CHAPTER 2

FROM THE 1930s TO THE 1980s

Learning outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Trace the relationship between industrialization and political forms such as populism.
- Look at the consolidation of modern states and the persistence of corporatism.
- Examine the implications of the Cold War for democracy in Latin America.
- Identify common characteristics among the military regimes of the 1960s–1980s.
- Assess the implications of the Cuban Revolution and look at revolutions in theory.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the recent history of Latin America from the Great Depression of the early 1930s, through the development of modernizing states overseeing rapid change in the postwar era and the military clampdown of the 1960s and 70s, to the dawn of a new democratic era in the 1980s. The Great Depression that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929 had a significant impact on the form of economic development that would be pursued in much of Latin America and, as a result, upon the shape of the region’s political systems. It initiated a process of industrialization that gathered pace after the Second World War in which large state bureaucracies controlling public enterprises were created, and workers and middle-class professionals and bureaucrats were incorporated in new governing coalitions overseeing the region’s own form of industrial revolution. However, the economic and political tensions generated by accelerated change, the constant threat of unrest among the main losers in this process such as the peasantry, and the waning fortunes of Latin America’s first industries in the context of the tense Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, contributed to the return of authoritarianism. Military regimes seized control in many Latin American countries from the 1960s until the 1980s, often employing repression to maintain control and purge the
politics of their countries of leftwing elements. However, economic crisis, international change and internal tensions eventually made the pressure for a return to civilian rule irresistible. The military returned to the barracks and authoritarian rulers relinquished control throughout Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Wall Street crash reduced demand for Latin American products and caused a recession that ended the neocolonial order by forcing countries to reconsider their dependence on the world economy. Some responded by seeking a special relationship with powerful countries that preserved access to their markets, as Argentina did by giving Britain preferential terms on its beef. Most states in the region responded by taking the initial steps towards creating their own industries through import-substitution industrialization (ISI) aiming to reduce their reliance on the import of manufactured goods (see Chapter 15). State-led ISI promised greater economic independence and to create jobs for an emerging working class. As a result, in the 1930s many Latin American governments began to restructure their economies by adopting protectionist policies that imposed tariffs on imports in order to nurture local industries. A nationalist climate made this easier by justifying hostility to foreign businesses (see Chapter 14). The US administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt responded to this climate by outlining a ‘Good Neighbour Policy’ towards Latin America in 1933 advocating that no American state should interfere in the affairs of others. FDR’s foreign policy aimed to achieve more constructive economic relations with the region, laying the basis for subsequent US–Latin American co-operation during the Second World War. Protectionist policies in Latin America implied the need for greater government intervention in the economy than in the past, and by the end of the 1930s the state as a set of institutions had grown stronger across the region (see Box 2.1). Public ministries grew in size, new government agencies were created to promote manufacturing and in Mexico and Bolivia the state nationalized the oil industry.

Policy shifts and recession fostered political polarization in the 1930s and new parties and movements – from communists to fascists – emerged to challenge elite conservative and liberal factions (see Chapter 13). However, economic recovery in the 1930s was achieved through the traditional export sector and policies adopted to survive the Depression required the state to balance the interests of the export sector, foreign capital and urban sectors. To do this, the state needed broad consent for its institutions and policies, and so power shifted to coalitions of landowners, middle classes, organized labour and the new state bureaucracy supported by the military. Most Latin American countries were ruled by authoritarian parties or military dictators stressing nationalism, and some regimes had fascist trappings such as those led by Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930–61) in the Dominican Republic, Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931–44) in El Salvador, Jorge Ubico (1931–44) in Guatemala,
An important theme in the study of Latin America has been the strength of the state and its relationship with development. What comprises the state has been the subject of intense debate, but the most influential definition by Weber (1968) understood the state as a set of social institutions which exercised a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a given territory. In Latin America, different types of state have emerged, but these have had common experiences and their capacities have almost always developed alongside the expansion of capitalism. The weakness of the state and the degree to which it has been the captive of powerful social groups, for example, have been factors that have repeatedly brought into question its legitimacy – authority based on consent – and held back economic modernization. Whitehead (1994) argues that it is advantageous to trace the effective organization of states in Latin America not from Independence but from later in the nineteenth century when stable administrations were established after many years in which dominant social groups had squabbled among themselves while excluding the mass of the population from politics. The stability of these administrations was related to the extent to which they were seen as legitimate by rival political and social forces. The first coherent efforts in Latin America from the 1850s at state-building – the active process of creating the formal institutions and procedures associated with the modern state, such as a government bureaucracy – reflected centralized attempts by oligarchic elites and authoritarian rulers to adapt property laws and develop infrastructure so that countries could integrate more effectively in the growing international economy.

Prior to the 1930s, oligarchic states prevailed in which a limited bureaucracy served the interests of a small sector of the population which derived its power from land-ownership or international trade. The Depression after 1929, the rise of economic nationalism and industrialization forced some states to assume new tasks and to find new sources of support in society to ensure stability. From the 1930s modernizing states developed by extending central public authority over greater areas of the national territory and taking on many more administrative responsibilities. During the Second World War these states were required to tighten centralized territorial control and the armed forces expanded. Public enterprises were also established in strategic sectors such as steel and power. These states often acted in the interests both of traditional oligarchs and newly emergent groups such as urban trades unions and professional bureaucrats. Their priorities and links with foreign markets limited development and often excluded the mass of the population from the benefits of economic growth. After the war, where ISI was underway it led to greater levels of state economic management and ownership, combined with public policies aiming to alleviate class conflict. In many cases, new, mainly urban classes were brought into the political process through populism – a form of political activity that championed the needs, concerns or preferences of ordinary people against powerful vested interests (see below, and Chapters 5, 17). In the process, traditional political practices such as corporatism and clientelism gained a new lease of life (see Box 2.2, Chapter 8). Interest groups were maintained and controlled by the state while politicians distributed jobs and other payoffs to supporters. Corporatism both ensured state control over these groups but
Arturo Alessandri (1932–36) in Chile and José María Velasco Ibarra (1934–35) in Ecuador. The governments of Getúlio Vargas (1930–45) in Brazil, Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40) in Mexico and David Toro (1936–37) in Bolivia had an authoritarian character while pursuing some progressive and socialistic reforms (see Chapter 17).
These political systems of the 1930s adapted by accommodating the new social forces generated by economic change yet did not end elite domination completely. Elements of the former hierarchy survived while new groups such as organized labour, peasant organizations and business groups were brought into the system under government control. In Brazil, for example, under Vargas trade unions were run by the Ministry of Labour. This development revived corporatism – a form of interest-group politics – that some scholars have argued has its roots in Iberian tradition (see Box 2.2).

**BOX 2.2 THEORIES AND DEBATES**

**Corporatism**

An important element of continuity in the evolution of Latin American political systems has been corporatism, which has often been a prominent feature of the relationship between state and society in the region.

The term ‘corporatism’ has been used in several ways in the study of Latin America (see Collier, 1995). First, the term has been used to refer to a type of society distinguished by what are, in essence, cultural characteristics that some scholars have argued were inherited from the Iberian tradition, such as social relations deriving from feudalism and a hierarchical Roman Catholic tradition, extended families governed by powerful patriarchs, essentially non-democratic links between the state and social groups, and hostility to the liberal capitalism of the modern era (see Wiarda, 1974, 1981; Véliz, 1980). An ideological vision of society structured along these lines has at times been advanced by conservatives and Church thinkers in Latin America (see Chapter 13). Second, corporatism has been used in a more functional sense to refer to ways in which hierarchically organized ‘corporations’ that represent distinct interest groups in society are incorporated into the state’s policymaking process, allowing those groups both to represent their members’ interests while at the same time ensuring their compliance with state policy – social and political control (see Schmitter, 1971, 1974; see also Box 8.1). Scholars employing the term in this way have not necessarily accepted the other sense in which it has been used. Under the functional definition, common examples of corporatist groups are the Church, trades unions, business organizations and the military. Often the state gave these a monopoly of representation within the social sectors they catered for in exchange for control over the selection of their leaders and the articulation of their demands (see Schmitter, 1974).

Corporatism in both senses has been employed to characterize political relations from the colonial era to the present day. Wiarda (1998) has argued that colonial Latin America, like that of the Iberian peninsula, had corporatist features. Society was organized around largely autonomous groups such as the Church that enjoyed privileges in exchange for exercising responsibilities under royal authority. Independence ended the monarchy’s role mediating between groups and, faced with anarchy, centralized control was imposed by caudillos (see Box 1.3) who tolerated corporatist structures like the Church and army, which in turn acted as de facto branches of government. As the liberal state itself developed in the late nineteenth century, it improved its ability to
In Chile and Venezuela, middle-class groups prevailed, while in Mexico control by a single party incorporating all social sectors was consolidated under an emergent bourgeoisie or capitalist class. Uruguay avoided the turmoil following the Wall Street crash of 1929 but still experienced authoritarian regimes, and in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, ISI and nationalism exacerbated political conflict between urban powerbrokers and rural oligarchs. In Peru, disputes between industrialists and the small urban working class aggravated rivalry between conservative landowners and liberal export elites, provoking recurrent military coups. In Colombia, nationalism greatly exacerbated polarization between rightwing figures such as Laureano Gómez (see Box 2.2 continued...
Chapter 13) and leftwingers such as Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (b.1898–d.1948), whose assassination in 1948 unleashed a civil war known as La Violencia that established a persistent tradition of lawlessness.

Industrialization accelerated during the Second World War as Latin America lost its access to the European market and there was rapid growth in US demand for strategic materials. The US also put Latin America under pressure to sever ties with the Axis powers, with countries supporting the Allies benefiting from preferential trade and investment relations. In Argentina, there was much sympathy for Italy and Germany, and the country remained neutral until towards the end of the war. In the larger countries of Latin America, the manufacturing encouraged by wartime economic policies began to have an impact on the class structure and political relations, strengthening industrialists and urban trades unions. By the end of the war these supporters of industry had begun to challenge traditional export interests and gain the attention of government. With recovery in Europe after the war, however, demand for Latin American products began to fall and ISI faltered as imported goods flowed anew into the region. Government officials and economists began to argue that Latin America would need to invigorate its industrialization process in order to compete. After 1949, the United Nations’ Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL, Economic Commission for Latin America, whose acronym in English was originally ECLA, later ECLAC to incorporate the Caribbean) supported efforts to develop ISI further (see Box 15.3). By the 1950s, most governments in the region had turned their backs on export-led growth policies, and this became the golden age of ISI. Table 2.1 summarizes the main events in this period.

However, ISI policies were applied to a differing extent and according to different priorities in each Latin American country and, as a result, generated a wide range of experiences. In each case, the state had to meet or confront the vested interest of different social groups, particularly traditional landowning elites, and the resultant impact of ISI upon class structures varied considerably. ISI policies were most comprehensive and coherent in the larger economies of the region such as Mexico and the Southern Cone countries of Brazil, Argentina and Chile, where they fuelled the growth of discernible if small classes of domestic industrialists and urban workers and underpinned corporatism. The size of these countries, their existing infrastructure and their technological capacity meant that in many cases industrialization occurred with little state intervention. In other parts of South America and in Central America, however, where traditional exporting elites retained considerable power, the state and other institutions such as CEPAL often played a more significant role in creating industry. In Peru, for example, traditional exporters held great economic and political power until the early 1960s, and ISI policies did not start until the administration of Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1963–68) and did not get seriously under way until the military had taken power under Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75). Thereafter, accelerated ISI in Peru based on comprehensive state intervention generated considerable economic and social problems for subsequent governments,
Table 2.1  LANDMARKS: From the Depression until the 1950s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year or period</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui publishes <em>Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana</em> (Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930–36</td>
<td>Nationalist or authoritarian regimes take power in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, Cuba, Brazil, Honduras and Ecuador. Authoritarian leaders in Mexico, Brazil and Bolivia pursue socialistic reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932–35</td>
<td>Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay over territorial claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>US president Franklin D. Roosevelt outlines ‘Good Neighbour Policy’ towards Latin America advocating that no American state should interfere in the affairs of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Anastasio Somoza comes to power in Nicaragua; in Brazil the fascist Ação Integralista Brasileira (Integralists) come close to pulling off a coup d’état but fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Lázaro Cárdenas nationalizes the oil industry in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939–45</td>
<td>Many Latin American countries remain neutral until late in the Second World War although supply the Allies with crucial raw materials. Some, such as Argentina, are sympathetic towards the Axis powers, although several join the Allies as combatants in 1942 following attacks on their shipping and the raid on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Brazil is the only Latin American country to send troops to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944–46</td>
<td>Democratic governments replace authoritarian regimes across the region and there is a general shift to the left as well as a period of labour militancy. In Guatemala, elections install nationalist presidents during 1944–54 who anger the US with their reformist policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946–48</td>
<td>Shift away from reformism as the Cold War begins to unfold and the US begins to place Latin American governments under pressure; states begin to bring organized labour under control and to repress Communist parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Juan Domingo Perón becomes president of Argentina, establishing a style of rule that has become synonymous with populism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Organización Demócrata Cristiana de América (ODCA, Christian Democrat Organization of America) founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Organization of American States (OAS) formed; Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL, Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLA) formed; assassination of populist Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in Colombia unleashes La Violencia; US backs dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
serving to widen already significant inequalities. The Central American countries started to industrialize in the 1950s but were limited by their small size. Under the aegis of CEPAL, ISI policies were the main impetus behind the first regional integration effort, and in 1960 the Mercado Común Centroamericano (MCCA, Central American Common Market, CACM) was formed by Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua as a mechanism to help nurture industry.

**Table 2.1 continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year or period</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Costa Rica abolishes its armed forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Bolivian revolution installs populist Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR, Revolutionary Nationalist Movement); Puerto Ricans vote in support of US commonwealth status with autonomy in internal affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Colombia’s liberal-conservative coalition gives way to a repressive dictatorship under General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla; women get the vote in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>CIA supports overthrow of the constitutional government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala; Vargas’s populist government in Brazil collapses and he commits suicide after a military ultimatum; US supports Alfredo Stroessner’s dictatorship in Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Perón is toppled in a military coup in Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Somoza is assassinated in Nicaragua; Egypt’s seizure of the Suez Canal generates nationalist tensions in Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>François ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier becomes president in Haiti with US support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Triumph of Cuban Revolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POPULISM**

Democratic governments began to replace authoritarian regimes in several countries, including Brazil, Venezuela and Guatemala, for a brief period during 1945–47. In Chile, the changes generated by industrialization had allowed for a form of democracy in which both industrialists and workers represented by their own parties competed for access to power. Several countries experienced the emergence of pro-industrial, multiclass and mainly urban ‘populist’ alliances behind a leader adopting nationalist...
rhetoric who used the power of the state to address issues of social justice. These alliances brought together classes that, under normal circumstances, were likely to come into conflict, such as workers and industrialists, and challenged the longstanding predominance of oligarchic and foreign economic interests by excluding them (see Chapters 15, 17).

‘Populism’ is a term whose precise meaning has been hotly debated and that has been used in different ways in the Latin American context. Historians have tended to argue that populism was a reaction to the Depression of the early 1930s that reflected simultaneous processes of adaptation and modernization in society and politics. Political scientists have used the term to refer variously to the characteristics of some of the movements like those above, to a style of political leadership, to a form of ideology (see Chapters 13 and 14), or to a combination of all of these (see Conniff (ed.), 1999). Di Tella (1965) applied the term ‘populism’ to post-1945 mass movements in Latin America, understanding these not as a product of the autonomous organizational power of the working class and/or the peasantry but nonetheless enjoying the support of these social groups as well as the support of non-working-class sectors upholding an anti-status quo ideology. Knight (1998) argued that populism in Latin America was best understood in terms of a political style adopted in order to obtain and maintain power involving a proclaimed rapport with ‘the people’, a ‘them-and-us mentality’, often during a period of crisis and mobilization. Populist leaders and movements have usually championed the needs of ordinary people, regardless of the social group they belong to, against powerful vested interests and as an alternative to traditional institutions of political representation such as political parties (see Chapters 5, 7). They have often directed their message at the poor, using radical rhetoric to promise better living conditions, and at the lower middle classes, by attacking rural oligarchies, industrial elites and economic imperialism (see Kaufman and Stallings, 1991). Populist regimes were usually authoritarian and leaders sought legitimacy across classes through the unifying ideology of nationalism (see Chapter 14). Nationalists resisted any effort to encourage a return to export-led growth and insisted that industrialization was the only way forward.

The most celebrated populist in Latin American history was Juan Domingo Perón, who ruled Argentina as president from 1946 until he was ousted in a coup in 1955. Perón’s glamorous wife Evita became a global icon and has been celebrated in literature, music and cinema. Peronist economic policy tried to end foreign ownership in many sectors and raised workers’ living standards, but an economic downturn and conflicts with the Vatican angered the middle class, and the military sent Perón into exile until 1973, when he returned to the presidency again briefly before his death. Other populist rulers with a nationalist message included Cárdenas in Mexico, José María Velasco Ibarra (1934–35, 1944–47, 1952–56, 1960–61, 1968–72) in Ecuador and Vargas in Brazil. Some populists such as Gaitán in Colombia and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (b.1895–d.1979) in Peru did not gain power but had an enduring impact on politics.
THE COLD WAR

A climate of nationalism in Latin America developed before and during the Second World War while the US was strengthening its position as a global power (see Chapters 11, 14, 15). After the war, the US focused on rebuilding Europe but, with the outbreak of the Cold War in the late 1940s, Washington again deepened its involvement in Latin American politics (see Chapters 10, 11). FDR’s cautious policy of the 1930s opposing foreign intervention in Latin American affairs was put aside. In 1948, the US was instrumental in setting up the Organization of American States (OAS, see Box 10.4) which became a vehicle for its anti-communism, and by the 1950s the US had assumed the right to intervene against what it regarded as communist activity in the region. The Cold War altered the basis of inter-American relations by turning Latin America into a battleground in the conflict between US capitalism and Soviet communism. Washington pursued an anti-communist crusade until the late 1980s that had an important influence on the fate of democracy by helping to perpetuate authoritarian regimes. The democratic governments that had begun to replace authoritarian regimes in the immediate postwar period had often included reformists and members of communist or socialist parties. The US pressed friendly governments to outlaw these parties and their sources of support in labour movements. It also formalized the close working relationships it had established during the war with military forces, the main source of anti-communism. In this climate, and amid strains often generated by populism, most of Latin America’s fragile postwar democratic experiments foundered. The logic of the Cold War also encouraged the US actively to undermine some reformist democracies. In Guatemala, between 1944 and 1954 democratic elections installed nationalist presidents who angered the US with their reformist policies. In 1954, a US-sponsored invasion from Honduras by a force recruited from enemies of the nationalist government of Jacobo Arbenz (1950–54), armed and trained by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), installed a repressive military junta in Guatemala. The US also backed dictatorships elsewhere, such as those of Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1948–58) in Venezuela and Alfredo Stroessner (1954–89) in Paraguay, although there were many inconsistencies in Washington’s policy.

By the late 1950s, domestic demand for manufactured products remained weak and ISI had created only a limited number of jobs yet nurtured large, inefficient states with vast bureaucracies riddled with corruption. Latin America remained dependent on imports of capital goods – the equipment needed to set up factories for more sophisticated manufacturing processes – and so remained vulnerable to external economic factors. Proponents of ISI realized that the benefits of modernization were not being distributed evenly or among most of the population, and peasants neglected by industrialization policies had begun mobilizing. Rising inflation and unemployment exacerbated social tensions and deep differences between protected industrialists, landowners and workers began to weaken governments.
In Colombia, the liberal-conservative coalition that overthrew Gómez gave way to a repressive dictatorship under General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953–57). In Argentina, military hardliners began a purge against Peronists. In Brazil, Vargas’s populist government was destroyed in 1954 by the irreconcilable demands of unions and industrialists and he committed suicide. Competition also developed between those advocating social reform and those who believed in more radical change. In Bolivia, the populist Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR, Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) took power in 1952 and pursued nationalist policies influenced by positions deriving from Marxism – a political philosophy advocating the achievement of workers’ control of the means of the production through revolution – to destroy the power of the traditional landed elites and mining interests. Although some countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Mexico, Chile and Uruguay were able to keep political differences under control, by the late 1950s much of Latin America had become mired in conflicts between rival social groups divided as to what direction their countries should take.

Until the 1960s, Marxism had played only a limited role in the evolution of Latin American politics, largely because the industrial working class was small and communist parties believed peasants would not be an important vector of revolution (see Chapter 13). However, the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 (see Box 2.3) challenged reformist perspectives and inspired armed revolts in Paraguay, Argentina and the Dominican Republic (1959), Venezuela and Colombia (1961), Guatemala and Ecuador (1962) and Peru (1963).

**BOX 2.3  CASE STUDY**

**The Cuban Revolution**

The Cuban Revolution in 1959 was a turning point in the Cold War because it linked nationalist resistance to ‘US imperialism’ with insurgency and transformed the prospects of socialism in Latin America (see Chapters 10, 13, 14, Box 11.5). The revolution which toppled the strongman Fulgencio Batista (1933–44, 1952–59) was the only successful armed insurgency in the region until the Sandinistas seized power in Nicaragua two decades later (see below). Cuba’s revolution was led by middle-class professionals like Fidel Castro (1959–) and the Argentine Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara (b.1928–d.1967) who drew inspiration from a long nationalist tradition deriving from the anti-Americanism of the Cuban hero José Martí (b.1853–d.1895) (see Box 10.2, Chapter 14). Since 1898 Cuban development had been strongly dependent on the US, and Marxist theories of imperialism made sense to nationalists committed to ending the island’s neocolonial relationship with its dominant neighbour (see Chapter 15).

Castro became a dictator but oversaw a transformation of economic and social structures that tackled inequalities on the island (see Chapter 17). His regime nationalized foreign-owned estates and industries; turned sugar plantations into
Cuba distorted US perceptions about the nature of the threat to its security and prompted the creation of the Alliance for Progress, a US programme of aid supporting reforms that was launched in Latin America in 1961. The objective of the Alliance was to nurture centrist, reformist alternatives to dictatorship premised on the notion that economic development and social reform could avert revolution. US capital was channelled to elected governments whose reforms – including some economic nationalism in the form of ISI combined with land reform and the reduction
of income inequalities – met with Washington’s approval. Reformers gaining US support in this period included Arturo Frondizi (1958–62) in Argentina, Rómulo Betancourt (1959–64) in Venezuela, Jânio Quadros (1961) in Brazil, Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1963–68) in Peru, Eduardo Frei (1964–70) in Chile, and Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958–62) and Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966–70) in Colombia. However, the Alliance served, in fact, to demonstrate the weakness of democracy in Latin America by confirming that social tensions in countries such as Brazil, Chile and Argentina could not be contained by limited reformism. It suited political forces on both left and right to discredit the reformist option and, as the Alliance faltered and elites in Latin American began to turn to the military, Washington acquiesced in the establishment of repressive anti-communist regimes. Table 2.2 summarises the main events in this period.

**Table 2.2 LANDMARKS: From the Cuban Revolution to the 1980s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year or period</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959–63</td>
<td>Relations between the US and revolutionary Cuba collapse; Cuban-inspired armed revolts in Paraguay, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador and Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails; US aid and reform programme, the Alliance for Progress, launched – reformers gain US support in Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Chile and Colombia; Paraguay becomes the last Latin American country to give women the vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Cuban Missile Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Coups in Brazil and Bolivia inaugurate a 20-year period of authoritarian military rule across Latin America; Eduardo Frei’s Christian democrats come to power in Chile and benefit from US aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>US forces invade Dominican Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Che Guevara killed in Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Reforming populist regime of General Juan Velasco Alvarado takes power in Peru; student demonstrators are massacred by the Mexican army at Tlatelolco on the eve of the Olympic games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>El Salvador attacks and fights the brief ‘Soccer War’ with Honduras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Marxist Salvador Allende becomes president of Chile, provoking US campaign to undermine him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Allende ousted amid great instability in a military coup that inaugurates the Pinochet dictatorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the 1930s to the 1980s

Table 2.2  continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year or period</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>National Front pact between Colombia’s Liberal and Conservative parties begins to unravel and guerrilla violence mounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Most repressive of Argentine military dictatorships comes to power and launches brutal ‘Dirty War’ against the Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Omar Torrijos signs a treaty with US that eventually gives back control of the Panama Canal to his country; FMLN guerrillas intensify attacks in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Nicaraguan Sandinistas overthrow the last Somoza in a successful revolution; confrontation with the US grows; in El Salvador army-backed rightwing death squads begin two-year eradication of tens of thousands of opponents; restoration of civilian government in Ecuador inaugurates slow process of democratization across Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>The Maoist guerrilla organization Sendero Luminoso launches its war against the Peruvian state; Archbishop Oscar Romero is assassinated in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Ronald Reagan takes office in the US and initiates an aggressive anti-communist strategy in Latin America; contra war by US-backed Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries begins against the Sandinista regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Mexico’s inability to meet payments provokes the ‘debt crisis’; Britain defeats Argentina in a war over the Malvinas/Falklands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–84</td>
<td>Colombian government under Belisario Betancur negotiates a ceasefire with the main guerrilla groups, which create political organizations to seek power through elections. These are subsequently targeted by rightwing paramilitaries and by 1986 the peace process is over, although the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19, 19th of April Movement) guerrilla organization transforms into the AD-M19 political movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>The Contadora negotiating process begins seeking a solution to the Central American civil wars through the mediation of (initially) Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Radio Martí, affiliated to the US Information Agency, begins broadcasting to Cuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986–87</td>
<td>Further efforts unfold to find a negotiated solution to the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, culminating in 1987 with the agreement by the Central American governments of the Esquipulas regional peace and democratization plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>US forces invade Panama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MILITARY REGIMES

Coups in Brazil and Bolivia in 1964 inaugurated a period of sweeping authoritarian rule across Latin America and signified a breakdown of the state under the stresses generated by industrial development. In Brazil, the growing radicalism of President João Goulart (1961–64), who had inherited the leadership of the populist constituency created by Vargas, alarmed the military. With the knowledge and collaboration of the US ambassador and military attaché, Brazil’s armed forces seized control and would remain in power for 20 years. In Bolivia, a coup ended Victor Paz Estenssoro’s second term (1960–64) and the military remained in power for 18 years. In Peru, the reformist General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–75) took power in 1968, and the military remained until 1980. In Uruguay, the military began assuming more power during the 1960s as it tried to eradicate guerrilla activity and completed its formal takeover in 1973, remaining in power until 1984. Perhaps the most notorious coup of this era was in Chile in 1973, when the government of Salvador Allende (1970–73) was violently overthrown by General Augusto Pinochet, who remained in power for 17 years. It was the obsession with communism of the US president Richard Nixon (1969–74) that helps to explain why he instructed the CIA to undermine Allende after the Chilean Marxist had won the 1970 election (see Lowenthal, 1991). In Argentina, the military had staged recurrent interventions in politics since 1943, acting after 1955 against the Peronists, and in 1966 the armed forces again seized power. Perón was permitted to return to the country in 1973, but the military again intervened in 1976 and a series of hardline generals imposed a violent dictatorship until 1983. In Panama, a coup in 1968 brought the military to power until 1989, and in Honduras and El Salvador the armed forces stepped in during 1978–82 and 1979–83 respectively.

The military regimes of the 1960s–1980s shared some characteristics. First, military interventions had hitherto often been in support of one civilian faction against another, while the regimes of the 1960s and 1970s often blamed the poor state of their countries on politicians and were distinctively antipolitical (see Box 2.4). As a result, the military often closed down democratic institutions such as congresses, parties, trades unions and the media, and took on administrative and managerial roles in the belief that they could act independently of squabbling civilians. Second, military leaderships in this period developed notions of national security (see Box 11.1), reflecting a concern with internal subversion. The US influenced this doctrine, and many Latin American officers were instructed in the US-run military School of the Americas in Panama, while the CIA played a leading role in intelligence strategies. National security doctrine encouraged Latin American armed forces to take an increasingly active role in national life, and they often assumed responsibility for civic action programmes to help the poor in an effort to ease the conditions that were believed to foster insurgency. Third, most of the military regimes of the 1960s–1980s made systematic use of repression against
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thousands of civilians in this period and the use of torture, assassination and dis-
appearances was common (see Table 8.1 and Box 8.9). In Chile, thousands of
supporters of Allende’s Unidad Popular (UP, Popular Unity) coalition were rounded
up and disappeared. In Argentina, the military conducted a brutal ‘dirty war’
against the Left during the late 1970s in which at least 9,000 people, and perhaps
up to 20,000, disappeared.

Many factors had contributed to the collapse of democracy in Latin America in
the 1960s and 1970s. First, the military interventions occurred in the aftermath of
the Cuban Revolution in the context of Cold War tension and, while the US cannot
be blamed directly for most interventions, it often supported and even encouraged
the military to act. The establishment of military governments both responded to
and also fuelled guerrilla activity, and in societies where levels of economic and
technological development were high, such as Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, urban
guerrillas appeared on the political landscape. The guerrilla armies failed to over-
throw the regimes they opposed and, in countries such as Uruguay, they contributed

BOX 2.4 THEORIES AND DEBATES

Military antipolitics

During the 1960s and 1970s, military officers in Latin America weighed up the problems
facing their countries and many blamed corrupt and inept civilian politicians as well
as dysfunctional institutions. They could only achieve modernization, economic
development and stability by curtailing ‘politics’ and ruling themselves for a long period.
This attitude among military officers has been termed ‘antipolitics’ and Loveman and
Davies (1997) have traced the development of this phenomenon since the nineteenth
century. An assumption that ‘politics’ was to blame for poverty, instability and economic
backwardness was neither new nor confined solely to the military and, by advocating
depoliticization, military modernizers often found allies among civilian elites to whom
democracy implied instability or unacceptable social reform. Loveman and Davies argued
that antipolitics is committed neither to capitalism nor to socialism – it is antiliberal and
anti-Marxist; it is repressive and coercive; it seeks order and places a high priority on
orderly economic growth. In the 1960s and 1970s antipolitics explicitly entailed hostility
to labour protests, mobilization by political parties and opposition to government
authority, and placed an emphasis on more traditional Hispanic values of loyalty,
authority and stability. To this it added the assumption widely held by Latin American
military elites that economic development was an integral part of national security, and
so was among the responsibilities of the armed forces (see Chapters 5, 8). The ‘new
professionalism’ of the armed forces in the 1960s and 1970s now implied high levels of
professional training in non-traditional areas that justified the establishment of military
governments as instruments of development. This training took place at military colleges
such as the Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (CAEM, Centre for Advanced Military
Studies) in Peru and the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG, Higher War School) in Brazil.
to the collapse of democratic government and the militarization of politics. Second, even by the 1960s democratic institutions and values did not have deep roots in most Latin American societies. In conditions of social and political tension nurtured by severe inequality, rapid urbanization, guerrilla activity and the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, military intervention may have been inevitable. Third, military interventions coincided with the exhaustion of the first phase of ISI (see Chapter 15) or, in the case of Peru, with its initiation. An influential model of bureaucratic authoritarianism was developed by O’Donnell (1973) to account for the relationship between the military regimes of the more industrialized economies of the Southern Cone and economic development (see Box 2.5). However, the economic policies adopted by military regimes in this period varied. The regime in Chile under Pinochet favoured economic liberalism and reemphasized the role of the free market, and in Uruguay the military also tried to restructure the economy. Chile’s regime developed policies in collaboration with the University of Chicago that would become influential in the late 1980s (see Chapter 16). It was easier to undertake reforms that might be unpopular with workers when repression could be used to silence opposition. Other regimes, such as that in Brazil, retained more statist approaches and did not radically restructure the economy, while forging close links with domestic and foreign capital. Most of the military regimes of this period instinctively preferred state ownership in strategic areas. A reformist approach taken by the Peruvian military government of 1968–75 distinguished this regime from the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the Southern Cone (see Chapter 17). The Peruvian military adopted policies of the revolutionary left, nationalized key economic sectors and pushed forward a strategy of ISI. This regime differed from those of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile because it was largely autonomous of domestic capitalists and foreign investors; it attempted to build support through the inclusion of lower-class groups; and it did not indulge in the systematic terror characteristic of the Southern Cone regimes.

There were other important differences among the military regimes of the 1960s–1980s and, within each regime, rival currents. Military regimes were neither united nor autonomous of civilian politics and conflicts often emerged between moderates and hardliners over the use of repression. In most Latin American cases, after several years of authoritarian rule, military-political leaderships sought some form of acceptance within society. In Chile, for example, control by Pinochet gradually evolved into personalist rule and a decisive stage was reached when a new constitution was approved by a plebiscite in 1980 giving the dictator a further eight years in office. In Brazil the military regime claimed legitimacy after 1974 by laying out a framework for the transfer of power and balancing pro-regime forces. In Argentina military regimes found it difficult to establish strong foundations within the institutions of government because of internal divisions, which weakened their efforts to seek support in society.

Some countries retained civilian-led governments in this period, although these often had an authoritarian character and ruled in conditions of instability. In
Colombia, after 1974 the National Front pact between two traditionally dominant parties, the Partido Liberal (PL, Liberal Party) and the Partido Conservador (PC, Conservative Party), began to unravel and the stability that the pact had achieved was increasingly threatened by mounting guerrilla violence (see Chapter 13). In Venezuela, after 1968 the political system was monopolized by two main parties, Acción Democrática (AD, Democratic Action) and the Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI, Committee for Independent Electoral Political Organization), allowing it to maintain stability until the late 1980s, when economic crisis provoked a breakdown of the two-party system (see Box 5.2). In Mexico, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party),
maintained authoritarian control over government throughout the 1970s. Costa Rica maintained democratic rule during the 1970s despite deep economic problems both before and after the 1982 debt crisis in the region, largely because the main political forces agreed to alternate in power.

GUERRILLAS

The guerrilla option persisted in Central America, Colombia and Peru – where the Maoist organization Sendero Luminoso launched a bloody war against the state (see Boxes 13.4, 14.8). The causes of revolutionary activity in Latin America have long been debated (see Box 2.6). Guerrilla insurgencies fared best in small agrarian countries ruled by corrupt and often dynastic elites who, by the 1970s, continued to prevail in much of Central America. Guerrilla movements, some of which had been established in the 1960s, grew in strength in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, and the proximity of these countries to the US meant that it intervened actively in the ensuing conflicts, often in support of dictatorships or military juntas. These revolutionaries and rightwing governments of Central America would fight the last major battles of the Cold War.

In Nicaragua, in 1979 the Sandinista revolutionaries overthrew Anastasio Somoza Debayle (1967–72, 1974–79), whose family had ruled the country tyrannically since the 1930s. The dynasty’s control had its origins in the US intervention against Augusto César Sandino (b.1895 – d.1934) in the 1920s. The nationalist and anti-imperialist tradition exemplified by Sandino, and Guevara’s notion of the foco, had been the inspiration for the formation in 1961 in Havana of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN, Sandinista National Liberation Front). A devastating earthquake in 1972 and the theft by government officials of emergency aid transformed perceptions of the revolutionaries’ cause and the Sandinistas were able to assume leadership after 1978 over a broad coalition that defeated Somoza’s forces in a popular revolution. The revolution inaugurated the final phase of the Cold War in Latin America, which was characterized by the resurgence of aggressive anti-communism under President Ronald Reagan (1981–89) (see Chapter 11). Confrontation with the US grew as the Sandinistas accepted international support, including Cuban aid. Reagan imposed a trade embargo and sponsored the creation of a counter-revolutionary army in Honduras, the contras, who raided Nicaragua and destroyed its economy throughout the 1980s (see Box 17.2). In 1990, Violeta Chamorro (1990–97), a member of Nicaragua’s conservative elite, became the first woman ever elected president in Latin America.

In El Salvador, by the late 1970s the suffering of the rural poor and the political monopoly of the country’s landowning oligarchy had also generated an insurrectionary climate, unleashing a decade of civil war. The Salvadorean revolutionaries were also inspired by a nationalist figure from history, Agustín Farabundo Martí
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(b.1893 – d.1932) who had served with Sandino. They gained moral and even material support from progressive and radical elements within the Church (see Chapter 8, Box 13.3). During the 1980s, Nicaragua’s FSLN supported the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) in its fight against the US-backed Salvadorean army, but the combatants fought to

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**Box 2.6 Theories and Debates**

What makes a revolution?

The causes of revolutions and the meaning of these sudden political, economic and social transitions have long been debated (see Selbin, 1993). An important cleavage in this debate has been between those whose arguments suggest that revolutionary movements ‘make’ revolutions, and those who have placed far more emphasis on the social and political structures in certain states and societies that make insurrections more likely. An orthodox position that chimed with classical Marxism suggested activities led by movements – such as strikes, peasant uprisings and guerrilla warfare – produced revolutions. Important contributions to this position have included those made by Wolf (1969), who stressed ‘peasant wars’ led to social revolutions in Mexico and Cuba among other countries; Paige (1975), who argued that certain types of peasantry were more likely to take part in revolutionary activities; and Tilly (1978), who examined patterns of social unrest among lower classes.

The idea that movements make revolutions was challenged by Skocpol (1979) who argued that, in certain cases, regimes collapsed because of their internal weaknesses as well as through international factors. Skocpol argued that certain types of state or regime are more vulnerable to revolution than others. This approach directed attention away from opposition movements to the weaknesses within states and the characteristics of particular regimes. Wickham-Crowley (1992) examined this debate in the context of Latin America. He argued that the strength of a revolutionary movement itself cannot explain whether it is successful or not. The successful Cuban revolutionaries of 1956–59 were not stronger in military terms than revolutionaries in Colombia, Guatemala or Venezuela in the 1960s, and the victorious Sandinistas in Nicaragua were not as strong as the Salvadorean guerrilla fighters. It was the distinctive characteristics of the Cuban and Nicaraguan regimes that may have weakened them when confronted by revolutionary movements: both the Batista and Somoza regimes provoked the creation of a cross-class national opposition that brought together revolutionaries and moderates; both lacked support among all social classes and so could not mobilize a loyal defence; and both were personalist, which limited their nationalistic appeal (see also Selbin, 1993). Wickham-Crowley said three factors make for a likely revolution in Latin America: peasant support for a guerrilla movement is crucial; guerrilla movements must have enough military power to survive counter-insurgency measures; and a weak regime, when confronted by a guerrilla challenge, must engender a cross-class opposition. He identified Bolivia as a prototype for guerrilla failure. In 1966 the Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara established a Cuban-led foco in the country, but the guerrillas lacked peasant support and they were destroyed by the army.

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a stalemate and El Salvador’s anti-communist elites sought a negotiated solution in 1992. In Guatemala, which had been under military control since 1954, there was also a resurgence of guerrilla activity in the late 1970s, eventually led by the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity). The country’s armed forces carried out a brutal campaign against the guerrillas, concentrated in the mainly indigenous western highlands and against the urban opposition, but after 1983 military leaders began to seek a negotiated transition to democracy and a civilian president was elected in 1985. Peace talks began in 1987 and agreements were finally concluded in 1996, ending a civil war that had begun in the 1960s and in which indigenous villagers had suffered greatly.

THE TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY

By the end of the 1970s many of Latin America’s militaries were ready to return to the barracks and the region experienced a wave of democratization, beginning with the restoration of civilian government in 1979 in Ecuador. By the mid-1990s all of the countries in the region except Cuba were under some form of democratic rule, or were experiencing a transition to democracy.

In Ecuador, civilian rule was restored under Jaime Roldós (1979–81) after almost three decades of alternating military governments. The Nicaraguan guerrillas overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, but fully democratic elections did not occur until 1990. Peru’s military handed over to civilian rule under Belaúnde Terry in 1980, but the following two decades were overshadowed by the brutal civil war against Sendero Luminoso in which the military took an increasingly prominent role (see Boxes 13.4, 14.8), followed by a decade of control under the autocratic populist Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) whose administration became mired in corruption. Honduras formally began its democratic life in 1981 with the election of Roberto Suazo Córdova (1982–86) leading to the first civilian government in more than a century, but for another 10 years the country was affected by the Central American civil wars and the military retained disproportionate power. In Bolivia, in 1982 the military handed power to a civilian administration under Hernán Siles Zuazo (1952, 1956–60, 1982–85) and in Argentina, following the military’s defeat in a war with Britain over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands (see Box 12.1), civilian rule returned in 1983 under Raúl Alfonsín (1983–89). In 1985, Uruguay’s military handed back power to a civilian administration under Julio María Sanguinetti (1985–90, 1995–2000), and in the same year Brazil’s military relinquished control to a civilian government under José Sarney (1985–90) and military rule formally ended in Guatemala with the election of Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo (1986–91). However, Guatemala did not realistically resemble a democracy until after the peace deal in 1996. In Chile, Pinochet was defeated in 1988 in a plebiscite on the continuation of his rule and handed over power in 1990 to Patricio Aylwin (1990–94). In 1989 the US invasion of Panama ousted the
military strongman Manuel Noriega (1981–89) and led to the reestablishment of
civilian rule, and a coup in Paraguay deposed the ageing dictator General Alfredo
Stroessner (1954–89) and led to a process of democratization that culminated in 1993
with elections won by Juan Carlos Wasmosy (1993–98). In El Salvador the recogni-
tion in 1991 of the FMLN as a political party and the signing of peace accords began
a process of democratization after a decade of civil war and the long domination of
government by rightwing elites backed by the army. In Mexico, single-party control
by the PRI ended when it finally lost congressional elections in 1997 and then pres-
idential elections in 2000.

Military and authoritarian rule ended for several reasons (see Chapter 4). Rising
international interest rates caused a severe debt crisis in 1982 (see Chapter 16) and
eroded the belief among investors that military regimes could continue to manage
economies by now heavily dependent on external borrowing. Nervousness among
foreign investors put the fragile coalitions upon which bureaucratic-authoritarian
regimes were founded under strain, and a new emphasis on free-market economics
(neoliberalism) challenged the model of state-led economic development upon which
corporatism had been based (see Chapters 8, 15, 16). Rivalries developed within the
armed forces themselves as moderates began to argue that more could be gained
from a negotiated transition to democracy than could be achieved with continued
military rule. The international climate also became more hostile towards military
regimes as Portugal, Greece and Spain underwent transitions to democracy. Lastly,
a consensus began to emerge among key interest-groups in support of the idea of a
revived liberal state founded on representative and accountable institutions. In par-
ticular, the late 1970s and 1980s witnessed the emergence of new social movements
(see Chapter 9) and popular sentiment grew strongly in favour of a shift to democracy.

SUMMARY

The 1929 Wall Street crash ended the neocolonial order as most countries took the
first steps towards creating their own industries. Many Latin American countries
were ruled by authoritarian parties or military dictators stressing nationalism as new
groups such as organized labour were brought into politics under government con-
trol. Communist and fascist parties also emerged to challenge elite conservative and
liberal factions. The process of industrialization gathered pace after the Second
World War and large state bureaucracies controlling public enterprises were created.
Workers and middle-class professionals and bureaucrats were incorporated in new
governing coalitions overseeing an industrial revolution. For a brief period during
1945–47 democratic governments began to replace authoritarian regimes, and in
several countries pro-industrial, multiclass populist alliances were formed. After the
late 1940s the Cold War began to alter the basis of inter-American relations by turn-
ing Latin America into a battleground in the conflict between US capitalism and Soviet
communism. Washington pursued an anti-communist crusade until the late 1980s that often helped to perpetuate authoritarian regimes. In the 1950s, industrialization strategies also began to falter and inflation and unemployment exacerbated social tensions. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 transformed the prospects of Marxism in Latin America and inspired armed revolts throughout the region. It also distorted US perceptions about threats to its security and prompted the creation of the Alliance for Progress aid and reform programme. This had limited success and, as Latin American elites began to turn to the military, Washington acquiesced in the establishment of repressive anti-communist regimes. Military coups in Brazil and Bolivia in 1964 inaugurated a period of authoritarian rule across Latin America and signified a breakdown of the state under stresses generated by industrial development. The military regimes of the 1960s–1980s often blamed the poor state of their countries on politicians, justified their rule with ideas of national security, made systematic use of repression against thousands of civilians and favoured economic liberalism alongside state control of key strategic areas. Guerrilla activity persisted in Colombia, Peru and Central America, where revolutionaries and rightwing governments fought the last major battles of the Cold War. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas led a successful revolution, leading to confrontation with the US, but in El Salvador the guerrillas and the army fought to a standstill. Guatemala’s armed forces carried out a brutal campaign against guerrillas concentrated in mainly indigenous areas. From the late 1970s onwards, Latin American militaries began to return to the barracks and the region experienced a wave of democratization. Authoritarian rule ended because of economic crisis, divisions within the armed forces, an international climate more hostile towards military regimes and a new consensus among key political actors in support of the idea of a revived liberal state.

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

- To what extent was the emergence of the modern state related to industrialization?
- Was corporatism inevitable in Latin America, and was it a substitute for democracy?
- What was the relationship between populism and the organized working class?
- Did US anti-communism stifle democracy in Latin America during the Cold War?
- Why was the Cuban Revolution in 1959 so significant?
- Why were the military interventions of the 1960s and 1970s so distinctive?
- Assess the pros and cons of the model of bureaucratic authoritarianism.
- Do radical movements, or specific circumstances, make revolutions?
- What factors explain why military and authoritarian rule ended in Latin America?
Useful websites

**oxlad.qeh.ox.ac.uk**  Oxford Latin American Economic History Database (OxLAD), compiled by the Latin American Centre of Oxford University

**www.neha.nl/w3vl/latinamerica.html**  Latin American Economic and Business History section of the WWW Virtual Library, maintained in Amsterdam by the Netherlands Economic History Archive

**www.evitaperon.org/Principal.htm**  Eva Perón Historical Research Foundation

**http://historicaltextarchive.com**  Historical Text Archive run from Mississippi, containing useful articles and links about Latin American history

**www.casahistoria.net/latam.html**  Useful site on Latin America within general history archive that has an independent left-of-centre perspective

**www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=topics.home**  Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

**www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/cuba.htm**  Valuable site compiled at Mount Holyoke College containing documents surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis

**www.grama.cu/che/homeche.html**  Granma Internacional Digital website about Che Guevara

**www.nottingham.ac.uk/hispanic/CRF/Cuba/index.htm**  Cuba Research Forum of the Department of Hispanic and Latin American Studies at the University of Nottingham, incorporating information on the Hennessy Collection of Cuban periodicals

**www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Comp/Seguridad/Armedas/mision.html**  Missions of Latin American militaries as defined in constitutions, compiled by Georgetown University’s Political Database of the Americas

**www.ejercito.mil.ar**  Official site of the Argentine army

**paginas.terra.com.br/educacao/acontinencia/links/link18.htm**  Links to Brazilian military colleges

**www.esg.br**  Brazil’s Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG, Higher War School)

**www.ejercito.cl**  Official site of the Chilean army

**www.ejercito.mil.pe**  Official site of the Peruvian army

**fmln.org.sv/portal**  Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front)

**www.mnr.org.bo**  Bolivian Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR, Revolutionary Nationalist Movement)
Recommended reading


Essential introduction to the economic, social and political history of the region and a key source of reference. Volume 6 (Parts 1 and 2) covers key themes in the whole region from 1930 to 1990; Volume 7 provides separate histories of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; Volume 8 covers Spanish South America; Volumes 10 and 11 look at ideas, culture and society, and include bibliographical essays.


Essential overview of corporatism in Latin America that explores this phenomenon at historical, theoretical and empirical levels and contains eight country studies as well as valuable introductory and concluding chapters pointing to new directions in research.


Essential collection of essays on Latin American populism past and present with a helpful introduction giving definitions and an overview of the study of this phenomenon and chapters that also explore its manifestations in the contemporary period.


Valuable collection taking an historical approach to military interventions in Latin American politics with sections on the relationship between military establishments and the US, the policies and consequences of military rule and the persistence of anti-politics in the democratic era.


Influential work first published in 1973 developing a model of bureaucratic authoritarianism to account for the Latin American military regimes of that period, updated in the 1998 edition with a new preface.


Essential survey of the origins and outcomes of rural insurgencies that represented the first systematic attempt to bring together case studies and sociological theories of revolutions in Latin America.