

THE RIGHT AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

Edited by
Douglas A.
Chalmers,
Maria do
Carmo
Campello
de Souza,
and Atilio A.
Boron

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Conservative Electoral
Movements and Democratic
Politics: Core Constituencies,
Coalition Building, and the
Latin American Electoral Right

Edward L. Gibson

In many ways, this volume proposes a journey through uncharted territory. Despite widespread interest in the Right in political discussion and scholarly debate, its study as a political force organized for the electoral struggle remains underdeveloped in comparative politics. This has been the case particularly for scholarship on Latin America. Much has been written on political parties and collective actors in the region, yet no comparative study of Latin American conservative parties has ever been carried out. The few book length country case studies seldom transcend the ideographic and offer little guidance for systematic comparative research. As a result, we possess not only a meager understanding of the electoral Right's historic role in democratic politics in Latin America, but also a hazy idea of how to study the beast in contemporary democratic settings where it has emerged as a vigorous actor.

The uncertain transitions that opened possibilities for democratic and progressive agendas in the past decade have given way to crisis-ridden consolidations dominated by the political agendas

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of the electoral Right. The rise of Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil, the impact of Mario Vargas Llosa's *Movimiento Libertad* on Peruvian politics, the growing protagonism of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) in Mexico, and the alliance between Peronism and the conservative Unión del Centro Democrático in Argentina are manifestations of this trend. Its generalized nature and similarities in the appeal and programs of the different electoral movements have naturally sparked interest in the "new Right" as a region-wide phenomenon. As this interest yields its dividends in new research, it poses a challenge to scholars: to study conservative electoral movements in ways that grasp the complexities of specific country case studies while at the same time shedding light on their theoretical relevance to democratic politics in the region. Two key elements for this are needed: first, coordination and interchange among researchers working on the topic — a starting point, which this volume provides and second, a minimal consensus on concepts and analytical approaches, and an empirical agenda for studying the electoral Right in contemporary Latin America.

This chapter is an attempt to move in that direction. The following pages contain ideas for the conceptualization of the electoral Right and its relationship to democratic politics and outline an analytical approach for the comparative study of conservative electoral movements. Finally, ideas for an empirical agenda on the electoral Right in contemporary Latin America will be presented. The objectives are to propose a basic road map for those interested in the comparative study of the electoral Right in Latin America, and to provide common points of reference for the growing number of scholars undertaking research on specific country case studies. In this way, the badly needed information and perspectives generated by such studies might be more readily interpreted in light of the broader theoretical issue of the Latin American electoral Right's relationship to contemporary democratic politics.

DEMOCRACY AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

Conceptualizing Conservative Electoral Movements: Core Constituencies versus Ideology

The focus of this chapter is on parties and electoral movements.¹ Political parties are examined in terms of their role as agents of collective action and social coalition-building. Conservative parties are the most important vehicles in capitalist democracies for linking the upper strata of society to other social sectors in a common political project.

Conservative party politics can be seen as an institutionalized form of collective action through which alliances are forged between

the upper social strata, a small minority in a political system governed by the logic of majority rule, and other social strata in the competitive struggle for power. What makes conservative parties important to comparative politics, and what sets them apart from other parties, is the social coalition that supports them. It is this characteristic that also provides a basis for comparing the ideologically varied conservative movements of the modern world, for example, the organic statist conservatives of nineteenth-century Britain with the free-market British conservatives of the late twentieth century.

Stated as a minimal definition, *conservative parties are parties that draw their core constituencies from the upper strata of society*.² The concept of core constituencies is simple; it is also central to the analytical approach outlined in this chapter. Its theoretical usefulness will be addressed later in this chapter, but it might be helpful to define it briefly here. A party's core constituencies are those sectors of society that are most important to its political agenda and resources. Their importance lies not necessarily in the number of votes they represent, but in their influence on the party's agenda and capacities for political action. A party's core constituencies shape its identity; they are necessary to its existence. In a political system of majority rule, however, they are not enough. A party's political leadership must forge alliances between its core constituencies and other social sectors if it is to succeed in the electoral contest. The study of conservative political action in democratic politics is, therefore, the study of the construction of polyclassist coalitions.

The dominant approach in the study of conservative parties has been to define those parties according to ideological criteria.³ The approach outlined here suggests that ideologies are not appropriate defining characteristics for the comparative study of conservative parties and electoral movements. The ideologies of movements vary in different historical periods and social settings. Defining conservative movements ideologically makes comparison difficult when ideologies vary across time and contexts. Equally important, it hinders the study of ideological diversity and struggle within conservative movements, issues which should be a major factor of scholarship. The study of conservative electoral movements requires a more enduring basis of comparison than that found in the fluid universe of ideas.

This does not imply that ideologies do not matter. Quite the contrary. A conceptualization that is clear and useful to comparative research, however, must establish a hierarchy among those characteristics that are defining and those that are descriptive. The minimal definition presented above has focused on the former. Beyond this minimal definition, it is possible to resolve the

relationship between ideology and conservative movements by distinguishing between defining properties and variable properties.⁴ The former define the concept; they provide the basis for excluding specific cases from the pool of cases being compared. However, variable properties are characteristics associated with the concept, but their variation or absence from a specific case does not provide grounds for removing it from the pool of cases being compared. In the definition proposed here, ideologies are placed among the variable characteristics. Conservative parties are conceived of as parties that draw their core constituencies from the upper strata of society. It is also possible to enumerate the ideologies with which they have been associated (for example, economic liberalism, organic statism, developmentalism). The presence or absence of such ideologies are matters to be settled by research. They are not necessary characteristics of the definition.

Consider the example of the typical agnostic in religious matters. The agnostic claims it is impossible to know whether or not God exists, but in his heart he has a pretty good idea of where he is leaning on the issue. Similarly, we are well aware that conservative movements are more likely to choose certain ideologies than others, but we should keep an open mind about the outcome of those choices pending empirical observation.

A caution is introduced against teleological conceptions of conservative political action. Scholars who view conservative movements in terms of their relationship to dominant social strata are particularly susceptible to this. Among them is Hans Geerd Schumann, who defines conservative politics as action taken by privileged strata "to safeguard the institutions in which social superiority is lodged."⁵ Similarly, the literature on democratic transitions in Latin America is filled with references to the Right as a force committed to freezing or thwarting social change.

Students of conservative parties should be wary of using such formulations as a starting point for research. In many cases these formulations may be correct, but they can lead to static and monolithic views of conservative political action. There is nothing inherently static or monolithic about conservative party politics. As with all political organizations, conservative parties are creatures of social change and internal struggle. They are wracked by their internal contradictions of their constituencies and shaped by their interaction with their political environment. As political contexts and socioeconomic structures change, the political agendas that mobilize conservatism's core constituencies change, their resources change, and so do the composition and objectives of conservative electoral coalitions.

In some cases, the agenda of conservative movements may indeed be to freeze or thwart social change. Examples of this might

include the Chilean electoral Right in the 1960s or 1970s, or, as Timothy Power's ongoing research on Brazil shows, the role of the Aliança de Renovação Nacional/Partido Democrático Social (ARENA/PDS) politicians in the Brazilian Constituent Assembly in the late 1980s.⁶ But conservative projects might well involve transformative agendas. The oligarchic leadership of Argentina's generation of 1880, while maintaining tight control over the political system, embarked upon broad projects of liberal socioeconomic reform against the interests of other sectors of the oligarchy and the Catholic church.⁷ Their less illustrious successors in the 1930s introduced the interventionist state into Argentina's political economy in response to the global depression. More recently, the agendas of liberal economic reform of the *Movimiento Libertad* in Peru or the *Unión del Centro Democrático (UCEDE)* in Argentina represented an important challenge to the intricate and extensive state-economic elite relationships that made up the power block of the developmentalist state.⁸ Conservative electoral movements may also take a proactive role in the democratization debate and in the defense of democratic politics, as have the PAN in Mexico and Mario Vargas Llosa's movement in Peru.

Caution is therefore advised against teleological conceptions of conservative political action or a priori assumptions about the objectives of conservative electoral movements. Resolving such questions lies in the realm of investigation, not in the realms of definition and conceptualization.

Collective Action and the Electoral Right

Given these observations, where might new research on the electoral Right fit into the ongoing scholarship on democratization? One place to start is the literature on collective actors in the democratization process. Most of this literature has focused on popular movements: labor, parties of the Left, the progressive church, social movements, and so on. It has addressed how the dramatically changed context of democratization has reshaped capacities and opportunities for political action by popular forces, along with the tensions and conflicts involved in their reorganization for the democratic struggle.

The study of the electoral Right has much to learn from this body of work, and should be seen as a vital addition to it. Margaret Keck's study of the rise of the Workers' party in Brazil, for example, analyzed the transition of Brazil's labor movement from class-based movement politics to party-building.⁹ The Workers' party experience provides interesting parallels to Argentine conservatism's own struggles as it has stumbled on its way from class-based, authoritarian politics to multiclass electoral coalition-building. Both cases

reveal the interaction between a newly forming political leadership and its social constituencies as they reorganize for the electoral struggle. They also show how these actors grapple with the new logics of coalition building inherent in democratic politics.

Both examples provide a review of the effect of democratization on collective actors. Here, however, the similarity ends. A key distinction between conservative movements and political actors until now addressed by the democratization literature is the position occupied by their core constituencies in the social structure. This difference points research toward a different set of empirical and theoretical questions. For popular movements, the questions tend to focus on the empowerment of the socially powerless through democratic politics. For conservative movements, the questions center more on how existing social power is channeled through democratic politics and translated into political power. The translation is by no means automatic. It requires political leadership, as well as organization, strategy, and ideological mobilization. How these come about, and their impact on democratic politics, is what the study of conservative electoral movements should seek to uncover.

Classes, Political Parties, and the Logic of Conservative Electoral Action

How is it that so large a proportion of the electorate, many of whom are neither wealthy nor privileged, have been recruited for a cause which is not their own?

— Labour party publication following the 1951 Conservative victory in the British general elections¹⁰

In political life, the salience of class does not emerge automatically from the structural differentiation of society. It is the product of political action. Just as political parties are the most important vehicles for social coalition building in democratic politics, so too are they the most important agents for shaping the collective visions that make coalition building possible. As Adam Przeworski and John Sprague suggest:

"The counting of votes," wrote Antonio Gramsci, "is the final ceremony of a long process." This is a process of forming images of society, of forging collective identities, of mobilizing commitments to particular visions of the future. Class, ethnicity, religion, race, or nation do not happen spontaneously, of themselves, as a reflection of objective conditions in the psyche of individuals. Collective identity, group solidarity, and political commitments are continually forged — shaped, destroyed, and molded anew — as a result

of conflicts in the course of which political parties, schools, unions, churches, newspapers, armies, and corporations strive to impose upon the masses a particular vision of society.¹¹

Understanding the role of parties in determining the salience of class cleavages in politics is important not only for uncovering the links between class and electoral behavior, but also for grasping a key difference between the logic of electoral mobilization by parties of the Left, and the logic of electoral mobilization by parties of the Right.

Class and class politics are central to the appeal of Left political organization. Appeals to broad class solidarity between workers, peasants, and salaried employees based on shared exploitation and social subordination is the essence of Left political mobilization. This is due both to the position of its core constituencies in the social structure and to the size of these constituencies in relation to the rest of the electorate. Given the electoral weight of its core constituencies, class appeals represent the shortest route for the Left to an electoral majority. Even in a multi-class alliance, the working-class core constituency will make up a significant share of the Left's total electoral support. For the Left, there tends to be a correspondence between the *influence* of its core constituencies in the party's political project and their *numbers* in the party's total electoral support.

This is not the case for the electoral Right. Only a fraction of a mass conservative party's total votes will come from the upper social strata.¹² A conservative coalition draws its support from virtually all social sectors: it builds majorities by slicing up the social spectrum. In some cases, the Thatcher and Reagan coalitions being the prime examples, it may even draw half its support from the working class. A conservative party is, in fact, the most polyclassist of parties. Furthermore, it is built through the very denial of class as an important source of cleavage in social and political life. This is central to the logic of conservative electoral action, and is crucial to its polyclassist potential. In contrast to parties of the Left, a *conservative party's actual mass base lies outside its core constituencies*. Its appeals must thus transcend class differences and forge bonds of social solidarity on the basis of other sources of collective identification. Conservative electoral majorities are built in part by weakening class-based solidarity and replacing it with other sources of collective identity.

This logic is determined by the extreme minority status of conservatism's upper-class core constituencies in a political system governed by majority rule. The distance between the number of votes conservatism's core constituencies provide and those needed for an electoral majority is far greater than for movements rooted in larger social strata. This numerical difference begets a qualitative

difference in the strategy of conservative mobilization: *the Left seeks to slice society horizontally; conservative movements seek to slice it vertically.*

Catholics, Bavarians, Correntinos, southerners, and the nation are some of the collective identities counterposed by conservative movements to the class-based appeals of the Left. The Christian Democratic turn of much of West European conservatism after World War II, as well as in post-1958 Venezuela, are reflections of this. So too are the variety of regional conservative parties to be found in much of the world, such as the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) in Germany and Argentina's many provincial conservative parties. British Conservatism's historic invocation of its role as guardian of the nation against the socially divisive appeals of Labour provides another example.

The publicity and statements of political leaders provide the most vivid manifestations of this ongoing struggle for the hearts and minds of the masses. "Lula: a class option," beamed a Brazilian Workers' party bumper sticker during the 1989 presidential campaign. Compare this with Vargas Llosa's announcement in 1987: "the historic struggle in Peru has not been between classes, but between the people and the state." In Argentina, Juan García, the fictitious taxi driver hero created by a UCEDE publicist, asked: "Who speaks for me, a middle Argentine? Forgive me for not saying 'middle class,' but I do not believe in that story about 'classes.'" Similarly, an ocean away in 1989, during the first day of televised sessions of the House of Commons, Margaret Thatcher boasted, "the old Labour order based on class is dead; the new order based on effort, opportunity, and merit is here to stay."

Przeworski and Sprague suggest that "the relative salience of class as a determinant of voting behavior is a cumulative consequence of strategies pursued by political parties of the Left."¹⁴ There is a corollary to this proposition, and it is that the weakness of class as a source of political cleavage is a cumulative result of the effectiveness of conservative electoral mobilization. The Right, as the Left, is permanently shaping collective visions of politics and society in its quest for political dominance. The more effective conservative electoral mobilization is, the weaker class-based sources of collective identity will tend to be. Similarly, the weaker class-based sources of collective identity are in a society, the more fertile the ground for conservative electoral mobilization.

In this sense, there is a close fit between the effect of the electoral contest on class politics and the logic of conservative electoral mobilization. The process of multiclass electoral coalition building tends to dilute the class content of party appeals. This applies even to the Left, which must appeal to values that go beyond the strictly proletarian or revolutionary identity of its core constituencies in

order to build an electoral majority.¹⁵ The electoral process itself thus articulates interests in a way that decreases the salience of class as a basis for collective identification. In the process, it creates a more hospitable terrain for the symbolic appeals of conservative electoral movements. The empirical impact of this dynamic is hard to measure. It provides, however, a theoretical counterargument to the often presumed anticonservative bias of democratic mass politics.

Conservative Parties and Democratic Stability

A working assumption of this chapter is that conservative parties are a necessary condition for political stability in capitalist democracies. No stable democracy anywhere, as a glance at Europe, North America, and a handful of Latin American countries will show, lacks a conservative party (or grouping of parties) capable of attaining national power through the ballot box. The importance of conservative parties to democratic stability lies in the pivotal social position of their constituencies, and in the fact that they will be inevitable and important participants in the struggle for power. Conservative parties help to mobilize the political action of powerful social strata into democratic channels. They improve the capability of those strata to influence political outcomes through the democratic process, and thus enhance the probabilities that they will submit to the binding authority of democratic institutions.¹⁶ A democratic regime without a viable conservative party is a presumptively unstable regime.

Furthermore, only electoral organization can provide social minorities with the power of multiclass coalitions. By weaving the class interests of their core constituencies into a broad alliance with other social strata, conservative parties create consensual bases for political agendas supported by the socially privileged. In this sense, conservative parties are vital institutions for rendering "the dominance of one social force," as Samuel Huntington would put it, "compatible with the community of the many."¹⁷ The social power of the economically privileged cannot be translated into political power democratically without the multiclass ingredient provided by political parties. This distinguishes parties from corporatist institutions, which are often seen as functional alternatives to parties as vehicles for the collective action of privileged strata in democratic societies.

Corporatist institutions are sectoral instruments by definition. They alone cannot provide the glue with which multiclass governing coalitions are formed. There is no stable democratic society where the power of the economically privileged is represented exclusively through corporatist channels. Where these mechanisms play a central role in policy making or interest representation, as in Western Europe or such Latin American democracies as Uruguay

and pre-1973 Chile, political parties play a vital mediating role between corporatist institutions, the state, and society, and generalize the class claims of corporatist institutions into society-wide projects of government.¹⁸ Corporatist institutions are not in themselves instruments of societal consensus building. At best they are instruments for class compromise and negotiation. Where they serve as primary channels for the political action of privileged social strata, they are little more than agents for popular class encapsulation (as in Brazil and Mexico), or aggravators of zero sum class confrontation (as in post-Peronist Argentina).¹⁹ In the forging of mass consensus, therefore, corporatist institutions are complementary to parties. They are not substitutes.

It can also be argued that populist or middle-class parties, due to their commitment to the structural preservation of capitalism, perform the functional task of making democratic politics safe for the socioeconomic interests of the upper classes. The history of Latin American social conflict, however, undermines that argument. Class struggle in Latin America since the advent of mass politics has tended to be about the distribution of resources generated by capitalist development; only infrequently has it been about the overthrow of capitalism itself. In the ferocious distributive struggles of Latin American capitalism, populist and middle-class parties have been historically unable to assure that the interests of the propertied classes will be given priority over those of the middle and lower classes that form their core constituencies. Parties with organic ties to the upper social strata that are capable of influencing political outcomes have proved essential to the willingness of Latin America's upper classes to submit class-conflict to the binding authority of democratic institutions. One need not be a conservative to recognize the value that a viable conservative party has for a democratic regime. The stability of bourgeois democracy requires a party committed to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

STUDYING THE ELECTORAL RIGHT

The Social Base

Core Constituencies

The rejection of class, which characterizes the practice of conservative movements, also pervades how conservative movements are perceived in theory. This rejection has been led by conservative intellectuals and scholars interested in conservatism as an ideology. For example, Russell Kirk, a prominent U.S. conservative intellectual, states outright that conservatism is "not confined to the interests of a single class; [it is found in] all classes and occupations."²⁰ In

his 1957 essay on conservatism, Samuel Huntington took issue with aristocratic conceptions of conservatism, suggesting instead that it be seen as a positional ideology not necessarily linked to the "interests of a continuing social group."²¹ This line of thinking, rooted in scholarship on the ideological dimensions of conservatism, has been most influential in scholarship on conservative parties and movements.²²

Even among scholars not influenced by this vein of thought, opposition to the study of conservative electoral movements as vehicles for upper-class collective action is widespread. This opposition is due to the difficulty in disentangling the protagonism of a single social sector from the web of alliances and political projects that make up the conservative electoral movement.

Carlos Acuña, for example, in his studies on the collective action of Argentine business, adduces the polyclass nature of conservative parties to propose that "parties are not the actors on which to focus the analysis of capitalist class political organization under democratic regimes."²³ Acuña's interest is the political behavior of Argentine entrepreneurs, particularly industrial entrepreneurs. Thus he is correct in asserting that corporatist business associations provide a more fine-tuned view of business collective action than do parties, which must reconcile the competing and often contradictory agendas of a varied constituent base. Yet the arenas for business collective action are multiple, as Acuña makes clear in his work. Alongside corporatist institutions, political parties are a vital arena where the socially powerful mobilize for the competitive struggle for power. Uncovering how they do this, and how their relationship with their party and their social allies shapes their capacities to act politically, is important to our understanding of a critical dimension of upper-class collective action in democratic politics.

The polyclass nature of conservative parties, therefore, should not be a reason to avoid studying their relationship to class conflict. Quite the contrary. As the complexity of the political process obscures relationships that lie beneath the ideological and institutional surface of political life, it becomes even more necessary to develop ways to uncover those relationships. We therefore need to develop a framework to help us accomplish a seemingly contradictory objective: to emphasize the relationship of a party to a specific class while simultaneously affirming its multiclass nature. The main obstacles to this endeavor lie not in our object of research, but in the conceptual tools we use to study it.

The relationship between the upper social strata and electoral movements can be clarified if we introduce the notion of core constituencies. All parties aspiring to power must be polyclassist. Their relationship to certain social constituencies, however, will be more significant than their relationship to others. A party's core

constituencies will be more important to the shaping of a party's political agenda, particularly for high-stake issues, than noncore constituencies. They will also play a more important role in the provision of financial and ideological resources. Amid the many social and political relationships that the political leadership of a party must maintain and nurture, its relationship to its core constituency is the most important in influencing its capacities to become a viable power contender.

The notion of core constituencies recognizes the fact of hierarchy between members of a coalition. All coalitions are characterized by some type of hierarchy, and the social coalitions that support political parties are no exception. This fact, while quite evident to most people, has remained a woefully underutilized notion in the formal study of party politics. In the following pages I show how viewing party politics through such a lens can help us come to grips with some of the more interesting social dynamics of electoral coalition building.

A conservative party (or any other party, for that matter) can afford to lose segments of its mass base outside its core constituencies without real detriment to its identity. In fact, regular fluctuations in the broad social composition of conservative coalitions are to be expected over time and contexts. Their policy agendas will reflect these fluctuations. The contrast between Richard Nixon's acquiescence on the issues of abortion rights and secular public education, and Ronald Reagan's crusade for prolife legislation and the introduction of biblical creationism in public schools cannot be explained by the surprising conversion of America's business elites from scientific rationalists to Bible-toting evangelicals. Rather, it is due to the addition of the largely lower-middle class fundamentalist movement to the Republican coalition in the 1970s. If George Bush were to distance himself from the Christian social agenda (as now seems likely) and lose the active support of the party's fundamentalist constituency, the Republican Party's essence as a multi-class electoral alliance led by the upper social strata would not be greatly affected. Certain dimensions of the alliance would be modified, with the attendant consequences for vote getting and policy orientations, but its core would remain untouched.

Structural change within a party occurs when its relationship to its core constituency changes.²⁴ British conservatism's absorption of the Liberal party's commerce and manufacturing constituencies at the turn of the century crystallized the alliance between landed nobility and bourgeoisie behind the Conservative party. This development transformed both parties, and gave impulse to the Conservative party's evolution as the most important electoral expression of Britain's dominant social strata in the twentieth century.

Another example of structural change within a party is provided by Argentine Radicalism in the early twentieth century. In this case,

a struggle between social constituencies for primacy within the party (manifested in a conflict within the political leadership of Radicalism) precipitated the party's transition from conservative party to nonconservative party. Today, the Radical party is the most important electoral expression of the Argentine middle classes. In his historical study of Argentine Radicalism, however, David Rock labels as mistaken "the traditional notion that the party was from the start an organ of middle class interests." Instead, Rock concludes that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it resembled a democratic conservative party: "a mass movement managed by upper-status groups, rather than a grass-roots movement operating in terms of pressures from below . . . a coalition of landowners and non-industrial middle-class groups."²⁵

The stability of this coalition was undermined by the explosive growth of urban patronage networks and middle-class participation in the party structure after its presidential electoral victory in 1916. To Rock, these developments unleashed "a struggle for control of the party between middle-class groups and the elite wing, which had supported Radicalism since the 1890s." Radicalism's first experience in power was characterized by "its difficulties in steering a balance between the party's middle class and elite-based groups."²⁶ In other words, the internal conflict wracking the party during its formative stage was over whether the upper class or the urban middle class would make up the core constituency of Argentine Radicalism. Ultimately, the struggle was decided in favor of the latter, and shortly thereafter, the Radical government of Hipólito Yrigoyen was overthrown by a conservative coup. Since that period, and in spite of its ever shifting multiclass alliances as a catchall anti-Peronist electoral force, the Radical party's strategic relationship to its middle-class constituency has remained its most important structural feature.

Introducing the notion of core constituencies to the study of conservative electoral movements allows us to highlight the protagonism of the upper social strata without reducing their movements to mere instruments of class or sectoral representation. Conservative parties can therefore be conceived of as vehicles for linking the upper social strata to other social sectors in a common political project. A conservative party's leaders seek to unite their upper class core constituency with other social sectors in search of an electoral majority. Conservative party politics can be seen as a multilayered interactive process, in which interaction between the party's political leadership and its core constituencies, and between the core constituencies and other social forces in the coalition, open and close possibilities for political action.

The use of the term "upper social strata" to denote the core constituencies of conservative electoral movements is very vague. It

points research in a certain direction, but leaves open an empirical question: What sectors of the upper social strata are we talking about? Assuming that a given conservative party's core constituencies are located in the upper social strata of society is not to assume that all segments of those strata are part of its core constituencies. The fragmentation of upper-class support among several conservative parties is not only a theoretical possibility, it is an empirical fact in a wide variety of cases. This fragmentation, and its impact on conservative party politics, is in itself a pressing topic for research.

In an ideal, fully consolidated conservative movement where one party rules the Right, we would expect to find most sectors of the upper social strata represented in the party. But even in this ideal situation, some sectors will be more represented than others; some will have a more intimate link or affinity with the party's program than others. In fact, the evolution of a conservative electoral movement may well reflect shifting power alignments within the upper social strata over time. The empirical task for the researcher, then, is to descend the ladder of abstraction and explore the specific relationship of the party to its core constituencies. Questions might include: From which specific sectors of the upper social strata does the party draw most of its resources and leadership? What are the ties between the political party and organized interest associations? To what extent do ideological and power-related struggles within the political leadership reflect deeper sectoral struggles within the upper social strata? To what extent does the existence of multiple conservative parties reflect ideological and socioeconomic cleavages within the upper social strata?

Noncore Constituencies

A conservative party's fate is not dictated solely by its relationship to its core constituencies in the upper social strata. In fact, its mass mobilization potential lies outside those strata. The study of the electoral Right must focus on the process by which mass support is generated and its impact on the party's evolution.

Most of the time parties will be mobilizing support within core and noncore constituencies simultaneously; reality is never kind enough to lay out its inner workings clearly for the purpose of political analysis. Nevertheless, the consolidation of core and noncore constituency support should be viewed as analytically distinct processes. The crystallization of support among core constituencies shapes the party's identity and provides it with resources for political action. It is the party's organic link to structural power. The crystallization of support among noncore constituencies provides the party with its mass electoral base.

The formative years of a conservative party will tend to be dominated by struggles to solidify the support of its core

constituencies. This is, after all, the period when the party's identity is being shaped, and when a critical mass of resources must be generated for the larger political struggle. Often this period is marked by struggle between rival conservative currents for the support of the upper social strata. Such was the case for Argentina's UCEDE that, only after winning *la interna de la derecha* against other currents of the electoral Right in the elections of 1983 and 1985, it was able to dedicate itself more fully to the task of popularizing its ideological agenda of *liberalismo* in the elections of 1987 and 1989. Similarly, Mario Vargas Llosa's first years as a political leader were consumed by struggles, first, to mobilize wary bourgeoisie behind his project of liberal reform, and second, to impose that project upon the traditional parties of the Right. Only with these core constituency conflicts resolved could the Peruvian new Right shift its sights to the broader political struggle. In the early stages of Vargas Llosa's rise, one observer wrote, "to impose itself upon the country, economic and political liberalism will first have to impose itself upon the Right."²⁷

The process is seldom as sequential as these examples would indicate, however. In the Peruvian case, Vargas Llosa's success in subduing rival movements on the Right was due in part to the mass mobilizing appeal of his messages of anti-Statism and popular liberalism, which gave him electoral support among the middle and lower strata that other forces in a moribund electoral Right could not match. Thus, popular liberalism imposed its imprint on the conservative movement as a whole, in spite of strong misgivings among important sectors of the State-dependent bourgeoisie about the potential reaches of wide-scale liberal reforms. In this case, the doctrines of the emergent political leadership linked to Vargas Llosa's *Movimiento Libertad* and the potential of these doctrines to mobilize mass support shaped important aspects of the conservative movement's physiognomy that could not have been predicted by analyzing core constituency dynamics alone.

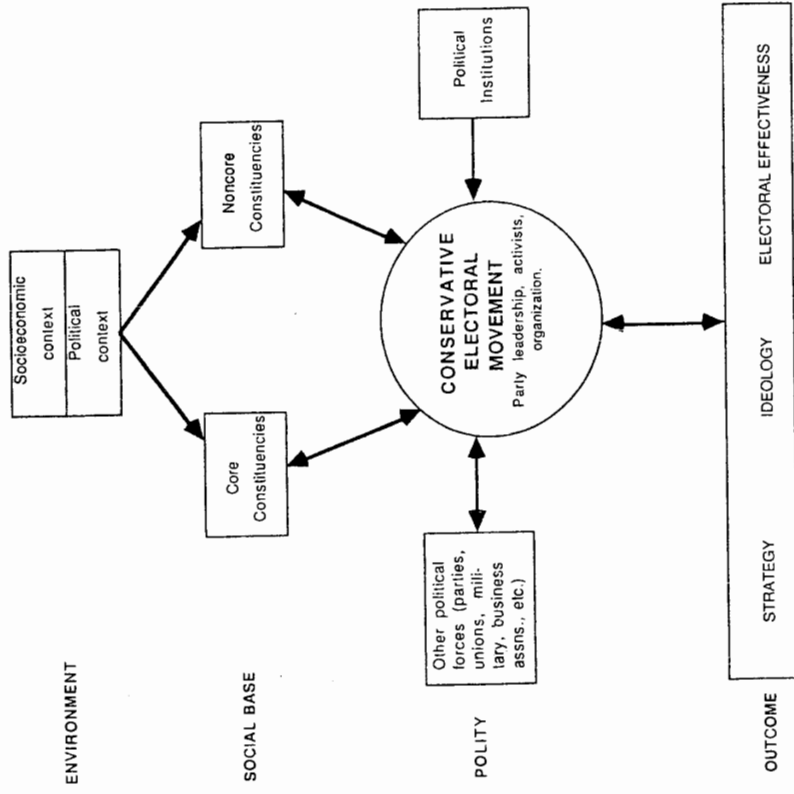
The process by which a conservative party builds mass support among noncore constituencies will feed back upon the party and reshape its structure and ideological orientations. The quest for mass support will spark changes and struggles within the political leadership. It will also force the adaptation of the party's core constituencies to new political agendas. The uneasy coexistence of the Peruvian bourgeoisie with the extreme popular liberalism of its party and the adoption of the Christian fundamentalist agenda of the Republican Party in the 1980s are examples of this. Similarly, should PAN choose to exercise its "catholic option" as a means of expanding its support among Mexico's middle and lower classes, it would need to reconcile that strategy with the *neopanista* business liberalism that came to dominate it over the past decade and galvanized its support among the more prosperous sectors of Mexican society.

Conservative mass coalition building is a story of harmonizing tensions between upper-class core constituencies and mass base, of reconciling the often conflicting imperatives of maintaining internal cohesion while pursuing external growth. These tensions apply as much to newly forming conservative movements as they do to parties with centuries of political experience. A conservative party's evolution is intimately tied to the way in which its political leadership mediates these tensions in its quest to build an electoral majority.

Key Research Variables

The variables that shape the outcomes of conservative party politics, that is, the strategy of the party, its ideology, and its fate, are

FIGURE 2.1
Conservative Electoral Movements: Research Variables



many. As the preceding sections have shown, what a conservative party is and does is not solely the result of its relationship to its upper class core constituencies, no matter how important that relationship may be. Its constituencies in other social strata are vital to its mass mobilization capabilities, and can thus exert a powerful influence on the internal dynamics of the party and its external strategies. The party leadership must also interact with a complex sociopolitical environment and channel its activities through a given set of political structures. All of these variables structure the constraints and opportunities for political action.

The actions and struggles of political leaders are also shaped by the internal dynamics of their parties as institutions (or agglomerations of parties, as is often the case in Latin America). Internal institutional factors — such as organizational structure, internal electoral or decision-making rules, factionalism, and power-sharing arrangements — can exist autonomously from the party's social base. They belong to an organizational realm that often takes on a life of its own.²⁸ They will, however, have a significant impact on the party's relationship to its electorate and on its capacities for mass mobilization.

The puzzle that the study of conservative electoral movements seeks to solve, therefore, is how the interaction between the party leadership and key social, political, and institutional variables shapes its political agenda and determines the logic, strategy, and structure of conservative political action. Figure 2.1 sketches some of the key variables to be taken into account.

TOPICS FOR AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AGENDA ON LATIN AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE ELECTORAL MOVEMENTS

The Media and the Electoral Right

One of the most striking features of democratic politics in Latin America over the last decade has been the growing importance of mass media in election campaigns and the attendant decline of parties and party structures. The implications of this development are many. The styles and images of politics change, as do the strategies and messages of political movements. More importantly, however, the displacement of party politics by mass-media politics affects the distribution of political resources between contenders, as well as the capacities of collective actors to use the electoral process to their advantage.

In the past, when party structure, organization, patronage, and clientelism were the main ingredients for winning elections, conservative and nonconservative movements competed on a

relatively even footing. The economic power and resources of conservative parties could be counterbalanced by the organization and militancy of socialist or middle-class parties. The numbers of votes mobilized were closely correlated to the depth and effectiveness of political organization. No amount of wealth or economic influence, as Argentina's hapless conservatives were to learn with the advent of universal suffrage, could match the patient labor of party building and mass organization as a route to power in electoral politics.

The growing substitution of mass media for party structure changes this situation considerably. This is evidenced today by the fact that most of the New Right electoral movements in Latin America have risen to prominence not by the strength of party organization, but by the power of the mass media. Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil (known in ungenerous circles as "Coca-Collor" for his success as a media creation), Mario Vargas Llosa's Movimiento Libertad in Peru, and Adelina de Viola's popularization of the Unión del Centro Democrático in Argentina are prominent examples.

Two elements might be considered in the analysis of the role and impact of mass media in electoral campaigns. The first is a party or movement's access to the mass media. Access depends on various factors, including the mobilization of financial resources to purchase advertising time or space, the skillful manipulation of images and messages, charismatic and telegenic leadership, state funding or regulation providing parties with free or equitable air time, and so on. These are resources that, with organization and political skill — and in a favorable institutional context — can theoretically be mobilized by conservative and nonconservative electoral movements alike. Lula's skillful use of the Brazilian media since the late 1970s and the Brazilian Workers' party's slick and effective television advertising campaigns during the 1989 presidential campaign stand as clear examples.

The second element to be considered is the control of mass media organs. Where these are in private hands, the issues of who owns them and how freely they are able to use them for political purposes become important in understanding the media's impact on the electoral process. "The media here are more for political combat than for information," remarked a U.S. observer at the recent Nicaraguan elections.²⁹ There is little doubt that the electoral Right's ability to engage in such "combat" owed much to the Chamorro family's control of the influential daily *La Prensa*. This was far more effective than UNO's discombobulated political organization in helping Violeta Chamorro defeat the Sandinistas' powerful electoral machinery. The U.S. election observer's statement could be applied to many other Latin American countries,³⁰ and as the mass media becomes central to the electoral process as a source of information and an arena for combat, the issue of control of media organs by

the electoral Right's core constituencies acquires considerable significance.

The increasing political importance of the mass media in the 1980s has provided Latin American conservative movements with important advantages in the competitive struggle. This is due once again to the position of their core constituencies in civil society, which provides them not only with abundant resources for gaining access to the mass media, but also in many cases links them to sectors with outright control of important media organs. All Brazilian parties had access to the daily free television air space provided by the government during the 1989 presidential campaign. Only Fernando Collor de Mello, however, could count on the magnanimity of Brazil's largest television network, Rede Globo, which converted him into an overnight star in the early phases of the electoral contest, and reserved its most euphoric news coverage — beamed nationwide — to his campaign right up to election day.³¹ The media's role in electoral politics is intimately connected to the issue of how the electoral process in contemporary Latin America is shaped by the socioeconomic context in which it is embedded. A pressing objective of research on the Latin American electoral Right should explore the links between the media power of its core constituencies and the capacities of its political organization.

Business and the Electoral Right

One of the most problematic dimensions of the relationships between conservative parties and their core constituencies in Latin America is embedded in the relationship of business and the electoral Right. In spite of the almost automatic equation in common parlance of conservative parties with bourgeois parties, Latin American business has proved an aloof ally in the electoral Right's political struggles. At election time, conservative parties may mobilize the electoral support of most of the upper social strata; as individuals, business executives may vote for such parties and contribute financial support to their campaigns. But the primary class expressions of Latin American business, be they trade associations, firms, or prominent business leaders, have rarely identified themselves with conservative parties, preferring instead to focus their collective action on such nonelectoral arenas as corporatist pressure politics and firm-state level negotiation.

There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important is the historical evolution of the Latin American bourgeoisie, which has taken place under the tutelage and protection of the state. This historical reality has strongly conditioned the Latin American bourgeoisie's patterns of collective behavior, and should be an

important focus of research for those interested in the relationship between business and parties of the Right. *The bourgeois-state relationship is the most important structural variable to observe from country to country to predict the propensities of business to become involved in conservative party building.*

Recent experience has shown that the fortunes of conservative electoral movements in Latin America are negatively correlated to the health and strength of the bourgeois-state relationship. Where a significant rupture in that relationship has taken place, business has mobilized vigorously behind conservative parties and has given impetus to their growth. In Mexico, for example, the 1982 nationalization of the banking system by the government of Lopez Portillo precipitated the mobilization of important sectors of business behind the PAN. This mobilization gave considerable impetus to the PAN's protagonism in Mexican politics, and prompted the party's internal transformation. In Peru, a country whose bourgeoisie was distinguished by its addition to corporatist pressure politics and its aloofness from party politics, it was another attempted bank nationalization — this time by Alan Garcia in 1987 — that prompted the unprecedented mobilization of business behind a conservative electoral movement — Mario Vargas Llosa's fledgling Movimiento Libertad. The statement made by a prominent business leader, "this experience has taught us that Peruvian businessmen must participate in politics," reflected the Peruvian bourgeoisie's new determination to put an end to its abstention from the electoral game.³² A similar pattern appeared in El Salvador. The reformist turn of the state under the Christian Democratic government of President Duarte sparked an unprecedented level of business mobilization into electoral politics, this time behind the ARENA, an extreme-Right party controlled by paramilitary forces. In the late 1980s, this mobilization caused important changes in the party's ideology and internal power structure, and led to the ascendance of Alfredo Cristiani and other leaders linked to the business community.³³ In all these cases the business shift toward conservative party politics was intimately connected to a break in its privileged relationship with the state.

Just as that relationship can break, however, it can also be mended. As Soledad Loeza wrote regarding the de la Madrid period, "all that was needed was for the de la Madrid government to seek to restore harmony between the State and business for the latter to abandon its support for party opposition."³⁴ De la Madrid's overtures, and those of current President Salinas de Gortari, have weakened the intensity of business support for an autonomous electoral strategy, and have thus undermined the PAN's image as a potential power alternative. At his death in September 1989, PAN leader Manuel Clouthier was engaged in a major struggle to resist those overtures

and to stem his party's flow toward collaborationist strategies with the PRI.

In Argentina, despite the depth of the socioeconomic crisis, considerable continuity has existed in the state-business relationship. As a result, business has oriented the bulk of its political action toward corporatist channels, and organic links between the party Right and business have remained weak.³⁵ This has remained one of the most troublesome problems for the party-building efforts of the conservative UCeDE since 1983.³⁶

The connection between Latin American conservative electoral movements and business should not be made automatically. Historical experience has shown this link to be extremely varied (as varied as the Latin American bourgeoisie itself). Variations in this relationship are themselves important determinants of the nature and strength of conservative electoral mobilization, and should be the subject of careful empirical research.

The Military and the Electoral Right

The return to democratic politics in Latin America sparked an important change in the balance of power between civil society and the armed forces. To a great extent, this relational change has also taken place in the narrower realm of conservative civil-military relations. The relationship between the civilian Right and the military varies greatly from country to country, but there is one development that appears to be regionwide in scope: a shift in the symmetry of relations between the civilian Right and the armed forces. The rise of conservative electoral movements is the most visible reflection of this shift.

In recent periods of democratic and authoritarian politics, civilian conservative forces converged with military actors invested with bureaucratic interests and political agendas of their own. The military served less as an instrument of upper-class political action than as a political ally whose political agenda had to be reconciled with that of the civilian Right. The military agenda often dominated the alliance. In many respects, the conservative agendas of the 1970s in Latin America were shaped by the armed forces.

Today the conservative agendas are being increasingly set by the civilian Right. This is certainly the case where the conservative civil-military relationship has been marked by elements of rupture. In Peru, the military's reformist political experiment of 1968 has made the Right wary of the armed forces as a political actor and has given impulse to autonomous strategies of political action through the party system. In Argentina, conservative disenchantment with the ineptitude and unmanageability of the military institution during the 1976-83 regime, as well as with its statist proclivities, help to explain

the Right's turn to party politics, as well as the relative distance its leaders have maintained from the armed forces since the return to democracy.

Similar trends have also emerged, however, in countries where the conservative civil-military relationship has been marked more by continuity than rupture. In countries such as Brazil, El Salvador, and Chile, the military continues to enjoy high prerogatives in the political system. It maintains a monopoly over areas of policy and security that are outside of the reach of civilian control, and its veto (or worse) of progressive agendas is still an important resource for the civilian Right.³⁷ Nevertheless, in each of these countries, the civilian Right has increased its margin of autonomy from the military, and has become more assertive in setting the agenda of conservative politics. In Brazil, the rise of Fernando Collor de Mello was accomplished through a mass mobilization campaign that gave the civilian Right a base of support independent from the armed forces. Collor was supported by the armed forces in the general election, but his rise owed little to the military institution. This has given him greater autonomy as a political leader than that enjoyed by his predecessor, José Sarney, or other veterans of the promilitary ARENA/PDS cohort.³⁸ In El Salvador, Cristiani's rise reflected the partial displacement within ARENA of the party's paramilitary founders by business leaders and civilian professionals. One result of this has been an unexpected degree of decision-making autonomy from the armed forces by the ARENA-led government.³⁹ In Chile, both the Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) and Renovación Nacional have taken center stage in defending the continuity of Pinochet's socioeconomic project. With over 40 percent of the electorate behind the parties of the Chilean Right, the General's continued presence in Chilean politics is no longer as indispensable as it used to be.

In part, these symmetrical changes in the conservative civil-military relationship are logical outgrowths of a return to democratic politics. Democracy, after all, implies the supremacy of civilian authority over military power. This has not, however, always been the case in Latin American democratic politics. Strong indications exist that the relational changes between the civilian Right and the military have more to do with the political dynamics of this specific democratic period than with the general tendencies of democratic politics. Conservative disenchantment with the military as a political ally seems more widespread among the Latin American upper social strata than in previous periods; this may in part be explained by the autonomy that the armed forces displayed in the authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. Instrumentally, therefore, alliances with the military have not proven as attractive as in the past to the civilian Right. Other factors, such as the declining strength and

militancy of popular movements and the Left in many countries, and a more favorable international context for democracy, might also help explain the relative independence displayed by the civilian Right toward the armed forces in the 1980s. In many cases these changes are subtle. They are, nevertheless, significant. The search for their determinants should be a central focus of research in scholarship on the Latin American electoral Right.

Socioeconomic Crisis and the New Electoral Right

Latin America today is undergoing the deepest and most generalized socioeconomic crisis since the Great Depression. At issue in this crisis is the decline of state-centered models of development that emerged as a regional response to the Great Depression and the post-war push for economic development. As state-centered models of development have come into question, the only political force — on either the Right or the Left — historically linked to nonstate-centered models of development is the liberal Right. Long dormant as an electoral force, it has now taken the initiative in shaping the debate and political agendas of democratic politics in several countries. This development has had a profound impact on the Latin American electoral Right, transforming both its strategies of mass mobilization as well as its internal power relationships. The rise of new Right parties in Latin America must be examined in light of the generalized socioeconomic crisis affecting the region today.

State Crisis, the Electoral Right, and the Shifting Public Debate

The rise of the new Right in Latin America is intimately linked to widespread dissatisfaction with the state's performance. The new Right is coterminous with *liberalismo* and *anti-estatismo*. The intellectual substance of its appeals has consisted of two elements. The first has been a frontal assault against the state's inefficiency, corruption, and authoritarianism in the economic and social realms — giving the Right, in some cases, the offensive on an issue related to democracy — as well as the pernicious effect of the state crisis on the middle and lower social strata.

The second element of the new Right's appeal has taken aim at the intricate array of state-economic elite relationships that make up the power structure of the developmentalist state.⁴⁰ This critique, rather than focusing on a monolithic, blundering state, fine tunes its attacks on specific socioeconomic interests whose economic dependence on the state gives them a stake in its continued role in the economy. Predictably, a big part of this critique is aimed at the labor movement and its corporatist connections to the state. It is also,

however, aimed at important segments of the bourgeoisie. The new Right's gallery of rogues goes beyond the "union bureaucracy." It has come to include the "mercantilist business class" decried by Peru's Hernando de Soto, the "prebendary businessman" vilified by Argentina's UCEDE, and the "cartorial capitalists" criticized by Brazil's neoliberal thinkers.

In many respects, therefore, the new Right emerges in ideological opposition to important aspects of the social status quo, to important sectors of its potential core constituencies, and by extension, to their traditional political representatives within the electoral Right. In this sense the socioeconomic crisis has unleashed a political struggle within the Right. The study of the liberal new Right in Latin America should pay particular attention to its emergence from the conflict within the Right, spurred by the crisis of the developmentalist state. It is the result of struggle between new movements pushing for liberal reform and traditional conservative leaderships "frozen in the New Deal," as a leader of the Peruvian new Right described them pejoratively.⁴¹

An additional feature of the New Right, which appears to be shared by a number of countries, is its posture of opposition to the political status quo. In these cases, the new Right presents itself as an alternative to the traditional political class of party politicians, which is as equally tarnished by its association with the sociopolitical context of the past several decades as big business, unions, and other new Right villains. Thus, in the Chilean presidential campaign of 1989, Hernan Büchi steadfastly denied that his movement, the UDI, was a party. He insisted, rather, that it was a social movement, united in opposition to a return of the pre-1973 political class to power. Similarly, Mario Vargas Llosa stressed the transitory nature of his political activity, and asserted that Libertad "is not the traditional political party that pursues power."⁴² Fernando Collor de Mello also ran on a strong antipolitical class platform, stressing his identity as a political outsider, untarnished by association with the political elite, and beholden only to civil society.⁴³

Much of this aspect of the new Right's posture can be chalked up to campaign rhetoric. This should not, however, obscure an important point: in much of Latin America today the discourse of reform and renovation has been monopolized by the Right. Given the depth of the state crisis, the success of anti-status quo campaigns is not surprising. That these should come primarily from the Right points to the poverty of the Latin American Left in responding to the ongoing disintegration of the Latin American state. The fact that the Right's anti-status quo campaign is also aimed at the political class whose authority is derived from democratic politics does, however, give some cause for concern. The distance between condemnations of the political class, or *la partidocracia*, and condemnations of liberal

democratic institutions themselves has been quite short throughout the history of liberal democracy. One can only hope that the politics of antipolitics, so effectively played by movements of the Right in their democratic bid for power does not, in the long run, add another element of instability to the already shaky legitimacy of Latin America's democratic institutions.

State Crisis, the Right, and Changing Social Structures

A vital issue related to the socioeconomic crisis is how long-term changes in the Latin American social structure have shaped Conservatism's capacities for collective action. The new Right has made impressive inroads into social sectors previously impervious to its antistate appeals. Part of the explanation for this phenomenon must be sought in the secular withering of Latin America's social structure and in the attendant volatility of long-standing social coalitions.

"Heterogeneity and fragmentation on the rise," is the way José Nun recently described Argentina's changing social structure.⁴⁴ This characterization reflects changes happening elsewhere in Latin America as well. A shrinking proletarian base (with the attendant weakening of labor union strength), the growth of economic informality, declining white collar living standards, and growing middle-class insecurity, as well as other effects of Latin America's state crisis have weakened existing bonds of political solidarity and created new opportunities for conservative electoral movements.

The impact of Latin America's socioeconomic crisis on local social structures varies widely from country to country. The types and effectiveness of conservative electoral mobilization will reflect these variations. Nevertheless, explanations of the rise of new Right movements in Latin America would benefit from the study of social changes throughout the region and the study of the emergence of new conservative movements. Scholarship on Latin American politics today is sorely lacking a systematic analysis of the connections between large-scale changes at the level of social structure and the new coalitions emerging at the level of politics. Perhaps the comparative study of the electoral Right will provide a valuable first step in that direction.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided ideas for the systematic study of conservative electoral movements. Its attention has been directed primarily at Latin America, where the protagonism of conservative parties in the current democratic period poses a substantial research challenge to students of comparative politics. The chapter's most important methodological point has been that a clear definition of

concepts should be the starting point of research. To this end, it has proposed that the defining characteristic of conservative parties and electoral movements be their social base; specifically, that their core constituencies are drawn from the upper strata of society. A central task of research of conservative parties involves uncovering how their political leadership forges alliances between their upper-class core constituencies and other social sectors in search of electoral majorities.

This chapter has also proposed the definitional task of separating movement from ideology. While ideology and ideological struggle are a major focus of research on conservative movements, caution is advised against including any given ideology or set of ideologies among the defining properties of such movements. Given the variety of ideologies associated with conservative movements over time and contexts, it is most useful to identify ideological properties as variable (generally associated with such movements but not always present), and social properties as defining.

The stress on methodology and systematic analysis that appears in these pages suggests proposing a normative basis for studying the Latin American Right. Whether one embraces or loathes the ideology and practice of conservative movements, all should agree on the desirability of a constitutionalist Right in Latin America. The constituencies of conservative movements cannot simply be done away with. They will be vital participants of the political struggle regardless of whether they have a party to represent them or not. The exercise of conservative political action through democratic channels may well strengthen the Right's capacities to influence politics, but it also keeps alive the hopes for an eventual realization of the better society that filled the work of scholars and political leaders during Latin America's uncertain transitions to democracy. It is too early to tell whether the many electoral movements emerging on the Right signal the institutionalization of a new democratic *praxis* or something merely ephemeral. What is clear is that for now they represent an important shift by the Right toward electoral politics. One way we might help to make that shift more permanent is to study it objectively and help people understand it.

NOTES

1. I use the phrase electoral movements instead of parties to maximize inclusiveness. The fluidity of many party systems in Latin America often produces the appearance of movements vying for power through the electoral process that do not have formal party status (as Vargas Llosa's Movimiento Libertad in Peru), are structurally inchoate, and thus not entirely worthy of the label party (as Collor de Mello's Partido de Reconstrução Nacional), or are shifting alliances of several parties (as Izquierda Unida in Peru). The expression electoral

movements permits us to include such phenomena alongside parties in our analysis.

2. For stylistic purposes (and at the sacrifice of conceptual clarity), I will occasionally substitute the "Electoral Right" or "Right" for conservatism, although the term Right refers to space on one end of a Left-Right ideological continuum, which conservatism might well share with movements of different sociological bases.

3. See, for example, some of the most recent comparative volumes on European conservative parties: Brian Girvin, ed., *The Transformation of Contemporary Conservatism* (London: Sage Publications, 1988); Zig Layton-Henry, ed., *Conservative Politics in Western Europe* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1982); "A Century of Conservatism," monographic issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, 4 (1978).

4. The distinction between defining and variable properties is taken from Giovanni Sartori, "Guidelines for Concept Analysis," in *Social Science Concepts*, ed. Giovanni Sartori (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1984).

5. Hans Geerd Schumann, "The Problem of Conservatism: Some Notes on Methodology," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, 4 (1978): 812.

6. Timothy Power, "A direita política: Discurso e Comportamento, 1987-1990." (Paper presented to the Seminário Nacional Sobre Comportamento Político, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, March 12-14, 1990).

7. Natalio Botana, in his book on the generation of 1880, describes its leaders as "skeptics and conservatives" in the political realm, and "liberals and progressives" in the social realm. See Natalio Botana, *El Orden Conservador: La política argentina entre 1880 y 1916* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1977), p. 13.

8. The fact that the implementation of these programs would lead to the formation of another power block within the economic elite, as has been the case in Chile, does not detract from the argument. The power block benefitting from liberal economic restructuring would be different from the one that preceded it. One cannot, therefore, assume a priori which sectors of society will benefit or suffer from a conservative project, much less assume that the goal of conservatism is to protect the interests of the upper social strata as a whole.

9. Margaret Keck, "From Movement to Politics: The Workers' Party of Brazil." Ph.D. dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 1986).

10. Cited in Robert McKenzie and Allan Silver, *Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England* (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 14.

11. Adam Przeworski and John Sprague, "Party Strategy, Class Organization, and Individual Voting," in *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, ed. Adam Przeworski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 99-101.

12. That is, of course, if it hopes to come anywhere near to doing well in an election.

13. Faustino A. Fernández Sasso, *El Estado y Yo, por Juan Barcía, Taxista* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Estudios Contemporáneos (IDEC)/Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1988), p. 2.

14. Przeworski and Sprague, "Party Strategy," p. 101.

15. For a theoretical treatment of this dynamic, particularly regarding its implications for working class and Socialist movements, see Adam Przeworski, "Proletariat into a Class: The Process of Class Formation," in *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, ed. Adam Przeworski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Przeworski and Sprague, "Party Strategy," p. 101.

16. Argentina, which has lacked a conservative party capable of winning national elections since at least the 1940s, is perhaps the classic example of the detrimental effect of chronic conservative electoral weakness on democratic

stability. Also, in Venezuela, the weakness of conservative party organization in the face of Acción Democrática's overwhelming organization during the 1945-48 Trienio period contributed to the breakdown of that brief democratic experiment. This contrasts with the relative stability of the democratic regime inaugurated in 1958, in which a strengthened conservative Christian Democratic Party, COPEI, forged consociational arrangements with Acción Democrática. I address the Argentine case, as well as new developments on the Argentine Right since 1983, in Edward L. Gibson, "Democracy and the New Electoral Right in Argentina," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 31, 3 (1990).

17. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 109.

18. Extensive literature exists on corporatism and its role in democratic politics in Western Europe. See, for example, Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1979); and Suzanne D. Berger, ed., *Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

19. For interesting analyses of the impact of class confrontation through corporatist politics in post-Peronist Argentina, and its impact on democratic politics, see Ricardo Sidicaro, "Poder y crisis de la gran burguesía agraria," in *Argentina Hoy*, ed. Alain Rouquié (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982). See also Sidicaro's "¿Es posible la democracia en Argentina?" in *¿Como renacen las democracias?* ed. Alain Rouquié and Jorge Schvarzer (Buenos Aires: EMECE, 1985).

20. Russell Kirk, *A Program for Conservatives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 22.

21. Samuel Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *American Political Science Review* 51, 2 (1957): 455.

22. Huntington, in "Conservatism as an Ideology," was concerned with conservatism as an ideology. He was careful to advise that his formulations were not intended for use in the study of parties, advice that unfortunately has not been heeded in most of the literature on conservative parties and movements.

23. Carlos Acuña, "The Bourgeoisie as a Political Actor: Theoretical Notes for a Reassessment of an Old and 'Forgotten' Topic," Ph.D. dissertation (Chicago: University of Chicago, forthcoming).

24. In a recent article Peter Mair argues that it is more feasible to think in terms of structural change in party systems than in parties, since it is virtually impossible to identify the structural "essence or core" of an individual party. If, however, we analyze a party's relationship to society in addition to its institutional and organizational dimensions, we can look to its social base to distill its essence or core. This would permit us to do what Mair considers problematic: distinguishing between changes in aspects of a party and changes in a party *tout court*. See Peter Mair, "The Problem of Party System Change," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, 3 (1989).

25. David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930: The Rise and Fall of Radicalism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 58, 97-98, 266, and 267.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 111 and 222.

27. Mirko Lauer, "Adios conservadorismo, bienvenido liberalismo: La nueva derecha en el Perú," *Nueva Sociedad* 98 (1988): 142.

28. One of the most forceful theoretical exponents of the autonomy of a party's internal organizational dynamics from the specific configuration of social forces that supports it is Angelo Panebianco. See his *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Panebianco levels strong criticism against what he labels the "sociological prejudice" in the literature on

political parties, which sees intraparty struggles and dynamics as mere reflections of struggles and dynamics in the social coalition that supports the party. In the approach I'm presenting in this chapter, I recognize, along with Panebianco, that the organizational and social dimensions of party politics constitute two separate levels of analysis. However, rather than concentrate analysis on one of those levels, as Panebianco does at the organizational level, I place a greater stress on analyzing the interaction between the two. In part (but only in part) this is necessitated by the fluidity of the organizational dimension of party politics in much of Latin America, which would make it difficult to focus exclusively on internal institutional variables to explain the outcomes of party politics.

29. *New York Times*, February 25, 1990, p. 10.

30. As evidenced by newspaper headline coverage of a political rally held by Mario Vargas Llosa in Cajamarca, Peru, on August 14, 1989: "Overflowing Crowds at Mario's Rally in Cajamarca," proclaimed *Expreso*, whose publisher was a member of Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO. "Slight Attendance at FREDEMO Rally in Cajamarca," commented the heading of the center-left daily *La República*.

31. Including the last two days before the election, when party advertising was prohibited by law.

32. Quoted in Francisco Durand, *La burguesía peruana: -Los primeros industriales*. -Alan García y los empresarios (Lima: Cuadernos DESCO, 1988), p. 72.

33. For a recent account of these developments, leading to ARENA's capture of the presidency in 1989, see Gabriel Gaspar Tapia, *El Salvador: el ascenso de la nueva derecha* (San Salvador: CINAS, 1989).

34. Soledad Loeza, "Derecha y Democracia en el Cambio Político Mexicano, 1982-1988," Conference Paper No. 24 (New York: The Columbia University-New York University Consortium, April 1990), p. 47. My translation.

35. An illustration of this is provided by the two-track logic of Peronist president Carlos Menem's alliance with the Argentine upper social strata in July 1988: an alliance with Alvaro Alsogaray, leader of the Unión del Centro Democrático, and a corporatist alliance with Argentina's most important multinational corporation, Bunge y Born, whose top executives were given control of the country's Ministry of the Economy. Not only was it necessary for President Menem to resort to these two expressions of Argentina's socioeconomic elite separately, tensions between the liberal party leadership collaborating with Menem and the business executives running the Ministry of the Economy bedeviled the government until Bunge y Born's withdrawal from the alliance in late 1989.

36. I address problems in the business-UCEDE relationship in Edward L. Gibson, "Democracy and the New Electoral Right in Argentina," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 32, 3 (1990).

37. For a discussion of military prerogatives and contestation of civilian authority in contemporary democratic regimes in Latin America see Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

38. It has also permitted Collor to enact cutbacks in the military budget and to challenge the armed forces in a number of areas previously outside of civilian jurisdiction. For a newspaper account of these developments, see "Brazil's Leader makes Military Toe the Line," *New York Times*, September 10, 1990, p. 6.

39. See Gabriel Gaspar Tapia, *El Salvador: El ascenso de la nueva derecha* (San Salvador: CINAS, 1989). For a newspaper account of the Christiani government's struggles with ARENA's paramilitary wing and the armed forces, see "Threats and Party Backlash for El Salvador Chief," *New York Times*, September 16, 1990, p. 10.

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40. The characterization of this dimension of the new Right critique is provided by William Nysten in his stimulating chapter in this volume.
41. Enrique Ghersi, interview with the author, Lima, Peru, August 12, 1989.
42. *Caretas*, March 20, 1989.
43. The fact that he had been governor of the northeastern state of Alagoas, was the son of a traditional political family, and mobilized the support of the bulk of the conservative political class did not seem to temper his public antipolitical class enthusiasm.
44. José Nun, "Cambios en la estructura social de la Argentina," in *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina*, eds. José Nun and Juan Carlos Portantiero (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1987), p. 135.