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PURPOSES AND METHODS OF INTRA-REGIONAL COMPARISON

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I. INTRODUCTION.

The purposes and methods of intra-regional comparison merit renewed scholarly attention for examining the nature, dynamics and implications of contemporary processes of change in Latin America. This paper focuses upon the purposes and methods of intra-regional comparison with specific reference to contemporary Latin America and from the disciplinary perspective of Political Science.

The increasing complexity of Latin America poses new challenges for the understanding of the very notion of "region" as such. If the internal diversity of the Region along cultural, economic, social and political dimensions was recognized by informed observers in the past, by the 1980s, it has become a fundamental feature, with far-reaching implications for theoretical and empirical research. This internal diversity can no longer be ignored in any attempt to grapple with the question of which are the most relevant dimensions in any analysis of political change in this part of the world. Likewise, these dimensions must be taken into account if we are to achieve an adequate understanding of the consequences and implications of recent trends relative to issues such as identity, internal heterogeneity and national as well as transnational integration.

The ways through which the economic crisis of the 1980s affected the different countries of Latin America and the paths the return

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to civilian governments took in each case, made the internal diversity of the Region clearer than ever. Today it is a dubious undertaking to assimilate to the same regional model the political economies of Chile or Mexico, with those of Brazil or Argentina, or these countries' with Peru's or Ecuador's. During the past decade the countries of Latin America have gone through a drastic restructuring of their models of capital accumulation, external trade and socio-political structures. These nation-states have also experienced drastic changes in their insertion in the global economy and into the international division of labor. They have accomodated to both through different paths. This is clearly reflected, for instance, in the difficulties that Chile and Mexico are presently confronting in establishing their own policies and strategies of regional integration and multilateral cooperation with their respective neighbors. In addition, the goals that the so called "major" countries of the Region have set for themselves in terms of the partnerships and alliances they seek with major international actors, are not easily compatible with intra-regional economic integration schemes - such as Mercosur, The Andean Pact, CARICOM, or MCC¹. It is illustrative to note that as a matter of deliberate strategy, in the case of Mexico, these are much more oriented towards the US and towards the search of a closer association with North America through NAFTA, than towards her neighbors of the South. Meanwhile, in the case of Chile there is evidence of considerable lack of interest towards subregional integration with MERCOSUR, as the establishment of linkages with

integration with MERCOSUR, as the establishment of linkages with Mediterranean Europe or with the Pacific Rim or with the US takes precedence.

Present features of intra-regional heterogeneity are also expressed at the cultural and political levels, as well as in the practical conscience of Latin American political elites. Increasingly, these growing differences cast a shadow of doubt on the feasibility of accepting uncritically the very concept of Latin America. These features challenge analysts and observers to examine what can and cannot be understood as Latin America, given the new and complex multidimensionality that her social, economic, cultural and political configuration exhibits today. Perhaps there are many Latin Americas for certain purposes, and perhaps for others there is none, given the emergence of processes and features of change that lead to new alignments that brake the traditional lines through which we used to understand "the regional". What seems clear is that a number of features that before could be intuitively apprehended under the umbrella notion of Latin America, do not longer exhibit useful analytical value.

Such heterogeneity and complexity is internally uneven, depending upon countries, subregions or specific subnational areas, and it has to do with historico-cultural matrixes which are quite differentiated, as well as with trajectories, projects and specific dynamics of "modernization" and with heterogeneities in terms of

social stratification. To a certain extent this was always so. What makes different the present situation is that the increasing internationalization of social and economic processes has the effect of polarizing and fragmenting these former heterogeneities in terms of other focii of reference. The relevant point here is that different intra-regional trajectories have the result of re-inserting various "parts" of Latin America in other relevant contexts. For instance, countries like Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile may be more usefully understood in terms of Euro-Mediterranean problematiques and patterns, while Mexico -it could be suggested- increasingly belongs to an infant "North American" political economy. Even sub-national spaces may be reorganized according to influences coming from different international functional systems of action. Different parts of the same nation-state can thus be connected at the same time to a variety of transnational socio-political networks, from which they derive their relevant behavioral rules and determinants.

For the purposes of this paper, however, recognizing the increasing internal differentiation of Latin America has strongly enhanced the relevance of comparative analysis as a tool for understanding this Region in theoretically and empirically meaningful ways. Within such context, intra-regional comparisons can have a very important role.

In the present paper we will start by taking stock at the past achievements and shortcomings of comparative political studies on Latin America, done both by Northern as well as Latin American

scholarly research. We will then examine the present state of comparativism in Latin American Political Science. In the process we intend to show why we believe that comparative political studies can and ought to be stimulated in the future. Within this framework, we will set forth the argument that contemporary changes in the world and in the region must be taken into account in the future research agenda for comparativists both within and outside the region. In the last part of this paper we will engage in a methodological and analytical discussion about the usefulness of intra-regional comparisons, and we will try to establish its role in social science research. Finally we will discuss some specific areas in which comparative political studies can prove specially useful and interesting as well as some of the basic institutional requirements that ought to be met if the present research agenda is to advance through fruitful paths.

II. COMPARATIVE APPROACHES AND METHODS ON LATIN AMERICA: LEGACIES FROM THE PAST, CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS.

Comparative studies and approaches are relatively new in the Latin American Social Sciences in general and in Political Science in particular². A clear interest in comparative approaches and analysis has emerged only recently within the Region.

Several factors account for the emergence of this new interest. Three are particularly worth mentioning. First, there has been in recent years increasing dissatisfaction with the result of studies and theoretical exercises derived from nation-centered perspectives coupled with the increasing discredit of grand generalizations based on supposedly "representative" features of major countries. Such dissatisfaction probably arises from the fact that all too often the "homogeneity" of the Region has been taken for granted. Thus, it has been often assumed that if some characteristic was found in any part of the Region, it would apply to the rest. This assumption is precisely what an adequate comparative framework can challenge, leading to a more detailed, rich and systematic appraisal of variance within the Hemisphere.

Secondly, in the past 15 years there has been an impressive surge of cross-national and cross-regional academic networks, providing a highly dynamic framework for intense exchange and cooperation between scholars from within and outside the region. This is a result of the efforts and resources invested by organizations, associations and foundations from both sides of the Hemisphere, and, to a lesser extent, to the activities of organizations and institutions from outside the Hemisphere.

As a result of significant institutional efforts, such as those of the Latin American Studies Association, the American Political Science Association, the Ford Foundation, the Inter-American

Foundation, the Fullbright Commission, the Social Science Research Council, and of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales(CLACSO) and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Latin America,- all of which have stimulated the exchanges within the Region and between the Region and the academic centers of the United States, Canada and Europe-, relatively dense transnational networks of scholars have emerged. The members of these networks communicate with their colleagues in and outside the Region as a regular part of their own professional routines. The institutionalization of cross-national and cross-regional networks of professional exchange has fundamentally changed the way in which Latin American scholars reflect upon the Region. It has also exposed Latin Americans to the comparative approaches and methods of the Area-specialists of the North, in particular the US and Canada, where comparative analysis has been more prominent since the 1950's under the encouragement that the "Area Studies" mode of organizing research and teaching provided for its institutionalization³.

This increasing contact and exchange has promoted new processes of socialization and mutual learning and has contributed to major worthy collaborative endeavours. It has also contributed to making evident the dearth of comparative research on Latin America done by the Latin American scholarly community, as opposed to the impressive strength of comparative research on the Region produced by scholars based in the North ⁴

Thirdly, the end of the Cold War and the increasing discredit of an intellectual climate that generated among Latin American intellectuals attitudes of suspicion and hostility towards anything that came from the North, accounts for a greater openness of Latin American scholars to comparative thinking and a greater willingness to abandon traditional attitudes which tended to see North and South as enemy blocks only linked by their antagonisms and by insurmountable cultural, political and economic contradictions.

These factors, coupled with the emergence of a new generation of scholars who have travelled to the North in order to acquire further training in comparative theory and methods, account for the emergence in Latin America since the 1980's of new and more open attitudes towards comparative analysis and for an increased awareness of its relevance for understanding Latin American politics. This can be seen with particular clarity in the work of Latin American specialists which have attempted to deal with topics such as the breakdown of democratic regimes, and later on in the efforts represented by studies which attempted to grapple with the processes of transition to democracy and the challenges for the consolidation of civilian regimes after the 1970s⁵. Other Latin American authors have also recently undertaken the task of approaching the question of civil-military relations comparatively⁶.

The importance of the emergence of a Latin American production in

the social sciences which aims at comparativeness can't be underestimated. However, a good deal of this literature still suffers from the lack of a distinct comparative method insofar as it consist mainly of edited volumes including studies that focus on specific countries that are presented in the same volume and that appear linked by an introductory or final chapter in which one author attempts to extract general conclusions on the basis of the different country studies. In general, however, the articles themselves don not incorporate comparative and contrasting references to other national experiences, which prevents these country studies from functioning as case- studies proper⁷. Regardless of the intrinsic value of these types of collections of articles and essays, national cases are thus not treated from a comparative perspective - it is left to the reader or to the editor of the volume to "extract" the comparative elements from these collections of self-contained monographs.

This kind of approach to "comparativeness" leads to methodological problems. The concentration on one national case not approached comparatively may lead to the effect of reinventing the wheel over and over again, and thus to the endless "discovery" of "unique", "new" or "specific" features of national cases when perhaps these unique, new, or specific features may only be such due to the failure to place the country-study within a comparative framework. This methodological problem may be found in many studies on urban poverty and the popular sectors produced between the 1970s and

1980s that constitutes a vast Latin American literature on the topic⁸.

Furthermore, there has been a tendency in such literature to describe phenomena such as urban poverty as definitional and singular to the condition of underdevelopment, as a manifestation of a mode of modernization exclusive of the region -shared only with other third world areas- and its peculiar trajectory⁹. The profuse Latin American literature on the urban popular sectors of the Region up until now, not only -in most cases- lack intra-regional dimensions of comparativeness but also exclude of its framework comparative references to the case of the North American, or European experiences, not to mention Asia's and Africa's.

These problems of method stand in contrast with the tradition of comparative analysis which flourished in the social sciences of the North since the end of World War II, particularly in the US and also in Canada. There is no doubt that studies such as Gabriel Almond's, James Coleman's, David Apter's, Lucian Pye's, Seymour Martin Lipset's, Charles Anderson's, as well as Barrington Moore's, to name just a few of the main authors, produced their studies in a specific sociopolitical context and saw their work influenced by the demands posed to them by the politics of global hegemony of the US in the Cold War, as well as by the struggle of the old european powers to confront and resolve their colonial and post colonial problems. Whatever their strategic rationale may have been, they

constituted the initial focus of a tradition that beyond its limitations has posed fruitful questions, research and debates about the countries of the South, within the scholarly communities of the North.

The anglosaxon comparative Area-studies tradition up until the 1970's has tended, however, to concentrate in the study of the "major countries" and to take these cases as representative of phenomena and political processes of the Region as a whole. The potential theoretical significance of certain cases was disregarded many times due to the lack of geopolitical, demographic, or economic importance of such cases. This tendency has been traditionally shared by scholars based in Latin America as well. Awareness of the limitations of attempting to apply to the entire Region the features of Mexico or Southern Cone countries is only recent, and it has provided the opportunity for the rise of a new comparative literature on Central America and the Andean countries.¹⁰

Furthermore, it is well known that quite too often the perspective of anglosaxon comparative analyses has been afflicted by ethnocentrism, which has affected its conclusions and predictive capacity. The problems this has led to in the theories of modernization and political development literature have been amply debated and discussed¹¹. Nonetheless, the comparative studies being produced at present in the North exhibit a whole new literature

that has explicitly attempted to overcome the theoretical as well as methodological -and ideological- implications of ethnocentrism.¹².

By the present decade the development of comparative analysis in the North -particularly in the US, Canada and Great Britain- still contrasts with the incipient development of comparative approaches and methods on regional issues, produced within the Region. As a result, some of the major comparative material on Latin America is still being produced outside the Region. And even though it is quite clear that there is today in Latin America an increasing generation of scholars -trained in the North- quite familiarized with comparative methods of analysis, the Latin American academic community faces the challenge of making comparative methods a major feature of its own development, lest the gap on the production of knowledge on its own Region not only remains but widens, with serious implications for the ability of its scholarly cadres to make a substantial endogenous contribution to their disciplines. In subsequent pages some of the paths through which this challenge may be met shall be discussed.

Let us first focus upon some aspects of methodological relevance for examining the purposes of intra-regional comparison with specific reference to the Region.

III. THE PURPOSES OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.

In this section we shall raise several questions which we regard as central components for approaching Latin America comparatively. Taking these aspects into account may be useful as scholarly research attempts to build on past experience as well as to overcome the shortcomings of former comparative endeavors.

1. As a point of departure, we wish to suggest that the presence or absence of a comparative approach is a question of method: a case study on the political process of a specific nation-state may or may not be comparative, depending upon whether or not there is in such study an explicit reference to that which is known on other cases. ~~Comparativeness~~, in other words, must be internalized within each case study. It is not the number of cases treated what makes for the comparativeness of a study. It is the way in which cases are treated what makes them part of a comparatively-constructed inquiry.

2. Comparative research does not consist in merely joining together particular cases in order to descriptively illustrate differences and similarities. Each case must, from the outset, be approached in terms of other cases which the researcher has theoretical and analytical reasons to believe are variants or instances of some processes that stand to be examined. The researcher must make sure that whatever specific traits are found in each case are, in effect, peculiar to that case and, as such, should be understood in its contrast to others. Likewise, similarities become useful, insofar

as they are identified with reference to wider sets of phenomena that appear elsewhere¹³.

3. To assume an inquiry comparatively also means awareness of the dangers of premature generalization. The researcher may easily extrapolate from one example or instance derived from one or a group of countries or a group of cases. Many times it is assumed that what is valid in one country or unit of analysis may easily be valid for others belonging to the same Region. This is, in fact, what often happened in the tradition of studies on models and modes of development in Latin America. It is illustrative to remember that the model of import-substitution-industrialization was hailed as an adequate description for development processes in the entire Region on the basis of the early experience of a group of countries such as Argentina, Chile Brazil and Mexico. This also occurred in the studies on bureaucratic authoritarianism as a concept which was too easily applied to contexts and regimes quite different to those that provided the basis for the formulation of the original concept¹⁴.

4. In the task of reformulating our traditional assumptions about Latin America, intra-regional comparisons have become increasingly relevant. The Region's heterogeneity and complexity is internally uneven, depending upon countries, subregions or specific subnational areas and is linked with historical and cultural matrixes which are internally differentiated and which embody

specific modernization trajectories, projects and dynamics and also very different social stratification structures. The point to be emphasized, however, is that acknowledging the **increasing** internal differentiation of Latin America has a number of implications for any future attempt to focus comparatively on the Region. Let us mention some of the main ones:

(a) There are issues that will be relevant to certain subregions and not to others. Such is the case, for instance, with the topics and themes of the fragmented or "incompleted" nation-states, of the truncated or aborted neo-corporative pacts, or of the presence of deep social, regional, ethnic or cultural internal cleavages.

(b) At the same time, there are other issue-areas that if not specific to certain subregions (such as the urban problem, informality, corruption, criminality, etc.,) may be determined and affected by subregion-specific factors that require for their study a different treatment depending upon the case, given the particular context that frames the actual dynamics of these more general factors.

(c) In addition, fruitful comparative inquiry in Latin America may require analytical openness to the plausibility that the accelerating processes of economical and technological globalization may require that the comparative frame of reference of Latin American phenomena should be expanded and inserted in a

wider global perspective. This ought to be done not necessarily in the search of some renewed form of "universalism" and of "grand theories" but, rather, as an attempt to obtain a richer grasp of specificities and variants of the observed phenomena. Thus, the researcher -in examining a wide diversity of topics and issues- would be wise to begin placing the regional cases in a wider context of inter- regional inquiry.

(d) At the same time, it is necessary to assume the implications for comparative analysis of the fact that questions which have traditionally been regarded as region- specific or sub-region specific may now have to be viewed as part of increasingly globalized dynamics and processes. Such is the case of a wide array of topics and issues such as political culture, political corruption, the crisis of the nation-state, the terciarization of the economies -phenomena which are taking place at a global scale-.

(e) The methodological implications of contemporary globalization phenomena for contemporary intra-regional comparative inquiry are far reaching. Thus, we will devote special attention to this point. It may be fruitful to regard contemporary globalization as a double movement whereby some problems and issues are internationally and inter- regionally integrated and in that very process acquire strong national, regional subnational and local specificities . At the same time, this internalization of

transnational issues may generate in each country a wider gap between social-action systems linked to global processes and other intra-national systems that are unable or unwilling to integrate. Many countries may become polarized between cosmopolitan areas and spheres, and others which remain strongly tied to local determinants. For example, studies that seek to understand the impact of international migration in the local politics of certain countries of the North will often require to consider within their frame of reference not only the general features of the national political system of the country of origin of the migrants, but also the local micro-political networks of certain zones or villages that provide a concentrated contingent of migrants ¹⁵. Migrants many times keep very strong linkages with their local communities of origin and do so in organized ways, transferring to their new habitat practices, conflicts, demands and operational structures that can only be fully understood in terms of their original context . At the same time informal networks of family, friends, relatives and partners are being projected at a transnational level and are increasingly affecting the internal dynamics of nation-states, particularly their economies, labor relations and culture.

16

These new articulations far from implying a trend towards homogeneity suggest, we suspect, complex phenomena of differentiating interconnection as a fairly novel result of the increasing presence of informal transnational linkages that bypass state-centered channels and whose implications require careful

scrutiny.

Thus, it will be increasingly important to include in our comparative analysis of Latin America, local and community-level studies, as well as urban or micro regional studies, since the latter dimensions are increasingly affected by global changes and do so in an increasingly differentiated and heterogeneous manner. Many international linkages do not have the nation-state as protagonist any longer; but rather interlocal networks whose linkages are made directly, skipping or bypassing state frontiers. There are many articulations and feedback circuits linking the local and the supranational and viceversa which pose new challenges to analysis. The already cited case of political relations that involve communities of migrants can serve as illustration of problems relative to pressure groups and transnational corporative interests.

International Relations specialists have been quite aware in the past few years of these developments and their implications¹⁷. Phenomena that formerly were encapsulated within nation-state boundaries have in the recent past gained increased weight in foreign spheres and in turn are being affected by the latter to a larger extent. For instance, the results of labor negotiations in the port of Philadelphia may become crucial to Chilean politics. Likewise, a strike by rural workers in California may have direct incidence in issues that up until recently might have been regarded as exclusive to strictly domestic the Mexican concerns. Conversely,

political violence in Guatemala may rapidly become internalized as a domestic problem in the US and Mexico. This is so because actors in internal conflicts can increasingly project their actions and ideas across borders and use foreign countries as sanctuary, as destination or as a relevant public for their ideas or demands, not to mention the consequences that vast refugee movements can have in the host countries as the recent experience in Europe aptly illustrates.

A novel feature of contemporary international politics is that it is increasingly processed not only through the traditional channels of the past, but also through growing networks between social segments and sectors located in different nation-states, giving origin to that ambiguous space that has been classified by some as belonging into the new real of "inter-domestic relations"¹⁸.

Inter-domestic phenomena cannot be easily assimilated to dependency theory. Through inter-domestic phenomena we may witness interactions that frequently brake the traditional asymmetries of dependency and that take place at a level of aggregation that such current did not study nor stress. More than relations of domination or pure exploitation, these interactions may be described as complex games taking place simultaneously at several levels and involving a great diversity of actors, placed in variable-sum situations which and feature indeterminate coalitional behavior. At the same time, interdependencies are in these cases best captured

through notions and concepts relevant to social action, to "agency" and to the concrete and situated historical performance of groups whose practices are best described through the logic of interacting networks composed of multiple channels and pluridirectional exchanges. On the other hand, there is a tendency to abandon models of analysis built upon the paradigm of structural macro-determination. The increasing evidence of the development of many new types of inter-national connectivities has important implications not only for the study of international relations but for the comparative study of national political processes as well.

In sum and conclusion, we would like to suggest that comparative analysis and methods that take into account basic factors such as the ones discussed above, should help us to examine more attentively the units of analysis required to confront the methodological challenges posed by these dramatic changes, at the national, regional, transnational and sub-regional levels and the new ways in which all of these are being re-articulated.

IV. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES.

On the basis of the discussion set forth in preceding pages, we would like to suggest in this section that in the process of exploring the issue of how units of analysis must be constructed in the study of contemporary regional political processes the analytical value of categories such as "nation", "country", "sub-

region" , "region", "global", "intra-regional or "inter-regional" must be systematically questioned and put under closer scrutiny. Only after going through such methodological exercise the researcher may be fairly sure that levels of aggregation of phenomena that make conceptual and analytical sense have been identified.

Before proceeding further, it is appropriate to reflect upon the meaning of the concept of "region" and examine its analytical import from the perspective of conducting intra-regional studies. We contend that the concept of "region" requires re-examination. To assume that this concept merely refers to a set of geographically close countries may be quite trivial for most research purposes. Geographical propinquity is not -in general-- an analytically relevant feature that may have an explanatory or descriptive meaning of its own, from the perspective of comparative analysis.

We may ask ourselves why it is that geographical proximity has become such an important feature in modern social scientific thought. We may advance the hypothesis that up to the 1960s most variables that were relevant to the foremost questions of the day seemed to be "spatially lumped together". Thus, modernization and development looked like the exclusive traits of a set of closely placed countries or societies, while tradition or backwardness were defined as everything outside the real or imaginary boundaries of the developed or modern spaces. Location and substantive social

characteristics were seen as strongly associated in both a spatial and statistical way. The role played by cultural area-studies in this respect should be highlighted. Even before that, since the 18th century, there was an attempt to understand the nature of European culture as defined by its opposition to the East, to the South or to the uncivilized areas which were conceived as spaces or realms connected to geography. Thus, Montesquieu and others chose to explain the cultural differentiating incidence of factors such as climate, latitude or topography. Such legacy has repeatedly permeated the perspective of modern social sciences. However, the refining and deepening of our comparative perspectives require that a closer look be taken at the analytical core that lies behind the concept of region.

Contemporary social sciences have powerfully relativized the notion that concrete processes, variables and behaviours can be seen as strictly associated with sociogeographical spaces. We have witnessed during the last twenty years a growing awareness of the separate analytical nature of the concepts of modernity, tradition, development or backwardness and their usual correlates, and of spatial dimensions. More than a physically descriptive set of categories the above are increasingly seen as heuristic devices that may help illuminate the nature of complex processes of social change. Thus, the world view underlying most of the literature on the cultural-area and early modernization theories can no longer be taken at face value.

The concept of region "hides" the assumption that geographical proximity is a proxy or a potential prima facie indicator of similarity on some substantive account or that proximity is in itself a factor that will tend to make countries or societies similar. Clearly, such assumption should not be discarded offhand. It must be submitted to closer and more careful scrutiny. We thus propose that whenever we engage in the definition of "region" as a unit of analysis, we are in fact saying that proximity may be a cause or may indicate specific tendencies that would tend to homogenize relevant and specifiable political or social processes in that particular geographical realm. But if we are to be consistent we then have to specify the bases for such assumption and make them explicit. In order to do so we must (a) establish precise hypotheses connecting propinquity with relevant and observable phenomena; (b) state which common traits make the component units of the region part of a distinguishable common realm. Proximity or close interaction may or may not make the units part of a relatively self-enclosed system of action, having its own distinguishing features vis a vis other similar macro units or regions.

Let us then suggest that when engaging in comparative intra-regional analysis we are not necessarily engaging in most-similar case analysis but may be, rather, (a) testing the hypothesis that we are in fact dealing with a region; and (b) testing specific hypotheses about the connection between spatial proximity and

sociopolitical similarity¹⁹.

Most- similar- case analysis is more strictly analytically bounded. It assumes the previous questions about similarity have been solved and that we have solid descriptive statements which allow us to believe, at least provisionally, that our cases belong into some relevant common universe or set. Therefore, we may find ourselves applying most- similar- case analysis to countries or political systems widely separated in space, or most- different- case analysis to countries of political systems located within the same geographical region²¹ For instance, we may find it possible to compare the political system of Costa Rica and Nicaragua from a MDC perspective, or Uruguay and Austria as most similar cases.

Intra-regional comparisons are not necessarily tied to MSC or MDC designs. The questions to be solved and tackled through intra-regional comparisons are related to establishing whether in a given dimension there may in fact be a set of cases which can be described as "a region" and to testing hypotheses about the connections that closeness may create between different neighbouring polities -most often through some historical, economic, communicational or cultural intervening factors-. Proximity is relevant if it can be translated into or related to specific and specifiable connecting processes, i.e., common exposure to some political cultural trend or experience whose diffusion has been meaningfully helped by propinquity.

Let us point out briefly at the types of variables that may be more interestingly treated through intra-regional comparisons. It should first be indicated that variables associated with whatever dimensions (historical, cultural, geographical) define the given region cannot be controlled for through this kind of design. This is because the dummy variable "region" takes only one possible value. We do not really know whether those variables or clusters of variables operate the way they seem to operate in the specific region we are studying either because they only occur in such particular context or because they are just a localized manifestation of more general trends. For instance, if we assume that Latin America -as has been widely suggested in the literature- is the region where pervasive clientelism is a preeminent feature of social and political transactions, we would only be able to meaningfully establish this if we examine at least some cases outside in order to observe whether "Latin American" clientelism and its correlates are in fact localized, or, on the contrary, appear in other regions and through similar modes as well.

Intra-regional comparisons are useful for the testing of general hypotheses concerning causal or interpretative statements that have been formulated in non-region-bound terms. A general statement about elections and clientelism world-wide can be tested using cases within one region. If there are meaningful intra-regional differences between countries regarding the relevant variables, we can falsify the universality hypothesis. On the other hand, if the

regional cases seem similar, we cannot be sure that the general hypothesis is true. This will obtain only if we can previously prove that it makes analytical sense to talk of a region as outlined above. We suggest that all intra-regional comparisons must start by a critical appraisal of the analytical plausibility of the putative region, according to what has been said in previous pages, i.e., that geographical factors are relevant in accounting for observations and that the referent units are commonly affected by some particular processes or causes associated with propinquity. For each issue we may find ourselves facing a different cluster of units, and the regions may take a different shape. Additionally, and following Weisman²¹, we could use intra-regional comparisons for the discovery of variations of a common process or problems. This mode will enhance the heuristic power of comparisons provided that we have previously grounded the assumption that intra-regional comparisons justify an MSC design.

Intra-regional comparisons may be advantageously used in a MSC mode --if previously grounded analytically--. For instance, one interesting exercise may be to focus upon a group of countries which appear at some point of time as similarly situated regarding certain variables in order to observe differences in their evolution through a given time-trajectory. The study of the differentiation of originally similar cases can help us identify new relevant variables and intervening factors as well as to weed out spurious correlations²².

It may be useful at this point to bring to bear a couple of examples of comparative intra-regional studies undertaken for other areas of the world. Hugo Heclo's Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden is a relevant example²³. In this study Heclo attempts to show how civil servants and public bureaucracies can shape the social agenda of nations with relative autonomy from civil society or political parties. For that purpose he examines the specific case of old-age assistance and unemployment insurance in both countries. He hypothesizes at the outset show that civil servants have framed the terms of new policy-making and the alternatives of policy debates. Heclo, however, sees a difference in the depth and strenght of the ability of the two states to shape the terms of social policy oriented debates. The Swedish bureaucracies are described as much more efficient and adroit than their British counterparts in this regard. The difference is explained because prior to industrialization and democratization, Sweden already had a well-entrenched pre-modern but centralized public administration, which contrasts with the British case, where the centralization of civil service came after the industrial revolution was well under way and after the onset of democratization. Thus, the Swedish civil service was in a better position, from the beginning, to steer and adapt to social and economic changes.

Heclo takes two relatively similar countries within a given geographical area and then proceeds to uncover (a) a "common

trait", namely, the ability of central bureaucracies to act independently from social pressures; and (b) a difference of degree in such ability. Once the difference has been established, a heuristic process leads the author to search for some hitherto unforeseen factor that might account for the difference through the identification of the questions of timing between bureaucratization and institutionalization of central public service and the parallel processes of democratization and industrial development as leading factors in explaining such difference. The comparison works here as a way of maintaining most factors equal (Sweden and Britain can be seen as relatively similar and close cases along a number of societal and political dimensions) so that if differences emerge, one can choose within a limited set of alternatives in the search for a differentiating factor that may at the same time have explanatory value in accounting for the diverging features of both countries' trajectories.

Though not strictly an area study, Peter Katzenstein's edited volume Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States²⁴ is also relevant to illustrate the rationale of intra-regional studies in a MSC design and how the boundaries of a region may be contingent upon the topic and research problem in question. Katzenstein and his co-authors bring together a series of country studies of developed nations in order to examine their ability to manage the international aspects of their economy and interdependence. He compares and contrasts how Japan and

continental european polities handle these aspects, on the one hand, with the way in which Britain and the US go about such tasks, on the other. The studies gathered in this volume uncover that the former countries are able to use policy instruments that enable them to intervene at the level of specific industrial sectors, while the latter are only able to manipulate aggregate macroeconomic variables. The difference is to be found in the global macrohistory of the examined cases, which account for the presence of certain policy instruments. What the Katzenstein collection allows to highlight is not a single factor but a holistic constellation of aspects. In this case the advanced industrial countries can be seen as analogous to a region (the North), and what is kept constant is the variable "level of development" . The difference that emerges and has to be explained is the specific ability of states to micro-manage adaptation to the international political economy.

This set of studies are not designed "to prove" a relationship between "level of development" and "availability of policy instruments". One could still find that several so called less developed countries can also use the same tools that i.e. France has used in order to promote economic adaptation to the world economy. What is being explained in these studies are the reasons for the different availability of such policy instruments in several industrialized countries, whatever the relationship of such instruments with level of development may be. In this case the plausible explanation is to be found in the global and aggregate

history of relationships of state and society that differentiate the continental (and Japanese) model, on the one hand, from the Anglo-Saxon type of trajectory, on the other. Nevertheless, the methodological procedure is clear: a group of countries is selected on the basis of their similarity regarding "level of development" in order to compare the nature of their management of international economic relations in each case. Differences are then uncovered, which cannot depend on the developmental "maturity" of such economies and states -since these are roughly constant. This leads the researchers towards the search for other kinds of differences, not previously considered, which, in turn, can illuminate and give rise to new hypotheses -which in this case are "holistic" statements about a given type of relationship between state and society-.

A question that we regard as increasingly important for future consideration is related to the forms in which it may be valid to compare sub-regions-within-a-region with other sub-regions-outside-the-original-region (for instance, the Andean and the Balkan countries). The subregional units to be compared in such cases ought to be chosen according to the type of problem and to theoretical considerations, and not as frequently occurs, for reasons of geographical proximity or putatively similar sociocultural areas. For instance, in the case of comparing the Andean subregion and the Balkans, one important feature that may justify treating them as similar cases along a given dimension is the unsolved and potentially explosive pluri-national character of

many countries in both regions. This would allow to enhance the explanatory "visibility" of differentiating factors, which may in turn permit to pinpoint more precisely what is it that makes explosive or does not make explosive certain types of ethnic conflicts or makes them conflictive in different ways or through different paths.

Another way in which political systems and processes can be fruitfully approached comparatively is taking specific topics as a point of departure. For instance, it is not sufficient to establish that clientelism is a feature of many political systems or a generalized phenomenon that may be found in countries as different as Italy, USA, Brazil or Ecuador. Such statements are still trivial. The comparative challenge consists in specifying how this theme is present and how it is articulated with, affects and is affected by the the political process depending upon an additional series of factors. It is crucial, for instance, to establish whether these factors are or not country, region or sub-region specific. It is necessary, then, to determine how it is that certain variables which are present at certain levels of analytical aggregation (region, subregion and so forth) introduce theoretically significant differentiating elements in the functioning of a type of action which in principle has only been defined in a very generic and abstract manner. These specifications have a double heuristic value: they open the possibility of reconceptualization and increase the density inherent to the

investigated category. They also allow to improve our understanding of the nature and dynamics of regional subregional or national phenomena being observed and to, hopefully, learn more about the extent to which these categories are universal or specific to a particular level of aggregation.

In sum, confronting the challenge of developing new comparative approaches for the study of Latin American politics, and given an increasingly complex analytical universe, requires the combination of conceptual categories and problem-areas with units of analysis of different levels, in order to enrich and deepen our interpretation of empirical data. There is no doubt that there are topics which are not relevant to the entire Region and that there are others that it would be profitable to research at the national subregional or intra-regional level. However, these conclusions can be reached as a result of comparative analysis and not previous to its application.

Thus, intra-regional comparisons can be resorted to in order to test the analytical plausibility of the concept of region itself; to falsify generalizations about a group of countries; and as a heuristic device to discover new relevant variables and develop new hypotheses; as well as to discover previously unknown sources of variation. This may be done by approaching the topics to be examined using either spatial or issue-centered methods. Intra-regional comparisons do not entail a priori commitment to either

MSC or MDC designs.

On the basis of the previous considerations we shall now make an initial and tentative statement about topics that could be fruitfully examined through comparative intra-regional analysis, and which open the possibility of alternative combinations with cross-regional methods of inquiry (along the lines suggested above) as well.

V. SOME CENTRAL THEMES FOR A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH AGENDA.

The following list offers only a sample of some of the most relevant and pressing issues that may be included in the future research agenda of comparative intra-regional studies in Latin America.

A. The question of Democracy.

The question of democracy in its classic sense and under the form it has developed in advanced industrial countries of the North may be relevant in the case of certain Southern Cone countries --Chile, Uruguay-- as well as Costa Rica. However, in the case of other countries of Latin America, and specifically in the case of the Andean countries, we may be confronted with severe difficulties which spring at least partly from the observation that concrete political practices, the political and civic ethos and the nature of micro politics in these countries seem to be grounded on very

different routines, assumptions and norms. The way in which political agents in the Andean subregion conceive democracy and politics seem to lack some of the rock-bottom traits that make it "feasible" in the classical mode. The problem goes beyond the framework posed by such notions as "infant", "incomplete" or incipient democracies. Most of the Andean and South American republican political systems are as old or older than their European counterparts. It seems quite inappropriate to talk of these systems as "new" in the same sense in which we can refer to those of Africa or some Asian states'. Latin American nation-states have been around for a long time. Thus, the fact that they don't seem able to produce the same forms of political democracy generated in most of the industrial North, must have some other cause than just "inmaturity". The specificity of these political systems may, therefore, be grounded in some other type of factor. We wish to suggest that at least some of these factors must be sought for at the level of micro politics, in the self-rationality of everyday practices, and in the nature of societal political culture and habits at large -whose examination requires to go beyond the limitations of conventional cultural determinism. In order to examine such issues comparatively, it might be useful to combine several analytical approaches. Among these, we would like to suggest the potential relevance of a neo -Tocquevilian approach, together with rational-choice and game- theories as well as historico-cultural instruments of analysis. Such lines of inquiry might be fruitfully combined with specific comparative institutional

analysis, and with other studies centered in gaining deeper insight onto the nature of Latin American political structures, dynamics and agencies at the intra-regional level in order to ground the nature of "the common" and "the specific". Comparisons between "european-type" systems --Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica-- with the Andean systems, and between the relatively stable and the unstable amongst the latter, could be a fruitful analytical endeavour, without forgetting the relevance of further inquiries at the inter-regional level²⁵.

Another topic worthy of renewed comparative analysis at the intra-regional level is the question of authoritarianism. We may distinguish between liberal democracies, inclusionary authoritarian systems and governments (i.e. Mexico) and exclusionary authoritarian polities (i.e. bureaucratic-authoritarian). There are also indications that new types of hybrid systems combining traits of authoritarianism and democracy are emerging in Latin America. The case of the Fujimori regime in Peru and certain aspects of the Menem Administration in Argentina or the Collor de Melo's Administration in Brazil may display this hybrid profile which is authoritarian but neither bureaucratic nor inclusionary nor strictly populist in the sense in which populism has been described since the 1920s (that is: as a set of procedures and policies that incorporate the interests and demands of the middle classes and selected segments of the working strata, articulated by a nationalistic discourse). This new breed of still vaguely defined

authoritarian tendencies that coexist with democratization efforts and ideologies together with the survival of older authoritarian institutions and practices --i.e. Chile, Paraguay-- present a rich variety of situations which may provide comparativists with ample "hunting field" for the discovery of new forms of political legitimacy, regulation, integration and of new hypotheses concerning the unsolved question of governance and democratic consolidation in the region.

We would also like to suggest that beyond the description and analysis of authoritarianism at the macro political level, the comparison of specific institutions, practices and micro political relations is called for, in order to see how authoritarianism and participatory tendencies coexist, struggle and adapt to each other in specific settings. This is a relevant endeavour in order to further our understanding of the Region as a whole. Authoritarianism can be seen not only as a characteristic of whole systems, but also as a set of entrenched political habits, rationalities and routines that shape the everyday business of government and political life. Authoritarianism can also be seen as a "way of life" below and beyond the institutional structures -- i.e. the authoritarianism of everyday life and of "common sense"--

26

B. The Question of Human Rights.

The ethical and practical meaning of human rights looks very different if seen from the perspective of highly institutionalized political systems and cultures such as those to be found in several parts of Europe, the Southern Cone and the Anglo Saxon world, rather than from the point of view of Central American, Andean or Luso-American politics.

These differences ought to be studied in terms of the ways in which subjectivity is constituted in different types of political environments. It refers to the notions of "subject" and of "citizen". A relevant comparative endeavor might be to study the ways in which people socially construct their public and private personas in different political contexts both between and within countries. On the basis of our previous work we can suggest that in the Andean world, subjectivities are ethically, psychologically and communicatively constructed, in ways that are at variance with those assumed by the practical rationality of modernity, as developed since the XVIII century in Europe and lands colonized and populated by European populations. This has key implications for political culture-related dimensions of social coexistence, as well as for understanding the nature and prospects of governance in the Region.

In the Andean world for instance, it seems difficult to legitimize and support the self-perceptions of people on the basis of the post-Kantian canon of personhood as constituted around a hard core

of universalistic rights and duties. This is because wide segments of the population and of the elites have not been deeply influenced and aculturated in such self-understandings as derived from the Enlightenment. The notions of human, political and civil rights presuppose certain culturally-bound forms of personhood and subjective self images that are absent or strongly distorted in vast segments of the nominal citizenship of these countries. A comparative agenda could delve into the ways in which citizenship is actually constructed in distinct environments and on the consequences which these different constructions have for democratic governance, authoritarianism and the enforcement of human, civil and political rights as derived from a classic eurocentric perspective of subjectivity.

C. Notions such as governability, governance, legitimacy and social contract have proved useful in analysing the process of political change in Latin America and in the tasks of consolidating civilian republican rule. However, these look very different as seen from the perspective of the Southern Cone, or the Andean countries, or from Central America. The efforts to build nations and states on the basis of classical "continental" models of governance or anglo saxon ideas about democracy as guidelines, may lead to unexpected outcomes and trajectories if the social and cultural preconditions for their implementation are missing. The classic "napoleonic" and post-jacobin ideal of a homogeneous, rationally centralized and unitarian nation-state may not be feasible as such in countries

that have been fractured from the onset by deep and unsolved ethnic, regional, cultural and social cleavages. These rifts put a question mark on the feasibility of elaborating and finding those common and egalitarian terms on which the feelings and identities that lay at the core of nationhood can take hold.

The founding and basic assumptions of modern nationhood may be lacking in many countries of Latin America or they may be present in new and unsuspected ways. These may well represent important departures from the classic experiences of jacobin or anglo-saxon republicanism. Comparative analysis may help illuminate different ways in which the political and cultural prerequisites of the classic nation-state may or may not be present in different systems and help discover which are the most probable and feasible paths for the future political institutionalization of civil and democratic governance, even if those variants may depart considerably from classical models and even from each other. It also may provide a wider comprehension of the meaning of republicanism and of the very concept of the "nation-state".

D. Other important comparative topics that we suggest may usefully become part of the core of intra-regional comparative research in Latin America follow.

i. Currently many Latin American political systems are undergoing deep electoral realignments and several political party systems are

in a state of flux. Others, however, display considerable stability and resiliency --Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia--. Intra-regional comparative research may help understand better the dynamics behind crystallization, de-alignment and re-alignment in political party systems. This was not possible before the wave of electoral democratization in the 1980s, but now we have in most countries a sequence of increasingly regular electoral events that can provide the basis for such kind of comparative analysis.

ii. Connected but different from the above, the same growing regularity and spread of all kinds of elections may open the door for more and better comparative electoral research in the region. Many studies of European and Anglo-saxon democracies can be replicated and enhanced by their adaptation to this Region. This may help us to expand the number of cases that research on electoral systems outside the Region has generated, in order to use such expanded data-base for hypotheses-testing purposes and for research on the effects of the regional or area variable on correlations found elsewhere.

iii. Civil-Military relations is a dimension that deserves continued close scrutiny. The future political development of Latin America still depends to a great extent of the ability of political systems to find new ways of institutionalizing the role of the military and civilian control over the armed forces. Democratic

consolidation requires solving the problem of how to deal with the legacy of military interventionism and authoritarianism in politics. The deepening and improvement of the democratic "qualities" of Latin American governments also are linked to the reform of civil-military relations in the hemisphere and to finding new defense doctrines and ideologies that are compatible with external peace and increased participation of the citizenry in national security tasks. In areas such as this, comparative intra-regional studies may provide useful inputs that may contribute to the Region's efforts in preventing future rounds in the secular cycle of coups- democratic restoration- democratic breakdown and renewed military takeovers.

The above are just a few examples of some of the most relevant topics for setting a comparative research agenda in Latin America. There are other very interesting fields worthy of comparative research, suggested by the increasing complex nature of the Region and the problems it faces in the future. Here we have just attempted to provide a sample of some of the most interesting as well as pressing questions for comparative politics.

VI. CONCLUSIONS.

Intra-regional comparisons have acquired renewed relevance for understanding and re-problematizing contemporary Latin America -a

Region whose dramatic changes have had profound implications for the definition of its very identity as such-. Simultaneously, the present vigor of social scientific reflection upon its very own theoretical and methodological assumptions alerts us to the timely adoption of a healthy skepticism vis-a-vis traditional assumptions and provides incentives for the search of fresh approaches whereby to reflect upon the old and the new features of Latin America²⁷.

These kind of phenomena lead us to emphasize the need to open our disciplinary practices to a permanent process of redefinition and criticism of the units of analysis employed in order to adjust them according to research requirements defined thematically and not on the basis of a prioristic positions on the nature of the world and on the relevant units of analysis.

Methodologically, and in the first instance, we would like to suggest that it is convenient to leave aside the tendency to take for granted the "substantial" existence of entities such as region, sub-region or world and make the definition of such units in themselves a problem worthy of research. To assume these kinds of theoretical and methodological approaches may lead to establishing that, depending upon the topic, relevant units of analysis may change. For certain purposes it may be useful to take for granted the existence of an entity called Latin America, but this is something that, increasingly, each study will have to demonstrate. Researchers must keep open to the possibility of new and

unsuspected forms in which the Region, or specific sub-regions may be defined . At this point, it is perhaps interesting to propose that relevant units of analysis may be defined in terms of relatively stable networks of interaction, endowed with some defined degree of self-containedness and "thickness". Giddens' efforts to develop a theory of the social structuring may at this point result useful to bear in mind ²⁸. To begin with, units of analysis may be determined on the basis of certain hypotheses ex-ante about systems of sustained and frequent interaction. It might be useful to recuperate the notion of system such as Giddens uses it in order to draw the limits of relevant comparable units of analysis.

Comparative inquiry on Latin America must move not only beyond premature universalisation and ethnocentrism --the most blatant manifestations of which have long been overcome in wide circles of scholars from within and without the region- . It is no longer sufficient or interesting enough to see how certain categories appear through a series of different cases. It is more important to see how, through the intellectual experience of comparison our own assumptions are questioned, affected, fragmented and falsified once confronted to systematic relativization.

The new comparativeness must contain a stronger component of transcultural enrichment of perspectives and of self critique of initial points of departure. We must move beyond the mere empirical

verification of specific hypotheses and of taxonomic construction, and simultaneously attempt to establish a tense and always precarious balance between generalization and specificity. General concepts must contain in themselves their moment of fragmentation and negativity. The experience of comparative research is also an experience of the worth of what Adorno may have called "negative thought", on the tacit or explicit assumptions of our theories. The latter must be seen as inevitably condemned to suffer the effects of perspective that the particular disciplinary and cultural situation imposes on the researcher. But this awareness of the boundaries that frame our individual perspectives, perceptions and biases should not be reason for suspicion about the value of the endeavor but, rather, a way of expanding our awareness of the complexities inherent to all research processes. It can be further seen as a device which enables disciplinary practitioners to widen their horizons and insure as much as possible against sources of confusion and plain error that lie embedded in our theoretical and methodological tools.

Last but not least, we should mention that the adoption of comparative methods and of comparative analysis as a feature of Latin American research is not only a matter of willingness and awareness about its import. It is also a matter of making specific training in the theories and methods of comparative analysis available within the Region. The comparative approach has been conspicuous by its absence in university training in the Region.

Present debates on the reform of higher education should make explicit reference to the issue of comparative methods and approaches to further the understanding of the Region within the realm of social science training particularly at the postgraduate level. The question of curricular development and the inclusion in the design of educational programs in the social sciences at the graduate level of comparative theories, methods and approaches merits open debate among academic circles in Latin America. Both the presence of a new generation of scholars trained comparatively in accredited universities of the North, particularly in the US and Canada, as well as the efforts made by foundations to introduce comparative analysis in their funding targets, should contribute to providing new training opportunities in comparative methods and approaches in Latin American higher learning centers. Such opportunities should result in an increasing capacity of the Region's new generations of scholars to deal with the complexities of national, subregional, regional and transnational dimensions of pressing contemporary issues from comparative perspectives. It should also contribute to the configuration of new generations of Latin American social scientists with the adequate tools to overcome some of the problems identified in this paper. International donors aware of the importance of contributing to disseminate the analytical tools for the de-parochialization of thinking and to combat premature generalization in efforts at empirical research and theory building, may well consider the importance of incorporating in their funding agendas to Latin

American social science institutions opportunities for training in comparative methods. The willingness of the Region's academia to conduct comparative analysis is there. The training lags behind. The institutional strategies to bridge the gap merit serious attention. The incorporation of comparative programs at the undergraduate and graduate level in Latin American centers of higher learning may provide excellent opportunities for the joint education, within the Region, of future social scientists who could then acquire the tools necessary for approaching rigorously, systematically as well as creatively national issues within broader perspectives as well as to jointly develop, regardless of national boundaries, new attitudes towards framing their understanding of regional, intra-regional, national and global issues from fresh and better grounded endogenous perspectives²⁹.

biographical note on the authors.

Amparo Menéndez-Carrión . Born in Uruguay, naturalized Ecuadorean. Professor of Comparative Politics and International Relations. Her Ph.D. dissertation (The Johns Hopkins University, 1985) on the voting behavior and urban political culture in the case of Guayaquil, published in 1986 as La Conquista del Voto, is regarded

as a classic in the study of urban politics and clientelism in Ecuador. Her studies on issues of voting behavior, political culture and urban politics have been published in Europe, the US and Latin America. Former consultant to UNESCO, ILO and the Ford Foundation, among others, she is presently serving her 2nd term as Director of FLACSO-Sede Ecuador. She is currently preparing a major study on the question of citizenship and the public sphere in the Andean Region.

Fernando Bustamante. Ecuadorean, Professor at FLACSO-Ecuador in Political Science and International Politics. He has been involved in the study of civil-military relations in Latin America and has published many articles and books on such topic and in the field of international security. He has concentrated in topics such as arms transfers, military expenditure, national security doctrines, threat perception and drug traffic and violence. Former consultant of FAO; former professor at the University of Chile and at FLACSO-Chile. Presently he is the Coordinator of the Area of Political Science at FLACSO-Ecuador . Currently righting a book on the ideology of military reformism in Ecuador.

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1. See for instance, Alberto Van Klaveren, "Why Integration Now?. Options for Latin America", in Peter Smith (ed.), The Challenge of Integration: Europe and the Americas<Transaction Publishers, 1993. Ruth Zimmerling; Latin America's Future in World Trade: Regional Versus World Market Integration. Report on the International Conference held on March 24-25 1992 in Frankfurt/Main. Frankfurt, Germany, Friederich Ebert Stiftung; Alicia Frohmann, Puentes Sobre la Turbulencia: La Concertacion Politica Latinoamericana en los 80; Santiago de Chile, FLACSO, 1990, and Jeffrey Schott/ Gary Hufbauer, "Free Trade Areas, The Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, and the Multilateral Trading System", in Colin Bradford Jr. ed. Strategic Options for Latin America in the 1990's, Paris, OECD, 1992.

2. Our statement concerns largely comparative politics made by latin american scholars. In the United States and Europe there is a tradition of comparative studies on Latin America. However, notwithstanding the above, there are some important exeptions to this relative neglect of comparativism by latin americans, we would like to refer the reader to some very important comparative studies made in the region. The problem is that they have remained isolated

(although sometimes major) efforts that have not been followed by an important number of practitioners. This is the case of such seminal works as Cardoso, Fernando Henrique & Faletto Enzo; Dependency and Development in Latin America, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Published originally as Dependencia y Desarrollo en América Latina, Mexico, Siglo XXI, 1969; Gino Germani, Authoritarianism, Nationalism, Populism and Fascism, New Brunswick, N.J.; Transaction Books, 1977; Jorge Hardoy, Richard Morse & Richard Schaedel, Ensayos Histórico-Sociales sobre la Urbanización en América Latina, Ediciones SIAP, Buenos Aires, 1978; Jorge Hardoy & Richard Schaedel, Las Ciudades de America LATina y sus Areas de Influencia; Ediciones SIAP, Buenos Aires 1975; Helio Jaguaribe; Political Development: A General Theory and a Latin American Case Study; New York; Harper and Row; 1973; Amparo Menendez-Carrión; La Conquista del Voto: de Velasco a Roldós; Quito, FLACSO-CEN, 1986; Claudio Veliz; The Centralist Tradition in Latin America; Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1979; Guillermo O'Donnell; Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism; Studies in South American Politics; Berkeley; U. of California; Institute of International Studies, 1973; Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead; Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives and Tentative Conclusions; Baltimore; John Hopkins University Press; 1987.

3. Ronald Chilcote provides a very useful bibliography of comparative studies on Latin America in Ronald Chilcote, Theories of Comparative Politics, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1981.

4. We want to stress that the problem is not a lack of competent Latin American scholars and specialists who may attempt or be interested in comparative research. Such specialists exist but tend to be physically and institutionally dispersed and are not able to coalesce into a strong research community. We are still unable to reach a stage where more or less permanent and stable research teams and communities are able to provide permanent and continuous efforts to the process of comparative inquiry.

Within this situation, however, some nuances must be introduced. For instance, in the Southern Cone more progress has been made in this direction, and in that sub-region we find the promising beginnings of a more established and regular comparative political studies tradition. See: Enrique Baloyra (ed.), Comparing New Democracies, Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone, Boulder, Colorado; Westview Press, 1987; Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter & Lawrence Whitehead, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule; Baltimore; Maryland; John Hopkins U. Press; 1986; L.W. Goodman, J.S.R. Mendelson & J. Rial; The Military and Democratization. The Future of Civil Military Relations in Latin America; Lexington, Mass.; D.C. Heath; Lexington Books, 1990;

5.5. See for instance the papers by some Latin American authors in David Collier's The New Authoritarianism in Latin America; Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979. Also, Gino Germani, op. cit.; O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead; op. cit.; and Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead; Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy; Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1987; Fernando Henrique Cardoso; Autoritarismo e Democratizacáo, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1975; Marcelo Cavarozzi; Autoritarismo y Democracia 1955-1983, Buenos Aires, Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983; Manuel Antonio Garretón; "Proyectos, Trayectorias y Fracazos de los Regímenes Militares del Cono Sur, Un Balance"; in Alternativas; Santiago, CERC, No.7, Enero-Abril, 1984; J. Labastida del Campo (ed.); Dictadores y Dictaduras; Mexico, Siglo XXI; 1986; Norbert Lechner; Estado y Política en América Latina; México; Siglo XXI; 1981; Francisco Rojas (ed.); Autoritarismo y Alternativas Populares en America Latina; San Jose, Costa Rica; FLACSO; 1982;

6. See for instance some papers by one of the authors: Fernando Bustamante; "Algunas Conclusiones e Hipótesis en Torno al Problema del Control Civil sobre las FFAA y la Consolidación Democrática en los Países Andinos", FLACSO Documento de Trabajo No. 333; Santiago-Chile, 1987; 6. Fernando Bustamante; "El Desarrollo de las FFAA de Ecuador y Colombia. Una Revisión Comparativa" FLACSO, Documento de Trabajo No. 346; Santiago-Chile, 1987; Fernando Bustamante; "Los Militares y la Creación de un Nuevo Orden Democrático en Perú y Ecuador" FLACSO; Documento de Trabajo No. 370; Santiago-Chile, 1988; Also see: Augusto Varas ed.: Paz Desarme y Desarrollo en América Latina; GEL eds. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1987; Augusto Varas (coordinador): La Autonomía Militar en América Latina; Editorial Nueva Sociedad, Caracas, Venezuela, 1988; Augusto Varas (ed.): Democracy under Siege: New Military Power in Latin America; Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1989; Goodman, Mendelson y Rial (comp.): Los Militares y la Democracia; PEITHO, Montevideo, 1990.

7. In fact, single-country case studies can be methodologically comparative if the single case is treated with reference to other contexts and if those contexts are brought in in order to illuminate the specific problem being investigated. There are very good examples of this, for instance the study by Amparo Menendez-Carrión; LA Conquista del Voto: de Velasco a Roldós; Quito; FLACSO-CEN; 1986, in which the ecuadorean case is treated in a comparative mode.

8. See, Alejandro Portes and John Walton; Urban Latin America: the Political Condition from Above and Below; Austin; The University of Texas Press; 1975, also; Irving Louis Horowitz; Masses in Latin American; New York; Oxford U. Press, 1970 and Janice Perlman; The

Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro; Berkeley; University of California Press; 1976.

9. For a insightful critique of conventional views of urban marginality, see; Janice Perlman; Op. Cit.; and Alejandro Portes & John Walton, op. cit.

10. The already quoted studies on militarism by Fernando Bustamante can be an example of these, also, The outstanding book by Catherine Conaghan

Arturo Escobar & Sonia Alvarez (eds.); The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy and Democracy; Boulder, Colorado; Westview Press; 1992; Alfred Stepan; The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective; Princeton; Princeton University Press; 1978; Edelberto Torres-Rivas; Centroamerica Hoy; Mexico; Siglo XXI; 1975;

11. See David Apter; The Politics of Modernization; University of Chicago Press, 1965; Samuel Huntington; Political Order in Changing Societies; New York; Yale University Press; 1968; John Johnson; Political Change in Latin America, The Emergence of the Middle Sectors; Stanford, Stanford University Press; S.M.Lipset y A. Solari; Elites in Latin America; New York; Oxford University Press; 1967; for examples of what we say.

12. We may mention, among others works such as: Charles Anderson; Politics and Economic Change in Latin America; Princeton; Van Nostrand and Co.; 1967; David Collier (ed.); The New Authoritarianism in Latin America; Princeton, Princeton University Press; 1979; Catherine Conaghan; op. cit.; Liisa North; Civil-Military Relations in Argentina, Chile and Peru; Berkeley, University of California; Institute of International Studies, 1966; Alfred Stepan; The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective; Princeton; Princeton University Press; 1979; to name only a few comparative studies by north american scholars, which in our view avoid the pitfalls of many among early modernization scholars.

13. Although here we are not specifically interested in inter-regional comparisons, it may well be worth noting that it makes sense to propose that extra regional references may constitute an excellent tool of a potential not sufficiently explored yet. The specificity of regional processes may be better understood if they are contrasted with a more universal range of cases and spatial and time spheres. It could lead to finding new and distinctive features that may easily escape to observation due to their common presence in the region. We could also uncover certain features that we considered peculiar because they had not stood the comparative test.

14. As formulated in Guillermo O'Donnells pioneer text; Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics; Berkeley; University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1973

15. On migrants and squatters, their origins and means of adaptation to the urban environment, we suggest seeing: Frank Andrews and George W. Phillips; "The squatters in Lima: Who They Are and What They Want"; in Journal of Developing Areas; 4:2 (January 1970); Wayne Cornelius; Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City; Stanford, Stanford University Press; 1975, and Alejandro Portes; op. cit.

16. On this see: James Caporaso (ed.); The Elusive State: International Comparative Perspectives; Newbury Park; London, New Delhi; Sage Publications; 1988.

17. See Roberto Keohane and Joseph Nye; Poder e Interdependencia: la Política Mundial en Transición; Colección Estudios Internacionales, Buenos Aires; GEL:, 1988.

18. See Stephen Krasner; Structural Conflict: the Third World Against Global Liberalism; Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press; 1985; Jeannie Lincoln and Elizabeth Ferris (eds.); The Dynamics of Latin American Foreign Policies: Challenges for the Eighties; Colorado; Westview Press; 1984 and Abraham Lowenthal; Partners in Conflict. The United States and Latin America; The John Hopkins University Press; Baltimore and London; 1987.

19. We suggest that the article by Carlos Waisman "Prospects for Inter-Regional Comparisons: Political Processes in The Southern Cone and Western Europe", in this volume offers a very interesting comparison between the analitical differences of intra- and inter-regional comparisons.

21. See Carlos Weisman; op. cit.

21. Carlos Waisman; op. cit.

22. This was done by Bustamante in comparing the development of military professionalism in Ecuador and Colombia through the 19th and 20th centuries. At the beginning of the XIX century Colombia and Ecuador went through very similar stages of military warlordism and their political structure looked similar. But their civil-military relations evolved in diverging directions. By knowing which variables were constant through both cases it was possible to develop new insights on which ones made the difference in the specific cases under analysis: the structure and political competences of both countries' civilian elites, among other factors. See Fernando Bustamante; "El Desarrollo de las FFAA de Ecuador y Colombia. Una Revisión Comparativa" FLACSO, Documento de

Trabajo No.346; Santiago-Chile, 1987.

23. Hugh Heclo; Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden; New Haven; CT; Yale University Press; 1974.

24. Peter Katzenstein; Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States; Madison; Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin Press; 1978.

25. On the issue of democracy and on the importance of questioning its concept, specifically in the case of andean countries, see, Amparo Menendez-Carrión; "Democracias Pendientes y Representación Política en América Latina", en Margarita Lopez Maya (ed.); Desarrollo y Democracia; Caracas; UNESCO, Universidad Central de Venezuela; Editorial Nueva Sociedad; 1991, and Amparo Menendez-Carrión; "Para Repensar la Cuestión de la Ciudadanía. Dilemas, Opciones y Apuntes para un Proyecto"; in FLACSO; Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales; IIa. época; Vol. 1; No. 1; 1991.

26. This discussion of authoritarianism has been undertaken by Amparo Menendez-Carrión, specifically for the case of the andean countries, see: Op. Cit. 1991b

27. See Heinz Sonntag; Duda/Certeza/Crisis: La Evolución de las Ciencias Sociales en América Latina; UNESCO; Caracas; 1988.

28. Anthony Giddens; Las Nuevas Reglas del Método Sociológico; Amorrortu; Buenos Aires; 1987, and Anthony Giddens, Jonathan Turner et al; La Teoría Social Hoy; Alianza Editorial; Mexico; 1993.

29. See Amparo Menendez-Carrión; op. cit. 1991a and 1991b.