four years.

*Average Annual Rates of Growth in Per Capita GNP by Regime Type*

<i>Regime Type</i>	<i>1969</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>1972</i>
Civilian	3.1	4.3	1.8	2.1
Military	2.4	3.3	3.3	3.3

Source: Statistics and Reports Division, Office of Financial Management, Bureau for Program and Management Service, Agency for International Development, *Gross National Product: Growth Rates and Trend Data by Region and Country* 1973:2.

Finally, as the recent debate over the Brazilian regime has indicated, there are no established criteria for evaluating regime performance. Data that are available, such as GNP increase per capita, say very little about other less available monitors of performance such as the growth of income inequality. To date studies have taken a very narrow and selective view of system performance.

Diachronic studies evaluating the impact of regime changes within a single country, such as Hayes’ work on Brazil (1973, 1975), offer solutions to some of the problems mentioned above, particularly problems in the comparability of data, selection of operational indicators, and instability of system performance. But these gains entail certain costs. Sample size is sharply limited, reducing the



possibility of controlling for independent variables. Moreover, the consequences of regime changes can only be evaluated against necessarily counter-factual assumptions. As Schmitter (1975, p. 38) has persuasively argued, regime changes often occur to *prevent* policy changes. To demonstrate that a military regime's policy performance is identical to that of its civilian predecessor may miss the point. In short, problems in the operationalization of dependent variables, whether policy outputs or outcomes, plague both cross-national and diachronic studies.

But perhaps the most fundamental weakness of studies analyzing the relationship between regime type and public policy performance has to do with the independent variable. By assuming that regime type has the same meaning across political units, time periods, and even cultural regions, existing studies of public policy have built their conclusions into their questions. Obviously, military regimes do not form a homogeneous group. Military governments are reformist as well as conservative, populist as well as authoritarian, and personalist as well as corporatist. By aggregating all types of military regimes together, research to date has ensured that differences in regime type will appear irrelevant. Moreover, the use of the civilian-military dichotomy has obscured possible overlaps between civilian and military governments (Weaver 1973, pp. 94–95). Officers may exercise substantial influence even if civilians are in top positions and vice versa.

#### RECASTING THE ISSUES

The preceding discussion of conceptual and empirical problems found in recent research suggests that it is premature to conclude that regime type is not important for understanding public policy in Latin America. Rather, what can be concluded is that comparative studies of the relationship between regime type and public policy have defined policy outputs and policy outcomes too narrowly and/or too crudely in operational terms to demonstrate that regime type is not a significant independent variable. In addition, regime type has been so broadly defined, using the civilian-military dichotomy, that it is questionable whether the independent variable has been operationally specified in a manner sufficient to uncover policy consequences. The major contribution of the empirical studies conducted so far may simply be to demonstrate that the relationship between regime type and public policy is not easily studied using readily available aggregate data.

The manner in which the theoretical issues have been conceptualized for research may be part of the problem. An appropriate strategy in such a situation is to step back and reconceptualize those issues. One way to do this is to reconsider, one by one, the questions raised by the original arguments over regime type and public policy. At least three questions present themselves: (1) What is the nature of regime type (how can the independent variables be specified)?; (2) What is the nature of policy outputs (how can the intervening variables be specified)?; and (3) What is the nature of policy outcomes (how can the dependent variable be specified)?

The first issue, that of regime type, raises questions about the nature of military regimes and the extent to which they differ from civilian regimes. Military regimes are assumed to share certain characteristics (such as cohesion, ability to ignore popular pressures for consumption, etc.) that make them different from civilian regimes, supposedly leading to different policy outputs. The real thrust of this argument has to do with the characteristics imputed to military regimes, not the fact that they are military. Therefore, it may be suggested that the civilian-military dichotomy leads to the use of spurious variables. The relevant variables are those qualities attributed, very possibly incorrectly, to military or civilian regimes.

If we avoid the assumption that military regimes share certain characteristics and civilian regimes share others, we can reopen the question of what is the best way to arrive at a typology of regimes that is relevant for the explanation of policy consequences. Indeed, avoiding this assumption would seem fully justified in view of the accumulation of studies that have appeared since the Johnson-Lieuwen debate first began. The many case studies of military, and for that matter civilian, regimes show that Johnson, Lieuwen, and those that followed them were both wrong, or from another perspective, both right. Some military regimes are cohesive, some are not; some are developmentalist, some are not; some mobilize the population, some demobilize it; and so on.

The fact that military regimes need not share the characteristics attributed to them does not mean that those attributes are unimportant. On the contrary, it is precisely in terms of such attributes that a meaningful typology of regimes might be specified. Such a typology could be based, for example, on the following attributes that have been the subject of attention in the literature discussed: regime cohesiveness, degree of pluralism and/or interest-group autonomy, extent of developmentalist orientation, degree of popular support, control of mass media, extent of monopoly over the instruments of coercion, level of citizen participation in politics, and professional training and expertise of administrators. Such a list is hardly comprehensive, nor is it intended to be. It does serve to illustrate, however, the type of regime characteristics that appear and reappear in the discussion of military versus civilian regimes and that could be used as the basis for deriving a more theoretically meaningful typology of regimes for predicting public policy outputs.

Operationalizing regime characteristics such as those listed above certainly presents difficulties. Numerous studies of political development have provided us with measures of formal democracy and political stability, such as the degree of party competitiveness, degree of popular participation in elections, degree of press freedom, level of civil strife, and regularity of constitutional succession (see, for example, Banks 1971; Russett et al. 1964; Taylor and Hudson 1972; Collier 1975; Feierabend, Feierabend, and Nesvold 1973; Cutwright 1963; Bwy 1968; Adelman and Morris 1967; Johnson 1976; Elkins 1974). There have been fewer attempts to operationalize other theoretically relevant regime variables; nevertheless, the possibility of investigating them should not be excluded. The first item of the tentative list presented above, for example, has been plausibly operationalized in a recent study by means of a simple dichotomy between

“senior leadership-headquarters planned coups” and “nonsenior leadership-headquarters planned coups” (Thompson 1976). Another recent study presents some imaginative suggestions for constructing nominal and ordinal scales of interest representation in Latin America (Collier and Collier 1977).

Turning to the second question, that of policy outputs, it might fairly be concluded that such outputs have been too narrowly construed. Most studies have utilized data on public expenditures and revenues as indicators of policy outputs. For the reasons discussed above, such data fail to provide an adequate picture of the policies followed by a regime.

What types of variables should be examined? This question should be answered in terms of the characteristics that are presumed to be important for distinguishing between types of public policy, rather than in terms of the convenience of data collection. In the case of Latin America, debate centers around issues such as government policy towards foreign investment, the degree of state involvement in the economy, allocations between the export sector and the internal market, the importance of agricultural versus raw materials and/or industrial development, interest group organization, distribution versus concentration of income, and land reform. The importance attached to such policies is easily seen in the extent to which the discussion of them dominates the recent literature analyzing controversial regimes such as those of Peru, Mexico, Brazil, and Chile (Lowenthal 1975; Chaplin 1976; Hansen 1974; Stepan 1973; Loveman 1976; Steenland 1974).

A more theoretically meaningful analysis of public policy might not lead to interval-scale indices of a type preferred in comparative studies, but it should be possible to arrive at ordinal-scale descriptions that would serve a similar purpose. One such technique, which has not been applied to the analysis of policy outputs in Latin America, would be developmental scaling (Leik and Matthews 1974), of which the Guttman scale is a special case. For example, land reform efforts might form the following scale: (1) no land reform; (2) a land reform that has not been seriously administered; (3) an active land reform limited to colonization; (4) an active land reform limited to colonization, public lands, and the expropriation of unused private lands; (5) an active land reform with some expropriation of private land but limited distributive results; (6) a land reform with a major redistributive impact; (7) a land reform of such an extent that the private sector is virtually eliminated. Similar scales could be derived to describe policy towards foreign investment, sectoral favoritism, income redistribution, and so on. Their use might entail some loss in the sophistication of data analysis, but they would permit systematic comparison and theoretical relevance in policy research.

The situation with respect to policy outcomes or overall system performance is far more complex. Insofar as system performance is treated in economic terms, it could be argued that the analysis of policy outcomes is a question for economists rather than students of government. As is evident from any perusal of the economic literature on Latin America, economists themselves disagree on the impact of particular public policies such as inflation or import substitution. Moreover, as small economic units linked to the world market, Latin American

nations are extremely vulnerable to shifts in commodity prices, investment flows, and lending policies of rich nations and multilateral agencies. To take a single, but not farfetched, example, the performance of the Cuban economy depends in the short run far more on the price of sugar in the world market than on the economic policies of the Cuban government. Any attempt to evaluate system performance in Latin America must therefore attempt to factor out a host of exogenous variables, including influences as difficult to assess as maneuvers by multinational corporations or destabilization efforts by foreign governments.

For such reasons, it may be premature to attempt to assess system performance in Latin America, at least in economic terms. Similar problems, perhaps even more acute in data terms, attend efforts to assess system performance in political or social terms. Given our inability to analyze policy outcomes in any manner not open to serious theoretical and empirical question, the wisest course may well be to "bracket" efforts to assess system performance and concentrate research efforts on the relationship between regime type and policy outputs.

#### CONCLUSION

In summary, empirical studies have failed to establish any strong relationship between regime type and public policy in Latin America. The limitations of such studies, however, are so great that the relationship is still not clear. Nevertheless, analysis of these limitations does suggest some basic directions for future investigation.

It is recommended that the study of this issue should sidestep, for the immediate future, the analysis of system performance or outcomes, focusing instead on government policies or outputs. The impact of regime type on public policy should not be investigated in terms of civilian-military dichotomy, but rather in terms of the characteristics that have been imputed to civilian and military regimes. The analysis of policy outputs should be expanded beyond the study of gross categories of expenditures and revenue to include specific policies followed in key areas of state intervention, defined in more qualitative terms that can be categorized in a manner allowing systematic comparative analysis.

Such a research strategy will require far more detailed and conceptually relevant data than are currently available in cross-national data banks. Collecting such data necessitates greater recourse to case studies of individual countries, planning documents, and expert assessments. While cross-national comparisons will continue to be important, time-series data of the sort already emphasized in case studies deserve greater attention. In short, if we are to answer basic questions about the relationship of regime type to policy impact, a considerable effort to generate appropriate data remains before us.

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