

The Transformations of Populism in Latin America¹

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The Latin American ruling classes have been living on the top of a volcano for a very long time, especially where ethnic conflict has been present, which means most of the region. These tensions, compounded with extreme economic inequality and large concentrations of labor in the mining areas of the Andes, or in tropical plantations, are responsible for a centuries-old tradition of social confrontation, and of a feeling of menace on the part of the upper classes, which is not to be found in other more homogeneous regions at similar levels of development.

Indian and slave rebellions have been the nightmare of the better-off sectors of the population since very early in their history. Thus, in what today is Peru and Bolivia, a massive revolt led by Indian cacique Tupac Amaru put in jeopardy the whole social system (1780-1783), causing enormous losses of life and property. A few years afterwards a slave rebellion broke out in Haiti, then a very rich colony, taking advantage of the struggle between various groups of settlers, under the impact of the French Revolution. After more than ten years most of the white population (5% of the island's total) were either killed or had to emigrate, leaving the island as the first independent country south of the United States. The "horrors" of the successful Haitian revolution had an impact on contemporaries which can only be compared to that caused in more recent years by Fidel Castro.

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1 I wish to thank Professor Hiroshi Matsushita for his invitation to spend a term in Kobe University, providing me with the opportunity of getting to know Japan, in its present and its history, which I have ransacked for additions to my store of comparative data. He was also kind enough to ask me to do a "revisiting" of my early analysis of populism (1965) to see whether my ideas had changed, or the reality had. This is my answer to that challenge.

The dread of a repetition of the Haiti syndrome caused the Brazilian elites to proceed very slowly and in a conciliatory manner in their drive for independence from Portugal, which was achieved with practically no violence (1822). A similar nightmare about reviving the ghost of Tupac Amaru held back the Peruvian white minority from starting a rebellion against Spain. In Mexico a similar caution among the capital's elites left the initiative in the hands of provincial groups, who, as might have been forecast, could not control the pent-up social antagonisms they stimulated in the struggle for independence, which quickly degenerated into a class-cum-ethnic war, with numberless victims on both sides (1810-1816).

By mid century there was another similar confrontation, this time including foreign intervention, and finally the well known Mexican Revolution, started in 1910 by the extremely moderate Francisco Madero, but soon escalating into a conflict which caused the destruction of the rural landlord class and about a million people in a span of ten years. The Mexican revolution, coming soon after the aborted Russian one of 1905, and being contemporary with the Bolsheviks' rise to power, became a warning to many other ruling groups in Latin America, who could not avoid asking themselves: why didn't this happen to us, or how can we prevent it from happening here? Many initiatives of social and political reform are strongly associated with this feeling of insecurity among the Establishment, which looked with awe not only to far-away events, but to others quite nearer home.

Since the early part of the XIXth century, when the new nations began their independent life but often lacked enough resources to create a strong central power, local chieftains -- "caudillos" -- emerged, capable of defying the government and often toppling it, only to be replaced later on by other armed men. This story is well known, and it has its equivalents in such countries as China, where it has been also intermittently enacted by warlords since very old times. But in the Latin American case an additional element was often present, namely, the capacity of those caudillos to lead the masses, creating a serious menace not only to constitutional order, but also to the system of social domination itself.

This pattern continued into the XXth century, creating a breed of "leaders of the people", or modern caudillos, often with military background, antagonistic to the upper classes, which felt them as a real danger, despite their not espousing, at least in most

cases, socialist ideas. Getulio Vargas of Brazil, Juan Domingo Peron of Argentina, and Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico, were the more typical cases, spanning from the thirties to the early seventies of this century. Their political formula was based on the mobilization of a large popular mass, urban and rural, which did not have much organizational experience, and which needed a father figure to lead them. These people had broken the crust of tradition, often through internal migration, or the impact of the mass media, leaving behind the network of personal relations in the small villages where they had lived under the aegis of the "three fathers": the extended family elder, the priest, and the small-scale employer or "patron". Confronted with the impersonality and insecurity of living in a more modern and strange environment, they needed to replace those three lost fathers, who provided some security, however authoritarian, with a fourth one, the *padre de los pobres* (father of the poor), whose overbearing manners were not only not resented, but welcome, as a mark of someone in a position of power, from whom favors could be expected.

The father figure, or *caudillo*, or charismatic leader, as we may choose to call him, had of course an important group around him, which was in turn recruited as a result of social tensions affecting the middle or upper echelons of society. Often he was of military extraction, but in other cases he emerged more directly from the ranks of the civilians, like Victor Raul Haya de la Torre in Peru, and Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela.

The popular following of these leaders was a very important element of their power. Not anyone can mobilize the masses: a combination of economic circumstances, reforms enacted or proposed, and personal traits of leadership, are necessary. Though the Left has often criticized such leaders and their mass movements, as being ideologically conservative, and brakes on revolutionary sentiments among the people, in fact they show a combination of conservative and revolutionary traits, and can change rather swiftly from one role to the other. Once one of these leaders starts mobilizing the masses, he is likely to be pushed by them, or by economic and political events, into radicalization, regardless of his original intentions. This has happened both to Peron and to Vargas, and to the latter's heir Joao Goulart, who took Brazil almost to the brink of revolution in 1964. In the case of Peron, it must be taken into account that from his movement the Montonero guerrillas were spawned, at the beginning with the blessing of the general, in exile and trying by all methods to come back to power.

The various movements we have mentioned, ranging from those led by Peron, Vargas and Cardenas to Haya de la Torre or Betancourt, have been often lumped together as “populist”, signalling the fact that they combine a popular following with non socialist ideas. This term is useful, though somewhat excessively broad in its meaning, as many different fish can be found in that pond.²

In an article written in 1965 I tried to differentiate between the various forms of populism, looking also for what they had in common. The article was rather widely reproduced and commented, and, of course, criticized. Now, after thirty years, I have been asked to go back to the field of battle, and state whether my ideas have changed, or, eventually, reality itself has. Of course, the latter is true, as these political movements have been evolving, but I see no reason for basically changing my scheme of analysis.³

Populism defined

Despite the differences between the various political parties branded “populist”, or “national popular”, there are some common traits, which I persist in listing as follows:

1. The leadership is extracted from strategic minorities of the upper or middle strata, usually affected by status incongruence, and ready to challenge the more traditionally conservative sectors of their own classes. They may be military without armaments, industrialists without protection, graduates without jobs, clerics pushed aside by modernization, educated members of discriminated ethnic minorities, and many other insecure or downwardly mobile elites.

2. The rank and file are drawn from the lower strata, with high social mobilization, that is, having broken their traditional bonds of loyalty to social superiors, but still with little organizational experience, so that it is difficult for them to form autonomous trade unions or labor parties.

3. The connection between leaders and led is based on a convergence of interests,

2. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds. *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969; Michael L. Conniff, *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1982.

3. “Populism and reform in Latin America”, in Claudio Veliz, ed., *Obstacles to change in Latin America*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1965; Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, Nueva York, New Left Review, 1977, ch. 4; Robert Dix, “Populism: Authoritarian and Democratic”, *Latin American Research Review* 20, 2, 1985; Emilio De Ippola, “Ruptura y continuidad: claves parciales para un balance de las interpretaciones del peronismo”, *Desarrollo Economico* 29, 115, octubre-diciembre 1989.

but it must be backed by charismatic appeal, anti-status-quo attitudes, however defined ideologically, and a common emotional state of mind.

Of course, a certain political movement can change in time its social character and its ideology, or more probably the form in which it interprets it. Spain's Socialists, adopting a "neo-liberal" (that is, neo-conservative) economic policy, and Italy's reborn ex Communists, now finally sharing power in a moderate Cabinet, are the better known cases. Conservatives also are not what they used to be, and Liberals or Radicals have often adopted new programs, more or less "social". In some cases the relative position of parties in the ideological spectrum has changed, though keeping a recognizable continuity.

In my definition of populism I didn't emphasize so much the ideology as the general attitude of giving precedence to representing the interests of the masses, and having the Establishment as their main antagonist. I gave more weight to the mass mobilization component than to any type of ideology, which can vary from what normally is considered left to right, but usually includes an important element of nationalism (or in other regions, ethnicity or religious fundamentalism).

Regarding nationalism, it must be said that as a result of the historical factors mentioned earlier, many Latin Americans, especially among the upper and middle classes, identify more with their European forebears than with most of their fellow citizens. This of course blunts the feeling of national identity, and occasionally produces extreme nationalist reactions as a compensating factor. Nationalism is, no doubt, a necessary component in the development of a country, though a dangerous one. Its expressions in Latin America are varied, and would take us far from the main object of this paper to describe in full. Suffice it to say that, in contrast with what happens in much of Asia and Africa, the Latin American nations share with the dominant world powers their ethnicity (among the ruling groups), their religion, and their language (with the exception of a few -- though significant -- Indian areas lightly touched by modernization). Strangely, then, nationalism has often taken the form of a reaffirmation of Hispanic values, which is in a sense a search of roots, but ignores the feelings of a large part of the local population. In other cases nationalism is tinged with nativist or mestizo values, thus becoming an anti-Establishment force, a sort of "popular nationalism". In this latter version it contrasts with what happens in Europe, where it has been a weapon of the Right, or in many parts of Asia and Africa, where it has been directed against colonial powers and their collabor-

ators, but not so much against the majority of the local Establishment.

On the other hand, Latin America does not provide much scope for religious fundamentalism, because it is much more secularized than the Middle East. Neither is an ethnically-based nationalism likely to take root in most of the continent, due to the high prevalence of racial mixing, but it may emerge among heavily Indian areas claiming ancestral lands, and which keep, if not their religion, at least their language. A similar thing is already happening in some Caribbean countries, including Guiana and Surinam.⁴

Anyway, as a result of a combination of factors, often some elites are formed, among the middle or upper layers of the social pyramid, which are at odds with the rest of their class. These anti-status-quo elites normally are the result of social tensions, which generate them, for example an abundance of higher educated people by comparison to the available positions. Often it is not easy to determine which are those tensions, so it may be necessary simply to detect the existence of such elites, whatever their origin. Or it may be convenient -- but often misleading -- to consider them simply the creation of a gifted individual, or the result of the spread of a certain ideology. In these cases it should be kept in mind that if possible one should push the causal link one stage backwards. For example, if we consider that the movement has been created through the exploits of a Peron, an Haya de la Torre or a Fidel Castro, we must first of all look at their entourage, their environment, their immediate lieutenants, and then to the social factors that may have created a sufficient number of people touched by the magic wand. Then it is necessary to determine the factors making that elite capable of establishing connections with a massive following.

Social tensions in countries of the periphery

In Latin America -- as in many other countries of the periphery -- social tensions responsible for the creation of the anti-status-quo elites, and for the presence of available masses to form a sizeable following, capable of generating a menace to the established order, can be listed as follows:

1. Structural dualism, due to the coexistence of particularly backward areas with

4. Kemp Ronald Hope, *Guyana: Politics and Development in an Emergent Socialist State*, Oakville, Ontario, Mosaic Press, 1985; Henk E. Chin and Hands Buddingh', *Surinam: Politics, Economics and Society*, London, Frances Pinter, 1987.

modernized sectors, the latter usually being associated to foreign investment and technology, and creating problems for local industrialists.

2. Levels of urbanization and education which produce a higher supply of aspirants to high-status jobs than the economy can satisfy.

3. Intense internal population movements, growth of communications, and other forms of mass mobilization not accompanied by an equivalent experience of autonomous class organization.

4. Concentration of economic power in an alliance of foreign and local elites which often lack legitimacy, especially vis-a-vis the urban middle classes.

These factors, prevalent throughout the Third World, are also present to some extent in core countries, but in the periphery they operate with far greater intensity. In Latin America, given its intermediate position in terms of development, and its above-alluded historical traits, they take on a special character. As a result, violence-prone populist parties of an authoritarian bent have been prevalent, some of them being ethnically based, a trait to-day almost confined to the Caribbean, but which is likely to intensify in the coming decades in some of the Andean countries.

In my original article I classified populist movements according to the type of elites they incorporate. These elites may derive

(a) from the upper or upper middle classes, or functional sectors closely associated to them, like military officers and the clergy; or else

(b) from the lower middle classes, or sectors of the intelligentsia.

I did not include the lower strata as a potential source of these elites, because by definition populism is a movement led by non-working class sectors. If a mass movement were led by an elite derived and grounded in the lower strata, then we would have something different: an early "slave insurrection" type of phenomenon, or a "primitive rebel" outburst, or, under more advanced industrial conditions, a working class socialist movement, but in that case again it would not be populist, because its rank and file would be highly organized.

Of course one has to be careful in detecting the social composition of a rebel elite, avoiding ideologically-based self descriptions. Certainly the really existing "socialist" revolutions have had as an essential component a non-working class leadership sector. As a matter of fact, Lenin's *What is to be Done?* should be considered, if properly read, the

standard argument for the need of such an elite under backward conditions.

Having classified populist elites according to the social strata whence most of their members come, I differentiated each level according to whether the elite was

(c) a small and “non-legitimated” sector of its social environment, in which case it would be surely more radical; or else

(d) a more representative group of its class of origin, though usually not a majority of it, in which case it would have attitudes more consonant with those in its original environment.

Combining these criteria, a four-fold table emerges. But considering the evidence I concluded that it was necessary to introduce yet another variable, the level of development. In highly developed countries usually there are no populist movements, or if at all there are phenomena like fascism or nazism, which were mobilizational, but not really anti-status-quo, despite the fact that some members of the conservative classes opposed them. Fascism and nazism define as their main enemies the “communists” and other working class sectors, while populism is mostly aimed against the dominant classes, even if it also confronts the Left. Now, coming back to the Latin American situation, I saw a difference between the relatively more developed countries, in terms of per capita indices (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) and the rest. In relatively more developed countries the middle class is more numerous, and often quite prosperous, so it would suffer less intense tensions leading to the formation of anti-status-quo attitudes. On the other hand, the working class is quite organized, reducing the reservoir of “mobilized but non autonomously organized” people, who abound in countries like Brasil or Mexico.

So I separated those three “more developed” countries from the rest, and to each group I applied the fourfold table, giving a total of eight squares (some of which might be empirically void). I will reproduce in an expanded way the situation as I saw it at the time, adding some considerations as to changes and tendencies. Though my classificatory system was mostly developed for Latin America, it had to apply also to other regions, so I am including examples drawn from the rest of the Third World. In a final section of this paper I will expand on some special cases, so as to analyze in more detail some dynamic processes of change.

The eight categories, defined by the type of elite associated to them, numbered from 1 to 8 and named according to the type of party they give rise to, can be seen in graph 1.

A description of each one of them follows afterwards.

Graph 1. Characteristics of elites linked to populist parties

	Typically underdeveloped countries		Relatively more developed countries	
	Legitimated	Non legitimated	Legitimated	Non legitimated
U M P i P d e d r l e	1 Multiclass Integra- tive (Mexico PRI, Varguismo, Con- gress Party)	3 "Nasserist" (Arab Socialism, "Peru- vian Revolution", Bolivian Military Socialism)	5 Empirically void	7 "Peronismo" (Ibanismo in Chile, aborted attempts in 1930' Japan)
L M o i w d e d r l e	2 "Aprista" (Peru APRA, Venezuela Accion Demo- cratica)	4 Social Revolution- ary (Cuban, Rus- sian, Chinese, Nicaraguan Revolutions)	6 "Yrigoyenismo"	8 Empirically void

1. **Multiclass Integrative parties** (typically underdeveloped country, upper middle strata legitimated elite)

This is likely to be a rather moderate version of populism, because of the many well-to-do people it is likely to include. India's Congress party in its days of glory was the classic example, as it included a sizeable sector of the elites, confident of leading the masses in a struggle for independence against an alien power. If I knew more about the Kuomintang I would also class it (and its offspring the Taiwan ruling party) in this category. Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in its heyday (1930s to 1970s) was another very good case, though it had evolved from a more radicalized revolutionary movement, more grounded on the lower middle classes (which might be classed under points 2 or 4). In Brazil the Varguista alliance from the 1940s to the 1980s (Partido Social Democratico, PSD, plus Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, PTB, and their successor the Movimento Democratico Brasileiro, MDB) was also of this type, which I

call Multiclass Integrative, and Helio Jaguaribe has referred to as Bismarckian. Often these countries have a numerous peasantry, and weak, or state-controlled, trade unions, which are easily led "from above".

This model, being able to integrate most social sectors, is quite efficient in promoting economic development, unless external circumstances intervene (as in China). However, as the economy grows, the weight of vested interests becomes so heavy that the party increasingly leans to conservatism, and with educational improvements the lower strata develop their own more autonomous organizations. Quite often the Multiclass Integrative party suffers some desertions to its left or popular side, as in Mexico with Cuauhtemoc Cardenas's Partido Revolucionario Democratico (PRD) which allied to the Left is a good challenger to the PRI. It also often happens that, given the high heterogeneity of the party, and the conflicting strategies of its leaders, a sector on the right splits off, or voters of that persuasion flock to a more clearly conservative, often religious grouping, like the Partido de Accion Nacional (PAN) in Mexico, or similarly inspired movements in India. So the Multiclass Integrative party, which usually is of the "dominant" variety, is likely to lose its monopoly of power, and become the Center in a three-way division, as appears to be happening both in India and Mexico. Alternately, a polarized -- but not necessarily violent -- structure may materialize, setting up the erstwhile Multiclass Integrative party either on the right or on the left of the new cleavage, according to the divisions it suffers and its ability at coalition-building.⁵

As for Brazil, the situation is so complex that it merits a special treatment lower down.

2. **"Aprista" parties** (typically underdeveloped country, lower middle strata legitimated elite)

This case differs from the previous one in that its elite is mostly derived from the lower middle classes and intelligentsia, having little if any backing among the bourgeoisie, the military or the high clergy. It often has a considerable trade union support, which is

5. Roger Hansen, *The Politics of Mexican Development*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970; Jose L. Reyna and Richard S. Weinert, eds., *Authoritarianism in Mexico*, Philadelphia, ISHI, 1977; Roderick A. Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989.

increased where there are important working class concentrations in mining or agribusiness (especially sugar) which create conditions for intense social confrontation. However, the workers in such places usually do not have much organizational experience, and need leadership from above. The impoverished, usually provincial, middle class and the intelligentsia provide that leadership, and become the spinal cord of this type of party, which needs a charismatic personality at its front in order to compensate for the weakness of its component parts. The "legitimated" character of the elite involved refers to how it is seen from its milieu among the middle classes, not the upper crust, for whom it may be a sworn enemy. Peru's Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), founded by Haya de la Torre in 1924, is an archetypical case, so much so that for brevity's sake I have used it to name the category. It was for decades the main contender against the Establishment, by whom it was seen as "worse than the Communists", because of its greater strength and occasional terrorist tactics.⁶

Other cases in point are Venezuela's Accion Democratica (AD), Costa Rica's Liberacion Nacional, and Bolivia's Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR). If a party of this type comes to power by violence, destroying the bases of much of the Establishment (as in Bolivia in 1952), it is likely to create considerable new vested interests within its fold, thus developing some of the traits of the Multiclass Integrative type. Bolivia's MNR was evolving in that direction, but its heterogeneity, and the desperate economic condition of the country, prompted a series of interventions by the armed forces, thus cutting short a potential "Mexican way". After democratization, the MNR has remained as an important party, with a major opponent to its right and several leftist or neopopulist groups on the opposite side.

As for Aprismo in Peru, it finally came to power with Alan Garcia in 1985, but mismanaged the economy to such an extent, and was so severely affected by corruption, that it was practically wiped out from the electoral scene in 1990. This allowed Alberto Fujimori to replace it as the hope of the have-nots, against the conservative alliance led by Vargas Llosa, but once in power he veered towards the right. Fujimori's party, of a highly personalized nature, is an unexpected newcomer, which I would classify as a Multiclass Integrative party, which has been able to retain a large popular following despite

6. Carol Graham, *Peru's Apra: Parties, Politics and the Elusive Quest for Democracy*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1992.

its neo-liberal economic policies, and has incorporated much of the entrepreneurial sectors, thus reducing the traditional or renovated Right to a rump.

3. **“Nasserism”** (typically underdeveloped country, upper middle strata non legitimated elite)

Among the upper middle strata, or their military and clergy components, a rather small and radical minority may arise, strongly at odds with the pre-existing status quo, and thus “non legitimated” in the eyes of the previous regime. The prosperous civilian sectors of the upper middle classes are not likely to be very much attracted to this anti-status-quo elite (if they were, the scenario would regress to square 1), but the more hard-pressed military or religious personnel may be more likely to generate this type of leadership. This is especially so in non-Western countries, where their normally conservative instincts are channelled into anti-Western attitudes, forcing them, in search of allies, to a popular mobilizational strategy. This goes hand in hand with a high dose of authoritarianism and single-party ideology, eventually adopting some form of socialist phraseology. Arab Socialism, often inspired by the military, is the main case in point. Its more radical varieties, originating in a guerrilla struggle, emerge from a prolonged war of liberation, as in Algeria. In that case the resulting structure may look more like a Social Revolutionary regime (point 4).

These systems, after having come to power mobilizing the masses, tend to consolidate a new dominant class, thus eventually changing to the Multiclass Integrative variety, or directly assuming the role of a Conservative party, if a new popular mobilizing movement emerges. This apparently is happening in Algeria, with the Islamic fundamentalists now performing the role earlier represented by the secular nationalists. In Iran, too, the Khomeini regime came to power against a solidly conservative though modernizing monarchical regime. However, after an early transitional phase it seems to have settled into a quite solid Multiclass Integrative pattern, liable to all the tensions and potential changes referred to in point 1.

In Latin America “Nasserist” regimes have not been common, probably because the military are much less driven to anti-Western or anti-imperialist attitudes than in Asia or Africa. On the other hand, the greater modernization of most Latin American countries

generates stronger unions or grass-roots based populist parties, thus prompting the military to anti-mobilizational, conservative attitudes, in recent times expressed in the many dictatorships the region has suffered. However, there are some exceptions, as in the first phase of Peru's "revolutionary" military regime (1968-75). Surprisingly, these military were the very same persons who had been fighting the guerrillas for years, but who decided that the only way to avoid a revolution from below was to stage one from above. The regime, however, did not jell, nor could it create an electoral base of its own.⁷

In Bolivia there had been two self-styled "military socialist" presidents in the late thirties, as a result of a reaction against the lost war against Paraguay (1932-1935). In Paraguay there was also a short-lived reaction of that type, caused by dissatisfaction with the results of the war. So the scenario is reminiscent of Nasser's initial motivations.

4. Social Revolutionary or "Fidelista" parties (typically underdeveloped country, lower middle strata non legitimated elite)

In some underdeveloped countries the situation for the lower middle classes is so pressing that a sector among them develops more intense feelings against the Establishment, and also against its own military, than in the "Aprista" case. The violence of these feelings estranges these minorities from the bulk of their own class, thus earning for them the "non legitimated" stamp in this classification.

The Cuban revolutionary movement is a prime example of this type of party. Though it had from the beginning, or it soon developed, a popular following, its dynamism came from a group recruited among the intelligentsia and other disaffected elements of the middle classes. This band of revolutionaries did not restrict itself to performing the role of a spark igniting the prairie, and it became the basis for the formation of a new dominant class, the bureaucracy.⁸

Other Communist revolutions have followed the same pattern, from China and Indo China to Zarist Russia. The movements on which they have been based are of a mobiliza-

7. Abraham F. Lowenthal, *The Peruvian Experiment: Continuity and Change under Military Rule*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975; Alfred Stepan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978.

8. James O'Connor, *The Origins of Socialism in Cuba*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1970; Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967.

tional character, with a small dedicated leadership and cadre of professional revolutionaries appealing to a broader mass in what amounts to a highly vertical variety of populism, ideologies apart, though I am not prepared to fight over names. In fact, it can be argued that Fidel Castro's movement, when it started, was more of the "Aprista" type (and was supported by leaders of that kind of parties, like Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela), only later evolving in a more radical orientation. The various guerrilla groups in Latin America are of course of the same type.⁹

On the other hand, Communist parties in Western Europe and Japan are of a different sort, as their basis is a highly organized and educated working class, plus a sector derived from the intelligentsia, and little if any peasant support. These Communist parties are of a non-populist variety, and they may be classed as Working Class Socialist.

Once a Social Revolutionary party is in power, it starts replacing the destroyed dominant classes with new ones, thus adopting some conservative traits. But memories of the revolution linger, and the party may become a Multiclass Integrative organization, as it appears to be the case in China, liable to the same potential changes as were described earlier in point 1.

5. **Empirically void** (relatively more developed country, upper middle strata legitimated elite)

We begin now with the four remaining cases, in relatively more developed countries, like Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, or the Japan of the twenties and thirties.

The first pigeon hole happens to be empirically empty, which sounds reasonable, as conditions there generate a rather well-off and satisfied, mostly conservative, upper middle class, and a sizeable and unionized working class, which tends to back non-populist, usually Socialist or Communist parties. There is a strong organizational backbone to politics in these countries, approximating Western European standards. So the social conservatism of the upper and middle classes usually extends to the military and the clergy, ex-

9. Howard Handelman, *Struggle in the Andes: Peasant Political Mobilization in Peru*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1975; Cynthia McClintock, "Why Peasants Rebel: The Case of Peru's Sendero Luminoso," *World Politics* 37:1, Oct. 1984: 48-85; Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *Sendero: historia de la guerra milenaria en el Peru*, vol 1, vols 2 and 3 forthcoming, Lima, Editorial Apoyo, 1990.

erting over them a strong pressure towards conformity, with only a few exceptions, which we will consider below. But normally one cannot expect the formation of a widely based, legitimated elite, set against the Establishment, among the higher levels of society in this type of countries.

6. **"Yrigoyenismo"** (relatively more developed country, lower middle strata legitimated elite)

For the same reasons as above, in this type of countries the lower middle class is generally not very much alienated from the system of social domination, of which it is a part. Politically it may have grievances, but there is little or no peasantry to mobilize, and the workers have their own economic and political organizations. Lower middle class unconformity thus leads, at most, to the support of centrist parties, like Chile's or Argentina's Radicales or Christian Democrats, or Uruguay's Colorados.¹⁰ These parties are mostly non populist, but in some cases they may acquire a mobilizational hue, as in Argentina under Hipolito Yrigoyen, active in opposition or in power since the beginning of the century up to 1930. Yrigoyen's element of mobilizationism really acquired a significant presence only in his second term in 1928 and was cut short by a military intervention in 1930. In Chile Arturo Alessandri, leader of a splinter group from the Liberal party, and allied to the Radicales, appeared also as a mass leader during the late teens and twenties, but soon faded away. Neither Yrigoyen nor Alessandri ever had a strong trade union component in their organization, and left no inheritance of a mobilizational kind, their parties simply filling in a centrist niche in the political spectrum.¹¹

7. **"Peronist" parties** (relatively more developed country, upper middle strata non legitimated elite)

Among the relatively more developed countries it is rare to have anti-status-quo atti-

10. I leave the word Radicales in Spanish so as to avoid the confusion with the English term "radical" which to-day is equivalent to "leftist", while the Radical parties, both of Argentina and Chile, are quite moderate, including a right-of-center element.

11. David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975.

tudes among the upper middle classes or their military and clerical counterparts, as already mentioned above. However, there are exceptions, and the main one is in Argentina. Very peculiar social conditions must have existed in that highly urbanized and prosperous country for it to have generated a strong and persistent populism. In fact, up to the Second World War the political spectrum was similar to that of Chile and several European countries, with an upper class Liberal Conservatism, a moderate and middle-class-based Radicalismo in the Center, and very active Socialist and Communist parties, with strong links to the trade unions and a considerable vote in the larger cities.

The peculiarity was that Argentina was at the time the more developed, and possibly stronger country in Latin America, a veritable Latin Australia, vying with Brazil for regional dominance. The war stimulated these ambitions, especially as Brazil had opted for an American alliance, while Argentina chose a wait- and-see approach while the world powers destroyed each other. The situation has been often described: briefly, it led to the emergence of a highly assertive elite made up of a large sector of the military, a good chunk of the Falangista Church, the nationalist Right intellectuals, and some industrialists. All of them were bent on creating a National Defense State, to play a role in the World War or its unpredictable sequels. For this it was necessary to expand industry in order to generate armament capability, and to feed and educate the population so as to make better soldiers out of them.

The bulk of the conservative classes, based on land ownership and an association with Great Britain, flatly opposed this project, and so did most of the intelligentsia, and the existing centrist and leftist parties, plus important groups of the clergy and the military, especially the navy. So conditions were created for the emergence of an anti-status-quo elite, with a strange combination of nationalist and popular orientations. Peron was its leader, and having come to power through a coup in 1943, quickly rose to the top. In his struggle with the more traditional status quo, he resorted to mobilizing the people, and war-time prosperity allowed him to distribute benefits to the lower strata.

Most surely Peron aimed at forming a Multiclass Integrative party, his own version of what Fascism was doing in Italy, or the PRI in Mexico. However, social tensions did not allow him to do this. In a country like Mexico it would have been easier, even at this late stage, because the popular classes had much less political weight, and could be led in a controlled way without necessarily antagonizing too much the Establishment. In Argen-

tina the contrary happened, and a deep division was created, forcing Peron to an excessive dose of potentially violent popular mobilization, beyond his original intentions. Thus a polarization ensued, with the conservatives, the middle class parties, and also most of the much reduced Left, linked in an "Antifascist" coalition, and Peron on the other side, with little support from old political elites, but a very strong mass following, which he quickly organized into new trade unions, managing to replace or coopt the old style leadership. We will later come back to a further consideration of Peronismo's features and present evolution.¹²

Peronismo is, in a sense, the equivalent, in a more developed country, of Nasserism, which it preceded by several years. In Chile General Carlos Ibanez created also, in 1952, a populist movement largely inspired by Peron's example, but after coming to power through free elections his support soon melted away, the previous party structure reasserting itself. In other Latin American countries there were attempts, by military leaders, to follow Peron's example, and unite "the army and the people", but without success.

Japan during the thirties provides an interesting case of an attempt, by a determined military-civilian elite, to form a nationalist populism, partly inspired (as Peron's) in Fascist examples, but with differentiating traits. Here also there was an emphasis on a National Defense State, and a recruitment of a motley elite made up of intermediate-level military officers and intellectuals with a samurai ideal. But in no moment were these people able to form a political party with a massive following. This was probably because of the large non-mobilised peasant majority, still under the control of local notables, and the conservative nature of most of the population and the middle classes.¹³

8. Empirically void (relatively more developed country, lower middle strata non legitimated elite)

12. About the origins and later evolution of Peronismo see Gino Germani, *Authoritarianism, Fascism and National Populism*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Books, 1978; Miguel Murmis and J.C. Portantiero, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 1971; Hiroshi Matsushita, *Movimiento obrero argentino, 1930-1945*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XX, 1983; Juan Carlos Torre, *Peron y la vieja guardia sindical*, Buenos Aires, Sudamericana, 1990; Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

13. See Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977; Richard Storry, *The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Nationalism (1957)*, Westport, Conn, Greenwood Press, 1973; Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: A Biography of Nakano Seigo*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1985.

Among the lower middle strata of a moderately developed country there are some forces leading to disconformity. These are today, after decades of decadence, at a higher pitch than in previous times. Both now and then some groups of a radical and violent persuasion have been formed, and some of them actually took up arms, spawning the guerrilla movements of Argentina (Peronista Montoneros and Marxist Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo, ERP), Uruguay (Tupamaros) and Chile (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, MIR, and Frente Patriotico Manuel Rodriguez, both Marxist). However, in contraposition to what happens in a more typically underdeveloped country, these elites lack a peasantry to go to, and find an already organized and more moderate trade union movement with quite a few vested interests, which antagonizes them. Thus they concentrate in an intellectual ghetto, hardly capable of challenging the dominant order.

If conditions were to change, worsening substantially, this middle class intelligentsia might be able to link up with a more impoverished and radicalized working class. But this is not very likely, and if at all, given the organizational experience of the trade unions and other popular associations, the outcome may be a more moderate Working Class Socialist movement, with party structures, non violent means, and increasingly pragmatic approach. This is what has been actually happening in Brazil, as we shall see, with the formation of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), born in the Greater Sao Paulo industrial area in the early eighties, but this is not, basically, a populist movement.

The role of populism in the consolidation of democracy

Democracy seems to be established in Latin America, this time for good. There were other occasions when it also seemed that republican institutions were taking root, for example during the post World War II period; but that spring did not last long, and that was due, to a large extent, to the difficulty of incorporating the masses in a consensual manner. In fact, international comparative experience suggests that one of the main challenges faced by the consolidation of democracy is the integration of the underprivileged into the party system.

During the early stages of industrial growth the lower strata usually develop highly adversary and violent traits, whether of a socialist or a populist variety. It is often stated that the tendency today is towards a blurring of class conflict as the basis of party support. This may be so, but parties were never wholly based on clearly-drawn class lines;

and in most highly industrialized countries there is still a bipolarity between a conservative party or alliance with entrepreneurial support, and a labor-based alternative. The middle classes are torn between these two powerful magnets, leaving little space for a centrist party, even if almost everybody has become, to some extent, centrist-minded. Over this pattern many special configurations can be embroidered, including more extreme parties of the left, or nationalistic and xenophobic ones, without deterring from the basic bipolarity. A limiting case is that of the United States, where the popular party incorporates important sectors of the upper classes, especially regional ones; while in other cases the presence of religious or ethnic differences can also cause departures from the above-alluded bipolarity.¹⁴

Most probably the heyday of populism has passed in Latin America, though in other parts of the less developed world it has still a long run ahead of it. In many cases it is changing almost out of recognition -- as has Communism in Europe -- and in others it has never been dominant. But in most cases it has been for a long time the representative, in however distorted a fashion, of the have-nots, and as such it has been an essential forerunner of a democratic set up. In order to have a better grasp of present-day alternatives, let us finally take a more detailed look at three countries which can serve as models of a possible transformation of the party system, and thus of populism also: Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

The Chilean model: Strong class-based parties following an "European" pattern

Chile -- one of the most developed, urban and educated countries in Latin America -- provides the main case in the region where political parties have been strongly rooted for over a century, with high stability and participation, and a capacity to express a wide gamut of ideologies. During the XIXth century the cleavage was first between Conservatives and Liberals, with the Radicales coming next as contenders for power. During the early part of the XXth century a strong, trade-union based, and quite solidly organized

14. For a recent reassessment of class cleavage theories regarding party support see Ronald J. Johnston, "Lipset and Rokkan Revisited: Electoral Cleavages, Electoral Geography, and Electoral Strategy in Great Britain," in R.J. Johnston, F.M. Shelley and P.J. Taylor, eds., *Developments in Electoral Geography*, London, Routledge, 1990; Frances Fox Piven, *Labor Parties in Postindustrial Societies*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992; regarding the impact of racial issues on the class character of voting in the USA see Thomas Byrne Edsall with Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics*, New York, Norton, 1991.

Socialist party was formed, later on divided in almost equal parts between Socialists and Communists. By mid century Christian Democracy emerged as a new center party, replacing the Radicales in the preferences of the moderate middle class. As early as 1938 a Popular Front was formed, uniting the Radicales to the Left, with a moderate reform program. For decades the electorate was almost equally divided into "three thirds" -- as the system was known -- giving the Right, the Center, and the Left equivalent voting power, the final results depending very much on shifting alliances and eventual splintering of forces.¹⁵

In other words, Chile has had a Western European-type system, and an almost total absence of populist experiences. The Right was quite strong before the Pinochet coup (1973), and in the 1970 elections it lost against Salvador Allende by less than 2%, garnering a solid 35% of the total poll. It has an almost uninterrupted tradition reaching to the last century. During the Unidad Popular government (1970-73) it looked as it might enter into a terminal illness, as reflected in some by-elections, but towards the end of that period it was again recovering.

In most really-existing democracies there are conservative parties, by that or another name, or semi-permanent alliances capable of winning elections or at least blocking extreme measures by their opponents. It is only natural to expect a similar pattern to evolve in the new Latin American democracies, and also to argue that the lack of such conservative parties or coalitions is a serious component of the weakness of consensual politics in this part of the world.¹⁶ However, given the nature of these societies, a strong conservative party or alliance is very likely to have a sizeable sector with authoritarian tendencies, reflecting the attitudes dominant among its constituency. Nevertheless, it performs a positive role in democratization, precisely because it provides channels of expression for those sectors, which are forced to mingle with others of their basic conservative persuasion but who are more prepared to engage in consensual politics. It would be almost tautological to say that a strong conservative party, if very fully sharing democratic values, would perform a positive role in maintaining them. The less obvious

15. Arturo and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Chile: Politics and Society*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1976; Paul Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1978.

16. For the role of conservative parties, see Douglas Chalmers, Atilio Boron and Maria do Carmo Campelo de Souza, eds., *The Right and Democracy in Latin America*, New York, Praeger, 1991.

hypothesis is that even a not very democratically-convinced party can perform that role, because of the way it channels and blends basic class interests and feelings into the political arena.

Similar considerations apply to the Left: it is a generally confirmed fact that when it has an ample electorate it tends to moderation. There are a few exceptions to this generalization, one of them being precisely Chile, where the Left has been for decades strong, though short of moderating structures.

During the sixties the Center was occupied by the Christian Democrats, who replaced the vanishing Radicales. In 1964 they won the presidency by a wide margin, but that was due to being supported by the Right, which preferred them to the Unidad Popular. In 1970 it was not possible to unite again the anti-socialist vote, with the known results: an immature Left came to power with a revolutionary mandate, but scarcely more than a third of the electorate, creating the preconditions for the military coup.

During the Pinochet years (1973-1990) Christian Democracy quickly adopted an oppositional attitude, and so did, even more clearly, the Catholic Church. On the Left there were agonizing reappraisals, especially among the Socialists, with the result of an intense splintering of that party, while the Communists remained more faithful to orthodoxy but lost a lot of their supporters. When redemocratization became more certain, it was the Socialists, reunited and rechristened as Partido por la Democracia (PPD), who took the lead in exploring coalitional tactics with the Christian Democrats, and in accepting, directly or indirectly, deals with those members of the military government who wished for an ordered transition, with guarantees for the maintenance of parts of the Pinochetista order, both economic and military. The result was a Christian Democratic presidency (first Patricio Aylwin in 1990, and then Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle in 1994) solidly supported by the Socialists, and with only a small unreformed Communist party to its left.

The Right continues alive and well, though divided into two parties, Hernan Buchi's Union Democratica Independiente (UDI), and Onofre Jarpa's more traditional Partido de Renovacion Nacional (PRN). Together with a thinly disguised "independent candidate," Jorge Errazuriz, it totalled slightly over 40% of the vote in the first free elections, thus remaining at its traditional par or even better, despite divisions. It benefited from economic recovery, and inherited a sector of the Christian Democratic electorate, restless at

the Left-leaning alliances of its leadership. As the country has changed a lot during its dictatorial interlude, now the Right cannot be said to rely mostly on a traditional peasant vote destined to disappear, but rather on dynamic urban and rural middle classes impressed by law-and-order slogans, plus some "working-class tory" following.

If the present ruling alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists ("Concertacion") proves to be permanent, the traditional pre-Pinochet tripartition of the electorate might be replaced by a bipolarity, more in line with Western European experience. On the left side of this cleavage there would be, now, a massive dosis of moderation, based on the Christian Democrats, plus a large sector of the Socialists, now converted to social democracy. It is clear that in the transition this moderate coalition was essential for the success of the operation.¹⁷

The Brazilian model: From moderate populism to a New Left

Brazil is almost an opposite case to that of Chile, in terms of social structure and party system. During the fifties its population was practically half illiterate and half rural, but involved in accelerated economic growth and migration to the cities, with a correspondingly high pattern of upward mobility for old city dwellers, especially in the South and Sao Paulo. This produced a continual change in the composition of the urban working class, making it difficult to consolidate trade union organizations and political loyalties. Typical populist followings were developed, but with a high rate of turnover. Thus Vargas, though a generator of one of the stronger political traditions in the country, once dead did not leave a legacy as unitary as that of Peron in Argentina or Haya de la Torre in Peru.¹⁸

Vargas had come to power in 1930 as a result of a civilian coalition formed to foil the fraudulent conservative regime based on Sao Paulo. He started a period of fifteen years in government (1930-1945), first as a provisional ruler, then constitutional, and finally dictatorial. During the final years of the Second World War a mutual emulation

17. Alejandro Foxley, "After authoritarianism: Political alternatives," in A. Foxley, M. McPherson and G. O'Donnell, eds., *Development, Democracy and the Art of Trespassing. Essays in Honor of Albert O. Hirschman*, Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press, 1988, pp. 91-113; Sergio Bitar, *Chile: Experiment in Democracy*, Philadelphia, Ishi, 1986; Manuel Antonio Garretón, *The Chilean Political Process*, Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1989.

18. Kenneth Erikson, *The Brazilian Corporative State and Working Class Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

with Argentina's Peron set in. At that time Vargas changed from being a rather conservative innovator and modernizer to assume the role of leader of populist mobilizations.

The Establishment, which had in large part supported the earlier Vargas, turned diffident and alarmed, and promoted a military coup to dispose of the "fascist dictator". But after four years he came back as President in free elections, even if the Right (under the guise of the Uniao Democratica Nacional, UDN) proved to be a serious electoral contender, garnering its votes from traditional and backward areas, but also from the main centers of middle class formation. Vargas, in his new role as democratically elected ruler (1951-1954) brought a much renovated program, including elements of "socialism", however vaguely defined. His new policies -- mixed with quite a bit of corruption -- met with serious opposition, and finally another military coup in the making led him to commit suicide as a dramatic gesture, to prevent the military takeover.

The Constitution was thus maintained, and his political machine, uniting a moderate and a leftist wing (Partido Social Democratico, PSD, and Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, PTB), almost permanently allied, continued in power. However, in 1961 a change took place, which it is unnecessary here to describe in any detail, but as a result of which Vargas's more radical heir, Joao Goulart, became president. This time Varguismo assumed a decidedly leftist hue, was supported by practically the whole Marxist and Fidelista intelligentsia and political parties, and attempted to implement an ambitious revolutionary program.

The period of radicalization under Goulart (1961-64) bears some resemblances to that of the Unidad Popular in Chile, though with quite a different social setting. The Brazilian situation was -- and continues to be -- less predictable than the Chilean, due to the Protean nature of its parties, which vie for the votes of a highly mobilized but scantily organized popular mass. The fact that this mass has a low degree of union or party organization makes it less powerful than its Chilean counterparts, but at the same time more volatile, more potentially violent. It hovers between a dormant state -- typical of the backward areas, under the aegis of traditionalist notables -- and varieties of populism, some of them quite conservative, like early Varguismo, and others potentially revolutionary, notably under Goulart. However, Goulart's efforts were unsuccessful, and they resulted in the break up of the Varguista coalition, its right wing joining the quite powerful conservative opposition in supporting a military coup. Thus an authoritarian regime was

established, with ample civilian support, which lasted for over 20 years, and was able -- like Pinochet, but contrary to Argentina's military rulers -- to develop and industrialize the country to a remarkable degree, so much so that at the time Brazil was perceived as entering into the category of another "Asian Tiger".¹⁹

The Right in Brazil has a solid tradition, stemming from imperial times, when it controlled passive rural electorates. After the Estado Novo interlude (1937-1945) it reemerged in 1945 rather strongly, as the Uniao Democratica Nacional (UDN), and in 1960 it was able to win a national election against the Varguista coalition, by coopting Janio Quadros, a condottiere from Sao Paulo with a wide popular appeal but clearly an instrument of the Right.²⁰

There was no real equivalent, in Brazil, of Chile's Unidad Popular, at the time. The nearest was the Communist party, which did not have much of a permanent electoral following. By the 1960s it had dropped its traditional anti-Varguista stance, wholeheartedly supporting the variety of populism cultivated by the old man's heir Goulart. The Communist party, given its well organized cadres and its connections with Goulartismo, was a political actor the equivalent of which did not exist in Chile. Compared to Chile's leftist parties, the Brazilian Communists were a small group, but they had ample connections, and good contacts with the leadership of an existing populist movement, which they might hope to manipulate from the inside.²¹ So the alchemy of changing a Varguista-inspired movement into one with Marxist traits could be envisaged, as a result not of class-consciousness and slow growth of organization among the proletariat, but of a coup de main by a well-knit elite. For the Brazilian dominant classes, the situation was even more explosive than in Chile; but if the mobilizing elites could be subdued, or their contacts with the masses blocked, the skies might be blue again and calmer than in the Andean coun-

19. Thomas Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967; Ronald Schneider, *The Political System of Brazil: Emergence of an Authoritarian "Modernizing" Regime, 1964-70*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971; Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971.

20. Janio Quadros, a rather unstable personality, resigned after a few months in office, as a result of confrontations with the military. Goulart, his vicepresident though political opponent (at that time presidents and vicepresidents were elected separately) thus came to power.

21. Leoncio Martins Rodrigues, "O PCB: os dirigentes e a organizacao," in *Historia Geral da Civilizacao Brasileira*, 3 tomes in 11 vols., ed. by Sergio Buarque de Holanda and Boris Fausto, Rio de Janeiro, Difel, 1963-86, tome 3, vol. 3, ch. 8, pp. 363-443; Edgard Carone, *O PCB*, 2 vols., Sao Paulo, Difel, 1982.

try.

The Varguista forces were divided, as we have seen, into two sectors: the centrist PSD and the more genuinely mobilizational PTB. The former had a position in political space not too different from Chile's Christian Democracy, though with much less ideological fervor and organizational clout, while Trabalhismo (PTB) was a more volatile equivalent of the Chilean Left, enjoying an increasing popular support, which every advance on the road of industrialization made bigger and more menacing. The leaders it generated from its own ranks, as well as many of those who mobilized it from the top, were totally unpredictable, as they were not kept within bounds by the requirements of large-scale autonomous organization.

However, as a result of intensive industrialization, by the eighties Brazilian society changed almost out of recognition. Though it continued to generate the time-bomb of the rural migrants and the unemployed intelligentsia, it also created ample entrepreneurial sectors, and a modern industrial working class. Both these latter groups, especially the entrepreneurs, could be expected to lend stability to the political system; but even the industrial workers might introduce an element of differentiation within the popular mass, thus making mobilizational politics (Varguista or social revolutionary) less likely.²²

The mammoth industrial concentrations of the Sao Paulo area became the cradle of a new unionism, quite pragmatic at the beginning, but soon receiving the support of most of the Marxist Left, and of the increasingly radical Catholic Teologia da Liberacao priests and lay activists.²³ By 1980 those unionists had formed the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers' Party), which from small origins developed into an important political force, capable of performing the role of main antagonist to the Establishment in the economic and also in the electoral field.

The post-transition situation in Brazil has been bedevilled by the instability of the party system, especially by the disarray of the large centrist stabilizer of the Partido do Movimento Democratico Brasileiro (PMDB), where most of the old Varguista politicians had converged after the military interlude. The more radical Varguistas retained the Trabalhista tradition, led in a very personalist manner by a close relative of Goulart, Leonel

22. Alfred Stepan, ed., *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation*, New York, Oxford U.P., 1989.

23. Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic church and politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1986.

Brizola, who for a moment appeared as capable of repeating the exploits of his predecessor, but conditions were no longer ripe for that type of appeal. By 1994 the Right, traditionally quite powerful, was in a temporary condition of disarray, divided between a "hard line" (today renamed Partido Progressista Brasileiro, PPB) and a "soft" or "aper-turista" faction (the Partido da Frente Liberal, PFL), both of which were offshoots and recombinations of the old UDN and PSD, that is, the anti-Varguista and the Varguista Right.

The Center, after democratization (1985), had been represented by the PMDB, a catch-all party with moderate Varguista roots. But this party, after performing an essential function in the first post-transition presidency, entered into a state of decomposition, losing numerous regionalist factions, and also a more ideological but moderate one which named itself Social Democrat (PSDB).

On the Left Brizola's Trabalhismo was disappearing as a major contender for power, thus leaving the field free for the PT, ably headed by Luis Inacio da Silva, known by his nickname Lula, a metallurgical trade unionist with basic pragmatic ideas but surrounded by a very radicalized band of militants. As the presidential election approached, Lula had a 40% preference, and he was miles ahead of any other candidate, due to the extreme proliferation of factions and parties. At this moment a reaction set in from many sectors, concerned with the possibility of an unreconstructed Left in power, of a non-mobilizational but quite radical frame of mind. The result of this reaction was that a great part of conservative and centrist opinion supported the Social Democratic candidate, the well-known sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, independently of the decision of party leaders, only some of whom actually endorsed him. Cardoso won the election, against a good performance by Lula, who is likely to retain the role of main leftist opposition, probably leading his party and allies to moderation, helped in this direction by the many mayors and councillors they had obtained in important cities, and by most trade union leaders, who have no use for extremist talk, which they partly blame for the defeat.

Cardoso's political support is highly heterogeneous, and it goes from the moderate Right (PFL), to most of the Center and Center-Left (his own PSDB and sectors of the undisciplined PMDB), leaving outside the more hardline conservatives, and Lula's PT. His coalition reminds the observer of Nehru's Congress party, which had a right and a left faction, but it is less mobilizational, and based on party alliances and pacts rather than

on a single organization. As its appeal is no longer mobilizational or populist (having espoused privatization and neo-liberal economic policies) it cannot really fit the Multi-class Integrative model. It comes near, though, to what we have described as one of the potential evolutions from that party type, when a three-tiered division sets in, with a dominant Center, against smaller but far from irrelevant alternatives at its right and left. With this combination Cardoso might succeed in getting reelected, and performing a positive role in economic stabilization. But the longer term prospects for a continuation of his type of coalition are rather low, and after his period in office a bipolarization may develop, with his wide but heterogeneous Center coalition slowly being "eaten up" from its two sides.

The Argentine model: Reformed populism

If Chile is the country in Latin America boasting a healthier Western-European-like Left, Argentina has the rare distinction of nurturing one of the stronger and more permanently-rooted populist parties in the region, with robust though caudillista-led trade unions. Peronismo has been seen for decades by the upper classes as a serious threat to their interests, even if most of the time it did not take a revolutionary character. It did pass through episodes of violence and anti-Establishment confrontation, especially during its long legal banishment (1955-1973), which led it to an alliance with guerrilla groups, partly originated among its own rank and file, partly recruited outside. Peronismo also has a sizeable component, among its influential elites and its trade union leadership, oriented towards some authoritarian form of Third-World nationalism. This very peculiar combination, despite its heterogeneity, has been capable of practically eliminating the Left as a viable electoral alternative up to very recently. But most of the time Peronismo was seen by the dominant classes as potentially more dangerous than the Marxist parties.²⁴

The main purpose of all military regimes in Argentina since 1955 has been to topple or to forestall the installation of a Peronista government. On the other hand, Peronismo, though threatening, was not revolutionary in intent, even if radical social change might

24. Carlos Waisman, *Reversal of Development in Argentina: Postwar Counterrevolutionary Policies and Their Structural Consequences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987; Donald Hodges, *Argentina, 1943-1987: The National Revolution and Resistance*, Albuquerque, U. of New Mexico P., 1987.

have been the unintended result of its taking over power after a violent struggle, especially in 1973. The complex nature of the highly organized Argentine pressure groups, including the contradictory nature of Peronismo, was the cause of the failure of all the above-mentioned military regimes to perpetuate themselves in a regular fashion, as happened in Chile or Brazil. All those military regimes in Argentina saw their prestige seriously eroded by internal coups. These were not due to military ambitions -- which always exist -- but to the fact that the contentious nature of civil society reflects itself in divisions among military factions, of an intensity unparalleled in the other countries. One might say that the threat posed by the popular classes against the Argentine Establishment was strong enough to alarm them and make them resort to the barracks, but not enough to dissuade some scheming military or civilian politicians to try to use them as allies against their rivals. Finally, one of them, Gral Galtieri, resorted to the Falklands/Malvinas adventure, as a way out from an already unbearable predicament, with the known results.

In Argentina the electoral Right is very weak, and divided into several factions, in sharp contrast with both Chile and Brazil. It is often said, after President Menem's reorientation of his economic policies in a "neoliberal" direction, that Peronismo after all is a conservative movement, maybe a popular-conservative one, and that it has shed its populist elements. I believe this is a wrong assessment of the situation, as it mixes up instrumental economic policies or pacts -- common also to Social Democracy in Europe -- with more basic political characters. If Peronismo had been simply a popular conservative force, it would not have generated such a resentment, for almost half a century, among the dominant classes. Admittedly, parties, and especially populist ones, do change in their attitudes, and also in the position they occupy in the ideological spectrum. Peronismo has changed, and probably will go on changing, but it falls far short from becoming a party of the Right, though it does have a fairly rightist faction within its fold, and eventually it may split up, and one of its components might, indeed, become a nucleus for a conservative coalition.

During the transition to democracy (1982-83) the fear of a Peronista victory troubled the sleep of most of the upper and middle classes, as well as of the intelligentsia, which was back from its short-lived infatuation with the working-class party of Montonero days. The absence of a party of the Right was supplanted by an enlarged Radica-

lismo, which under Raul Alfonsin's able leadership absorbed, strangely enough, a large chunk of the disillusioned intelligentsia as well as the vote if not the hearts of the upper classes. The Radical victory of 1983 facilitated the transition, because that party was less threatening to most sectors of Argentine society than Peronismo. This was so, despite Alfonsin's determination to make Junta members pay for their misdeeds. He could get away with this on the basis of his credit for moderation, while if the Peronistas had attempted a similar move they would have generated an immediate trigger-happy reaction from the whole conservative hemisphere of public opinion, let alone the military.

In 1989 Peronismo rose again as the most probable winner of the impending presidential election. The party had been going through a process of renovation, led by moderate party chief Antonio Cafiero. But hard-core Peronista resistance, backed by the unions and some old party stalwarts, supported, in internal elections, Carlos Menem, a lesser-known politician who promised to go back to unalloyed Peronista recipes. When opinion polls made his electoral victory a certainty, a panic was created among entrepreneurs, who feared a return to semiconfiscatory policies, meddling with market mechanisms, and run-away inflation. Intellectuals also were alarmed at the prospect of a restriction of hard-won liberties. It seemed to many that the country would return to the protracted civil-war-type confrontation of past decades, unleashing insecurity and a run to the dollar, causing hyperinflation (200% in one month, 100% the following). This was too much, even for Argentines accustomed to rates of 20 or 30% per month, and supermarket looting -- a very rare event in this country -- took place, with some fatal victims. Conditions were indeed being created for an extreme polarization of public opinion, with foreseeable violent outcomes. Under a different ideological set up, a reproduction of the Chilean episode of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular seemed quite probable. To avoid this outcome, Menem, once in power, took a dramatic decision: he offered the Ministry of Economy to the more senior manager of the largest corporation in the country, Bunge y Born, with an unobjectionable antiperonista past. This decision took everybody by surprise, and was considered a betrayal by party militants. The entrepreneurial Right was of course jubilant, scarcely crediting its senses, though fearing eventually the Peronistas would reveal their true colors. But as time went by and the government persisted in its newly acquired attitudes, confidence was consolidated. Peronismo's leadership's conversion to privatization and neoliberalism was a symbol of the end of the civil strife which

ravaged the country for over forty years, and in that sense it has had a positive effect. This is so regardless of the advisability or otherwise of those policies, which have been able to put a stop to inflation, privatize major state-owned enterprises, and attract some foreign capital, but at the cost of recession and unemployment.

Despite the turn around of Peronista policies, the mass following of that party has remained very high, and Menem was able to get reelected in 1995 with a handsome 50% of the electorate, the same amount he got in 1989. That 50% now includes a good proportion of upper class conservative opinion (probably not more than 10% of the total), but it retains most of its popular component (which may have gone down from the full 50% of his previous electoral victory to 40%). The trade unions, though in a majority still Peronista, do not like the new policies, but they have to put up with them, as coming from "their" party. An increasing number of militants, however, show their disconformity, some of them supporting a center-left alternative and a new unionism, but this movement is still in a very initial stage.

Peronismo's new attitude was in a sense the result of slowly gathering social causes, not just due to a decision by the President. So the panic generated by his electoral victory was perhaps unjustified, or grossly exaggerated. Indeed it would have been suicidal to follow traditional Peronista solutions to the new economic conditions of national decay and globalized capital. But parties and political leaders are known to have committed that type of action, the latest example being probably Alan Garcia's in Peru, which led the country to the doldrums, and his party to almost extinction. On the other hand, Peronismo's conversion to moderation, "neoliberalism", and tolerance of dissent is no peculiar Argentine or populist phenomenon, as it follows rather closely the pattern to be found among many social democratic or even communist movements, notably in Spain, which exerts a powerful demonstration effect in Argentina.

Is then populism a functional equivalent of social democracy, or its forerunner? To some extent it is, but it is a different sort of entity. There are important similarities, mainly the fact of occupying the lowermost sector of the social pyramid, if not necessarily the left of the ideological spectrum, but the former is more important than the latter in order to understand its political role and potentialities. However, populism, of which as we have seen there are several varieties, is in all of them more heterogeneous than social democracy. Its non-working class components are much more significant and dominant

than those which also exist in the social democratic model. The Right within the movement is somewhat excessively happy with the new scenario, thus possibly causing a division, of which there have been already some inklings, through the departure, towards a moderate center-left alliance (the Frente Pais Solidario, FREPASO) of some important leaders. This, if extended, might deprive the government of its legislative majority, inaugurating a period of alliance-building.

Taking into account the international comparative experience, one cannot but predict that at some time or other Argentina would come back to "normal", that is, exhibit a bipolarity between a conservative party (or alliance) and a leftist or popular conglomerate, either social democratic or of the American Democratic party type, popular but not mobilizational. In this scenario a divided Peronismo might provide leaders and numbers for both sides of the bipolarity, but in alliance with other forces. It is difficult, and unadvisable, to go on gazing at the crystal ball at this stage, because ancient wisdom says that one is master of one's words only before uttering them, especially if in paper.

Conclusions

A party system capable of channelling the tensions existing in any economically developed democracy needs at least two mechanisms of interest articulation and aggregation. On one side, a party where the entrepreneurial classes will feel comfortable, knowing that it will defend their points of view and can occasionally win an election. On the other, a party linked to the trade unions and other popular sectors.

The former can be called the "party of the Right," and the latter the "Left" or "Popular party." These terms can be challenged, as often the popular party will have many conservative traits (as is typically the case with Peronismo and with Poland's Solidarity), and the party voted by the entrepreneurs may also get the support of the intelligentsia as a mutual second best (as was the case of Argentina's Radicalismo under Alfonsín). But under whatever names, the expression of those two sets of interests, the entrepreneurs and the working class, is necessary for the consolidation of democracy, once a certain level of economic and cultural development has been attained.

A strongly and freely organized working class, which is the main support of the popular party, can become, with the passage of time and the accumulation of experience, a bulwark of social stability, while retaining reformist aims, attuned to what is possible

in terms of the current distribution of power, national and international. In the long and often tortuous process of becoming such a participant in a democratic system, however, the popular party can perform destabilizing roles, especially if it has a populist rather than a social democratic composition. The paradox of populism is that due to its authoritarian and occasionally violent traits it has been for decades a foe of liberal democracy; but it has held in its hands one essential component of any modern democratic regime, the representation of the popular classes.

In Latin America there has been no dearth of populist movements. Some of them have run their cycle, as is the case of Varguismo and, less surely, of Peru's APRA, while others, like Peronismo, remain as very solid political forces, but with a radically changed structure and program. It remains as an unfulfilled task for political scientists in the region to study the various forms in which this process of eclipse or transformation has taken place, or might occur in the foreseeable future, under the very different conditions of the various countries in the region.