



Political changes and continuities in Latin America: implications for India

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Sudamérica en el s. XIX

Latin America

- LA is not homogeneous: geographically, culturally, politically.
- Mexico, Central America, Caribbean, South America
- Under the influence of USA and Europe



History

- Colonies from Spain, Portugal, England, France, Netherlands
- 19th century: process of independence, internal conflicts over organization of the new states (civil wars), regional conflicts over boundaries.
- 20th century: development, political and economic instability



- During the Cold War under the sphere of the USA: authoritarian governments, revolutions, economic problems.

- 1980's: debt crisis - Return to democracy (still infant)

- 1990's: neoliberal politics - Washington Consensus

- Economic and financial crisis: Tequila Crisis in Mexico (1994), Real crisis in Brazil (1998-99), Argentina Crisis (2001).



The “left”: progress's parties

- Populist, nationalist governments
- Last decade: social, political, economic reforms - Inclusion
- Empowered the society (rights)
- In foreign policy: orientation to the region, and countries with similar views. New actors in the region: China, India, Russia and Iran.
- But international economic crisis and aftermath slowdown has affected, esp. South American countries - Adopted some controversial policies

What happened with the Left?

“Every time that leftist party takes power, it weakens” Ignacio ‘Lula’ Da Silva

- The use of democratic means by the Left, but democracy imposes limits
- Political parties had to provide human resources to the government - They lost contact with society, they became bureaucratic
- Militants important: transmits the ideas, but if the government tolerates their critics or change some things

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- Institutionalization: democracy requires to develop institutions - The Political party ended up “invading the State”
 - Which electors and how many they have? Majority is ideological follower is a utopia
 - Most of them didn't come from preexisting political movements (Chavez, Morales) - Emerge from heterogeneous movements.
 - Coalitions: difficult to have cohesion for a long period of time (Constitutional reforms)

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- Adversaries: need to satisfy some of their needs
 - Improvement of living conditions: favored changes of sides in politics - Leftist present a cycle:
 - 1) The Right destroys middle classes
 - 2) Impoverished middle classes vote for populist governments
 - 3) These governments improve living conditions
 - 4) Middle classes imagined themselves as part of the elite and vote for the right
 - They have allowed the emergence of a new middle class, not necessarily populist
 - They increased consumption instead of creating better public services

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- None of the populist governments in LA achieved the objective of transforming the economic production structure.
 - No success on fiscal policies.

Latin America turns to the “Right”

- To be competitive in elections
 - 1) Find a defined political area to represent
 - 2) Accept as the base, the collective rights “conquered” during leftist governments
 - 3) Defeat: left behind the ideological speech
- They elaborated a critic over leftist governments: tend to concentrate power, corruption, incomplete reforms (Justice, Mass Media), state interventionism.
- “Conquered Rights” not a part of a political party, but something that belonged to the society as a right.

The “New Right”

- Built a less traumatized relation between the State and the public sphere.
- Three cultural/social sources:
 - 1) Business World as a synonym of efficient government. Flexibility and pragmatism. “Ideology of doing”.
 - 2) NGO: spaces to recruit new specialized human resources for the government (soft areas) - Sensitive, open social phase.
 - 3) World of new spirituality and self-help - “New Age” - Individualism, ‘you can do it’.
- New and old Right (Chile, Argentina, Brazil)

The Right has the capacity to reform itself



Examples

- **Argentina:** first Right-centered government – New political party
- **Venezuela:** opposition won majority in Congress (National Assembly) – Political conflict
- **Brazil:** corruption, economic stagnation – Impeachment
- **Chile:** corruption – economic stagnation
- **Bolivia:** change the constitution so as to be reelected

Implications for India

- Doors have been opened
- Countries are dependent on Exports and foreign investments
- Economic and Political issues: national industries or access to markets, political conflicts can paralyze the government, resistance to China, negotiation over Doha Round
- LA expects to grow less than 1% in 2016
- Challenges: raw materials, USA Fed interest rate, economic stagnation, complicated political processes