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The Rise and Fall of the DINA in Chile; 1974-1977
and The Social, Economic, and Political Causes of
Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism; Argentina, Brazil, and
Venezuela

by

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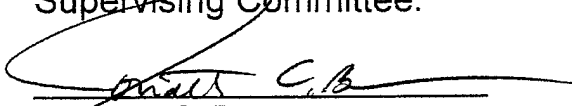
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Approved by
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Raúl Madrid

Dedication

For my parents: thank you for your love and support, for instilling in me your thirst for knowledge, and for teaching me the value of education.

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The Rise and Fall of the DINA in Chile; 1974-1977

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Early on the morning of September 11, 1973, the Chilean Air Force bombed and strafed the presidential palace in downtown Santiago. Soon after, army units assaulted the burning building with tanks and infantry. This stunning attack ended the socialist presidency of Salvador Allende and brought to a close four decades of uninterrupted constitutional rule in Chile, but the fighting did not end there. The military junta that seized power to end Allende's Marxist experiment perceived themselves to be at war with the forces of the Chilean Left. Yet this would not be a conventional war fought on the fields of battle, rather a subversive war fought in the shadows and in the minds of the people. The dictator who emerged as the sole power in Chile after the coup, General Augusto Pinochet, required a new organization to engage the enemy in this different type of war. The *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* or DINA filled that role.

DINA's secret police tactics and unflinching use of violence soon instilled fear in enemies and allies alike, but also created new problems. Organized after the coup and granted autonomous status in 1974, the DINA mercilessly hunted the enemies of the regime at home and abroad and formed one of the foundations of Pinochet's power. In early February

1974, one high-level Chilean government official remarked that in Chile there are three sources of power: "Pinochet, God and DINA."¹ In mid-1974, DINA consisted of only about 600 full-time military agents and civilian contract employees. As the DINA's Director, Colonel Juan Manuel Contreras, expanded his power the size of his secret army grew; by 1977 DINA controlled 9,300 agents and a network of spies and informants penetrating all sectors of Chilean society and numbering in the tens of thousands.²

Yet beyond secretly monitoring and eliminating subversion, the DINA and its director also generated a considerable amount of negative publicity for the government and tarnished its international reputation. DINA's role in implementing the regime's internal repression through arrests, disappearances, tortures, and executions provoked a sustained condemnation from human rights organizations and the Catholic Church. DINA's torture of British doctor Sheila Cassidy and its role in the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C. sparked further international isolation and lent credence to those opposing Chile on humanitarian grounds. As the DINA systematically destroyed its enemies

¹ Department of Defense, Intelligence Report (hereafter cited as DODIR), "DINA, Its Operations and Powers," February 6, 1974, Document number 9c06.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 1.

² John Dinges and Saul Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row* (New York, 1980), 132.

on the Chilean Left, it engendered new enemies: the human rights organizations, the Catholic Church, Democratic members of the US Congress, the British government, and finally found itself opposed by the Carter administration. More importantly, however, DINA's actions and the negative publicity it generated strengthened the position of Contreras's enemies within the Chilean government as well as those who distrusted him and disapproved of his tactics.

By late 1977, DINA ceased to exist. Its once all-powerful Director, Colonel Contreras, found himself on the outside, on the defensive, and struggling to avoid prosecution. How did such a pervasive, powerful organization fall from grace in such a short period of time? What occurred to force Pinochet, who answered to no one, to sacrifice his most trusted subordinate and reorganize the agency Contreras had so painstakingly created? The elimination of DINA occurred not at the hands of its Marxist enemies, nor solely because of the outcry of human rights organizations, but because increasing international outrage provided the opportunity for DINA's foes within the government to seek its destruction.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

In order to understand how an official government organization came to routinely and aggressively employ torture, disappearance and execution against its own citizens, one must first endeavor to understand how the military perceived the nature of the Communist threat and the theory of subversive warfare. The idea of subversive war and its concomitant doctrine of national security developed in the bi-polar era of the 1950s and 1960s. Western nations found themselves facing the new Communist threat of revolution. Rather than defending themselves from invasion, the nations of Latin America began to focus on the internal threat of Marxist inspired social revolutions. This threat appeared very real to the militaries of Latin America and the United States.

The Cuban revolution of 1959 brought the Cold War to Latin America; Cuba began promoting and to some degree "exporting" revolution with the backing of the Soviet Union. An internal State Department memo to President Johnson in 1964 succinctly stated the danger to Latin American democracies:

Latin America has long been considered a target for Castro-communist subversion. Because of the unstable political institutions, enormous social differences, and retarded economic growth in these countries, many groups in their societies feel isolated from the main currents of

national development, and are easy prey to Castro-communist propaganda and organizers....³

Marxist President Salvador Allende's *Via Chilena*, or "Chilean Road to Socialism," and his warm relations with Fidel Castro convinced many Chilean Military officers that they now faced an internal war against the forces of the left to decide the fate and future of Chile.

The growing specter of social revolution served as the precursor for the 1973 military coup d'état. As Augusto Pinochet himself later explained, "Just as other countries in the world, and more particularly in Latin America, Chile has endured the onslaught of marxist-leninism and has decided to face and fight until it is totally defeated."⁴ Pinochet's forces marched from the battle of the presidential palace into a battle for the soul of Chile. This new war for the hearts and minds of the Chilean people defied conventional military logic: the enemy wore no uniforms, commanded no divisions and possessed no tanks. Instead, the forces of Communism relied on subversion.

The theory of counter-subversive warfare developed as a response to the Communist tactic of fomenting revolution in democratic societies. However, counter-subversive warfare formed only a part of the larger

³ Memorandum from the Administrator of the Agency for International Development to President Johnson, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume IX*, 11-12.

Chilean version of the National Security Doctrine. This doctrine, conceived by the United States and adapted by the Brazilian Superior War College to fit the Latin American environment, postulated that the regions' social inequalities and economic underdevelopment increased its' vulnerability to Communist inspired revolution. Shortly after the coup, the Military Junta led by Pinochet enlisted the support of University of Chicago trained economists to formulate plans to stimulate economic development and mitigate these vulnerabilities.

The military component of the National Security Doctrine asserted the need for new tactics and strategies to counter subversion - the first stirrings of revolution. To respond to this new menace, the military forces of the state would join with the police and intelligence agencies to conduct an internal campaign against Communist ideologies. Thus, the unconventional threat of Marxism required unconventional warfare to counter it. Moreover, Marxist philosophy elicited an unconventional ideological response from the militaries of Latin America. Augusto Pinochet explains:

Marxism is an intrinsically perverse doctrine; therefore anything that flows from it, regardless of how healthy it may appear to be, is corroded by the venom that gnaws at its roots. ... However, present day reality indicates that

⁴ Augusto Pinochet, "Chile on its Way to the Future" (Address delivered in Santiago, Chile, September 11, 1976), 45.

Marxism is not only an intrinsically perverse doctrine. It is moreover, a permanent aggression, currently at the service of Soviet Imperialism. ... this modern form of permanent aggression originates a non-conventional war, wherein territorial invasion is replaced by an attempt to control a state from within.⁵

The view of Marxism as a sickness and a threat to the very survival of the State helps to explain the vicious, brutal tactics implemented against it. This harsh characterization allowed the military to convince themselves that extra-ordinary means to combat Marxism were warranted and justified. Moreover, this new war pitted Chilean against Chilean. During a dinner conversation at the home of Defense Minister Orlando Letelier prior to the coup, a Constitutionalist (opposed to military intervention in the government) Army Colonel commented on the turnout for a pro-Allende rally several days before, "a million people is impressive, don't you think?" His companion, a young navy officer replied, "I believe our last census count reported our population at ten million. Surely we could get along with nine."⁶ More than just a flippant remark, the navy officer's statement foreshadowed events to come; within the regime's first eighteen months the military and security forces executed thousands of Chileans and ten percent of Chilean families

⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁶ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 59.

suffered the arrest, detention or exile of a family member.⁷ Genaro Arriagada's analysis of Latin American military ideology sheds additional insight on this shift towards civilians as the new enemy:

... counter-subversive war cannot be waged within the framework of the law or under the ethical rules applicable to conventional war. As a result, legitimation, or at least a permissive attitude, soon gives way to torture and other crimes or abuses against the civilian population and those detained for subversive attitudes.⁸

The threat of Communism and the resulting subversive war help to explain not only the bloody seizure of power on September 11, 1973, but also the ongoing siege mentality and state of emergency. The Marxist "sickness" had not yet been eliminated from Chilean society. Ten days after the coup, General Pinochet told reporters, "Marxist resistance is not finished, there are still extremists left. Chile continues in a state of internal war."⁹ At the Tejas Verdes military base, a former student of Pinochet's shared his ideology and assessment; moreover, he shared Pinochet's ambition. Seizing upon the opportunities presented by the coup and his mentor's rise to power, he quickly built a terror-inspiring machine of repression. His ruthless zeal in fighting the counter-

⁷ Americas Watch, "Chile Since the Coup: Ten Years of Repression" (New York, 1983), 3.

⁸ Genaro Arriagada, *Ideology and Politics in the South American Military: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay* (Washington, D.C., 1979), 25.

⁹ Mary Helen Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile* (Berkeley, 1994), 56.

subversive war soon shocked friend and foe alike. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda rapidly attained a reputation as the second most powerful man in Chile.

Contreras and the Birth of DINA

Although ostensibly created by decree of the ruling military junta on June 18, 1974, Manuel Contreras organized the fundamental elements of the National Intelligence Directorate in the immediate aftermath of the 1973 coup d'état. Originally created as a department of the *Servicio Nacional de Detinidos* (National Prisoners Service or SENDET) in November 1973, the DINA quickly amassed incredible power.

The history of Contreras and the history of DINA are the same; he envisioned it, created it, and commanded it throughout its reign of terror. Despite his meteoric rise to power as the head of Chile's most notorious intelligence service, an analysis of Contreras's early military career reveals little out of the ordinary. Born in Santiago in 1929, he entered the Chilean Military Academy as a cadet in 1944, earning a commission as a Second Lieutenant in 1948. Contreras trained as military engineer and subsequent assignments as Engineer Platoon Leader and Engineer Instructor at the Military Academy led to his promotion to Captain in

1957. After serving as a company commander and both student and instructor at the Army War Academy, Contreras earned a promotion to Major in January 1966. More importantly for his future role in Chilean history, however, Contreras also served as aide to Augusto Pinochet during Pinochet's tenure as professor of geopolitics at the War Academy.¹⁰ In September 1966, Contreras attended the US Army's Engineer Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Contreras began his first tour of duty at the Tejas Verdes Engineer School as an instructor in September 1967, shortly after completing his training assignment in the United States. Tejas Verdes, situated on the coast to the west of Santiago and near the city of San Antonio, owed its strategic importance to its proximity to the city and the port at the mouth of the nearby Maipo River. Over the next several years, Contreras remained at Tejas Verdes, earning a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in January 1970 and assuming command of the base and its Engineer Regiment in December 1972.¹¹ Contreras's position as the commander of Tejas Verdes enabled him to capitalize on the fall of the Allende regime and prepare for a much larger role in the events to follow.

¹⁰ Information Report, Central Intelligence Agency, untitled, January 31, 1975, Document number 9cf2.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 2; Arriagada, *Ideology and Politics*, 17.

Contreras anticipated the overthrow of Allende and preempted the events in Santiago, as Mark Ensalaco "according to troops stationed there, Contreras began converting the base into a concentration camp and interrogation center on September 9, 1973,"¹² two days *before* the coup.

Subsequent activities undertaken by Contreras foreshadowed the tactics used by DINA and likely represent initial attempts at developing the strategies and procedures for conducting the new subversive war. After the seizure of power by the military, Contreras assumed responsibility for San Antonio and the surrounding area including the nearby port. He faced his first test on 13 September when the radical dockworkers' union staged a strike at the port threatening to interrupt food supplies to Lima. That afternoon, Contreras invited four union leaders to his office to conduct negotiations. The following morning, the four bullet-ridden corpses were delivered to their families, and the strikes in San Antonio abruptly ceased.¹³

Contreras' brutality and use of torture quickly pacified the strategically important, previously pro-Allende San Antonio region, thus

¹¹ DODIR, "COL Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, Chilean Army, Bio Report," August 5, 1974, Document number 9c06.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 1-2; Mark Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet, Recovering the Truth* (Philadelphia, 2000), 56.

¹² Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 56.

¹³ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 122.

relieving the military junta of a particularly worrisome burden. The President of the Junta soon rewarded Contreras for his efforts. In November 1973, General Pinochet assigned Contreras to head the Department of National Intelligence under the National Prisoners Service.¹⁴ Moreover, on January 1, 1974, Pinochet promoted him to Colonel. Yet Contreras coveted more power than that of a mere Army Colonel, as the Director of the soon-to-be-autonomous DINA, his power first rivaled and then overshadowed that of any Chilean General other than Pinochet himself.

¹⁴ Spooner, *Soldier in a Narrow Land*, 125-6.

CHAPTER 3. ORGANIZATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Due to the sensitive and often illegal nature of DINA's operations, little internal documentation exists regarding its organization and operations. Colonel Contreras successfully fostered a culture of secrecy among his operatives. However, recently declassified documents of the United States Government shed considerable light on the internal organization of this most secretive Chilean institution (see organizational diagram: Annex 1).

The Director of DINA commanded the agency and the Sub-Directors of the Interior, Exterior and Logistics commanded the three main subordinate elements. Additionally, several administrative elements existed to support the Director: the Aide to the Director; the Secretary General, responsible for administrative matters within the Director's office; an Intelligence Committee, formed as needed to assist the Director with specific problems or operations; the Telecommunications Brigade, responsible for records distribution and filing as well as control and distribution of electronic sensors; and a Secret Brigade, whose functions remain unknown. The Logistics Section managed the resources necessary for DINA to carry out its duties and included administrative, legal, computer, and logistics elements. Nevertheless,

however important these ancillary sections may have been in allowing DINA to operate, they did not engage in counter-subversive activities. All of DINA's operational, "warfighting" elements belonged to either the Interior or Exterior Sections. The actions of these units caused the furor that led to the reorganization of DINA in 1977 and merits an in-depth analysis.

The perception of widespread subversion within Chile led to the creation of a robust internal intelligence apparatus with elements focusing on all aspects of Chilean society. Under the command of the Sub-Director, the Interior subdivision was further broken down into the economic and interior sections. The Economic Section, through its Economic Brigade, monitored the activities of public and private business/economic interests and ensured compliance with government policies. The actual conduct of the subversive war fell to the Interior Section, which was "responsible for combating real or perceived internal subversion."¹⁵ The majority of DINA's infamy is traceable to the activities of this section. The Interior Sub-Sections monitored subversive activities in areas of Labor, Agriculture, Education, Political Activity, Resistance, Infiltration of the Armed Forces, and Internal Security. However, the

¹⁵ DODIR, "Organizational Diagram of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA)," June 17, 1975, Document number 9c10.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 3.

National, Citizen's, Metropolitan and Interior Brigades carried out the bulk of activities of the Internal Section. Field operatives working outside Santiago comprised the National Brigade, while civilian informants operating outside Santiago constituted the Citizen's Brigade. Operatives working exclusively inside Santiago formed the Metropolitan Brigade. Finally, the Interior Brigade consisted of mobile units that deployed from Santiago to outlying regions. These brigades further subdivided into groups consisting of five to eight man action teams, which patrolled the streets, conducted surveillance, made arrests, abducted subversives, applied torture and disposed of bodies.¹⁶

The responsibilities of the Sub-Director of the Exterior included all intelligence activities conducted outside Chile. The Exterior Section consisted of the Psychological and Foreign Relations Sections. The Exterior Brigade, responsible for conducting intelligence operations outside Chile, fell under the command of the Foreign Relations Section. This Exterior Brigade gave Contreras what he termed an "extraterritorial capability," the ability to strike enemies outside Chile.¹⁷ The Psychological Section planned propaganda and disinformation operations conducted outside Chile -- for example, influencing

¹⁶ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 75.

¹⁷ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 138.

information published by foreign media sources. Operatives tasked with conducting such operations comprised its subordinate element, the Psychological Brigade.

No outside agency - executive, legislative, or judicial - exerted any control over DINA. All agents and operatives swore a personal oath of allegiance to Contreras, who commanded all activities within the organization.¹⁸ He in turn answered only to the President. Although Contreras relied on President Pinochet for support and authority, so too did Pinochet rely on Contreras and his DINA, for suppression of dissent and support in the consolidation of his power. Thus, the two existed in a mutually dependent relationship. As United States Ambassador David Popper reported in October 1975:

One of Pinochet's major sources of power is the National Directorate of Intelligence (DINA), an organization whose principal mission is internal security but which is expanding its influence into ever-growing areas of activity. DINA reports directly to Pinochet and is ultimately controlled by him alone.¹⁹

John Dinges and Saul Landau add:

Contreras reported to no one but Pinochet, the sole consumer of DINA's intelligence reports. No one but Pinochet could give an order to Colonel Contreras, who,

¹⁸ Ibid., 131.

¹⁹ Department of State, US Embassy Report, "Chile's Government After Two Years: Political Appraisal," October 14, 1975, Document number 8dd0.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 7.

though he commanded no divisions, possessed more power than any other Chilean general.²⁰

Decree law 521, promulgated on June 18, 1974, officially established DINA as an independent, autonomous agency, although it had been previously organized as a department within and under the nominal control of SENDET. More importantly, however, the decree granted DINA agents unlimited powers of search and seizure and made all other intelligence services subordinate to DINA.

Yet, DINA's autonomy extended beyond the letter of the law. A high-level government source remarked that "no judge in any court or any minister in the government is going to question the matter any further if DINA says that they are now handling the matter."²¹

Additionally, General Gustavo Leigh, Air Force Commander-in-Chief and member of the Military Junta, later remarked that:

The organization [DINA] was in fact linked directly to the president [Pinochet] even though, legally, it should have been responsible to the governmental junta. In other words, I took my people [air force personnel] away when I realized I had no power to control DINA.²²

Regardless of laws, decrees, or even the wishes of other members of the military junta, Pinochet and Contreras controlled DINA, determined its

²⁰ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 166.

²¹ DODIR, "DINA it's Operations and Powers," 1.

role in the subversive war and planned the nature of operations undertaken. The war's first battles pitted the Metropolitan Brigades' Cuapolicán group against the most vocal and aggressive party of the far left, the MIR (Movimiento Izquierdista Revolucionario), or the Movement of the Revolutionary Left.

²² J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorships and Oppositions* (Baltimore, 1986), 131.

CHAPTER 4. THE INTERIOR SECTION

The Interior Section's first operations focused on the destruction of the MIR, which Contreras considered to be the regime's most dangerous opponent. During the tumultuous final days of the *Via Chilena*, the MIR openly called workers to armed rebellion in support of the Allende regime. Fomenting of revolution by the Marxist MIR in conjunction with widespread evidence of arms stockpiling led to the military intervention of September 1973, and although the MIR failed to rally armed resistance to the military coup d'état, Contreras and Pinochet subsequently designated the MIR as the first object of the subversive war. The brigades of the Interior Section utilized numerous tactics in their war against the MIR including the use of informants, torture, executions and the "disappearance" of detainees.

Before the DINA could arrest a suspect it first needed to locate them, thus the need for timely information. Intelligence regarding the location of subversives came from two primary sources: informants and through the systematic torture of other subversives. DINA's first line of attack consisted of its army of informants or *soplones* (whisperers). The *soplones*, estimated to have numbered some 20,000 to 30,000, instilled fear not only in society at large, but also in the government

bureaucracy.²³ Informants provided a means of suppressing and controlling political activities among government employees as well as a means of gathering intelligence on suspected enemies.

With a network of spies and informants in factories, universities, political parties, and social organizations, the DINA sowed mistrust among colleagues, neighbors, and friends. The secret police tentacles also wound through the government itself; dossiers were gathered on employees and telephones were tapped.²⁴

However, one type of informant stood out amongst all others: the collaborator. Miguel Estay, a Communist, revealed the names of eighty-four party members.²⁵ Osvaldo Romo Mena, who defected to the DINA, willingly identified his former MIR colleagues and earned a reputation as an exceedingly cruel torturer. Miguel Enríquez, MIR's leader, reported that Romo delivered between three and five MIRistas to the DINA in a single week.²⁶ DINA's use of informants created little controversy. However, its use of torture and numerous unexplained disappearances attributed to its agents generated an increasing international furor.

Once arrested by DINA agents, most suspects shared a similar fate: torture. An Americas Watch survey conducted in May 1976 found that of 200 detainees in one facility, "88.5 percent had been tortured

²³ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 134.

²⁴ Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (New York), 101.

physically and 84 percent had undergone 'psychological treatment.'"²⁷

The Interior Section operated several detention centers in and around Santiago; many of which also served as torture centers. DINA agents routinely employed torture to gain timely intelligence regarding its enemies. Interrogators sought to answer four main questions: the addresses of safe houses, the real identities of leftists (known to interrogators only by their noms de guerre), the sites of rendezvous points and the locations of weapons caches.²⁸ Agents utilized numerous torture techniques including, but not limited to the following:

- Beatings, occasionally resulting in hemorrhaging and death.
- The *Teléfono*, or Telephone: "violent blows to the ears with cupped hands to rupture the eardrums."²⁹
- The *Picana*, or Prod: shocks applied to sensitive parts of the body using an electric prod.
- The *Parrilla*, or Grill: torturers strapped victims to a metal bed frame and applied electrical current.

²⁵ Ibid., 96.

²⁶ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 75.

²⁷ Americas Watch, "Chile Since the Coup," 127.

²⁸ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 76.

²⁹ Ibid., 91.

- The *Submarino*, or "Wet" Submarine: repeated submersion of the prisoner's heads in barrels of water usually mixed with urine and excrement.
- The "Dry" Submarine: repeated near-asphyxiation using a sack over the head.
- The *Pau de Arará*, or Parrot's Perch: prisoners were bound by their wrists and ankles, which were then tied together behind their backs. The victims were then suspended by a wooden pole and beaten, burned, etc...

Other methods included burning with cigarettes, exposure to blinding lights or deafening noise, rape and/or sexual humiliation and mental anguish.³⁰

Despite the secrecy of its operations and the very real threat that released prisoners who discussed their plight might suffer re-arrest, the DINA proved unable to long conceal the work of its torturers. The Interior Section's penchant for mercilessly torturing its victims shocked regime watchers and earned the DINA much unwanted publicity and notoriety. DINA's widespread use of torture and blatant disregard for international standards of human rights soon provoked condemnation from the

³⁰ Ibid., 90-91; Americas Watch, "Chile Since the Coup," 71-2; Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 95.

Catholic Church's Vicariate of Solidarity and several international watchdog groups. However, a second prevalent DINA tactic, the disappearance of victims, also aroused condemnation and further tarnished Chile's international image.

Intimidation and elimination combined to form one of the most disturbing techniques employed by the DINA in the new subversive war - disappearance. Yet, the roots of DINA's "new" tactic actually lay in Nazi Germany. During World War II, Adolf Hitler's Secret State Police, the Gestapo, arrested suspected members of the French resistance in the middle of the night and "disappeared" them. The Gestapo concluded that, "intimidation can only be achieved either by capital punishment, or through measures by which the relatives of the prisoners or the population cannot learn of the fate of the criminals."³¹ The Vicariate of Solidarity officially investigated 668 cases of disappearance committed between 1973 and 1978, but in the first three years of the Junta unofficial reports estimated some 1,000 to 2,000 Chileans disappeared after arrest by security forces.³² Yet the DINA did not vanish its foes arbitrarily, many more cases of disappearance occurred in other Latin American

³¹ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 84.

³² Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 94; Americas Watch, "Chile Since the Coup," 80.

countries. DINA's Internal Section utilized disappearances for a specific purpose, to terrorize and intimidate its enemies. As Constable notes;

[T]he rumor of people vanishing made the DINA seem omnipresent and omnipotent. "To disappear" evokes images of "magic intervention by mysterious forces," wrote a team of Chilean psychologists. "It suggests the inexplicable, the irrevocable, an absolute loss of knowledge."³³

Although indistinguishable to the victim, disappearance, as opposed to execution, provoked a markedly different effect on those who remained. In the dangerous and hunted world of the Chilean Left, the sudden, unexplained absence of a colleague undoubtedly provoked fear and sowed panic.

Some adversaries, such as the top leadership of the MIR, proved too dangerous for arrest or disappearance. Instead, DINA's action teams executed them. The Military Junta amended the Military Code of Justice (Código de Justicia Militar) on the day after the coup such that "when the security of the attacked [that is, the military] so requires, the attacker or attackers may be executed in the act."³⁴ DINA's agents, largely recruited from the military and retaining their former ranks, also utilized this modified clause to their advantage. Many of the regimes' enemies perished in actual and contrived shootouts with the military and security

³³ Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 94.

forces. But first, the DINA needed to locate its intended victims. Torture, rather than astute intelligence work, provided the solution.

Turncoat MIRista Osvaldo Romo's knowledge of the organization's members and his expertise at torture led to the arrest of MIR central committee member Lumi Videla on September 21, 1974. Information gleaned from the arrest and interrogation of a MIR militant known as Flaca Alejandra precipitated Videla's arrest. Romo's subsequent torture of Videla in turn led to the arrest of her husband Sergio Pérez. Neither survived their detention. Information extracted from the pair resulted in the execution of the MIR's leader, Miguel Enríquez, two weeks later. Enríquez met his fate on October 4, 1974 at the hands of DINA's Cuapolicán group during a gun battle on the outskirts of Santiago. Contreras then used Videla's corpse to send a message to the Italian government, whose embassy continued to grant shelter and asylum to Chileans. DINA agents threw Videla's battered body over the walls of the Italian Embassy and the Chilean government later claimed she died as the result of an orgy in the embassy's garden.³⁵

The following year, the arrest and torture of a MIR intermediary led to an armed confrontation between DINA agents and the remaining MIR

³⁴ Genaro Arriagada, *Pinochet, The Politics of Power* (London, 1988), 6.

³⁵ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 77-8.

leadership. On October 16, 1975, operatives surrounded a farmhouse sheltering Dagoberto Pérez Vargas, Nelson Gutiérrez, and Andrés Pascal Allende, three of the MIR's most senior leaders. In the ensuing four-hour firefight DINA agents and Carabineros (the Chilean national police) seriously wounded Gutiérrez and killed Dagoberto Pérez. However, Gutiérrez, Allende, and two women managed to escape. The four evaded a massive manhunt and later sought sanctuary in a Catholic convent. The convent's priest enlisted the aid of British doctor and soon-to-be nun Sheila Cassidy to treat Gutiérrez's wound. The MIR leaders eventually found safety through asylum, but Cassidy's plight had only begun. Unable to visit his wrath on the escaped MIRistas, Contreras set his agents on Cassidy. DINA operatives arrested Cassidy on October 31, 1975, killing her maid in the process. Sheila Cassidy then endured humiliation and torture as agents stripped her and tied her to the *parrilla* where they shocked her repeatedly and demanded to know why she had aided the wounded MIRistas. Emerging from her ordeal in late December, Cassidy's story shocked the world and outraged Great Britain.³⁶ Contreras and Pinochet remained undeterred; Chile's enemies risked torture or death regardless of nationality or geographical separation.

³⁶ Ibid., 79-81; Taylor Branch and Eugene Propper, *Labyrinth* (New York, 1982), 313.

CHAPTER 5. THE EXTERIOR SECTION

Contreras utilized the Exterior Section to promote regional cooperation in anti-subversive warfare among the Continent's authoritarian regimes and to strike his adversaries outside Chile. Contreras organized the section in late 1974 to counter the growing problem of Chilean leftists living in exile and the larger issue of what Pinochet termed the "international Marxist campaign" against his regime.³⁷ In order to punish the exiles and fight the Marxists Contreras required what he referred to as an "extraterritorial capability," the ability to conduct operations beyond Chile's borders. In pursuit of these goals, Contreras devised Operation CONDOR, a regional intelligence alliance designed to track subversives and support friendly foreign agents working in member countries. The formation of CONDOR in late 1975 also led to the forced repatriation of several known leftists arrested in member countries. Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil formed the original members of CONDOR with Peru and Ecuador later joining the alliance.³⁸ Yet Contreras, the self-appointed chief of the intelligence cooperative, envisioned an additional, more sinister purpose: clandestine support for assassinations.

³⁷ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 138.

Michael Vernon Townley, an American-born DINA agent, provided much of the extraterritorial capability; under orders from Contreras and DINA, Townley assassinated several important foes of the regime living outside Chile. Originally recruited for his knowledge of electronics and radio systems, Townley convinced his DINA superiors that he had more deadly skills to contribute to the war effort. Contreras and Pinochet selected former commander-in-chief Carlos Prats, Pinochet's former superior and main rival for the Army's continued loyalty, as the first target for the Exterior Section. The Exterior Section called on Michael Townley. In September 1974, Townley and another DINA agent placed a remote controlled explosive device under Prats's automobile outside his home in Buenos Aires with the assistance of Argentine intelligence agents. Prats died in the resulting explosion and his wife burned to death in the car.³⁹ The Exterior Section next targeted Bernardo Leighton, a Chilean Christian Democrat living Rome, for his denunciations of the coup and opposition to the regime. On October 6, 1975, Townley's hit squad, including Italian fascists and relying on their local expertise, failed to kill Leighton but succeeded in gravely wounding and permanently disabling

³⁸ Ibid., 238-9; Report, Central Intelligence Agency, "A Brief Look at 'Operation Condor,'" August 22, 1978, Document number 00009443.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 2.

³⁹ Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 103; Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 139.

both him and his wife.⁴⁰ The success of Townley's next mission caused more problems for him, the DINA, and the regime than it solved.

The assassination of former Chilean Ambassador to the United States and Defense Minister Orlando Letelier on embassy row in Washington, D.C. shocked Chile's staunchest ally and over time, the investigative trail led to the DINA and Michael Townley. Upon his release from imprisonment in Chile - Letelier was detained immediately following the coup and held for twelve months - the commander of the far-southern Dawson Island concentration camp warned the former minister that "General Pinochet will not and does not tolerate activities against his government." The military regime could deliver punishment "no matter where the violator lives," the officer proclaimed.⁴¹ By 1976, Letelier had overcome his harsh treatment on semi-polar Dawson Island and become a vocal and effective opponent of the regime in the capitol of Pinochet's most important ally, the United States. Disregarding the camp commander's warning Letelier encouraged the United Nation's Commission on Human Rights' condemnation of Chile and lobbied Democratic members of Congress to cut off all military aid to the Pinochet regime.

⁴⁰ Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 103; Branch, *Labyrinth*, 309.

⁴¹ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 8.

The Pinochet government negotiated a \$62.5 million mining investment contract with the Dutch investment firm Stevin Groep in 1975. However in mid-1976, Letelier successfully lobbied a local Dutch municipality, which pressured the Stevin Groep into first suspending and then cancelling its investment program. Pinochet, aware of Orlando Letelier's activities in Holland advocating an economic boycott of Chile, blamed Letelier for the loss of the lucrative contract. During one of his several trips to Holland, Letelier proposed the creation of a "Salvador Allende Institute" to train potential government officials and prepare "blueprints" for a constitutional government.⁴² These actions combined to outrage Pinochet and convince him of Letelier's treason: Pinochet suspected Letelier of attempting to form a government in exile. Pinochet and Contreras again prepared to exercise their "extraterritorial capability" in order to eliminate Letelier.

On 21 September 1976, Michael Townley's hit squad detonated the remote-controlled car bomb that killed Orlando Letelier and his female passenger Ronnie Moffitt as they drove to work through Washington's quiet embassy row. The resulting outrage led to a determined FBI investigation that subsequently pieced together random bits of evidence, increasingly pointing to the DINA. FBI special agents

⁴² Ibid., 174.

slowly unraveled the crime and forced the extradition of Michael Townley who plead guilty and testified against his DINA superiors in U.S. court in return for a maximum of a ten-year sentence.⁴³ The disclosure of DINA's assassination efforts brought additional unwanted scrutiny of the agency and fueled the calls for its disbandment.

⁴³ Ibid., 337-342.

CHAPTER 6. THE FOES OF DINA

Human Rights Organizations

The repression associated with the September 1973 coup and its immediate aftermath resulted in numerous deaths and, after the initial shock wore off, spurred human rights organizations into action against the military regime. International human rights groups began receiving reports detailing executions and tortures committed by the military and several requested the Junta's permission to dispatch investigative teams to Chile. In early 1974, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued one of the first reports detailing the plight of victims and condemning the Chilean Armed Forces for their gross violations of international standards of human rights. Ironically, the commission was created in Santiago, Chile in 1959 by resolution of the Organization of American States. Other groups such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists also sent investigative teams to Chile, yet all met with official intransigence and bureaucratic stonewalling. Although initially focused on the military's action following the coup, these groups later converged on the DINA, which since its formal organization beginning in 1974 came to symbolize the systematic,

institutionalized repression characteristic of the Pinochet regime. The United Nations Human Rights Commission also joined the crusade to end the abuses in Chile and succeeded in winning a resolution of the UN General Assembly accusing Chile of serious human rights abuses including torture in December 1975 and again in December 1977.⁴⁴

Domestic human rights organizations faced far a more serious challenge in their efforts to publicize the regime's crimes yet also exerted a continuous and increasing pressure on the government. In fact, the most effective domestic proponents of human rights coalesced under the auspices of the church due to its protected status and unique position in society. As the authors of *Military Rule in Chile* observed, "At first, the church acted to protect and defend sectors affected by physical persecution and repression. It acted as the only organization with sufficient legitimacy to speak to the military in defense of human rights."⁴⁵

In October 1973, Bishop Fernando Ariztía founded the Committee for Peace with the backing of his superior, Cardinal Raúl Silva. This ecumenical organization, encompassing Catholic, Lutheran and Methodists churches as well as the Rabbinical Council of Chile and the World Council of Churches, worked to counteract the repression of the

⁴⁴ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 128, 166.

⁴⁵ Valenzuela and Valenzuela, *Military Rule in Chile*, 170.

Pinochet regime. Yet, the committee's publication of reports unflattering to the regime and the assistance they rendered the MIRistas wounded during the farm house gun battle with DINA agents in November 1975 provided Pinochet with the grounds to finally demand that Cardinal Silva dissolve the committee.

In late 1975, Cardinal Silva closed the Committee for Peace, but in its place and unbeknownst to Pinochet he created the Vicaría de la Solidaridad (the Vicariate of Solidarity). The Vicariate, under the full authority and protection of the Roman Catholic Church, commenced operations in January 1976 by providing legal defense for victim's families and analyzing, documenting and publishing accounts of repression. Much of the Vicariate's documentation formed the basis of reports filed by international human rights organizations. Although protected by the Catholic Church, the Vicariate did draw the attention of the DINA, though in a greatly constrained manner: in August 1976, the DINA abducted two outspoken Vicariate activists (Jaime Castillo and Eugenio Velasco), drove them to the airport, and forced them into exile.⁴⁶

The unremitting pressure of domestic and international human rights groups took its toll on the regime. Although Pinochet denounced the activities of human rights groups and the UN resolution as "unfair,

slanderous, and discriminating" these groups succeeded in calling international attention to the case of Chile and forced Pinochet's acknowledgement of their actions.⁴⁷ However, within Chile human rights remained an isolated issue, of importance to only a small segment of the society. A State Department report from 1975 noted that:

Internally, the human rights issue is of substantially less importance than economic affairs; the latter hits all Chileans in the pocketbook, whereas the former affects directly only a small proportion of the population. It is the rest of the world – prodded by a highly effective and virulent anti-Junta propaganda campaign mounted by the Soviet Union and its friends – which views human rights as the overriding issue, not most Chileans.⁴⁸

This appraisal in part explains Pinochet's ability to weather criticisms regarding human rights; most Chileans remained unaffected and Pinochet skillfully characterized the condemnations as attacks on Chilean national honor perpetrated by its international enemies. However, as accounts of repression increased, pressure mounted and the tactics of denial and diverting blame no longer sufficed. DINA's activities created opposition beyond the human rights movement; it also vied against rival intelligence agencies.

⁴⁶ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 60-62, 66.

⁴⁷ Pinochet, "Chile on its Way to the Future," 21.

⁴⁸ Department of State, US Embassy Report, "Chile's Government After Two Years," 14.

Other Internal Security Agencies

Ironically, the war against subversion generated intense competition between the several internal security agencies tasked with carrying it out. In theory, Decree Law 521 delegated overall responsibility for the conduct of the counter-subversive war to the DINA, yet in practice each service retained its own intelligence apparatus and undertook independent operations. DINA's relations with the Navy (SIN) and the Carabineros (SICAR) intelligence agencies remained cordial throughout DINA existence. However, DINA's relations with the Army (SIM) and Air Force (SIFA) internal security agencies proved more turbulent. In October 1974, DINA agents removed a prisoner from the Santiago penitentiary and disappeared him, while posing as army officers.

The rival services also attempted to deflect blame from their organizations by accusing competing agencies of human rights abuses. A report by the Central Intelligence Agency in April 1974 details the remarks of an unnamed source who stated that "DINA has not tortured or mistreated prisoners." This source goes on to attribute negative reports regarding DINA activities to either:

Marxists... who have chosen DINA as a target and who [direct] propaganda [and] accusations against DINA, or certain elements in other Chilean intelligence services, who

resent the establishment of DINA and its assumption of primary national intelligence responsibilities.⁴⁹

These rivalries often manifested a more sinister side. When the commander of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate died in an air crash in mid-1974, rumors circulated that the DINA might have caused the accident. Reciprocally, DINA agents believed rumors of Air Force operatives conspiring to assassinate them. Occasionally, inter-agency distrust and rivalry ended in death. Andrés Valenzuela Morales, a former member of the Air Force's Joint Command – clandestinely organized in 1974 or 1975 to target the Chilean Communist Party – later described how his organization “executed one of its own members thought to have been recruited by the DINA.”⁵⁰ Pinochet issued a directive in September 1975 assigning sole power to arrest political opponents to the DINA.⁵¹ However, the mistrust, rivalry and competition among intelligence agencies continued unabated. The DINA's actions also engendered powerful adversaries overseas, most notably the United States.

⁴⁹ Information Report, Central Intelligence Agency, untitled, April 13, 1974, Document number 9d6e.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 1-2.

⁵⁰ Spooner, *Soldier in a Narrow Land*, 121.

⁵¹ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 86.

Role of the United States

The United States increasingly pressured the Chilean government over its human rights record, although it had once been a staunch ally of the Pinochet regime and a tacit supporter of his overthrow of Marxist president Salvador Allende. In 1974, the United States Congress passed legislation banning military aid to Chile in response to its pattern of human rights abuses. In 1976, the Congress expanded the ban on military aid to include arms sales and credit and passed legislation prohibiting all non-humanitarian aid to governments that displayed a "consistent pattern of gross violations" of human rights, clearly applicable in the case of the Pinochet regime.⁵² By July 1977, David Boyatt, the U.S. Chargé, could report to his superiors at the State Department that "When I spoke with President Pinochet June 20 he let me know that he had understood the USG's [United States Government's] concern's about the security services' accountability and their reputations." In the same report, Boyatt later added, "We have, of course, been disappointed in the past. But there is the smell of something important in the wind, and we are cautiously optimistic."⁵³ Despite the seemingly small number of

⁵² Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 61, 106.

⁵³ Report, Department of State, "DINA Feels the Heat", July 6, 1977, Document number 9b28.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 2.

overt declarations of the United States, its role in the dissolution of the DINA should not be underestimated. Continuous pressure over human rights violations exerted by Chile's foremost ally and most important economic trading partner, which increased after the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, undoubtedly constituted a rising burden on the Pinochet government. Yet, the DINA's list of powerful enemies numbered one more, its internal political opponents.

Internal Political Opposition

Among the enemies engendered by Contreras and the DINA during their reign of terror, perhaps none represented a greater threat to the existence of the organization than the high-ranking officers within the Pinochet regime. Aversion to Contreras's power and occasional insubordination grew over time, but as the negative publicity surrounding DINA's human rights violations and illegal methods increased, so too did the opposition and hostility from within the government. A recently declassified report written by the Central Intelligence Agency describes the situation in January 1975:

During the past several weeks, there has been increasing criticism within high levels of the Chilean government regarding unauthorized activities of the Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA). Several Army generals have approached President Augusto Pinochet and presented

corroborated accounts of torture and mistreatment of detainees by the DINA... A number of high-ranking Army officers agree that DINA's methods of operation have done a great deal to tarnish Chile's international image.⁵⁴

However, Pinochet still needed Contreras and the DINA in the war against subversion. Despite the unease of many generals, and the outright opposition of others, Pinochet continued to support Contreras and refused to curtail DINA's authority. Mark Ensalaco succinctly describes Contreras's history of victory over his opponents within the regime:

For three years Contreras had thrived on repeated challenges to his power. Progressive General Óscar Bonilla, one of the original coup plotters and Pinochet's main rival in the army, had attacked Contreras. But that challenge ended with Bonilla's death in a mysterious helicopter accident in March 1975. General Sergio Arellano, another giant in the general's corps, had complained to Pinochet about Contreras' "Gestapo" and had expressed his disagreement with other Pinochet policies. Arellano received his retirement orders. Also in late 1975, General Odlanier Mena, the chief of the Army Intelligence Service (SIM) faced down Contreras over the issue of DINA spying on army officers. Pinochet named Mena ambassador to Panama and later Uruguay – in effect, diplomatic exile. Contreras, by controlling most of the flow of information to Pinochet, had skillfully cast all opposition to DINA in the light of opposition to Pinochet.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Information Report, Central Intelligence Agency, untitled, January 31, 1975, Document number 9cf2.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 1-2.

⁵⁵ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 278.

Not all of Contreras's enemies made their opposition known; some merely watched and waited for the tide of favor to change. By late 1977, their patience began to pay off: DINA's very success and audacity began to erode its exalted position.

Contreras's success at eliminating – at least temporarily - the internal threat posed by the MIR, the Chilean Communist Party, and the Socialists weakened his position in the government: if no subversive elements remained to threaten the regime, Pinochet no longer required the man or the organization designed to eradicate them. Chilean security forces killed eighty-seven MIR militants in the three and a half months immediately following the coup and another one hundred forty-eight perished by August 1977, most at the hands of the DINA.⁵⁶ The DINA, in conjunction with the Air Force Intelligence Directorate (DIFA), wreaked similar havoc on the Chilean Communist Party and the Socialists. As Mark Ensalaco observes:

By mid-1977, the regime had abducted, murdered, and “disappeared” about as many of its enemies as was feasible. During its four years of existence, the DINA and the other intelligence services had managed to decimate the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, had crippled the internal front of the Socialist party, and had decapitated the central committee of the Communist party.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 127.

DINA's role in the assassinations of General Prats and Orlando Letelier further undermined its position. At a time when the regime needed the DINA less, the cost of retaining the organization and its director continued to increase due to the negative reactions of the United States, Great Britain and the United Nations. DINA's foes and Contreras' enemies smelled weakness and began pressuring Pinochet to jettison the organization as a good will gesture aimed at improving its badly tarnished international image.

CHAPTER 7. THE REORGANIZATION OF DINA

The combined efforts of Contreras's enemies and DINA's opponents finally convinced Pinochet that the cost of retaining the agency outweighed the value of its contribution to the regime; in August 1977 Pinochet formally dissolved the DINA.⁵⁸ However, Pinochet quickly replaced the DINA with a new organization, the Centro Nacional de Informaciones, or National Center for Information (CNI), retaining Contreras as its director. On July 9, 1977, Pinochet delivered a speech in which he assailed those who "intend to make us kneel with threats or pressures, internal or external" - a reference to human rights groups. He added that such threats and pressures "are even less acceptable when the supposed defense of human rights is invoked as a cause."⁵⁹ Yet on August 6, Pinochet disbanded the DINA on the eve of a visit to Chile by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, Terence Todman. Clearly, these "pressures" influenced Pinochet's decision, yet even more telling is the fact that by November Pinochet forced the "resignation" of Contreras as director of the new CNI and replaced him with Contreras's old enemy General Mena.

⁵⁸ Valenzuela and Valenzuela, *Military Rule in Chile*, 131.

⁵⁹ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 126-7.

Summoned from his diplomatic exile and returned to active duty after his forced retirement, Mena's return to grace proved that a cosmetic name change had been insufficient to appease DINA's enemies. They demanded and received the destruction of the DINA and the banishment of Manuel Contreras. As Mark Ensalaco noted, "In the end, Pinochet would have to sacrifice the DINA and Contreras, under pressure from the international community and even from the armed forces."⁶⁰ As John Dinges and Saul Landau observed:

Some of the men of power and property inside Chile began, slowly at first, to react. They wanted to restore the government they had helped create to the good graces of the United States. Their loyalty to Pinochet would remain firm, as long as His Excellency showed some flexibility. Pinochet, the realist, allowed them to choose a hitherto sacred target: the burgeoning empire of Manuel Contreras.⁶¹

Pinochet's expulsion of Contreras carried with it recognition of his valuable service in the war against subversion; in early November Pinochet promoted Contreras to Brigadier General. Contreras, despite his recent promotion, soon learned that life outside the halls of power would be very different. Dinges and Landau again explain:

As a colonel, he had wielded the power of ten generals at the apex of his power. But with DINA formally abolished and Pinochet no longer solidly behind him, he discovered

⁶⁰ Ibid., 58.

⁶¹ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 279.

what he had suspected: he had no independent constituency within the military. He had friends and supporters, but no where near as many as he had enemies. And even his staunchest supporters did not possess the will or organized strength to confront the general's corps to defend his position without clear backing from Pinochet.⁶²

Yet, Contreras's troubles had only just begun. In early 1978, Pinochet decreed a general amnesty for anyone who had committed a criminal act between September 11, 1973 and March 10, 1978. However, a specific provision of the amnesty excluded those already implicated in the assassination of Orlando Letelier and Ronnie Moffitt.⁶³ On August 1, 1978, a U.S. Grand Jury indicted Manuel Contreras and two other DINA officers in conjunction with the murders of Letelier and Moffitt. Although the Chilean Supreme Court eventually denied the extradition requests tendered by the United States Government, Contreras and his operations deputy, Pedro Espinoza finally had their day in court on November 12, 1993. Judge Adolfo Bañados sentenced Contreras to seven years in prison for his complicity in the Letelier/Moffitt assassinations. The judge ordered Espinoza to serve six years for his role in the crime.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid., 307.

⁶³ Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, 129.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 233-4.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

The elimination of DINA occurred because of the continuous outcry of human rights organizations combined with increasing international pressure, which provided the impetus for DINA's foes within the government to seek and win its destruction. DINA's role in implementing the regime's internal repression through arrests, disappearances, tortures and executions provoked the enduring condemnation of human rights organizations and the Catholic Church. However, these groups alone failed to achieve the reduction or elimination of the repressive apparatus of the state. In fact, DINA's power, scope and audacity actually increased over time. DINA's role in the assassinations of Orlando Letelier and Ronnie Moffitt in Washington, D.C., and its torture of British doctor Sheila Cassidy contributed to a growing international isolation and increasing political and economic pressure from the United States.

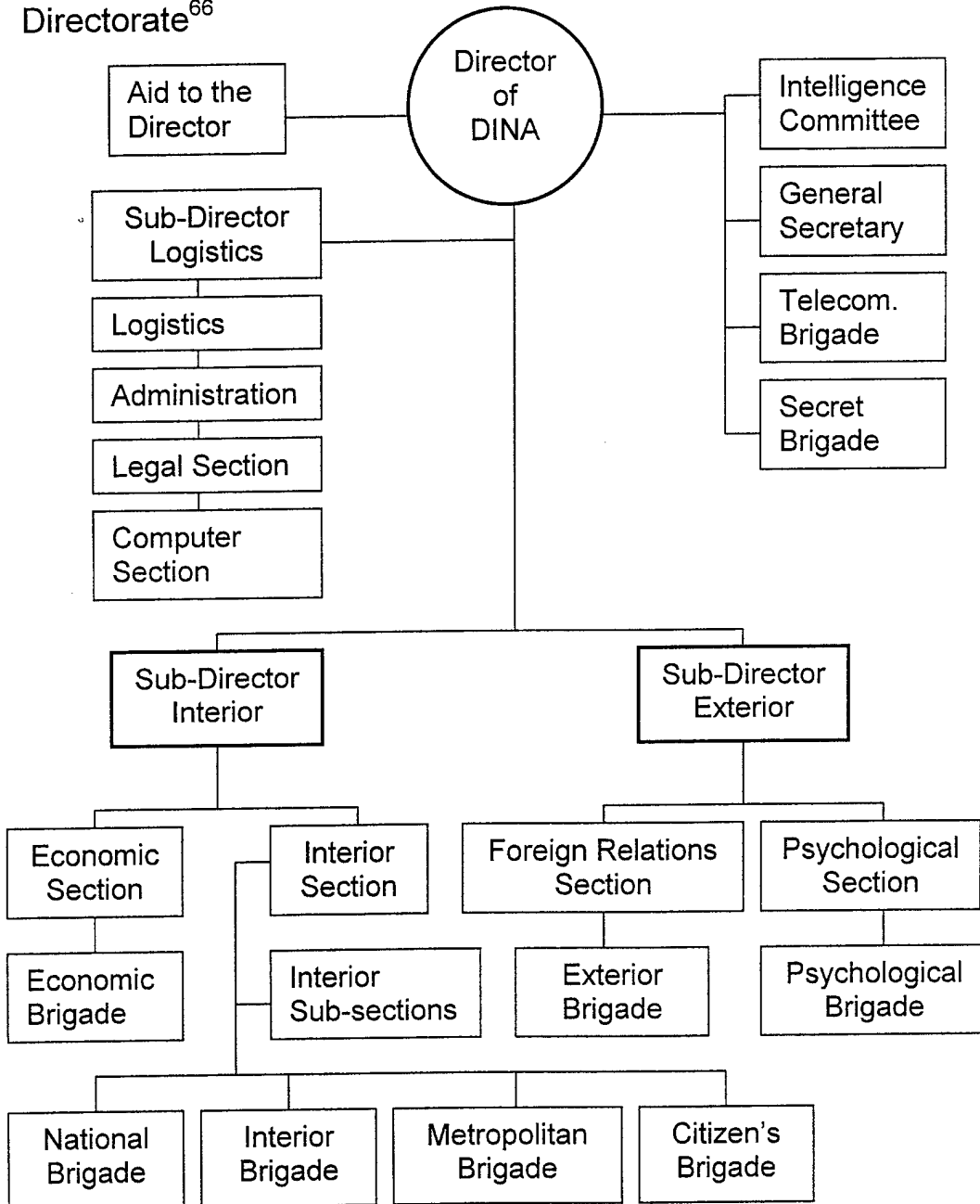
As the DINA systematically destroyed its enemies on the Chilean Left, it undermined its own position in the regime. If no subversive elements remained to threaten the regime, Pinochet no longer required the organization designed to eradicate them or its director. More importantly, DINA's actions and the negative publicity it generated

strengthened the position of Contreras's enemies within the Chilean government and those who distrusted him and disapproved of his tactics. By late 1977, DINA passed into extinction, sacrificed by Pinochet as the price for improved relations with the United States and the continued loyalty of powerful members of his own government. It's once all-powerful Director, General Contreras, found himself on the outside, removed from the organization he created, distanced from his benefactor and struggling to avoid prosecution. As Contreras himself once said, the chief of intelligence's first job was to "administer the silence."⁶⁵ Yet the judiciary disagreed. While he evaded extradition after being indicted by a U.S. court in 1978, Contreras ironically ended up inside the cogs of the Chilean security machine, serving a seven year prison sentence for the crimes he committed "protecting" the Pinochet regime.

⁶⁵ Dinges, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, 332.

Annex 1: Organizational Diagram of the National Intelligence

Directorate⁶⁶



⁶⁶ DODIR, "Organizational Diagram of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA)," 17 June, 1975, Document number 9c10.pdf at <http://foia.state.gov>. 2.

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The Social, Economic, and Political Causes of
Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism; Argentina, Brazil, and
Venezuela

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 1960s proved to be a turbulent era in Latin American history. Social unrest, economic crisis and political turmoil confronted the fledgling democracies of the region. The elected governments of Argentina and Brazil found themselves unable to weather these crises and fell victim to military rule. On April 1, 1964, the Brazilian Army deposed President João Goulart. After the overthrow, the military junta created what Guillermo O'Donnell would later term a "Bureaucratic-Authoritarian" regime in an effort to completely reorganize a fragmented Brazilian society.¹ In Argentina, on June 28, 1966, a similar military coup ousted President Arturo Illia. The conspirators, led by General Juan Carlos Onganía, subsequently attempted to restructure their society in much the same way as their counterparts in Brazil.² However, during the same period, Venezuela's democratic institutions survived the challenges of both armed insurrection (1961-1967) and an attempted military coup d'état (1966).³ Venezuela not only escaped Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism but also ushered in an unprecedented era of democracy in the 1960s. What similarities in social structure, economics and politics compelled both Brazil and Argentina to seek an authoritarian solution to these societal crises? What differences existed in

¹ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964*, xv.

² *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 29, 1966.

Venezuela that allowed it to escape authoritarian rule and achieve an enviable measure of economic success and social consensus? The purpose of this paper is to analyze commonalities between governments and societies that became authoritarian, the factors that drove coups, and the rare combination of circumstances that allowed certain countries to escape authoritarian rule. The military coups in Brazil and Argentina occurred not *solely* because of the tenets of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model, but because those preconditions *combined* with weak democratic institutions and external pressures exceeded the capabilities of their elected governments.

³ Richard A. Haggerty, ed., *Venezuela: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1993), 24-28.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

Brazil

Jânio Quadros resigned from the office of the President of Brazil on August 25, 1961 in an attempt to gain popular support for his plan to restructure the government. However, instead of triggering an uprising that would demand his return to office, his resignation led to a succession crisis that nearly erupted into civil war. Under a compromise that changed the constitutional system from presidential to parliamentary, Congress elected the former Vice President, João Goulart, to the office of President but also severely limited his executive powers, thereby achieving an end to the crisis. A plebiscite held in 1963 restored the presidential system and full executive powers. However, Goulart chose to interpret the victory as a popular support for his presidency, not as support for the presidential system.⁴ Goulart's subsequent populist policies alienated the elites and the military while contributing to the growing fragmentation of society. Goulart's leftist tendencies deeply strained his relations with the Brazilian Army and the United States. His perceived sympathy for a rebellion of army sergeants in 1963 and attendance at a mass rally by the left in Rio de Janeiro in 1964 further destabilized the country. A huge counter-rally by the right in São Paulo a few days later tipped the balance; on April 1, 1964, the

Army seized power to prevent a civil war. After the overthrow, the Army Chief of Staff, Marshall Humberto Castello Branco, and his supporters developed what Guillermo O'Donnell later termed a "Bureaucratic-Authoritarian" regime in an effort to correct the flaws of a deeply fragmented Brazilian society.

Argentina

In Argentina, Arturo Illia, a small town country doctor, was elected president in July 1963 with only 25 percent of the votes cast.⁵ Significantly, this occurred in an election in which the military banned Peronist Party participation. Dr. Illia chose to form a cabinet almost exclusively made up of members of own his own party (*Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo*)[IBL1]. The resulting lack of broad based representation in his government, his blatant cronyism, and his short term economic revival policies alienated many segments of society and contributed to his ultimate downfall. On June 28, 1966, a military coup led by General Juan Carlos Onganía ousted Illia after little more than three years in office. After the overthrow, General Onganía and his supporters also attempted to create a Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regime in an effort to completely reorganize Argentine society.

⁴ Rex A. Hudson, ed., *Brazil: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1998), 74-76.

⁵ David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 344.

Venezuela

On December 7, 1958, Venezuelans elected Rómulo Betancourt president by a margin of forty-nine percent of the votes cast.⁶ This election signaled the end of a decade of military rule and the beginnings of a new era in Venezuelan history. Since declaring their independence from Spain in 1811, Venezuelans had previously lived under a democratic government for only a brief three-year period lasting from 1945 to 1948. However, the democratic lessons learned by political leaders during this period, known as the *trienio*, profoundly impacted the future of Venezuelan democracy. The 1940s witnessed the rise of influential political parties that penetrated all sectors of society; among the most important were *Acción Democrática* (AD) and the *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (COPEI). In 1945, disgruntled junior military officers and the leaders of *Acción Democrática* formed a coup coalition and overthrew the military government of General Isasías Medina Angarita thus beginning the *trienio*. Having won the subsequent elections by a wide margin, AD felt little need to consider the fears and concerns of rival groups when executing its policies. The sweeping social reforms and exclusionary politics practiced by *Acción Democrática* soon began to alienate large segments of Venezuelan society to include their former allies in the

⁶ Edwin Lieuwen, *Venezuela* (London, 1965), 104.

military. In November 1948, the military ousted the elected president and exiled the leadership of *Acción Democrática* and *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* including Rómulo Betancourt, AD's president.

Following the end of the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez in 1958, political parties again rose to prominence in Venezuela, but with a significant difference.

Gone were the policies of exclusion and social revolution; in their place the veterans of the *trienio* and survivors of a decade in exile established inclusion, compromise and legitimacy as the new "rules of the game." The election of Rómulo Betancourt in 1958 began an era of political compromise and social consensus heretofore unknown in Venezuelan history.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this paper will be to analyze these three cases in terms of an expanded Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model. Guillermo O'Donnell, in his book *El Estado Burocrático Autoritario*, attributes the rise of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism to three factors:

- the end of the “easy” phase of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)
- the “activation” of the popular sector
- the rise of technocrats

However, some political scientists have criticized O'Donnell's model for its failure to consider external factors such as regional demonstration effects (coups in neighboring countries, etc.) and the international political setting. Additional criticisms of the model include its apparent breakdown when applied to negative cases (such as that of Venezuela) and its lack of attention to the relative strength or weakness of political institutions prior to military intervention. Therefore, an expanded Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model will be developed and utilized in this analysis. This framework will allow a comparison of the strength of political institutions and the effects of the following external influences in addition to the traditional tenets of the model listed above: inter-regional demonstration effects, the Cold War and the Cuban Revolution, and United States foreign policy. The

expanded B-A model provides an improved framework to explain the downfall of the elected governments of Brazil and Argentina and allows for the effects of additional, external determinants on the subsequent rise of Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regimes. To summarize the expanded B-A model:

- the strength of democratic institutions (role of the executive, political party system, and military autonomy)
- the end of the “easy” phase of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)
- the “activation” of the popular sector
- the rise of technocrats
- the effect of external influences (the cold war, U.S. foreign policy, and inter-regional demonstration effects)

CHAPTER 4. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND AUTHORITY

Brazil: Executive Branch

What institutional structures existed in Brazil in the 1960s and how much authority did they exert in society? The Brazilian Constitution of 1891 closely resembled that of the United States and established a federal and presidential system of three equal branches: legislative, executive and judicial. The President must be a native Brazilian, is elected directly and serves a four-year term. The President is ineligible to run for a consecutive term, but may run for re-election four years after relinquishing office. The President and Vice-President are elected separately. The legislative branch, also directly elected by popular vote, is comprised of a bicameral Congress; the Senate forms the upper house and the Chamber of Deputies forms the lower house.⁷ In contrast to the theory of balanced power, Jordan Young notes: "A new constitution prepared in 1891 set the traditional three branches of government - the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. In Brazil, as in many other Latin American countries, the executive branch of government was far more powerful than the other two."⁸ Philippe Schmitter adds, "The Brazilian President is, first and

⁷ Hudson, ed., *Brazil: A Country Study*, 255, 259, 263-264.

⁸ Jordan M. Young, ed., *Brazil 1954-1964: End of Civilian Cycle*, (New York, 1972), 6.

foremost, at the center of an enormous patronage system.”⁹ In addition to the imbalances caused by extensive executive power, democracy in Brazil has had to contend with numerous challenges to the constitutional system itself; between independence in 1882 and the overthrow of Goulart in 1964, Brazil has had five constitutions: 1824, 1891, 1934, 1937, and 1946. Additionally, between 1945 and the 1964 coups only two presidents served their full term of office.¹⁰ The political history of populist president Getulio Vargas demonstrates the power of the executive branch and the weak commitment to democratic institutions.

Richard Schroeder notes in *Brazil: Awakening Giant*:

Vargas became provisional chief executive as a result of a military coup in 1930... Vargas ruled as provisional chief for four years, then as president under a custom made constitution from 1934 until November 1937. At that time he staged a coup, assumed dictatorial powers and declared a semi-corporate *Estado Novo*, a new state. He did his utmost to modify the power of the big foreign enterprises in the country... He gave women the right to vote, improved the social security system, abolished child labor, wrote a new labor code with collective bargaining, and sought to break the feudal powers of the great estates. After fifteen years, Vargas was deposed in a bloodless military coup in 1945. He returned to power in 1950 in a free election...¹¹

The constitution of 1946 introduced a serious institutional problem; the constitution did not stipulate that the president and vice-president must belong to the same party. The difficulties created by this measure became apparent in

⁹ Philippe C. Schmitter, *Interest Change and Political Conflict in Brazil* (Stanford, 1971), 306.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

1961. Conservative Jânio Quadros won the presidency, but an opposition candidate, João Goulart, won the vice presidency with the support of the left. After the resignation of Jânio Quadros in August 1961, a serious crisis developed over the succession of Goulart. The military opposed allowing Goulart to assume the presidency while his supporters on the left began to arm themselves and organize for his support. Civil war was averted when military leaders opposed to his succession achieved limits on his powers by way of a political compromise resulting in a brief experiment with a parliamentary form of government. Goulart subsequently achieved the return of full presidential powers in January 1963 as a result of a national plebiscite, but strong opposition continued. Goulart, frustrated by ongoing congressional opposition to his policies, soon determined that even full presidential powers were insufficient. In October 1963 he requested that Congress declare a thirty-day state of siege and grant him sweeping executive powers. However, Goulart withdrew the request three days later amid overwhelming opposition from the left and the right.¹² João Goulart experienced frustrations with the imperfect democratic institutions of Brazil, but also contributed to their decay.

¹¹ Richard C. Schroeder, *Brazil: Awakening Giant* (Washington, D.C., 1972), 282.

¹² Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 103, 142, 149-150.

Argentina: Executive Branch

Did institutional structures in Argentina mirror those in Brazil? What authority did these institutions exert in Argentine society? The Argentine Constitution of 1853 established a federal system of government based on the principle of the separation of powers into three equal branches: legislative, executive and judicial. The President serves as chief of state and head of government and is elected to a single six-year term by an electoral college. The members of the Electoral College are chosen by popular vote. The President is ineligible to run for a second term, but may run for re-election six years after relinquishing office. The legislative branch consists of a bicameral Congress; the Senate forms the upper house and is elected by the legislatures of the provinces while the Chamber of Deputies, or lower house, is elected by popular vote.¹³ Although the 1853 Constitution envisioned a balanced government of three coequal branches, it granted extensive powers to the executive branch. Subsequent amendments and presidential actions increased the already broad power of the President. For example, in 1949, President Juan Perón convened a constitutional convention, which removed the prohibition against immediate re-election of the president and granted labor the right to organize and to strike. The

¹³ James D. Rudolph, ed., *Argentina, A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 205-208.

expansion of the role of the executive caused far ranging political consequences;

as James Rudolph notes in *Argentina, A Country Study*:

The powers granted to the president are so extensive that the office is the center of the political system; it is the prize for which all political actors compete. Once in office, the president is not legally required to seek wide backing for his policies. The limits on presidential power are political, not legal, and consequently presidents rarely share power with political parties...¹⁴

Brazil: Political Parties

No national political parties existed in Brazil in the early 1960s. Instead, numerous parties organized along regional or personalistic lines. Thirteen parties contested the 1962 congressional elections with only three representing broad geographic regions. The *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD) and the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB), both founded by Getulio Vargas, represented federal bureaucrats and workers respectively. The *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN) represented the anti-Getulista opposition. With the exception of the pro-Communist *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (PSB) most parties lacked a definitive ideology and espoused vague programs.¹⁵ Brazilian political parties existed to gain control of the presidency in order to reap the benefits of patronage and

¹⁴ Ibid., 208.

¹⁵ John W. F. Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964* (Austin, 1970) xiv, 366-367.

policy making. Regional parties existed to achieve the same results at the local and state level. As Lawrence Graham states in *Civil Service Reform in Brazil*:

The heterogeneous and overlapping patterns and styles of politics prevalent throughout the country were made even more disparate under a highly unstable multiparty system joined to a federalist system of government. Under such a set of circumstances, ideology could hardly provide a unifying factor for a political party and at the same time guarantee it sufficient electoral support to elect its candidates. Neither could effective alternatives in public policy be offered as a sole means for aggregating interests. The one available unifying factor able to bring these diverse interests and groups together was the use of public office to provide jobs and favors as rewards to those assisting in amassing the necessary votes and resources required for election.¹⁶

Argentina: Political Parties

The role of political parties in Argentina also served to weaken the democratic framework. A strong two-party system did not exist; instead numerous fragmented parties vied for ascendancy and control of the executive branch. In the 1963 elections, three major and forty-seven minor parties competed at the ballot booth.¹⁷ With the possible exception of the Peronists, political parties lacked well-defined ideologies or distinctive policies. Instead, as in Brazil, parties existed to gain control of the presidency in order to reap the benefits of patronage and policy making. The self-serving and destructive role of

¹⁶ Lawrence S. Graham, *Civil Service Reform in Brazil: Principles versus Practice* (Austin, 1968), 123.

political party activity did not end after losing an election. Opposition parties seldom resigned themselves to waiting for the next election; instead they actively sought to undermine the government in hopes of provoking a coup. These groups reasoned that they might be able to gain some power in a new government or fare better in new elections. As Rudolph notes: "All of the extraconstitutional governments since 1930 were supported, at least initially, by most of the major parties that had formed the opposition to the deposed government. In most cases, opposition parties were also active in the conspiracies that led to military interventions."¹⁸

Brazil: Role of the Armed Forces

What roles did the Armed Forces of Brazil and Argentina play in the constitutional framework? Did they serve to support the institutions of democracy or undermine them? In Brazil, the constitution of 1891 established the role of the military as moderator. Article 14 formed the foundation of this principle when it declared "...the army and navy to be permanent national institutions responsible for maintaining law and order and for ensuring the continuance of the three constitutional powers." The article also required the military to be obedient to the president but "within the limits of the law." Thus

¹⁷ David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 344.

¹⁸ Rudolph, *Argentina, A Country Study*, 216.

the armed forces were to obey only if they determined a presidential order to be legal.¹⁹ Moreover, as Philippe Schmitter observes: "The President of the Republic is only nominally Commander in Chief of all armed forces. It is widely believed that actual command is exercised by the respective military ministers, who have traditionally been high ranking officers, and that they have unrestricted veto over matters of direct concern to them."²⁰ The Brazilian military exercised these functions on numerous occasions. As Dulles notes in *Unrest in Brazil*: "Military officers were often ready to step in 'to save Brazil from its politicians.' The military had played leading roles in doing away with the constitutions of 1824, 1891, 1934, and 1937."²¹ In 1954 the military forced the dismissal of then Minister of Labor, João Goulart. In 1955 the army intervened to depose Presidents Carlos Luz and João Café Filho. As former president Juscelino Kubitschek once said; "In Brazil one is elected by the people, but one governs with one's eyes turned toward the armed forces."²²

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁰ Schmitter, *Political Conflict in Brazil*, 254.

²¹ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, xiv.

²² *Ibid.*, 132.

Argentina: Role of the Armed Forces

The military in Argentina also exacerbated the existing institutional imbalances by defining a role for itself outside the constitutional framework. The armed forces' obligation to defend the Constitution is clearly defined and generally agreed upon. Military subordination to civilian rule and its involvement in politics are not as clearly defined. Many officers and civilians expanded their interpretations of the role of the armed forces to constitute a "virtual fourth branch of government."²³ The military assumed "veto" powers over the actions, and on occasion, the very existence of elected governments. The autonomy granted the military by succeeding administrations did little to curb these excesses or subordinate the military to civilian rule. Robert Potash notes in *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1962-1973*:

Dr. Illia's failure to select his own military commanders had the effect of diminishing his constitutional authority as commander-in-chief of the nation's armed forces. At the same time, his action, or better said inaction, tended to strengthen the view held in military circles that the armed forces were an autonomous institution, whose basic obligation was to protect the interests of the state, and who owed only a conditional loyalty to any particular government. Such a concept carried with it the implication that the armed forces, and more specifically the Army, could become the final arbiter of the survival of a government.²⁴

²³ Richard S. Hillman, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Latin America* (Boulder, 1997), 98.

²⁴ Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1962-1973* (Stanford, 1996), 123.

The armed forces in Argentina took their role as the "final arbiter" very seriously; four out of five presidents were deposed by the military between 1946 and 1966.²⁵ Even more telling is the fact two additional coups occurred prior to this period: in 1930 and 1943. In many cases, the military also excluded from electoral participation those political parties whose objectives they found unsavory or pressured civilian governments to annul the results of unfavorable elections. On the few occasions that elections did occur they were often marred by election fraud, further undermining the democratic process. Thus, both João Goulart in Brazil and Dr. Arturo Illia in Argentina formed their governments on imperfect democratic foundations.

²⁵ *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 29, 1966.

Bureaucratic Authoritarian Model

What social and economic precursors in Brazil and Argentina compelled their militaries to seize power? Guillermo O'Donnell details the effects of the latter stages of industrialization on society in his book *El Estado Burocrático Autoritario*. Therefore, let us analyze the social and economic precursors in relation to this model. O'Donnell attributes the rise of "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism" to three factors:

- the end of the "easy" phase of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)
- the "activation" of the popular sector
- the rise of technocrats

CHAPTER 5. IMPORT SUBSTITUTION INDUSTRIALIZATION

Did these three socio-economic precursors exist in Brazil and Argentina in the 1960s? Let us begin with an analysis of Import Substitution Industrialization. ISI is a nationalistic economic policy designed to replace dependence on imported goods with the ability to manufacture these products domestically. In the first or “easy” phase, the government creates protected industries through tariff barriers and subsidies. Over time, manufacturing satisfies the market demand for these simple goods and a second stage appears. In this “profundización” or “deepening” phase the government’s focus shifts to the domestic production of more complex goods and machine tools and is considerably more difficult and costly to implement. The shift to new, more orthodox economic policies with a corresponding reduction in expenditures directed toward the popular sector causes social unrest and economic turmoil.

To fund this “deepening” phase of ISI the government subsidizes the importation of more expensive intermediate and capital goods at the expense of traditional exports such as agriculture. This in turn causes deficits in the balance of payments, foreign indebtedness, and inflation. A “zero-sum” condition results. The government, no longer able to spend freely, “takes” from one segment of society in the form of taxes, reduced spending on social or

defense programs, or suppression of wages to “give” benefits to another segment of society. The increased pressures of ISI, combined with working class demands for higher wages and benefits, leads to the dissolution of political coalitions. Each group demands more from a government that is increasingly able to give less. Competition increases as each group struggles for ever smaller pieces of the national pie. An even greater polarization of socio-economic groups results; the elites regard the expenditures on the popular sector as excessive and detrimental to national development while the working class regards elite proposals to reduce wages and attract international investment as exploitative and anti-nationalistic.

Brazil

What political and economic effects did the second phase of ISI have in Brazil? President Goulart inherited an economy suffering from several ills; a serious balance of payment crisis, a huge foreign debt, spiraling inflation and excessive government deficits. During the first, or “easy” stage of ISI, the economy experienced sufficient growth to enable the government to meet the needs of multiple sectors at the same time. President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) avoided the political problems of the “zero-sum” condition by continuing to meet the needs of multiple sectors despite the early signs of economic difficulties. The same luxury did not exist for President Goulart.

Kubitschek's economic policies greatly increased the difficulties already inherent in the *profundización* stage of ISI. Kubitschek financed populist policies in an era of decreasing government revenues by vastly expanding the government debt. "The Kubitschek administration's spending exceeded revenues in all five years from 1956 through 1960. To cover the deficits, the Kubitschek administration had resorted to the printing press. The net result was that currency in circulation rose from 67.5 billion cruzeiros in 1956 to 177 billion in 1960."²⁶

Michael Wallerstein goes on to state:

Kubitschek sought to maximize both short-term economic growth and political support under the constraint of a deteriorating balance of trade. His solution was to borrow abroad at a rate that could not be maintained for long. When, by 1958, Kubitschek was unable to obtain more long-term loans, he turned to short-term loans. It was a successful strategy of reaping the benefits and deferring the costs until someone else would be president. For Kubitschek's political popularity the strategy may have been optimal, but for his successors, caught between the IMF and national bankruptcy, it was disastrous.²⁷

Although Kubitschek's policies certainly exacerbated the situation, the fundamental causes of economic crisis owed their origin to the problems inherent in Import Substitution Industrialization. Manufacturing, producing goods destined for consumer markets, trebled between 1948 and 1962 while agriculture, the bulk of which generated export earnings, grew by only 1.8

²⁶ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 87.

times.²⁸ The ensuing economic imbalance between export revenue earnings (agriculture) and import spending to support ISI (to purchase new tools, technologies, and machinery) started out small, but over time created a staggering crisis. In 1955, total exports outweighed total imports: \$1,306 million US to \$1,423 million US, thus creating a trade surplus. However, by 1962 the situation had reversed and imports (\$1,475 million US) outweighed exports (\$1,214 million US) creating a trade deficit.²⁹ The trade imbalance also created a drag on the economy, which led to stagnation. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 6.8 percent in 1950 and remained relatively strong through 1960, but fell precipitously between 1960 and 1963. GDP stood at 9.4 in 1960, dropped to 8.6 in 1961, fell again in 1962 to 6.6, and plummeted to 0.6 percent by 1963.³⁰

Sharp increases in population growth and urbanization added to the strain. The rising population caused a growing demand for government resources, and increasing urbanization meant that those demands carried a greater price. As Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan note; "In the decade 1950 to 1960, Brazil's rural population grew from 33 million to 39 million, while the urban population grew much more rapidly, from 19 million to 32 million. This new,

²⁷ Michael Wallerstein, "The Collapse of Democracy in Brazil; Its Economic Determinants," *Latin American Research Review*, Volume 33, Number 1, 1998, 33-34.

²⁸ Octavo Ianni, *Crisis in Brazil* (New York, 1970) 25.

²⁹ Bela C. Maday, et al, *U. S. Army Area Handbook for Brazil* (Washington, D.C., 1964), 568.

rapidly expanding urban population created a whole new series of increased requirements for transportation, jobs, and distribution of food and housing.”³¹ Government financial operations, rather than improve the situation, contributed to the economic problems. The percentage of GDP spent by the government to finance its own operations rose from 10.9 percent in 1959 to 14.4 percent in 1963. Meanwhile, government tax revenues fell from 23 percent in 1959 to 20 percent in 1963. This pattern of deficit spending led to spiraling inflation; prices rose by 50 percent in 1962, 75 percent in 1963, and a stunning 140 percent between January 1963 and Goulart’s overthrow in April.³²

Rising inflation in turn triggered social polarization as each group fought to retain its share of the national pie at the expense of other groups. As the cost of living rose, (it increased by 43 percent in 1961 and 80 percent in 1963), it triggered numerous strikes as workers attempted to hold on to their hard won wages.³³ The government labor tribunals arbitrated 524 labor strikes in 1959, but by 1963 the number had almost doubled to 1,069.³⁴ The middle class enjoyed no immunity from the effects of rising prices and inflation. The erosion of wages

³⁰ Hudson, *Brazil: A Country Study*, 467.

³¹ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America* (Baltimore, 1978), 112.

³² *Ibid.*, 114.

³³ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 109, 152.

³⁴ Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 112.

effectively reduced the distinctions between the middle class and workers and contributed to a growing social polarization.

President Goulart's economic policy initially focused on stabilization. However, when faced with widespread opposition, his policies quickly became those of capitulation. Although many Brazilians understood the problem of inflation and recognized the need to control it, no group was willing to sacrifice their benefits to support a stabilization policy.

As Thomas Skidmore notes in *Authoritarian Brazil*:

By 1964 it was doubtful if any democratically elected president could carry out the stabilization program that was essential if Brazil was to resume growth within the capitalist system. It was either stabilization under an authoritarian government or social revolution under a government of the left.³⁵

Goulart's attempt at stabilization centered on the Three-Year Plan of Economic and Social Development announced in December 1962. The plan called for a mix of economic and social measures including stabilization, development, and banking, tax and agrarian reforms. The economic stabilization measures called for wage limitations, price ceilings and reductions in public expenditures. Opposition to the economic plan soon surfaced on both the left and the right; the left warned the plan would harm low-income groups and conservatives called the plan inflationary. The first test of the new plan came the following February

³⁵ Alfred Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil* (New Haven, 1973), 20.

when Goulart promised to hold wage increases for federal employees and military personnel to a maximum 40 percent increase and asked for a price freeze on manufactured goods. However, Goulart soon bowed to political pressure and by late April 1963 he declared an average 60 percent increase in military and civil service pay. The victory of the middle class, the military, and bureaucrats did not go unnoticed by their rivals in the working class. In October 1963, the General Workers' Command (CGT) demanded a 100 percent pay raise for affiliated unions in Sao Paulo state and ordered a general strike to enforce their demands. Goulart, who owed a major portion of his political backing to organized labor, deemed the union's demands to be justifiable. Although the regional labor court quickly declared the strike illegal, it later granted the confederation an 80 percent pay increase.³⁶

The government's announcement of proposals to raise taxes caused little controversy because of its poor record of tax collection and widespread evasion. For example, a mere 340,101 Brazilians (of a population of 62 million) filed income tax returns in 1958. The inability to effectively collect taxes increased the government's deficit; in 1963 the Brazilian press reported a 139 billion-cruzeiro tax loss due to evasion. Goulart's planned tax reform would have impacted all social groups, but he seemed to single out the upper classes in a

³⁶ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 139, 151-2, 154.

speech in May 1962; "In Brazil, those who make the largest profits are often those who pay the least into the national treasury. We must also have a complete and systematic reorganization of our revenue collection system so that all shall pay a tax in proportion to their profits...."³⁷ However, Goulart's tax reform proposal generated little opposition from Brazilian elites or the middle classes due in part to the government's poor performance in enforcing previous wage and price policies. The government's inability to generate increased tax revenues combined with Goulart's conciliatory pay increases expanded the existing federal deficit and contributed to the growing economic crisis.

The military sector in Brazil also began to suffer from the effects of the declining economy. Inflation and a rising cost of living lowered the standard of living previously enjoyed by military members and exacerbated tensions between the armed forces and organized labor. Budgetary shortfalls also added to the military's growing anxiety and animosity toward the Goulart regime. As Rex Hudson explains;

Minister of the Army General Amaury Krueel complained that the army had been subjected to a "survival" budget since 1958 and that most of its armaments and equipment were either obsolete, beyond repair, or required replacement. In 1962 every regional army headquarters reported that it was not in condition to hold regular exercises, and many officers concluded that their efforts were useless because of a generalized "disbelief and lack of incentive." General Krueel alerted President Goulart that

³⁷ Ibid., 55, 132, 153.

inadequate funding was creating a "calamitous situation" in which the army was being "economically and financially asphyxiated."³⁸

In 1961, the Ministry of War received a budget of 37.4 billion cruzeros or 9 percent of the federal budget. By 1963 the budget totaled 54.1 billion cruzeros, but military's share decreased to only 7 percent of the total federal budget, a significant reduction in an era of spiraling inflation.³⁹ Other sectors of society also reacted to the increasing pressures of inflation. Plant owners in Pernambuco staged their own strike in February 1964 in response to "constant strikes, 'threats', and 'acts of subversion'" by workers demanding wage increases⁴⁰

Argentina

What political and economic effects did the second phase of ISI have in Argentina? Dr. Illia also inherited an economy in distress. He confronted a growing balance of payment crisis, chronic inflation and excessive government deficits. Previously, during the first stages of ISI, the Argentine economy experienced sufficient growth to enable the government to meet the needs of multiple sectors at the same time.⁴¹ The same luxury did not exist under the second stage. Although President Illia and his cabinet scored some initial

³⁸ Hudson, *Brazil: A Country Study*, 76-77.

³⁹ Maday, *Area Handbook for Brazil*, 581.

successes with their short-term policies, the difficulties inherent in pursuing greater industrialization, the effects of an unbalanced economy, and his lack of political support plagued him throughout his time in office. Increased urbanization and industrialization caused a corresponding increase in the number of urban consumers and meant greater urban consumption of agricultural products. However, the agricultural sector remained minimalized under ISI and a similar expansion in this sector did not occur. Expanded manufacturing began to require more imported goods at the same time the agricultural sector, the country's primary foreign exchange earner, exported less due to stagnant production and increasing local consumption. As in Brazil, a fundamental economic imbalance existed: as more investment flowed into manufacturing, which generated few exports, investment in agriculture declined.

The Illia administration found itself locked in an inflation spiral it could not control. Ineffective wage policies and a rising cost of living resulted in chronic inflation; 22 percent in 1964, 29 percent in 1965 and 32 percent in 1966.⁴² The government's inability to enforce its wage policy in the face of strong union opposition meant that no cure for inflation would be found. The official wage policy for 1965 specified a maximum annual increase in public

⁴⁰ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 253.

⁴¹ Gary W. Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era* (Albuquerque, 1978), 10.

⁴² Guido Di Tella and Rudiger Dornbusch, eds., *The Political Economy of Argentina, 1946-83* (Pittsburgh, 1989), 158.

sector wages of 23 percent. However, this policy soon ran aground on the rock of labor opposition. The *Union Obrera Metalúrgica*, the country's largest union, won a negotiated settlement of 35 percent in mid 1965.⁴³ In 1966 the policy stated a maximum increase of 15 percent, but this too failed; when faced with threats of strikes and sabotage the administration granted wage increases of "about 30 percent" to the municipal workers of Buenos Aires. Other labor sectors soon won similar gains; railway workers: 24 to 29 percent, construction workers: 33.5 percent and stevedores won an impressive 50 percent increase.⁴⁴ Labor strikes and demonstration became commonplace, as did the wage increases they earned, most far above the maximum levels set by government planners. As the cost of living continued to rise, (due in large part to the rising cost of labor) so did the demands for higher wages. The cost of living index for Buenos Aires stood at 181 in 1963 (1960 = 100), but had grown to 242 in 1964.⁴⁵

Inflation affected all segments of society, but some suffered more than others did. The working class, traditionally most affected by inflation, demanded and won further wage increases in order to maintain their hard earned gains in the face of rising inflation. The middle classes also suffered from the effects of

⁴³ *The Economist*, September 1965, 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, May 1966, 3-4.

⁴⁵ *The Review of the River Plate*, January 22, 1965, (hereafter cited as RRP), 70.

inflation; most white-collar *empleados* did not have influential unions to ensure corresponding wage increases, and small business owners felt the effects of government price controls. Elite dissatisfaction centered on their loss of bargaining power in setting private wages due to the government's failure to enforce its own public wage policy. The government's measured responses and attempts to pacify labor with wage increases were seen as "soft" and as contributing to union power. Perceived governmental weakness did little to inspire confidence in democratic solutions. Elite complaints also included the growing budget deficit, increasing taxation, rising inflation and continued lack of representation. The inability of elites to influence the Illia regime, or at least have their problems considered, also contributed to a growing feeling of exasperation with what they considered ineffective democratic procedures.⁴⁶

The balance of payments disparity mentioned above stemmed in part from the policies of preceding governments; however, Illia's policies only increased its severity. The attempt to correct the deficit through increased taxation failed to staunch the drain of such state run industries as the railroads. In the middle 1960s, the railroads represented not only a tremendous drain on national resources, but also a significant source of union power.⁴⁷ Between 1964

⁴⁶ Ibid., January 30, 1965, 137-138; Wynia, *The Postwar Era*, 114, 125.

⁴⁷ *The Economist*, September 1965, 3, 5.

and 1965, the railway deficit increased 57 percent and accounted for some 90 percent of all treasury outlays to support state enterprises.⁴⁸ Illia's inability to reform the railroads in the face of labor opposition did little to improve either the government deficit or his public image. The railroad dilemma created additional political problems for Illia; although unwilling or unable to reduce waste and corruption in the state run railroad monopoly, the government was both willing and able to increase taxation in order to offset railroad expenditures. Thus, many viewed the democratically elected government as corrupt and wasteful, yet willing to increase taxation while limiting representation. As frustration grew, the perceived legitimacy of the Illia regime declined.

The Argentine military enjoyed no immunity in this environment of economic constraints. The military budget in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased from 2.6 percent in 1962 and 1963 (1962: \$410 million U.S., 1963: \$323 million U.S.), to 2.4 percent in 1964 (\$316 million U.S.) and a low of 2.2 percent in 1965 (\$347 million U.S.). As in Brazil, the effects of inflation eroded the purchasing power of the military. As the domestic and international costs of arms and equipment rose, the real value of the budget fell at an even faster rate.⁴⁹ The military did not fail to notice that the railroad's share of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3; RRP, January 22, 1965, 71.

⁴⁹ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 125.

national pie continued to increase while their own share continued to fall.

Additionally, the military also suffered from what they perceived to be a lack of representation in the Illia government. On several occasions senior military leaders appealed to the Illia government for a greater voice on domestic and foreign policy issues, but to no avail.

Conclusions

All sectors of society in Brazil and Argentina suffered from the economic impacts of the deepening phase of ISI and the government policies designed to implement and fund them. Thus, "profundización" did contribute to a severe economic crisis in both Brazil and Argentina, as predicted by the B-A model, even if it is not clear that the deepening alone caused the crisis.

CHAPTER 6. ACTIVATION OF THE POPULAR SECTOR

What social and political effect did the activation of the working class play in the events leading to these coups and is the B-A model again valid? The second aspect of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model is the “activation” of the popular sector, i.e., organized labor or the working class. In this sense, activation means:

1. Coalition: organization of a previously fragmented group.
2. Political Power: the entry into the political and economic life of the country of that group.
3. Backlash: the corresponding realization by other socio-political groups of the power this newly organized sector wields.

The theory states that the newly activated popular sector resists changes in the economic policy caused by the deepening phase of ISI and continues to demand wage and benefit increases. These demands, as manifested through strikes and opposition to the government, intensify the political and economic crises. What political effects did working class “activation” have in Brazil and Argentina?

Brazil

The activation of the working class in Brazil occurred more slowly than in Argentina, and to a certain degree was incomplete at the time of the coup in

1964. Industrial workers in Brazil in 1920 numbered some 275,000, but by 1950 that number had risen to 1,256,000. However, the labor policies of Getulio Vargas, which initiated the process of activation, also greatly constrained its scope.⁵⁰ Getulio Vargas rose to power in 1930 after a military coup d'état. His political power rested on an alliance between the military and the working class. Vargas ruled Brazil for the next fifteen years, as president until 1937 and as dictator from 1937 to 1945. Vargas initially granted some concessions to labor, but he also strove to ensure that workers remained under tight state control. In 1943, Vargas enacted a new labor code, which allowed unions to organize and bargain collectively, but only at the local level and only under the oversight of the Ministry of Labor. Vargas' lack of military background coupled with his attempts to greatly increase the power of labor led to the military forcing his dismissal in 1945. The presidency of Marshal Dutra (1946-1951) aided labor in establishing the first two national labor confederations: the *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Indústria* (CNTI), or National Confederation of Industrial Workers, and the *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores no Comércio* (CNTC), or the National Confederation of Commerce Workers.⁵¹ Vargas emerged as a presidential candidate again in 1950, but now turned completely to organized labor for support. Vargas won the election with 49

⁵⁰ Irving L. Horowitz, *Revolution in Brazil* (New York, 1964), 228, 245.

percent of the vote.⁵² After assuming office he named João Goulart as his Minister of Labor and quickly moved to consolidate his control over organized labor. Goulart actively supported labor by regularly endorsing strikes and workers' demands for higher wages. Unions gained additional autonomy during this era and began using short, illegal strikes to win their demands. As Irving Horowitz explains in *Revolution in Brazil*: "Short strikes are an illegal but tolerated practice of pressuring the labor tribunals for early and favorable decisions."⁵³

Increasing union membership rates also contributed to the growing power of the working class. Between 1942 and 1966, union membership in workers' syndicates grew from 400,000 to 2,000,000.⁵⁴ Combining disparate unions into strong national confederations greatly increased the ability of the working class to exert pressure on employers and the government. Although forbidden by law, unions successfully created the Central Command of Workers or CGT in late 1961. The CGT general strike of September 1962 forced Congress to alter the timetable for the plebiscite to restore Goulart's full

⁵¹ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 297.

⁵² Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 79.

⁵³ Horowitz, *Revolution in Brazil*, 247.

⁵⁴ Philippe C. Schmitter, *Interest Change and Political Conflict in Brazil* (Stanford, 1971), 152.

presidential powers and demonstrated the growing political power of organized labor.⁵⁵

The rising power of organized labor posed a serious dilemma for Goulart: it served as a foundation of political support, of which he had precious little, but it also exerted pressure on his government to pursue more leftist policies which alienated conservatives. After the general strike of 1962, workers demanded land reform, voting rights for illiterates and soldiers, and greater legal freedom to strike. Thus labor demands began to destroy the fragile political foundation of Goulart's presidency and to alarm the elites and the military. As Goulart attempted to move to the left to retain the support of labor, the left intensified its demands. At the same time, Goulart's actions aroused suspicion and fear among conservative elites, the military, and the middle class. In this polarized atmosphere, almost every measure undertaken by Goulart met with criticism from all sides of the political spectrum. Conservatives regularly denounced him for his pro-labor policies and support of communists. Leftists criticized him for the lack of progress toward their reform agenda and accused him of capitulating to the pressures of the right. Therefore, the actions of the "newly awakened" working class in Brazil did contribute to the severity of the socio-political crisis and thus the B-A model is also valid in this respect.

⁵⁵ Horowitz, *Revolution in Brazil*, 252.

Argentina

General Juan Perón served as Secretary of Labor and Vice President of the Republic in 1943. He used these positions to organize and mobilize the previously excluded urban working class. By 1945 he succeeded in transforming the *Confederación General de Trabajo* (CGT), and other weak, fragmented unions, into a potent political party under his control.⁵⁶ This period in Argentine history witnessed a veritable explosion in the breadth and depth of unionization; as Daniel James notes in *Resistance and Integration*, "Between 1946 and 1951 total union membership increased from 520,000 members to 2,334,000." After the fall of Perón in 1955, the military excluded the Peronist Party from electoral participation until Perón's return in 1973. Even though it was officially excluded from presidential elections, the working class continued to make its presence felt through its union activities and political pressure. Labor generally opposed the Illia government throughout his term in office despite numerous attempts by Illia to appease or co-opt the working classes.

The working class opposed Illia for both political and economic reasons. Political opposition had its origins in party politics prior to the official exclusion of the Peronists in 1955. The UCRP and the Peronists had separate origins, differing platforms and had traditionally run competing candidates for president.

⁵⁶ Gary W. Wymia, *The Politics of Latin American Development* (Cambridge, 1990), 253.

They were rival parties. In addition, due to their exclusion from the 1963 elections, the Peronists claimed that the Illia government lacked legitimacy since a large segment of the population had been denied their voting rights. In their view, the Peronists were not in opposition to a democratically elected government. Instead, they opposed a regime installed through a compromised and controlled, but not democratic, process.⁵⁷ The Peronist party leadership under Augusto Vandor also came to view many of Illia's policies as attempts to undermine their position as the political spokesmen for labor. Illia's accommodating stance toward labor, as illustrated by his tolerance of strikes and frequent wage increases, demonstrated to labor leaders his intention to lure the working class to his party, the UCRP (and thus away from their control). Vandor's response centered on the second phase of the *Plana de Lucha*, the "fighting plan" used with success against Illia's predecessor, José María Guido, during 1962's *Semana de Protesta*. The second stage of the plan, implemented in 1964, sought greater rights for workers and put additional pressure on the Illia government. *Confederación General de Trabajo* leaders ordered workers to occupy thousands of factories between mid-May and late June 1964. These occupations demonstrated the power of the working class and the weakness and

⁵⁷ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 119.

indecision of the Illia government.⁵⁸ Another Peronist action, which destabilized the country, occurred in October 1964. *Operación Retorno*, the campaign to return Juan Perón from exile in Spain, brought weeks of uncertainty and generated new rumors of a coup.⁵⁹

Illia's attempt to subvert labor leadership obviously failed. He failed to generate working class support, provoked the union leadership and antagonized the other sectors of society. By catering to working class needs in his bid to win political support, Illia alienated the traditional agricultural and industrial elites. Industrialists opposed rising wages, which affected their profits, and deeply resented the government's apathy in the face of rising union militancy. Agricultural elites, as represented by the *Sociedad Rural de Argentina* (SRA), opposed the "new and increased taxation", "price rises" and "the frightening budget deficit".⁶⁰ Industrial and agricultural elites both experienced acute frustration over their inability to voice their concerns to the government. Illia's policy, with the exception of his decidedly pro-labor stance, was to ignore narrow sector based demands in his policy formulation efforts. Instead Illia chose only to heed the advice of his UCRP associates. By refusing to address the needs of these sectors Illia not only lost their support, but also converted them

⁵⁸ Ibid., 137-139.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁶⁰ RRP, January 30, 1965, 137-138.

into active opponents of a government that did not represent them. The age-old fear of a lower class uprising also helped to unify the normally fragmented elites in opposition to Illia. The activation of the Argentine working class occurred under the first presidency of Juan Perón (1946-1955) and subsequent attempts to suppress or exclude this sector resulted in increasing socio-political tension as predicted by O'Donnell. This tension led not only to tacit working class support of a coup, but also galvanized the elites.

CHAPTER 7. TECHNOCRATS

What political role did technocrats play in these national dramas? Did they support the elected governments or join the coup coalitions in favor of establishing Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regimes as predicted by O'Donnell's theory? The third interdependent aspect of the B-A model highlights the increasingly important role of "technocrats." Technocrats are expert, technologically advanced bureaucrats in government, industry and the military. The rising self-confidence of this sector leads them to view the growing economic and political crises with impatience. They consider their abilities to solve national level problems to be superior to those of the professional politicians. The increasingly militant activities of the labor movement alarm the technocrats, which they consider detrimental to economic growth and thus the national interest. The resulting social unrest and economic crisis compels the technocrats to assume the reigns of government in order to cure the nations' ills. What effect did the rise of these technocrats in society and the military have in Argentina and Brazil? Did the sequence of history follow the path described by O'Donnell?

Brazil

The rise of technocrats in Brazilian society at large defies exact documentation, but can be inferred through several methods: increasing enrollment in higher education, expanding enrollment in "technocratic" fields of study, and the emergence of professional associations and governmental organizations. Enrollment in higher education increased 117 percent between 1950 and 1960 and 195 percent between 1960 and 1968 and reflects the rising aspirations of the middle class. Enrollment in technically oriented fields expanded rapidly between 1958 and 1968; business administration and economics grew by 442 percent and engineering grew by 288 percent.⁶¹ Perhaps the best indicator of the growth of technocrats is the emergence of professional associations such as the *Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros* (ISEB). The ISEB "...create[d] an ideology linking nationalism and development. A sort of combined graduate school and research facility, ISEB offered instruction in the social sciences, history, and philosophy to a select group of full-time students, most of them 'middle-level government functionaries and military officers.'"⁶²

The evolution of technocrats in the military occurred in stages. The first stage involved the professionalization of the Armed Forces. The next stage involved a shift in organizational focus from concerns of a purely military nature

⁶¹ Riordan Roett, ed., *Brazil in the Sixties* (Nashville, 1972), 281,

⁶² Schmitter, *Political Conflict in Brazil*, 64.

to those encompassing much broader national level social and economic interests. Finally, in response to a rising sense of alarm over the rapidly deteriorating social and economic situation, the military began to act. As Samuel Fitch explains in *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America*:

At a time when civilian institutions appeared increasingly weak and fragmented, most Latin American militaries were culminating a period of increasing professionalization. Financed in part by postwar economic growth and in part by U. S. military assistance programs, the armed forces increased in size and in their level of technical and organizational development. Entry requirements for officers were stiffened, professional norms were strengthened, and military education extended through a series of military schools, usually patterned on the American model.⁶³

The *Escola Superior de Guerra* (ESG), or Superior War College, serves as a cornerstone of professional military education in Brazil. Established in 1949 by President Dutra, the ESG declared its mission to be “preparing civilians and the military to perform executive functions and advisory functions especially in those organs responsible for the formulation, development, planning, and execution of the policies of national security.” The expanding focus of military concern is demonstrated in the diversity of the ESG’s curriculum; as Alfred Stepan notes, “Its civil-military, national security elites studied inflation, agrarian reform, banking reform, voting systems, transportation, and education

⁶³ Samuel J. Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore, 1988), 14.

as well as guerilla and conventional warfare.”⁶⁴ As the social and economic crises worsened in the early 1960s, these doctrines took on added significance, as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan observe:

Thus by early 1964 important elements within the Brazilian military were becoming increasingly apprehensive about the threats to the military institution, while at the same time groups within the military began to feel that the military possessed, through the work of the Superior War College, the development doctrines, as well as the personal and organizational strengths to rule Brazil.⁶⁵

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the ESG developed what became known as the national security doctrine. The doctrine theorized that the nature of the threat to Brazil had changed; the main threat was no longer an enemy invasion from outside but rather subversion from within. Moreover, the doctrine viewed national development as inseparable from national security. A 1956 ESG lecture stated:

We live in a climate of world-wide war that will decide the destiny of Western civilization... A decentralized system is fundamentally weak in periods of war, which demand a centralized and hierarchical structure. As total war absorbs all people, institutions, wealth, and human and natural resources for the obtainment of the objectives, it seems certain that centralization and concentration will increase the efficiency and the ability of the political and national power.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil*, 54, 56.

⁶⁵ Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 120.

⁶⁶ Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil*, 55.

The national security doctrine gained credibility as the social and economic crisis worsened. The military viewed President Goulart as a leftist, and they forced his dismissal as Minister of Labor in 1945 and openly opposed his assumption of the presidency in 1961. Not only did his radical reform agenda, staunch support of organized labor and open acceptance of communists fail to enhance national security; they seemed designed to undermine it. As Keith Gardiner notes:

...The military perceived the Brazilian political and economic system as gradually breaking down, particularly during the last two years under Goulart. The conclusion they drew was that the existing democratic and political institutions and the civilian politicians the institutions produced were not only incompetent to find acceptable solutions to national problems but that they actually helped create the political and economic chaos that breeds insurgency.⁶⁷

Regarding the relations between the armed forces and the government, Thomas

Skidmore writes:

They [the military] felt they had perfectly justifiable reasons for regarding the government as dangerously incompetent: the haphazard economic policy that held no promise of success against either inflation at home (now exceeding an annual rate of 100 percent) or the threat of payments default abroad, the recourse to exclusively statist solutions to social and economic problems (e.g. land reform), and the growing complicity with organized violence.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ L. Keith Gardiner, *The Political Implications of Modernization* (Washington, D.C., 1975), 17.

⁶⁸ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 294-5.

The growing communist influence in Brazil alarmed the military and the United States. A State Department memo from 1961 observes:

A significant consequence of Goulart's political opportunism is the favor and patronage which he has shown to Communists and suspected Communists throughout his career, in return for their political support. Almost certainly Goulart believes that the men he has appointed to key positions in his administration are personally loyal to him, but his tolerance and patronage have been affording the Communists an unprecedented opportunity to infiltrate the Federal bureaucracy.⁶⁹

The rising influence of the communists and the Communist Party belied their relatively small numbers. John W. F. Dulles estimated the 1962 strength of the pro-Moscow Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) at some 35,000 members and the smaller pro-Peking Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B) at a mere 1,000 members.⁷⁰ However, the aggressive rhetoric of the small groups of communists when combined with the rising militancy of the working class as a whole created the impression of a unified left and an impending class struggle to determine the future of Brazil. This increasing social polarization added to the ominous sense of crisis in Brazil. Urban elites feared the rising power of organized labor and the growing threat of communism. Rural elites feared the growing political and economic turmoil would lead to a peasant uprising or a social revolution. Although in reality the situation was less severe than it seemed, these fears

gripped the elites and galvanized their actions. As Rex Hudson notes in *Brazil:*

A Country Study:

The crisis had much more to do with elite fears of a mass uprising, supposedly instigated by international communism, than with the reality of social revolution. They, rather than the masses, believed the fiery rhetoric of leftist-populist politicians.⁷¹

Two issues most alarmed the rural elites: land reform and voting rights for illiterates. In November 1961, the New York Times quoted Francisco Juliao, organizer of the Peasant Leagues, as warning that if the peasants could not gain land by legal means, then they would take it by revolution.⁷² Partially in response to growing demands from his supporters on the left, Goulart proposed an agrarian reform bill in March 1963. The bill called for "expropriation of all unused private lands and the distribution of this land among rural and other workers in the region involved." Conservatives in Congress quickly "pointed out that federal and state governments already held title to two-thirds of the land surface of Brazil."⁷³ The bill subsequently died in committee, but Goulart remained undeterred by opposition and unwilling to consider distribution of government holdings, and continued to press for the redistribution of private

⁶⁹ Report From the Inter-Departmental Survey Team on Brazil to President Kennedy, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XII* (hereafter cited as FRUS, vol XII), (LBJ Library), 475.

⁷⁰ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 188.

⁷¹ Hudson, *Brazil: A Country Study*, 72.

⁷² Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 111-112.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 142, 143.

lands. Rural landowners, sensing Goulart's resolve, responded by organizing an armed resistance:

Early in 1964 conservative Mineiros also combated plans for agrarian reform. They noted a few laborers (rural and otherwise) were organizing to descend on Rio and Brasília to demand land. [Deputy] Brizola, claiming his Groups of Eleven totaled 200,000 members, was urging the peasants to prepare themselves to seize the land. A group of farm owners from the Minas city of Governador Valadares declared themselves 'fully resolved to open fire on anyone who invaded' their properties.⁷⁴

The Brazilian constitution of 1946 made illiterates and enlisted members of the armed forces ineligible to vote. The potential impact of granting voting rights to the illiterates was enormous. Some 47 percent of Brazil's population of voting age in 1962 were illiterate.⁷⁵ In rural areas, the proposed measure immediately would grant peasants a voting majority. Obviously, the rural elites vigorously opposed the plan; they had no intention of relinquishing their political control to the masses. Military officers opposed the suffrage plan as well because they viewed attempts to grant voting rights to soldiers as destructive of discipline and a threat to the military's institutional order.

Urban elites and the middle classes united in their opposition to the leftist shift of the Goulart regime and rising militancy of the workers. The middle class in Brazil identified with the elites much more than the working

⁷⁴ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 260-261.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 363.

class and their opposition to Goulart grew for two reasons. Economically, they resented the effects of spiraling inflation and prices which eroded of their standard of living. Politically, they opposed the dilution of their political power in relation to that of the working class. Growing fears of a coming class struggle also led the middle class to ally itself with the urban elites. As Bela Maday points out, "Although they [the middle class] are not a 'comfortable' segment of the population satisfied with a status quo, they do not wish any drastic changes in their mode of life."⁷⁶ Urban elites viewed the expanding economic crisis as a threat to their financial well being and future prosperity "...since this group derives a large portion of its wealth from trade and industry, it is intensely interested in economic development and stability."⁷⁷ However, the elites saw the signs of rising social conflict as a direct threat to their existence. As Thomas Skidmore notes:

They feared an irreversible coup from the top leading to a socialist regime bent upon wholesale change in the social and economic structure. In short, the economic stakes of political brinkmanship, as perceived by the propertied classes, had risen very high by 1964.⁷⁸

What role did the Brazilian military play in the increasingly polarized society of the early 1960s? During the constitutional crisis of 1961 the Brazilian

⁷⁶ Maday, et al, *Area Handbook for Brazil*, 97.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁸ Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil*, 4.

military accepted its historic role of arbiter and its position of subordination to civilian rule. Although it opposed Goulart's assumption of the presidency and forced a constitutional change to limit his powers, it remained loyal to the authority of the civilian government. By early 1964 however, circumstances had dramatically altered this relationship. What compelled the military to intervene directly in 1964 as opposed to a continuance of its traditional role of moderator?

In November 1962, General Decio Escobar succinctly stated the constitutionalist position in a speech to over thirty other generals: "Politics in the army or the army in politics is an evil that must be combated without truce. Military pressure for political and social reforms is as odious as the pressure from organized labor."⁷⁹ The growing political crisis, however, continued to undermine the military's role as moderator and to erode the legal restraints precluding direct military intervention. On September 12, 1963 some six hundred plus sergeants of the Air Force and Marines staged a rebellion in Brasilia in protest over a Supreme Court decision which denied them the ability to run for elected office. Army units stationed nearby quickly subdued the rebels. On the fourteenth, President Goulart issued a declaration that while explicitly denouncing the rebellion implicitly supported the rebel's cause.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 134.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

In October 1963, at the behest of his military ministers, Goulart requested that Congress declare a thirty-day state of siege and grant him sweeping executive powers in order "to cope with a 'serious internal commotion' that was threatening 'democratic institutions and political order.'"⁸¹ Although Goulart withdrew the request three days later amid overwhelming opposition from both the left and the right, his prestige and credibility suffered immensely. On March 13, 1964, Goulart spoke at a massive leftist rally in Rio de Janeiro, which proved to be a decisive event in his presidency. Some 150,000 workers and students attended the CGT organized rally.⁸² Goulart's speech followed that of his brother-in-law, Leonel Brizola, the radical leftist Deputy from Guanabara and former Governor of Rio Grande do Sul. Brizola implored the President to "drop the policy of conciliation and organize a strictly populist and nationalist government." He "guaranteed" that the people would support "overthrowing the present Congress and installing a Constituent Assembly with a view to creating a popular Congress, made up of laborers, peasants, sergeants, and nationalist officers, and authentic men of the people."⁸³

Goulart then spoke and used the opportunity to announce two newly signed executive decrees: the nationalization of all private oil refineries and the

⁸¹ Ibid., 149.

⁸² Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 287.

⁸³ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 270.

expropriation of all "under-utilized" properties over 1,200 acres bordering government highways or railways and those properties over seventy acres within six miles of federal dams, irrigation or drainage projects.⁸⁴ He also vowed to submit proposed constitutional amendments on agrarian reform, voting rights for illiterates and enlisted men, the legalization of the Communist Party, and the delegation of legislative powers to the Executive. Opponents and supporters alike reacted quickly to the rally; congressional opponents discussed impeachment while Goulart's supporters in the CGT threatened a general strike and the possible closing of Congress "by the people."⁸⁵ The military's response to the rally soon followed. On March 20, 1964, General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, Chief of Staff, sent a secret memorandum to other high-ranking officers and his staff outlining his views on recent events. In the letter he listed "the advent of a Constituent Assembly as a means of achieving basic reforms and the unleashing on a large scale of agitations generalized from the illegal power of the General Worker's Command (CGT)" as threats. He continued, "The ambitious Constituent Assembly is a violent revolutionary objective for the closing of the present Congress and the institution of a dictatorship." He went on to point out that:

⁸⁴ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 288-289.

⁸⁵ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 272, 273.

It is necessary here to stay always within the limits of the law; to be ready to defend legality; to be aware through the integral functioning of the three constitutional branches and through the enforcement of laws, including those that ensure the electoral process; and to be against revolution for dictatorship and Constituent Assembly, against the CGT and discrediting the historic role of the armed forces.⁸⁶

The memo sent a clear message to President Goulart: refrain from your leftist policies or forfeit your military support. However clear the message may have been, Goulart either failed to understand the severity of military displeasure or chose to ignore it.

On the night of 25 March, just over one thousand sailors and marines attended a meeting of the Associação dos Marinheiros e Fuzileiros Navais, or Sailors and Marines Association. In protest over the Admiralty's decision to imprison the organizers of the meeting, they mutinied early the following morning and locked themselves in the labor union hall in Guanabara in which the meeting had been held. Representatives of the CGT attended the meeting and assisted the rebels in their negotiations with the government. The Minister of the Navy, Sílvio Mota, attempted to forcefully end the crisis and reestablish discipline but was instead dismissed by Goulart. Inexplicably, Goulart then allowed the mutinous sailors and the CGT representatives to participate in the selection of the new Minister of the Navy. Goulart's actions accelerated the

⁸⁶ Young, *Brazil 1954-1964*, 178-179.

crisis and drove many officers into the conspiracy against him. As Alfred Stepan observed:

Among the legalistic officers, who comprised the majority of the military officers and who were reluctant to take a bold step against the constitutionally elected president, Goulart's sanctioning of indiscipline and disorder allowed the question of legalism to be reformulated. Obedience was owed to the president 'within the limits of the law.' To many officers, the president's actions now seemed to lie outside the law.⁸⁷

The situation appeared to be out of control and the very survival of the military as an institution now seemed threatened. As Wendy Hunter observes:

Developments of the early 1960s constituted a challenge to core corporate principles as well as the military's preferred political and economic order. Labor organizers' efforts to unionize enlisted men and President Goulart's pardon of mutinous sailors put in question the military's corporate preservation.⁸⁸

Therefore, the rise of technocrats in Brazilian society closely followed O'Donnell's model. Brazilian technocrats, civilian and military, grew increasingly impatient with the economic and political crises facing their society. Moreover, the rising militancy of the labor movement and the growing threat of communism alarmed the technocrats and compelled them to act.

⁸⁷ Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 131.

⁸⁸ Wendy Hunter, *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 21.

Argentina

The rise of technocrats in Argentine society followed a similar trajectory as Brazil: increasing enrollment in higher education, expanding enrollment in “technocratic” fields of study, and the emergence of professional associations or governmental organizations. Enrollment in higher education increased from an average of 24,000 during the years between 1930 and 1934 to more than 266,000 in 1967. Of those enrolled, more than 57,000 specialized in “economic sciences,” the most popular field of study.⁸⁹ Professional associations such as the *Instituto Nacional para la Tecnologia Agraria* (INTA), devoted to improvements in the agricultural sector, also demonstrated the growing influence of technocrats.⁹⁰ However, CONADE, the Argentine national planning agency, represented the most important governmental technocratic organization. In 1961, the government created CONADE to develop long-range plans for rural and industrial modernization and increased production; the organization was staffed with economists trained by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA).⁹¹

⁸⁹ Frederick P. Munson, et al, *U. S. Army Area Handbook for Argentina* (Washington, D.C., 1969), 133.

⁹⁰ Rock, *Argentina*, 337.

⁹¹ Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 115, 119.

The rising professionalism of the Argentine military mirrored the rise of technocrats in the civilian sectors of society and occurred in stages.⁹² As in Brazil, professionalization of the Armed Forces occurred first and led to an expansion of organizational focus. The first two factors enabled the military to act while the third, an expanding social and economic crisis, forced the military technocrats to intervene.

The shift to a meritocracy and the modernization of military education provides two examples of increasing professionalism.⁹³ Merit based selection and promotion meant that only the most qualified officers would achieve high rank. Officer career progression changed to include several levels of advanced technical education. Together, these improvements created new military elites who represented the best and brightest in their field.

In the early 1960s, as the perceived need for modernization increased, these new elites began to expand their horizons. The focus of the military grew to include not only a concern for internal reorganization, but also the need to look beyond its previous limits. The *Comisión Especial de la Restructuración del Ejército* (CERE) began in 1963 and recommended several changes to the internal organization of the army. Expanded curriculums in military schools and

⁹² Gino Germani, *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism* (New Brunswick, 1978), 69.

⁹³ Alain Roquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America* (Berkeley, 1982), 101-102, 143.

the establishment of a new staff-planning department enlarged the military's area of concern into sectors formerly outside their purview. The curriculum of the senior level Army courses at the Center of Higher Studies, revised in 1964, required colonels to undertake research on such topics as the Southern Cone, relations between the Army and its national community and even world economic problems.⁹⁴ Part of the CERE reorganization efforts called for the establishment of a long-range planning cell following the example of the U.S. Army. Known as *Jefatura VI*, this new element conducted research and planning at the national level. However, friction between civilian bureaucrats and military planners soon developed. Staff officers requesting detailed information from Illia's ministries in order to formulate their plans in support of national objectives met with substantial resistance. Illia and his associates considered the requests an attempt to plan for future military governments.⁹⁵ Ministerial intransigence failed to deter the military planners; they simply determined their own national objectives. The lack of coherent plans for national development, however, seemed to validate the military's lack of confidence in the abilities of the Illia government.

America, in the form of its Military Assistance Program (MAP), also influenced the Argentine Army. As Alain Rouquié notes in *The Military and the*

⁹⁴ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 131-132.

State in Latin America: "The programs of military aid helped to reinforce the institutional confidence of the officers and to increase their consciousness that they possessed technical and organizational capacities that were superior to those of the civilians." Technocrats influenced Argentine society in numerous areas. However, their reaction to the increasing social and economic crises generated the most profound impact. Military dissatisfaction with the Illia regime began early and worsened as perceptions of weakness and partisanship increased. Initially, this opposition centered on policies related to the military involving critical resources and its historical role of political arbiter. In the latter stages of the Illia regime, the level of these concerns grew in response to the resurgence of Peronism and increasing social polarization.

Military commanders, trained to consider economic policy in terms of national security, viewed Illia's cancellation of foreign oil contracts in 1963 as increasing the country's reliance on foreign sources of oil production. The government's inability to control inflation continued to cause grave concern to military leaders as it reduced their ability to purchase foreign arms and supplies even as it fueled rising social tensions. However, labor relations and fears of the resurgence of Peronism caused the greatest conflict in civil-military relations.⁹⁶ The military viewed the government's repeated failure to enforce its own wage

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 131.

policies, numerous capitulations to union demands, and attempts to reintegrate the Peronists as being soft on Peronism, thereby heightening military apprehension. Although strikes and demonstration actually decreased in frequency and size from 1963 to 1965, their very existence troubled military leaders.⁹⁷ Many military officers equated the Peronists with the radical left and Cuban communism. While the Argentine Communist Party did boast some 60,000-65,000 members in 1965, it exerted very little influence.⁹⁸ Despite this, the perception of communist power remained strong. The factory seizures in the summer of 1964 strained the patience of military leaders. The specter of a full-scale revolution lurked just behind the scenes. The final break came with the Peronist party victories in the 1965 elections. The Peronists gained 35 seats in the Chamber of Deputies; the only net gain of any political group. The UCRP lost 2 seats but retained 70 of the 192 total. The Peronists now held 52 seats, second only to the UCRP. Due to the fragmented nature of Argentine politics the remaining seats were scattered among some ten other parties. The 96 seat to be contested in the 1967 election added to the uncertainty. These gains galvanized

⁹⁶ Ibid., 126, 137.

⁹⁷ Frederick C. Turner and José Enrique Miguens, eds., *Perón and the Reshaping of Argentina* (Pittsburgh, 1983), 41.

⁹⁸ Report, National Intelligence Estimate 91-65; Argentina, National Security Files (hereafter cited as NSF), National Intelligence Estimates (hereafter cited as NIE), Box 9, File 91 (LBJ Library), 8.

military opinion in opposition to Illia and set in motion planning for the coup.⁹⁹ The startling resurgence of Peronism, by both legal and extra-legal means, spelled disaster for Illia's ability to serve out his term. The vast improvements in the professionalism of the military convinced many, in and out of uniform, that the generals possessed the requisite skills to lead the country more effectively than the Illia government. However, despite numerous strains and mounting evidence of the failures of Illia's government their loyalty to the constitution held them in check until 1966.

How did the military view its role vis-à-vis the constitution and what changed in 1966 to cause them to abandon it and seize the reigns of power? In August 1964, General Onganía, then serving as Army Commander-in-Chief, delivered a speech at the Fifth Conference of the American Armies at West Point, New York. In outlining his view of the military's relation to elected governments he stated:

It would be criminal for the armed forces to destroy the constitutional order in our country because of the government's errors in administering state affairs, no matter how serious they may appear. In a democracy, the only remedy for mistakes made by government leaders is through the votes of those who disagree.... As long as a government, no matter how inept, acts in conformity to the general principles contained in the Constitution, they [the armed forces] will have to support its authority.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Wynia, *The Postwar Era*, 127; Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration* (Cambridge, 1988), 183-184.

¹⁰⁰ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 133.

The situation in early 1966 differed dramatically. Cracks in the military's subordination to the constitutional government began to first appear in individual officers in late 1964. General Julio Alsogaray suggested to General Onganía that the army should begin to consider the idea of coup when he observed "it is not possible to start looking for cabinet ministers at dawn."¹⁰¹ General Onganía disagreed, and although he rebuked Alsogaray for breaching the topic, it is clear that at least some in the military began to look beyond the Illia government and the constitution to find solutions to the country's problems. These cracks continued to widen. By 1965, the military's disappointment in Illia's economic policies and their concern over his handling of the Peronists accelerated. Elites, dissatisfied by economic stagnation and their political exclusion, increased their pressure on the military to force changes. As Gary Wynia observed in *Argentina in the Postwar Era*:

...Argentina's insecure democratic presidents consistently turned a deaf ear to their (interest-group leaders) pleas for institutionalized access to the executive. This in part explains why many interest-group leaders supported the military coups that removed elected officials in 1962 and 1966. If they could not get elected presidents to listen to them, they were willing to give military leaders a try.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 135.

¹⁰² Wynia, *The Postwar Era*, 135.

The resurgent Peronists also continued to apply significant pressure on the military through their ongoing campaign to challenge the authority of the government. As the cracks grew to chasms, General Onganía relented and in April 1965 directed several members of the General Staff to make contact with "various civilian sectors" so that in the event of a "power vacuum" the military would have the information necessary to take charge.¹⁰³ In November 1965 General Onganía retired due to a perceived slight from Illia regarding the appointment of Brigadier General Eduardo Castro Sánchez, a subordinate of Onganía, to the position of Secretary of the Army. The pro-coup forces gathered momentum after General Onganía's retirement. In early April 1966, Secretary of the Army General Castro Sánchez and Undersecretary of the Army General Manuel Laprida issued a communiqué attempting to prevent a coup. The communiqué not only stressed military loyalty and subordination to the Constitution and warned those sectors of society in opposition to Illia against seeking a coup, but also listed the problems facing the country. Problems cited included: "the economic problems, the damage of all kinds done by the strikes, the atmosphere of disbelief and suspicion, and acts which produce deterioration of, and disbelief in the institutions of the Republic."¹⁰⁴ Although the communiqué succeeded in postponing a coup it could not prevent one. When

¹⁰³ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 147.

President Illia refused the use of force to prevent a coup, "the fate of that government was sealed at that moment."¹⁰⁵ On the morning of June 28, 1966, the intransigence of the Illia government, combined with the vigorous efforts of its opponents to undermine the government's credibility, finally exceeded the limits of military tolerance.

Obviously Dr. Illia greatly underestimated the political costs of his policies of short-term economic revival. By creating an administration comprised solely of members of the UCRP, he not only eliminated the possibility of creating broad based political support for his policies, he also ensured that political expedience would continue to be valued over national interest. Increasing industrialization brought with it the winds of change. These winds, in the form of the three factors of the B-A model, created severe pressures on the Illia government. Were other factors also at work to bring about the Onganía coup and its subsequent attempt to install a B-A regime? If additional factors did exist, what role did they play and did they contribute to Illia's downfall or serve to support his government and discourage its overthrow?

The polarization of society combined with a "spoils to the victor" system of government distribution meant that competing groups rarely cooperated to the

¹⁰⁴ *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 3, 1966.

benefit of society as a whole. Cooperation normally only occurred through one of two methods: the formation of "coup coalitions" to overthrow the existing regime or forced cooperation imposed by authoritarian governments. Deep division existed in Argentine society in the 1960s. A traditional "ruling elite" did not exist. Instead, the elites in Argentina fragmented into two main groups: rural/agricultural and urban/industrial. Division in the middle class also existed. Various political parties represented the middle class in the early 1960s, from the UCRP to the UCRI and beyond. The working class, united by Juan Perón, maintained most of their coherence under the banner of the Peronist party but stood in opposition to the other sectors of the country. The military in Argentina had only recently reconsolidated after an internal crisis of power between anti-Peronist "azules" and the "colorado" factions which supported the political reintegration of the Peronists. Historically these social groups joined forces and formed coalitions to control the country either through constitutional or extra-constitutional means. As a result, the normal state of politics became those of exclusion directed against one or more of the other competing sectors of society with the distribution of benefits determined by the group in power.

In this light, the Argentine fears of a resurgent Peronist movement took on added significance. Erosion of traditional U.S. opposition to the overthrow of an

¹⁰⁵ Potash, *The Army and Politics*, 171.

elected regime resulted; although formal diplomatic ties were suspended on June 28, 1966, the U.S. recognized the new Onganía government two weeks later on July 15.¹⁰⁶ Any Argentine fears of a negative U.S. reaction to the coup were unfounded if they existed at all.

¹⁰⁶ Statement issued by the Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1966* (Washington, D.C., 1969), 290; Note delivered to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ibid.*, 297.

CHAPTER 8. INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION

Cuban threat

The volatile international situation in the 1960s also played an important role in the fall of these democratic regimes. The Cuban revolution of 1959 brought the cold war to the shores of Latin America. During that struggle, the revolutionary forces destroyed the national army and a mass exodus of elites and the middle class soon followed. In February 1962, Fidel Castro called for armed revolution throughout Latin America. His declaration that “the duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution” set in motion Cuba’s subsequent attempts to “export” revolution.¹⁰⁷ The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 only served to heighten US fears of communism in the hemisphere and cemented US resolve to prevent further communist expansion.

The fear of communist revolution spread rapidly throughout Latin America and had a profound impact on elites and the military in Brazil and Argentina. In both nations these groups clearly realized what the effects of a communist revolution would be; their fears of imprisonment, exile or death caused immediate and forceful resistance to any signs of communist influence. US foreign policy reinforced these fears of communist aggression. An internal

¹⁰⁷ John M. del Aguila, *Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution* (Boulder, 1984), 111.

State Department memo to President Johnson in 1964 succinctly stated US foreign policy in Latin America during the 1960s:

Latin America has long been considered a target for Castro-communist subversion. Because of the unstable political institutions, enormous social differences, and retarded economic growth in these countries, many groups in their societies feel isolated from the main currents of national development, and are easy prey to Castro-communist propaganda and organizers... Prevention of any further expansion of communist influence and power within the Western Hemisphere is a major requirement of United States security. Any such expansion would not only greatly undermine the physical security of the United States, but would place the United States' position in all other areas of Latin America in jeopardy and would adversely affect our power and influence in other areas of the world which are vital to U.S. security.¹⁰⁸

Castro's actions reinforced these fears; in August 1961, during the constitutional crisis following the resignation of Jânio Quadros, Castro advised Brazilians to "wage guerrilla warfare against 'reactionary militarists' who, he charged, were responsible for forcing Quadros out of office."¹⁰⁹ In late 1963, Peruvian authorities investigating the wreckage of a Brazilian airliner discovered several letters that were "correspondence between persons in Brazil and persons in Cuba with respect to training for the Peasant Leagues in the Northeast of Brazil to take over lands." Jordan Young, in *Brazil: 1954-1964*, goes on to observe that "they

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum from the Administrator of the Agency for International Development to President Johnson, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume IX* (hereafter cited as FRUS, vol. IX), (LBJ Library) 11-12.

¹⁰⁹ Young, *Brazil: 1954-1964*, 104.

[the letters] do indicate Cuban interest in promoting and financing of what was intended to be guerrilla training in Brazil.”¹¹⁰

US Foreign Policy

What effect did the foreign policy of the United States have on the rise of Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regimes in Brazil and Argentina? Did the United States assist the Armed Forces in deposing their elected governments, actively oppose military intervention, or merely grant tacit approval? Throughout the late 1960s the “Domino Theory” and the rhetoric of United States’ anti-communism was put to the test in Vietnam. U.S. foreign policy in this era focused on containment in Asia and prevention in Latin America. Already fighting a costly war in Vietnam, the U.S. sought to prevent the conditions that would allow a communist takeover anywhere in Latin America. Moreover, the U.S. transmitted this concern and the tenets of its policy to the militaries of the region. As the Administrative History of the Department of State notes:

As President Johnson assumed office in November 1963, the Brazilian economy and internal political situation were deteriorating in an atmosphere of recurrent crises and growing social and labor unrest. Ultra-nationalists and extreme leftists were increasingly dominating government, labor, student and other sectors -- with the cooperation of President João Goulart. The United States was concerned over the leftward swing of the Goulart government and its inability to cope with serious economic, social, and political problems. With Brazil in near-

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 156.

chaos, Goulart appeared to be unwilling to focus on any except the most narrowly political problems, leading many Brazilian observers to conclude that he intended to seize authoritarian power.¹¹¹

The Brazilian military recognized the threat and seemed to agree with the assessment of the United States, as Alfred Stepan notes:

By early 1964, through the prism of internal-warfare doctrines of the new professionalism, a substantial part of the Brazilian military establishment perceived the rising strike levels, the inflation rate of over 75 percent, the declining economy, the demands of the Left for a constituent assembly, and the growing indiscipline of the enlisted men as signs that Brazil was entering a stage of subversive warfare.¹¹²

Unwilling to arouse nationalist sentiment for fear of undermining a coup attempt, the U. S. adopted a cautious, hands-off policy; tacit approval was given for a coup, but little visible support was to be shown. An internal U. S. government report to President Kennedy in November 1962 advised:

The United States should also intensify its intelligence concerning, and unobtrusively maintain contact with, any military and political elements of a potential and more friendly alternative regime, and should be prepared to act promptly and effectively in support of such a regime, in case the impending financial crisis or some other eventuality should result in the displacement of Goulart.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Report, Bilateral Relations and Special Problems, Section F, Brazil, *Administrative History of the Department of State*, Volume 1, Box 2, Chapter 6, (LBJ Library), 1-2.

¹¹² Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil*, 57-58.

¹¹³ Report From the Inter-Departmental Survey Team on Brazil to President Kennedy, *FRUS*, vol XII, (LBJ Library), 475-476.

However, in preparation for the possibility that a coup attempt might flounder and require more direct U. S. assistance to be successful, the Pentagon dispatched a U. S. Navy aircraft carrier task group to the "ocean area vicinity Santos, Brazil" on March 31, 1964, at the request of Ambassador Lincoln Gordon. The orders stated: "the purpose of the carrier task group is to establish a U. S. presence in this area when so directed and to be prepared to carry out tasks as may be assigned."¹¹⁴ After the Brazilian military successfully carried out the coup, the U. S. quickly adopted the position that no breach of constitutionality had occurred; Goulart had simply abandoned the presidency. Federal Deputy Ranieri Mazzilli, was sworn in April 2, 1964. Official U. S. recognition of the new administration followed later that same day in the form of a congratulatory letter from President Johnson. The letter "stressed the President's good wishes, the admiration of the American people for the resolute will of the Brazilian people to resolve their difficulties in a framework of democracy, and hopes for strengthening of US-Brazilian cooperation."¹¹⁵ On April 3, 1964, new orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff released the carrier task group from their contingency operations off the Brazilian coast.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Memo From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Command, dated March 31, 1964, NSF, Country File, Box 9, Cables, Vol. II, (LBJ Library), 1.

¹¹⁵ Report, Bilateral Relations and Special Problems, Section F, Brazil, *Administrative History of the Department of State*, Volume 1, Box 2, Chapter 6, (LBJ Library), 2-4.

¹¹⁶ Memo From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Command, dated April 3, 1964, NSF, Country File, Box 9, Cables, Vol. II, (LBJ Library), 1.

Regional Demonstration Effects

Brazil

For the elites and the military in Brazil, the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 and the Cuban Revolution of 1959 served as dramatic examples of the dangers of social unrest. Numerous results of the revolution in neighboring Bolivia mirrored leftist demands facing Brazil in the 1960s: voting rights for illiterates, land reform, and the destruction of the national military. Leaders of the rebellious *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) quickly granted full voting rights to all persons regardless of literacy or property requirements. The measure would drastically change the composition of the national electorate, increasing the number of eligible voters from some 200,000 to nearly 1,000,000. Land reform initiatives in post-revolutionary Bolivia expropriated the estates of traditional landholders and redistributed their properties to the Indian peasants. The MNR government compensated the affected landholders not in cash but in twenty-five year government bonds based on declared property tax values (which were normally much lower than actual values). When combined with the drastic reorganization of the electorate, the land reforms effectively eliminated the power of the oligarchy. Brazilian officers in the 1960s also undoubtedly understood the lessons of the Bolivian Revolution. Massive purges of the officer corps and drastic reductions in the military budget and force structure following

the Bolivian Army's surrender to the rebels effectively destroyed the pre-existing military institutions. Additionally, the new regime closed the Bolivian Military Academy and required that officers swear their allegiance to the MNR Party.¹¹⁷ In Cuba, the fall of the Batista regime on January 1st, 1959 triggered the disintegration of the Cuban National Army and led to an exodus of elites and the middle class. Over time, a fundamental reorganization of Cuban society occurred, this reorganization included the destruction of the preexisting political power structures, a large-scale redistribution of private land, a systematic reorganization of the structure of wealth, and finally, a turn to communism. The lessons of the revolutions in Bolivia and Cuba were not lost on the elites and military officers of Brazil; they feared a popular uprising that would eliminate their long held positions of power and influence, and in April 1964, they moved to eliminate that possibility.

Argentina

Inter-regional demonstration effects also influenced the Argentinean Armed Forces' decision to overthrow the Illia regime. The 1964 military coup in Brazil did not go unnoticed by their counterparts across the *Rio de La Plata*.

When Brazilian officers deposed populist president João Goulart and embarked

¹¹⁷ Rex A. Hudson and Dennis M. Hanratty, eds., *Bolivia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C., 1991), 35.

on a reformation of society to correct what they perceived as years of subversive and self-serving political corruption, many officers in Argentina sympathized with their frustrations. The U.S. regarded the Goulart regime as soft on communism and tacitly supported its overthrow. Although the regime did not achieve rapid economic success, it began the process of economic growth through the proscription of political parties (and thus the elimination of political infighting) and the imposition of a single national plan for development. By 1966, the Brazilian military's campaign to reorganize society and restructure the economy was well under way.¹¹⁸ Argentina did not ignore the activities of its major regional rival; many technocrats observed the regime in Brazil with envy and considered the reorganization of their own society desirable and necessary. The Dominican Crisis of 1965 provided the second major external factor contributing to the overthrow of the Illia regime. Instead of inspiring emulation like the coup in Brazil, the Dominican Crisis caused the Argentine military acute embarrassment and exacerbated tension between the Army and the government. On April 28, 1965, some one thousand U.S. Marines landed in Santo Domingo in response to a disintegrating political situation tantamount to civil war. Originally a unilateral U.S. intervention, the Organization of American States

¹¹⁸ Wynia, *The Postwar Era*, 173.

(OAS) voted on May 6th to establish an Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF).¹¹⁹

The Argentine Foreign Minister voted in support of the measure, which the military naturally assumed meant sending troops to serve in the IAPF if not actually commanding the force. Once again problems quickly began to appear.

On May 14, the military high command sent a memo to Illia outlining the urgent need to send forces to the Dominican Republic. Illia refused due in large part to widespread resistance in the Chamber of Deputies, which recently condemned the U.S. intervention and proposed that Congress must first ratify any troop deployments. The military viewed the Dominican Republic as being in imminent danger of communist take-over and felt it their duty to fight to prevent such a take-over from happening.¹²⁰ Thus government hesitancy further convinced the military that the Illia government was "soft on communism."¹²¹ The subsequent naming of a Brazilian general to lead the IAPF while Argentina waffled on the issue of sending forces added professional embarrassment to the growing list of military grievances. Thus affairs outside Argentina did little to strengthen Illia's government; instead external events added impetus to the growing calls for a military "veto" of the Illia regime.

¹¹⁹ Report, Inter-American Relations, Section E, The Dominican Republic. *Administrative History of the Department of State*, Volume 1, Box 2, Chapter 6, (LBJ Library). 40.

¹²⁰ RRP, May 21, 1965, 245.

¹²¹ *The Economist*, August 1966, 2; RRP, July, 12, 1965, 19.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSIONS

Brazil

Political institutions

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the social, economic, and political precursors to the overthrow of the Goulart regime in Brazil? Did governmental and political structures lack the resiliency and durability necessary to survive? Did these structural deficiencies contribute to the rise of an authoritarian regime? The weaknesses inherent in Brazilian democratic institutions meant that any elected regime held a tenuous grip on power. An overly powerful executive created a "spoils to the victor" political mentality. The highly fragmented political parties vied to win the office of president, not to control the destiny of the nation, but to distribute the benefits of patronage and policy to their constituency. Additionally, due to the conflictive nature of Brazilian politics and the necessity of implementing unpopular economic policies, President Goulart sought additional executive powers to deal with the growing crises. These extra-constitutional efforts (the state of siege request and calls for a constituent assembly) eroded national commitment to finding democratic solutions. An excessively autonomous military with a long history of political intervention further undermined the stability of democracy in Brazil. Finally, a President lacking a strong popular mandate who tried to build

support among one interest group at the expense of all others did little to strengthen an already fragile commitment to democracy in Brazil. By early 1964, all sectors of society sought extra-constitutional means to solve the national crisis. Goulart and the leftists pursued a policy of executive decrees, sought the elimination of the Congress, and called for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The elites and the military responded with a coup d'état.

Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model

If weak institutions made for a fragile democracy in Brazil, what effect did the tenets of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model have?

Each tenet of the B-A model did occur in Brazil prior to the coup as demonstrated above, although in varying degrees. Brazil experienced a very intense economic crisis in the early 1960s. The economic problems associated with the second stage of Import Substitution Industrialization severely afflicted Brazil and caused spiraling inflation, large government budget deficits, and chronic balance of payment problems. The effects of ISI polarized society; in an era of increasing competition, each sector sought to preserve its slice of the national pie at the expense of the other sectors. Thus ISI, and the corresponding economic crisis, greatly contributed to the instability of the Goulart regime. The ISI related crisis created the conditions for radical political change. The activation of the working class in Brazil had less impact because the process was

incomplete at the time of Goulart's overthrow. The working class in Brazil never achieved full national recognition of its power and subsequent attempts to suppress that power, as predicted by the B-A model, did not occur. This class activation did, however, significantly influence the policies of João Goulart. Lacking broad political endorsement, Goulart turned to his traditional supporters, the working class and the left, to provide a political foundation. However, in order to achieve stability he first needed to complete the process of working class activation and create a unified political base. The leadership of the CGT, who also coveted the power of a unified working class block, sought to limit Goulart's influence over the workers and impeded his efforts in this area. Both the CGT and left demanded concessions from Goulart in return for political support. For Goulart, who generally acquiesced to these demands, the cost was the growing alienation of the traditional power holders in Brazil: the elites and the military. Goulart failed to create a political base of sufficient size and power to complete his quasi-social revolution before his ouster in 1964. The rise of technocrats in Brazil closely followed O'Donnell's model; the growth of "technocratic enclaves" in government and the military served as a focal point for the rising opposition to the economic and social crises affecting the country. The increasing expertise of the civilian and military technocrats convinced them that not only could technocrats rule more effectively than the politicians could,

but that those same politicians were to blame for creating the crises.

Additionally, the development of the national security doctrine convinced many military officers that the government's actions (and inaction) contributed to the rising specter of subversive warfare. The new doctrine of national security viewed the growing social unrest and economic crisis not as legitimate political expression or valid government policy, but the initial warning signs of insurgent warfare. The situation, and their constitutional duty, demanded they act to save the nation.

International Political Situation

Thus all tenets of the B-A model occurred in Brazil, but what of the external factors of demonstration effects, the Cold War and the Cuban Revolution, and United States foreign policy? Would an authoritarian regime have arisen in Brazil without these factors, or did they contribute to the fall of Goulart and help to determine the type of regime that would follow?

Inherently weak democratic institutions, combined with chronic social and economic crises meant that a regime change in Brazil was quite likely. However, the growing threat of Communism, the development of the doctrine of national security, and the effects of inter-regional events meant that the new regime would be very different than those that preceded it. The inter-regional demonstration effects of the social revolutions in Bolivia and Cuba alarmed

elites and the military in Brazil; the threat of leftist revolution loomed large on the horizon. Moreover, both groups well understood that if any social revolution occurred in Brazil, they faced elimination, imprisonment or exile. Fidel Castro's attempts to "export revolution" to Brazil, the discovery of links between Cuban advisors and the Peasant Leagues in Northeastern Brazil, and the calls for Brazilians to "wage guerilla warfare" all served to validate the fears of elites and the military. U.S. foreign policy did little to defuse the situation; in fact, the U.S. response to the growing crisis was to advocate (at least tacitly) the overthrow of Goulart and to prepare to militarily support the insurgents if needed. Therefore, we can conclude that external factors did contribute to overthrow of João Goulart and helped to determine the type of regime that would replace him.

Argentina

What then of Argentina two years later? Does the Bureaucratic Authoritarian model fully explain the causes of the demise of the Illia government, or did weak institutions and external factors contribute to his downfall and influence the type of political organization that replaced him?

Political Institutions

As was the case in Brazil, weak political institutions undermined the stability of the elected government. Excessive executive powers, fragmented political parties, and a powerful autonomous military combined to weaken the national commitment to democracy. A system of “presidential patronage” also existed in Argentina and led to a “winner-takes-all” mentality. Therefore, party competition did not center on issues or ideals, but rather on control of the executive branch for the distribution of national wealth. Moreover, opposition parties sought to actively undermine the government in hopes of upsetting the status quo in their favor. President Illia’s narrow electoral victory and subsequent exclusion of opposing interests and parties exacerbated the situation. The military’s historic willingness to intervene in national politics also undermined the stability of democratic institutions. As each group sought to protect its own interests at the expense of others, they unwittingly combined forces to destabilize the system they sought to control.

B-A Model

What were the effects of the three tenets of the B-A model on this unstable democracy?

As the Illia government continued to pursue industrialization in the face of severe economic problems, social and political resistance grew. All factors of the B-A model occurred in Argentina. Attempts to pursue the second stage of ISI caused serious economic problems, including rising inflation and cost of living, a balance of payment crisis, and growing government debt. The resulting economic crisis created a zero-sum condition; the government was unable to meet the needs, much less the desires, of competing social and political groups. Sectarianism, in attempting to extract the maximum economic benefit from the government regardless of the cost to other groups, fueled the increasing political crisis. However, those who were best able to influence or coerce the government into meeting their needs suffered less than other groups. The activation of the Argentine working class under Juan Perón, and subsequent attempts to suppress its influence, added to the crisis. As Illia increasingly turned to the working class and the left for political support, they continued to expand their demands and oppose his policies. Illia became fixated on capturing the fleeting support of the working class to save his regime. Illia's credibility and power declined correspondingly. The more he turned to the left for support and acquiesced to

their demands, the more he was perceived as weak and soft on communism, thus increasing the alienation of the elites and the military. As the perceived severity of the economic crisis grew, the political effect was a continuous erosion of confidence in the Illia regime that undermined its ability to function. The power of the Illia government declined in relation to the other sectors of Argentine society. Each group convinced itself of two things: that the Illia regime lacked legitimacy and that adherence to democratic principles was less important than their economic and political needs. The growing competence and confidence of the new class of technocrats convinced them that not only was the government to blame for the political and economic crises, but that they had acquired the requisite skills to rule more effectively. The resulting lack of confidence in democracy and the skewed democratic tradition that viewed coup d'état as legitimate political action set the stage for the eventual failure of the Illia regime. Moreover, the tenets of the national security doctrine convinced many elites and military officers that the crises were in fact threats to national survival. The economic and political crises compelled the technocrats to act; the national security doctrine made action a constitutional obligation.

International Political Situation

Thus, as in Brazil, all tenets of the B-A model did occur, but what of the external factors? Would an authoritarian regime have arisen in Argentina in the absence of the cold war and the demonstration effects of the Brazilian coup and the Dominican Crisis, or did they help to determine the type of regime that would follow?

Again, as in Brazil, inherently weak democratic institutions, combined with chronic social and economic crises meant that a regime change in Argentina would most likely occur. However, the cold war, U.S. foreign policy, the Brazilian coup and the Dominican Crisis all added impetus to the rise of an authoritarian regime. The cold war polarized Argentina just as it had the rest of the world. Many in the Armed Forces equated the Peronist Party with Cuban communism and thus Illia's attempts to legitimize and placate the Peronists alarmed the military. Furthermore, the factory seizures in 1964 raised the specter of social revolution. Viewed through the prism of the national security doctrine, the threat appeared very real indeed. U.S. foreign policy stressed the potential of Castro-communist subversion and stated the unequivocal U.S. opposition to communist expansion in Latin America; thus reinforcing the premise of the national security doctrine. The Brazilian coup was envied by many Argentine elites and military officers; the forceful end of destructive political bickering and

the imposition of a single, coherent plan for national development seemed to be exactly what Argentina lacked. The Dominican Crisis added impetus to calls for Illia's overthrow; government reluctance to send forces to the aid of a neighboring democracy facing communist overthrow provided another example of the regime's soft stance toward communism. Moreover, the accompanying professional embarrassment increased military dissatisfaction with the regime.

Expanded B-A model

Therefore, external factors both contributed to the downfall of the Goulart and Illia governments and helped to determine the nature of the regimes that replaced them. Thus, the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model is at once both valid and insufficient. The expanded B-A model provides an improved framework to explain the downfall of the elected governments of Brazil and Argentina and allows for the effects of additional, external determinants on the subsequent rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarian regimes. To summarize the expanded B-A model:

- the strength of democratic institutions (role of the executive, political party system, and military autonomy)
- the end of the “easy” phase of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)
- the “activation” of the popular sector
- the rise of technocrats
- the effect of external influences (the cold war, U.S. foreign policy, and inter-regional demonstration effects)

CHAPTER 10. VENEZUELA

Again using the expanded B-A model, what conclusions can be drawn from the negative-case of Venezuela? Did the tenets of the model occur in Venezuela, and if so why did a Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regime not emerge? If crucial elements of the model did not occur in Venezuela, why did they not occur and was their mere absence sufficient to prevent the development of an authoritarian regime or were other factors at work?

Numerous similarities link Venezuela to Brazil and Argentina, although significant economic and developmental differences exist. Like most other nations of Latin America, Venezuela experienced long periods of *caudillo* rule. Venezuelan history is replete with instances of varying degrees of military intervention in politics and periods of outright military rule, much like its neighbors to the south. However, unlike Argentina and Brazil, populism did not occur in Venezuela. All three countries struggled with the difficulties inherent in transitioning from agrarian based societies to industrialized societies yet, Venezuela and Argentina consistently maintained the highest per capita Gross Domestic Product levels in Latin America.¹²² Yet, Argentina's economy relied on manufacturing and agriculture, whereas petroleum exports almost exclusively

¹²² Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy, Volume 2: The Case of Latin America* (Baltimore, 1994), 324.

drove the Venezuela economy. Although substantive differences exist between the cases under examination, important lessons can be drawn by comparing the case of Venezuela in 1960s to those of Brazil and Argentina. What was the composition and strength of the institutions of democracy that existed in Venezuela during this period?

Political Institutions

All three nations shared unbalanced constitutional systems that allocated a disproportionate share of the distributive functions of the state to the executive branch. The Venezuelan Constitution of 1961 did not signify a radical departure from previous political institutions; in fact, it marked the nation's twenty-second constitution since 1830.¹²³ Like those of Brazil and Argentina, the Venezuelan Constitution established a federal state with the traditional three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. The Constitution specifies the direct election of the President and the members of the bi-cameral Congress. The President, who is elected to a five year term, must be a native Venezuelan over thirty years old and cannot be a member of the clergy. Additionally, the President is ineligible for a second term of office and may not run for reelection within ten years. The President also serves as Commander in Chief of the Armed

¹²³ David E. Blank, *Politics in Venezuela* (Boston, 1973), 1.

Forces.¹²⁴ As in Brazil and Argentina, the Venezuelan Constitution cedes enormous power to the executive branch and creates a presidential patronage system that drives competition over the distribution of state resources. In discussing presidential powers, Terry Karl notes in *The Paradox of Plenty*: “This central element of politics [is] the undisputed authority of the chief executive in determining the final allocation of revenues...” She goes on to add that:

Rather than symbolize military conquest, national glory, cultural superiority, or territorial expansion, the Venezuelan State came to be viewed primarily as an enormous distributive apparatus, a huge milk cow that benefited those who were able to suckle at her teats.¹²⁵

In contrast to Argentina and Brazil where numerous fragmented parties served to weaken democracy, the political parties in Venezuela not only strengthened democracy, in large measure they created democracy. No political parties existed in Venezuela before 1935.¹²⁶ However, soon afterwards the process of organizing large segments of society began. *Acción Democrática* formed in 1941 and developed into a mass political organization vertically integrated from neighborhood to national level and horizontally integrated across functional groups from labor to students to professionals.¹²⁷ AD also promoted

¹²⁴ Wendell Blanchard, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Venezuela* (Washington, D.C., 1964), 239-240, 248-249.

¹²⁵ Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty; Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley, 1997), 90-91.

¹²⁶ Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 87.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

the mobilization of workers and peasants and the formation of unions. By the middle 1940s, *Acción Democrática* became an organization of national scope. After AD's consolidation of power following the 1945 coup, several new parties formed. These parties represented both the right under *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (COPEI) or the Christian Democrats, and on the non-communist left under *Unión Republicana Democrática* (URD).

Although initially weaker than AD, these parties expanded their constituencies and together coalesced into a stable multi-party system that penetrated all sectors of society. As opposed to the weak and fragmented party systems in Brazil and Argentina, Venezuelan political parties wielded enormous strength and represented distinctive political viewpoints. Moreover, their shared experiences of repression and exile during the harsh dictatorship following the *trienio* (1945-1948) fostered a sense that only through compromise and consensus could democracy survive. In October, 1958, AD, COPEI, and URD formalized the new "rules of the game" in an agreement known as the Pact of Punto Fijo. The pact established a coalition government and served as the foundation of democratic institutions. Although superceded by the Constitution of 1961, the Pact of Punto Fijo firmly established many of the principles that allowed democracy to survive in Venezuela. As Daniel Levine notes:

The most striking feature of Venezuelan politics after 1958 is the conscious, explicit decision of political elites to reduce interparty

tension and violence, accentuate common interests and procedures, and remove, insofar as possible, issues of survival and legitimacy from the political scene.¹²⁸

By the eliminating the historic pattern of excluding opposition parties while in office or even threatening their survival, as well as removing the “spoils-to-the-victor” or “winner-takes-all” mind set from politics, destructive interparty competition was greatly reduced. Additionally, mass organization and horizontal integration enabled the parties to mitigate inter-class struggles and limit destabilizing political conflict. Class struggles and political conflict still occurred, but they now occurred *within* the party structure, thus internalizing conflicts and strengthening democracy.

The political role of the military in Venezuela mirrors that of other Latin American nations. The Armed Forces, and in particular the Army, viewed themselves as the “decisive arbiters” of national politics.¹²⁹ However, the military dictatorship from 1948 to 1958, and especially the harsh authoritarianism and severe repression under the regime of Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1952-1958), served to greatly diminish the legitimacy of the Armed Forces. Although the excesses of the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship had weakened their political influence, the military still constituted a powerful segment of society and the most serious threat to democracy. In order to alleviate the threat

¹²⁸ Ibid., 93.

of military revolt, Rómulo Betancourt co-opted the military through generous pay raises, improved standards of living, and increased academic and training standards. Betancourt also enhanced civilian control of the military by including military leaders in discussions regarding national security and military affairs, but also by denying them a voice in purely political matters.¹³⁰ Rather than pursue an adversarial and confrontational relationship with the military like João Goulart or Arturo Illia, Betancourt chose a strategy of inclusion and co-option.

Therefore, all three countries shared similar constitutional structures. However, the nature and role of political parties in Venezuela was significantly different than those in Brazil or Argentina. Rather than undermining democracy by advocating radical social change or escalating political and social conflict, parties in Venezuela mediated social conflict and pursued cooperation and incremental change. The role of the military in Venezuela again reflected those of the militaries of Brazil and Argentina, but it was partially constrained internally by its own diminished legitimacy and externally by its economic subordination to civilian control. Rómulo Betancourt formed his government on a seemingly solid democratic foundation; his counterparts south of the south did not have that advantage.

¹²⁹ Haggerty, ed., *Venezuela: A Country Study*, 155.

¹³⁰ Judith Ewell, *Venezuela, A Century of Change* (Stanford, 1984), 131.

BA Model

What was the social and economic situation in Venezuela in the early 1960s? In what way did socio-economic factors contribute to the successful implementation of democracy?

Import Substitution Industrialization

The severity of the political and economic effects of Import Substitution Industrialization in Venezuela proved to be much less severe than in Brazil or Argentina. The B-A model is valid in this aspect due to the fact that Venezuela in the 1960s did not suffer from the economic problems associated with the second stage of ISI and did not fall victim to a Bureaucratic-Authoritarian regime. Like his counterparts to the south, Rómulo Betancourt inherited an economy in turmoil. In 1958, the economy stagnated; growth stood at a mere one percent and unemployment reached nine percent.¹³¹ Additionally, Betancourt faced payment of some 2,300 million bolivars in debts (\$766 million) incurred during the Pérez Jiménez regime.¹³² Stagnant growth combined with government deficits produced a recession that lasted until 1962. However, unlike Argentina or Brazil, the Venezuelan economy rested primarily on a single export commodity, petroleum. In 1962, petroleum exports represented almost ninety-

¹³¹ Loring Allen, *Venezuelan Economic Development, A Politico-Economic Analysis* (Greenwich, 1977), 108.

three percent of total exports. Additionally, oil accounted for one-third of the gross national product and provided some sixty percent of government revenues.

¹³³ However, oil wealth in Venezuela is a double-edged sword; it confers both special privileges and special burdens. A decline in oil prices, as occurred in 1958 and 1959, usually triggers a recession. Rising oil prices create a 'boom' mentality and stimulates competition among sectors and a corresponding expansion of the government bureaucracy. More importantly, oil serves to mitigate social conflict and eliminate the recurring violent confrontations of a "zero-sum" game, which plagued Argentina and Brazil. As Michael Coppedge explains:

Simply put, oil is a lubricant that eases the social frictions that arise in a democracy. It lessens the need for hard choices. Under conditions of scarcity, politics tends to be a zero-sum game: one group gains only at the expense of another. But the larger the earnings from oil exports, the fewer losers there are. There is enough to go around.¹³⁴

Thus, petroleum export revenues alleviated a major cause of social conflict and prevented a necessary precursor to Bureaucratic Authoritarianism. Moreover, due to the imbalances of the oil export led economy, implementation of the second stage of import substitution proceeded more slowly in Venezuela. In 1977, Loring Allen wrote:

¹³² Edwin Lieuwen, *Venezuela* (London, 1965), 143.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 137, 108.

The effectiveness of import substitution has been greatest for final consumer goods. Indeed, the policy has now almost run its course in this first and easiest step of an import substitution model. The substitution of imported raw materials and intermediate and capital goods has barely begun.¹³⁵

In fact, as late as 1981, the government continued to promote domestically produced consumer goods through its "Buy Venezuelan" decrees.¹³⁶ Petroleum exports mitigated economic conflicts and retarded the pace of import substitution policies. Therefore, we can conclude the "deepening" phase of ISI did not occur in Venezuela in the 1960s.

Activation of the popular sector

What about the activation of the working class? Did the political activation of organized labor and subsequent attempts to suppress that activation contribute to instability in Venezuela?

The second aspect of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model is the "activation" of the popular sector, i.e., organized labor or the working class. As stated previously, activation means:

1. Coalition: Organization of a previously fragmented group.
2. Political Power: the entry into the political and economic life of the country of that group.

¹³⁴ Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 323.

¹³⁵ Loring Allen, *Venezuelan Economic Development*, 232.

3. Backlash: the corresponding realization by other socio-political groups of the power this newly organized sector wields.

The validity of the B-A model is again demonstrated by the negative case of Venezuela; working class activation was incomplete in the early 1960s and the political power of unions was circumscribed by the party system. No populist leader arose in Venezuela as in Brazil and Argentina. Instead, *Acción Democrática* facilitated limited working class activation through political organization. In the 1940s, AD mobilized both workers and peasants for the first time in Venezuelan history. AD established both the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela* (CTV) or National Labor Confederation and the *Federación Campesina de Venezuela* (FCV) or Venezuelan Peasant's Federation. The CTV claimed over 300,000 members by 1948 and the FCV some 43,000.¹³⁷ During *Acción Democrática's* short tenure from 1945 to 1948, organized labor experienced a marked expansion and gained additional legal protections and benefits including the right to work, to organize, to strike, to sick pay and pension guarantees.¹³⁸ However, *Acción Democrática* clearly controlled the emergence of the working classes and constrained its political power. As Terry Karl observes in *The Paradox of Plenty*:

¹³⁶ Laura Randall, *The Political Economy of Venezuelan Oil* (New York, 1987), 137.

¹³⁷ Blank, *Politics in Venezuela*, 22.

¹³⁸ Lieuwen, *Venezuela*, 74.

Taking advantage of its [*Acción Democrática's*] brief rule to organize labor and peasant associations under the domination of the party and therefore to preempt their capacity for autonomous action, it established the nation's first labor federation, the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) and formed the Peasant Federation. In a mere three years the number of legal unions rose from 252 to 1,014 and over 100 collective agreements were signed.¹³⁹

When democracy disappeared in 1948, so did labor's recently won gains.

Organized labor suffered persecution and suppression under military rule, much like the political parties did. With the return to democracy in 1958, organized labor again emerged as the major component of the AD coalition. The

Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela was revived and soon represented over 1,100,000 employees. Additionally, most of the 600 unions that existed during the *trienio* were also reestablished and an additional 700 were

legalized.¹⁴⁰ Although this development trajectory seems to share important similarities with those of Brazil and Argentina, crucial differences exist. First, no *autonomous* labor movement emerged in Venezuela. As John Martz explains:

"Although the laborers and peasants are not organized as mere adjuncts of the party, there is undeniable evidence that both groups are largely controlled and directed by the party. In recent years the paternalism of the government has

¹³⁹ Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty*, 95-96.

¹⁴⁰ Lieuwen, *Venezuela*, 180.

prevented the development of fully independent labor organizations.”¹⁴¹ Second, unlike the situations in Brazil and Argentina, Venezuelan labor did not oppose the government. On the contrary, *Acción Democrática*, and later COPEI, represented the interests of organized labor from *within* the government. Loring Allen explains:

Unlike the situation in many developed countries where the principal goal of unionism is the maximization of the economic benefits to its members through the collective bargaining process, in Venezuela an equally important goal is to achieve economic benefits through political influence in partisan politics.¹⁴²

Finally, oil export profits prevented a zero-sum economic crisis in Venezuela; petrodollars ensured union loyalty. Dwindling government resources did not stimulate a militant labor movement or widespread strikes as in Brazil and Argentina. Therefore, no corresponding polarization of society occurred in Venezuela.

Technocrats

Did a new “technocrat” element emerge in Venezuelan society in the 1960s? If so, did the rise of technocrats follow the predictions of the B-A model?

Civilian technocrats emerged in Venezuelan society along a similar timeline as in Brazil and Argentina. In 1958, the Ministry of Education listed

¹⁴¹ John D. Martz, *Acción Democrática: Evolution of a Modern Political Party in Venezuela* (Princeton, 1966), 287.

25,458 students enrolled in secondary technical programs and 16,126 university students. By 1968, these numbers had grown to 121,877 and 58,831, increases of 379 percent and 265 percent, respectively.¹⁴³ Additionally, Loring Allen noted in 1977 that the “employment of professionals, technicians, managers and administrators has grown more than twice as fast as the labor force since 1950.”¹⁴⁴ Numerous technical organizations also developed such as the government’s Central Office of Coordination and Planning (CORDIPLAN), established in 1958, the private sector Institute for Economic and Social Development (IDES), and the Center for the Study of Development (CENDES).¹⁴⁵ However, military technocrats in Venezuela established educational and advisory organizations linking internal security and national development much later than their counterparts in Brazil and Argentina. The *Instituto de Altos Estudios de la Defensa Nacional* was organized in 1972 and a presidential advisory board, the *Consejo Nacional de Seguridad y Defensa*, was established in 1976.¹⁴⁶ More importantly, as previously demonstrated, no severe economic or political crises developed in Venezuela as predicted by the B-A model. Consequently, no polarizing social unrest or chronic economic crisis

¹⁴² Allen, *Venezuelan Economic Development*, 153.

¹⁴³ Blank, *Politics in Venezuela*, 50.

¹⁴⁴ Allen, *Venezuelan Economic Development*, 143.

¹⁴⁵ Blank, *Politics in Venezuela*, 107, 199; Allen, *Venezuelan Economic Development*, 93.

¹⁴⁶ John D. Martz and David, J. Meyers, eds., *Venezuela: The Democratic Experience* (New York, 1986), 163.

compelled Venezuelan technocrats to assume the reigns of government, as did their counterparts in Argentina and Brazil.

International Political Situation

Cuban Revolution

The turbulent international situation of the 1960s contributed to the demise of elected democracy in Brazil and Argentina. Did the growing threat of communism and inter-regional demonstration effects significantly impact the course of Venezuelan democracy? The answer in both cases is yes. However, rather than destabilizing democracy, these external factors were shrewdly manipulated into strengthening democracy and contributing to national stability.

President Rómulo Betancourt's attempt to institute a sweeping program of liberal reforms during the *trienio* resulted in his overthrow and ten years of political exile. Upon his return to power in 1958, Betancourt refused to implement radical reforms. Instead he preferred a measured pace of social change based on compromise with opposition groups. The slow pace of change and policy of compromise angered the younger, more radical elements of his political coalition. In 1960, these radicals were expelled from *Acción Democrática* and aligned themselves with the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) to form the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). MIR attempted, through riots and demonstrations, "to force the government to adopt Castro-like

policies or to relinquish its control.”¹⁴⁷ Indeed, as the Central Intelligence Agency noted in 1964: “Venezuela remains a priority target in Communist efforts to promote violent revolution in Latin America, primarily because Fidel Castro cannot afford to allow such an important democratic reformist regime to succeed.”¹⁴⁸ In June 1962, Betancourt “suspended” the legitimacy of MIR and the PCV after the discovery of their involvement in the recently suppressed military rebellions in Carúpano and Puerto Cabello. MIR and PCV then formed the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) and began a campaign to overthrow the government by force of arms.¹⁴⁹ However, rather than causing a serious threat to the democratic government, the insurgents allowed Betancourt to eliminate the radical elements of his party and to consolidate his control over the true threat to democracy in Venezuela: the military. Betancourt adapted the threat of communism to support his regime. “With the military, it is clear that Betancourt consciously pushed the fragility argument, warning military officers that his government was the only thing that stood between them and a Cuban-style revolution, which, as they knew, had ended with total liquidation of the traditional military establishment.”¹⁵⁰ Adding credibility to the argument, in 1963, the government announced the discovery of a three-ton cache of Cuban

¹⁴⁷ Report, NIE 89-61; *Situation in Venezuela*, NSF, Box 9, File 89 (LBJ Library), 5.

¹⁴⁸ Report, NIE 89-64; *Prospects for Political Stability in Venezuela*, NSF, Box 9, File 89 (LBJ Library), 3.

¹⁴⁹ Lieuwen, *Venezuela*, 190.

arms on the Paraguana Peninsula.¹⁵¹ These weapons, earmarked for use by FALN guerrillas, proved the validity of the Communist threat and galvanized the military behind the President. Thus, Betancourt successfully turned the threat of communism and the demonstration effect of the Cuban revolution to his advantage. As Judith Ewell notes:

Terrorism and guerilla warfare brought in the keystone to Betancourt's system; the armed forces, with whom Betancourt struck an implicit bargain. He allowed them a greater role in national security and in the direction of military affairs, but he denied them a voice in political matters.¹⁵²

Regional Effects

Other inter-regional events, including the Brazilian coup of 1964 and the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, had less impact. Although Venezuela initially broke diplomatic relations with Brazil, they were reestablished in 1966 following the "carefully orchestrated congressional election" of General Artur Costa e Silva.¹⁵³ Again, although initially critical of U.S. intervention in the Dominican crisis, "Venezuela contributed medical and other supplies for the use of the Inter-American Peace Force and was one of the first nations to recognize the provisional government of Garcia Godoy."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Daniel H. Levine, *Conflict and Political Change in Venezuela* (Princeton, 1973), 238.

¹⁵¹ Martz, *Acción Democrática*, 115.

¹⁵² Ewell, *Venezuela, A Century of Change*, 131.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁵⁴ Report, NIE 89-65; *Venezuela*, NSF, Box 9, File 89 (LBJ Library), 8.

Conclusions

Therefore, the expanded Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model is again valid. Strong political parties enhanced democratic stability by internalizing and managing conflict. The absence of severe economic crisis caused by the implementation of the second stage of Import Substitution Industrialization combined with the lack of a politically activated working class (it was activated, but not confrontational) precluded the emergence of a polarizing social crisis in Venezuela. Consequently, the importance of the rise of technocrats was negated. External factors did influence the course of Venezuelan democracy; the threat of communism and armed insurgency strengthened civilian control of the military.

CHAPTER 11. LEADERSHIP

Looking beyond the expanded B-A model, what role did the leadership skills of the political actors play in these three cases? Was leadership an important factor in survival or demise of democracy in Latin America in the 1960s?

Political leadership plays a crucial role in national affairs; therefore, its impact should not be underestimated. All three cases demonstrate the importance of leadership, although in differing ways. Positive leadership, as in the case of Venezuela's Rómulo Betancourt, can create an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and compromise that strengthens democracy. Negative leadership set the conditions for military intervention; Brazilian President João Goulart's and Deputy Leonel Brizola's calls for armed uprising exemplify the advocacy of extra-constitutional solutions that undermined democracy. Ineffective leadership, such as that of Argentinean President Arturo Illia, erodes government credibility and destabilizes political institutions. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan note that "what often seem to be unsolvable problems are not intrinsically so, but are rather produced by politicians who define problems in such a way as to create oppositions and conflicts that are themselves insoluble. In Venezuela, the devotion of leadership to redefining problems, methods of action, and relations

among groups is very prominent.”¹⁵⁵ John Martz and David Meyers echo this observation of the positive impact of effective leadership on Venezuelan democracy when they write:

The most significant factor influencing party and party system evolution since 1958 has been the extraordinary leadership skills of those who created and sustained the mass-based political parties. They demonstrated that liberal democratic institutions and procedures could produce positive results. In turn, this reinforced underlying beliefs and attitudes that legitimated institutions and procedures that embodied liberal democracy, especially political party competition and free elections.¹⁵⁶

Leadership is a critical contributing factor to the historic strength of democratic institutions. Good leadership can overcome a history of weak institutions; likewise, poor leadership can completely undermine the best of institutions. These authors go on to add that “after the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez, democratic political party leaders [in Venezuela] displayed exceptional talents. Not only did they craft and manage a functioning democracy, they successfully defended it against great odds.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, leadership is an important element in determining the success or failure of political regimes and deserves inclusion into a reformulated political analysis model.

¹⁵⁵ Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 103.

¹⁵⁶ Martz and Meyers, *Venezuela: The Democratic Experience*, 131.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

Therefore, summarizing the expanded Bureaucratic Authoritarian model and adding leadership yields a comprehensive Political Stability Model:

- the strength of democratic institutions
- economic stability
- political stability
- social stability
- external pressures
- leadership

In conclusion, the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian model has been shown to be valid, but insufficient in the cases of Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela. The B-A model fails to account for the impact of the strength or weakness of democratic institutions or to consider external factors. The expanded B-A model integrates these additional factors and adds validity to the original framework developed by Guillermo O'Donnell. However, the expanded model fails to consider the crucial role of leadership in times of crisis. Thus, summarizing the expanded Bureaucratic Authoritarian model and adding the additional dimension of leadership creates a comprehensive Political Stability Model. This new analytical tool is designed to provide a framework for detailed analysis of historic and current political stability and to highlight those critical factors shown to contribute to, or significantly impact the course of, regime change and

coup d'état. The following table summarizes the Political Stability Model and illustrates the conclusions of this analysis of the social, economic, and political precursors of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism in Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela.

The Political Stability Model

	Argentina	Brazil	Venezuela
Executive Branch	Disproportionately powerful	Disproportionately powerful	Disproportionately powerful
Political Parties	Fragmented Class divided	Fragmented Class divided	Diverse, but unified Integrated across classes
Political Participation	Some exclusion Competitive	Some exclusion Competitive	Inclusive Cooperative
Role of Military	Politicized Autonomous	Politicized Autonomous	De-politicized Co-opted by govt.
End of ISI	Economic Crisis Zero-sum game	Economic Crisis Zero-sum game	Oil revenues No zero-sum game
Activation of Popular sector Technocrats	Fully activated Autonomous	Partially activated Autonomous	Not autonomous Subsumed by political parties
	Felt government was less competent Compelled to act	Felt government was less competent Compelled to act	Incomplete development Competent government Action not necessary
Leadership	Ineffective	Negative	Positive

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