
TOPICAL REVIEW

THE THEORY OF SECTORAL CLASHES: INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT ISSUE OF LARR IS DEDICATED TO THE PAPERS OF A SYMPOSIUM* centering on the applicability of Markos Mamalakis' theory of sectoral clashes to Latin America and the relevance of the theory to economics as well as to other social science disciplines. The original purpose of the symposium was to provide the background for a special article in LARR with commentaries, a format which we have used in the past with considerable success. The lengthy contributions, however, of Barraza and Merx as well as the rather extensive commentaries of other participants made it seem desirable to include the greater part of the symposium in this issue. The editor felt justified in so proceeding in view of the broad nature of the subject matter both in inter-disciplinary range and in geographic coverage.

In commenting on the Mamalakis theory, the commentaries, and the two applications to Mexico and Argentina, one is immediately aware of the highly critical reception with which the theory was greeted. My own reaction both at the symposium itself and afterwards upon reviewing the revised texts is that Mamalakis has presented a provocative theoretical formulation that requires considerable elaboration before it can be used in an explanatory way, but that it opens up the possibility of providing the social sciences with an analytical tool for the study of complex societies that is potentially usable by all the disciplines.

In reviewing the comments, one is impressed by the degree to which major problems in the recent dynamics of Latin America are touched upon. Most

* The symposium was entitled "The Relative Applicability of Class and Sectoral Frameworks to the Analysis of Social, Economic and Political Change in Latin America," and was held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee on April 18 and 19, 1969 under the sponsorship of the Center for Latin American Studies of that university. The conference was made possible by grants from the Anonymous Funds Committee and the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

social scientists are concerned with accounting for change (with or without "development") in Latin America, and here at least is a forthright attempt to account for it. Mamalakis, in presenting a series of models to show how sectoral realignments change from the 19th century to the present, draws largely from his experience in Chile, and even in this exercise he is admittedly presenting an abstraction and simplification of the total process. Much of the commentary he received is directed to indicate that in specific countries the pattern underwent modifications. To indicate that the sectoral pattern was different from country to country in different periods of time does not invalidate the theory, but rather forces one to think along sectoral lines in determining whether indeed at certain times and places the determinant factor in a given change was or was not behavior along sectoral lines.

The frames of Mamalakis' model, although rigid at first glance, are modifiable (as Domínguez points out in his commentary) and permit the analyst the opportunity to represent several simultaneous alignments of dominance, neutrality or repression. With more sophisticated, refined and precise guidelines for the bounding of sectors and definition of sub-sectors and a device for introducing foreign input, the Mamalakis frames should be able to provide a composite diagram of the constellation of economic, political and social forces at any point in the history of a complex society. Analyzing this diagram over time and space may well provide the basis for successful prediction of trends that will advance us in accounting for change in Latin America.

Since 1960 there have been several summaries of social science research on Latin America which reflect the general theoretical dilemma in which scholars find themselves (particularly as regards class analysis) in accounting for recent developments and forecasting future trends. The first, which resulted from a Working Group on Social Aspects of Economic Development in Latin America, held in Mexico City in 1960, resulted in a two-volume publication in 1963. Echavarría, who gave the sociologist's view, pinpointed one of the major problems:

The lack of precision of the concept of class and the controversies that have raged round it (in this respect the middle class holds the record) have led to the adoption of many different euphemisms such as 'middle classes,' middle sectors, intermediate groups, etc., to denote this important category. Similarly, the reputation for Machiavellianism attaching to the work of some leading social scientists tempts one to avoid certain other categories—the *élites*, political class, ruling class—although the use of these terms in the strictly neutral, scientific connotation will often prove necessary (Medina Echavarría, 1963:72).

In 1962 a Seminar on Social Structure, Stratification and Mobility was held in Rio de Janeiro, which resulted in a volume edited by Anthony Leeds (1967).

Then, in 1965 a Seminar on Elites and Development in Latin America was held at the University of Montevideo and resulted in a one-volume publication in 1966, edited by Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari. This effort represented a joint attempt to apply, or at least call attention to, "elite analysis" as an "alternative perspective" to class analysis. In many respects both seminars reflected the same dissatisfaction with class analysis to which Echavarría refers, and both resulted in the exposition of new and modified approaches to societal analysis with special emphasis on explaining growth and development or lack of same.

Adams in 1967 published *Second Sowing*, which represents a theoretical approach from anthropology in which power analysis by dual sectors is used as an alternative to class analysis. In his exposition Adams emphasizes the difficulties of defining the middle class and, except for the southern cone countries, denies the utility of the concept for Latin America, opting for a major two-fold division of society based upon contrasting value systems to which each sector adheres. These are: prestige through manipulation of power for the upper sector, and wealth through work for the lower. Like Mamalakis he sees the growing importance of government, exercising its redistributive function (resources for Mamalakis, power for Adams): "The major challenge to the dual system seems to rest with governments. Their role in secondary development carries with it a natural corollary of concern for a balance of power among the various segments of society."

This role of government in Mamalakis' theory is what Charles Anderson characterizes as a "Mercantilist government which advantages one sector over another for reasons of state. This would seem to permit a more accurate reading of the course of Latin American development politics than the presumption that the state characteristically responds to demands for established interests. From the mineral concessions and the liberal trade policies of the nineteenth century to the Prebischian economics of the postwar period, the development policies of most Latin American states cannot very well be explained by extant economic elites."

In Mamalakis' boxes for government and white collar services are the kinetic and potential elements of the "mercantilist" government, and with the addition of the entrepreneurial component they account for what has been termed the middle class. The government-service coalition is one of the more recent of Mamalakis' patterns. An application of the concept of "balance ratio" for different income groups in the service sector in countries where government-service coalitions now operate might yield an index of the viability (or perhaps a saturation point) of recent urbanization and terciarization trends.

Recent developments in Bolivia, which were reviewed at the symposium

by James Malloy (and further developed in a paper presented at the AAAS meetings in December 1969) show how the sectoral analysis sheds light on the rather abrupt reversal of the 1952 MNR coalition of civil government with blue collar workers, peasants and a small entrepreneur sector to the more recent alliance of government, services and peasants against the blue collar worker and particularly the miners. The shifting role of the white collar professional (under Paz) and military (under Barrientos) at first suppressing, then favoring the cause of the larger salary dependent employee-teacher sector, clearly reflects the intra-class divisiveness in the middle sectors as does the rather sudden alienation between miners and peasants over the same period for the lower class.

Merckx's paper on Argentina, particularly his conception of stop-go cycles and sectoral clashes, provides a well-documented example of the fresh insight that the Mamalakis approach offers to interpretation of Latin American socio-economic dynamics over the past few decades, to the extent to which Merckx's generalization on Argentina is relevant to other countries of Latin America.

In view of the recrudescence of military governments in Latin America the applicability of Merckx's generalization is worth examining in other countries: "It would be an exaggeration to say that the lines of political conflict are drawn only along lines of economic interest, but as a minimum, it can be said that disagreement over economic policy options has played a major part in preventing broad-based governing coalitions. . . . Military governments have been no more free of policy struggles than have civilian governments . . . Economic failures discredit military regimes as fully as they do civilian governments."

Barraza, in applying Mamalakis' theory to Mexico, points up the fact that "intuitively the theory fits well," and then proceeds to show that a rigorous testing in quantifying the influence of the "power" of a dominant or suppressed sector in wage and employment yields no confirmation of the theory. In a subsequent issue of LARR, Mamalakis plans to furnish a rebuttal in which some of the details of methodology relevant to the empirical validation of the theory will be explained in greater depth than the presentation of the theory in articles form has permitted.

The commentaries represent in addition to economics (Gottlieb and Wionczek), political science (Domínguez and Charles Anderson) and sociology (Merckx and Bo Anderson). Although at the Milwaukee symposium more disciplines were represented (notably James D. Cockcroft in history and Sidney Greenfield in anthropology) and there were additional representatives of economics (Clark Reynolds) and political science (Malloy and Harry Kan-

tor), it has been necessary because of limitation of space to reduce the selection to those commentaries which were most directly relevant to the theory, its implications for the social sciences and its applicability to specific Latin American countries.

Bo Anderson, sociologist, makes comparisons with Scandinavian countries and contrasts the different government attitudes toward sector suppression as populist and technocratic. Charles Anderson from political science stresses the utility of Mamalakis' theory specifically in analyzing politics of development policy—but suggests that complex-coalition models are at present more useful to the political scientist than either those based on class or sectoral conflict. Domínguez, also a political scientist, points out the pros and cons of the sectoral conflict approach in understanding the dynamics of agglomerative, non-functionally based parties (e.g., the several Christian Democratic parties). Economist Gottlieb's observations are most helpful in explicating the disaggregative features of the Mamalakis theory.

Merkx points out that the recent studies on emergent coalitions in different societies from Trotsky to Barrington Moore have a congruence which should require a theoretical formulation of the type advanced by Mamalakis, although he holds that this formulation still lacks the rigor of true theory and at this point is best described in part taxonomy and in part hypothesis. Wionczek, an economist, is perhaps the most critical of the commentators. He feels that Mamalakis has underweighed the non-economic factors and that the concepts of government and banking systems within the frames of the theory are too vague.

A sequel to the meeting represented by this issue of LARR was held at the AAAS meetings in Boston in December of 1969. At this symposium, the Mamalakis theory was applied to Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Cuba by a smaller interdisciplinary group. LARR hopes that its readers share the editor's concern that this type of forum is useful in providing an interdisciplinary critique of important theoretical contributions in Latin American research.

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* Editor's note: With this issue of LARR founding editor Richard P. Schaedel relinquishes the editorship to Thomas F. McGann of the University of Texas and returns to full-time teaching and research. The new staff is completed by Thomas F. Glick, Associate Editor; Luis A. Arocena and Lawrence S. Graham, Consulting Editors; Katherine Vine, News Section Editor; and D. Cheryl Wilkins, Research Inventory Editor.

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