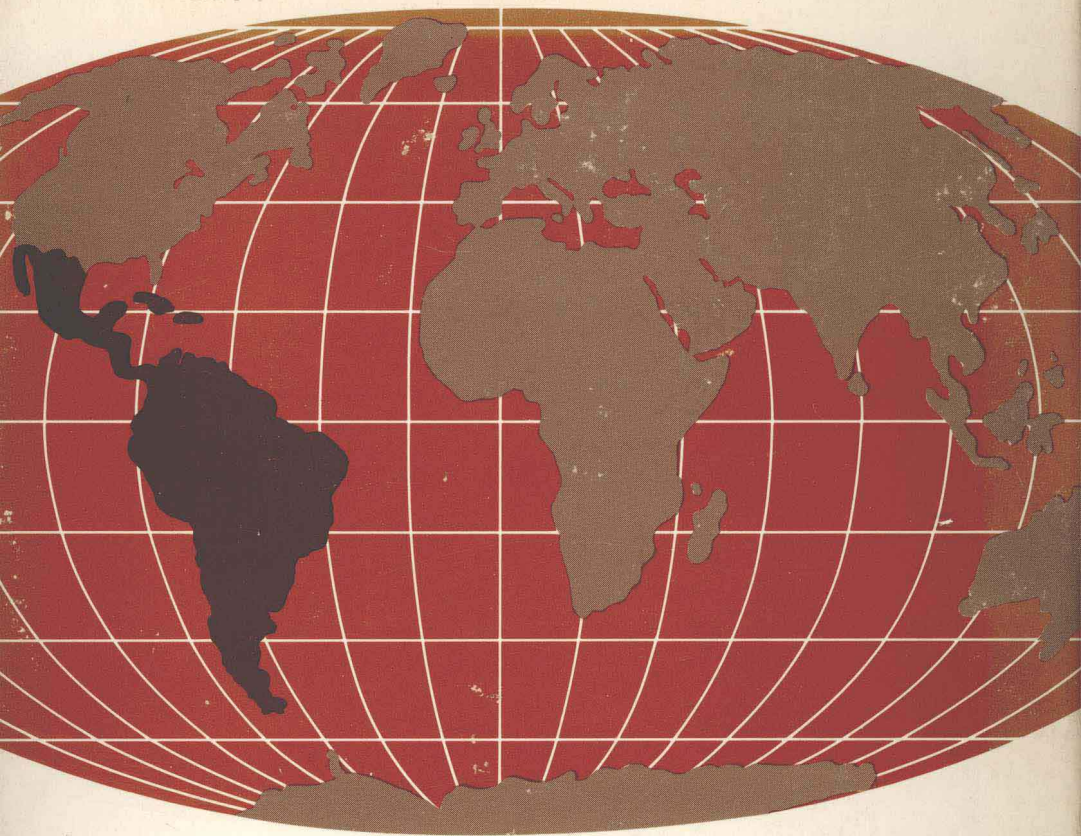


CLIO DICTIONARIES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Jack C. Plano, Editor



Ernest Rossi  
Jack C. Plano

**THE  
LATIN  
AMERICAN  
POLITICAL  
DICTIONARY**

*The Latin American Political Dictionary*

Ernest E. Rossi  
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*Western Michigan University*



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## *A Note on How to Use This Book*

*The Latin American Political Dictionary* is organized so that entries that relate to a particular topical area are arranged alphabetically within a subject-matter chapter. Students thus can concentrate on studying groups of concepts that relate to their professor's lectures or textbook assignments. When in doubt as to which chapter contains a term the reader can consult the general index. In addition, major countries in the region are profiled in the Guide to Countries, which indicates where information may be found on specific social, economic, historical, and political topics for each country. In these ways, users gain access to broad classes of related information.

The authors designed the special format of this book to offer the reader a variety of approaches in the quest for information about Latin America. These approaches include its use as: (1) a *reference guide* to the specialized language which relates to that region of the world; (2) a *study guide* for several types of introductory courses to the field of Latin American studies; (3) a *supplement* to the textbook or to a group of monographs adopted for use in a Latin American course; (4) a *source of review materials* for the student who is enrolled in an advanced course in the field; and (5) a *cognate-course aid* to be used in various social science courses.

## *Preface*

Precision in the use of language can be regarded as the primary scientific tool of every intellectual discipline. This was the first consideration of the authors in undertaking their work on *The Latin American Political Dictionary*. Other objectives included producing a work that would enable students of Latin American politics, economics, sociology, geography, and history to acquire, easily and accurately, a knowledge of some of the basics that relate to that region of the world. The authors would like to emphasize, however, that no effort has been made to be exhaustive in the inclusion of terms. Rather, they have used their best judgment to sift and winnow out those concepts, events, institutions, strategies and theories that are most applicable to achieving a basic understanding of the Latin American region. The book thus places a major emphasis on facilitating the “learning of the basics” with the assumption that an ability to communicate in a technical language will aid the student in his or her search for knowledge in the field.

Several special features of this book are aimed at achieving these objectives. First, the entries have been systematically selected to complement the subject matter found in various textbooks that focus on Latin America. Second, a subject-matter chapter format is utilized to make the book useful as a teaching and learning tool. The chapters in the dictionary dovetail with those found in many books in the field so assignments can be coordinated by the instructor. Third, each entry, in addition to including an up-to-date definition, contains a paragraph of *significance* wherein the term’s historical importance and its current

relevance are discussed and analyzed. Fourth, the book contains extensive cross-references that offer the reader an opportunity to seek additional information pertaining to the subject of inquiry. Finally, the Guide to Countries and a comprehensive index facilitate use of the book as an effective reference tool as well as a teaching and learning device.

Politics and the field of political science probably suffer more than most disciplines from semantic confusion. This is especially true when beginning students undertake introductory courses that focus on foreign regions generally unfamiliar to them. The opportunity to provide help to those undertaking a first course in Latin American studies was one of the prime motivations of the authors. Comments from students and faculty about whether or not the book measures up to these expectations will be greatly appreciated. The authors accept full responsibility and encourage readers to call errors of commission as well as omission to their attention.

The authors acknowledge the important role of the many scholars whose articles and books have contributed to the enrichment of the language of the field of Latin American Studies. We also thank our students who have challenged and excited us over the years in a manner that could only contribute to the value of this work. Also, we express our thanks and appreciation to Dorothea Bradford Barr who completed the final typing of the manuscript with skill, dispatch, and good humor.

Ernest E. Rossi

Jack C. Plano

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# I

## *Geography, Population, and Social Structure*

**Creole (*Criollo*)** In the colonial period, a person of full Spanish ancestry born in the Americas. Creoles are distinguished from peninsulars (*peninsulares*), or Spaniards who were born in the Iberian peninsula. Most important governmental, ecclesiastical, and military positions during the colonial period were held by peninsulars. For example, of the 170 viceroys, only four were creoles; of the 602 captains-general, governors, and presidents, only fourteen were creoles; of the 606 archbishops and bishops, 105 were creoles. Many creoles were well-educated and trained in the professions, some were wealthy, large landholders or mine owners. They resented the special privileges, wealth, and the social snobbery of the peninsulars, and they were embittered by the economic and political restrictions placed on them by colonial administrators. In Brazil, the situation was essentially the same as in Spanish America, except that Brazilian-born whites were known as *mazombos* and whites born in Portugal were known as *reinois*. See also CRÉOLE; PENINSULAR.

**Significance** By the end of the eighteenth century, many creoles saw themselves as *americanos* rather than as Spaniards. They were attracted to the ideas of political independence, republicanism, and natural rights, and their hatred of the peninsu-

lars united them politically. The municipal councils (*cabildos*) were dominated by creoles, and they used this position to support a break with Spain and to govern the colonies during the Wars of Independence. Creoles came into power after independence and, although they split into factions, they remained basically conservative in their approach to social reform. Creoles then replaced the peninsulars as the upper social class, and they used their power to increase their wealth and solidify their position against Indians and *mestizos*.

**Demographic Cycle** The impact of technological change on the size and composition of a society's population. The demographic cycle evolves through three stages. The first stage is characterized by a preindustrial base, with a near equilibrium between births and deaths producing a relatively stable population. Both birth and death rates are very high, the infant mortality rate is high, life expectancy is about thirty years, and population increase is slow but steady. The second stage of the demographic cycle is transitional and involves continued high birth rates, a sharp decline in death rates, and, as a result, a veritable "population explosion." In this stage, infant mortality rates fall dramatically, resulting in a biologically young population. The third stage of the demographic cycle is ushered in as industrialization and technological advancements tend to substantially reduce the birth rate and the death rate continues its decline begun during the second stage. *See also* POPULATION.

**Significance** The impact of the demographic cycle on Latin America is probably greater than on any other region in the world. Most Latin states have moved into the second stage and are caught up with the greatest population surge ever experienced on the globe. Some societies, for example, have doubled their populations during the brief span of seventeen years. Countries with the highest growth rates include Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela, all of which have annual rates of growth that exceed 3 percent. Argentina and Uruguay have the lowest growth rates in Latin America and both have annual growth rates of considerably less than 2 percent. Because industrial development and general modernization proceed at an uneven pace within states, most Latin countries have geographical areas or regions that reflect all three of the major stages of the demographic cycle. Areas that still typify the first stage of extremely

high birth and death rates, however, are becoming extremely rare. The typically high growth rates in most of Latin America, popularly referred to as the "population explosion," have tended to create a major problem. The problem is that evidence from developed countries indicates that industrialization tends to bring the high growth rate under control, but achieving major economic growth in societies where populations are doubling in several decades remains an unfulfilled challenge for most Latin societies.

**Ejido** An agricultural landholding community in Mexico. *Ejidos* were originally communal lands of Mexican Indian villages and a few still remain. Most *ejidos*, however, have been created by the great land reforms enacted since the mid-1930s. In a typical *ejido*, woodland and meadows are used in common, but cropland is divided into parcels and distributed to the *ejidatarios* (members of an *ejido*). A few *ejidos* are operated as cooperatives in which the cropland is farmed jointly and profits shared by the *ejidatarios*. An *ejido* differs from a state farm in that the land is nationalized in state farms and peasants become agricultural laborers who work for a wage. An *ejido* that has been parceled among its members differs from a privately owned family farm because, although *ejido* parcels are worked by families and may be inherited, *ejido* land may not be sold, mortgaged, leased, or alienated in any way. Most *ejidos* operated as cooperatives have not been successful and the *ejidatarios* have suffered from corrupt *ejido* managers. Some parceled *ejidos* are more productive than traditional haciendas, but generally *ejido* plots are small, poor techniques are used, mechanization has not been adopted, and production is low. For the most part, *ejido* peasants practice subsistence agriculture. See also LAND REFORM; MEXICAN REVOLUTION.

**Significance** Over forty-five million hectares, or almost 50 percent of Mexican croplands, are in the *ejido* system, and about a third of the population depends on it for their livelihood. Although production is not satisfactory, the *ejido* system is one of the major social achievements of the Mexican Revolution and any attempt to change it by forced consolidations would undoubtedly disturb the political stability of the nation. Since the 1940s, the Mexican government has favored the medium-sized, privately owned farm because it is more productive. Despite the great land reforms that have taken place in Mexico since the

1930s, a virtual population explosion has produced more landless peasants today than there were in 1910. Pressures on the government to break up large farms sometimes take the form of squatters (called *paracaidistas*, or parachutists) who invade and occupy desirable croplands. These attempts have usually been repulsed by the Mexican government, which finds itself faced by a dilemma. As the leader of the continuing Mexican Revolution, the government must defend and support the revolutionary principle of land reform. On the other hand, government leaders believe that if most of the remaining privately held farms were redistributed to *ejidos*, agricultural production would fall and the revolutionary goals of national development and independence would be set back.

**Élite** The upper social class in Haiti that historically governed the nation. The *élite*, who constitute about 5 percent of the population of Haiti, are mulattoes and a few wealthy blacks (Negroes). They live in Port-au-Prince, speak French, practice Catholicism, value French culture and style, are well-educated and wealthy, and display an elegant deportment. The *élite* are sharply differentiated from the illiterate rural masses, almost 90 percent of the people, who live in abject poverty, speak *Créole*, and practice Vodun (Voodoo). The small urban working class (about 6 percent) is similar to the peasants in these matters. The new urban middle class (from 2 to 4 percent) is black, educated, and French speaking. It is not cohesive, however, and is uncertain of its position in Haitian society, and it has been affected by black nationalist and black consciousness movements. *See also* CRÉOLE; MULATTO.

**Significance** The *élite* were the dominant part of the unofficial two-caste system that developed in Haiti after independence was achieved in 1804. Unlike the traditional upper class of Spanish America, the *élite* were not a landed gentry and have always lived in urban areas. Following independence and the freeing of the slaves, all farmland was divided into small plots and given to former slaves. The *élite* inherited the social and psychological position of the French colonials. They were attracted to the professions, looked down on manual labor, and avoided industry and commerce. Their political and economic position declined after the black middle-class physician, François Duvalier, took power in 1957.

**Geographical Factors—Climate** The impact of weather conditions on the political, economic, social and military power of nations. In Latin America, climate changes dramatically from east to west, from north of south, and at lower to higher altitudes. The Andes mountain range, which runs the length of the South American continent from Venezuela to the southern tip of Chile, has a substantial impact on weather conditions for most of the continental countries. The west coast changes from lush growth supported by heavy rains north of the equator to desert land in Peru and Chile south of the equator. The Andes, cold and snowcapped, support life in a few valleys protected by surrounding peaks, and in the Altiplano or the high plateau in Bolivia. Proceeding east from the Andes along the Amazon's headwaters from Colombia to Bolivia is *la montaña* or the rain forest. The Amazon Basin is a vast jungle and its climate is determined by the fact that it is barely above sea level. The high temperatures in the Amazon Basin and heavy rains in the region inhibit agriculture and make it mostly unfit for human habitation. Further south, a vast treeless plain known as the Pampa stretches across southern Brazil and most of Argentina, enjoying moderate temperatures and rainfall sufficient to support large-scale ranching operations. *See also other* GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS.

**Significance** The climatic conditions of a state or region are determined mainly by its temperature, topography, precipitation, location, and wind patterns. Moderate or temperate climatic conditions typically encourage developments that strengthen national power, such as those found in Argentina and in southern Brazil. Adverse conditions can be overcome, but a greater investment in human effort and resources is required, which makes developmental progress more difficult to achieve. The South American continent's great climatic diversity results not only from its topographical features but also from its vastness, stretching about 4,500 miles from north to south and 3,000 miles from east to west. Because the equator traverses the northern portion of the continent, amidst the towering snow-capped peaks of the Andean range, Latin culture is influenced by the immediacy of climatic changes. Most of South America lies within the Equatorial Zone—from a latitude of 30 degrees north of the equator to 30 degrees south. Thus, it more closely resembles Africa climatically than the United States or Europe. Climate is one of the most important geographical factors because it directly affects growing food and performing work. For example, the highland Indians over the centuries made blood and



lung physiological adaptations to living in the thin air of the mountains. When they were transported by the Spaniards to work on plantations in the humid tropical coastal lowlands, they could not perform effectively and thousands died. Subsequently Africans were imported as slaves to work on the coastal plantations. This accounts for the large black population of the Caribbean islands and coastal lowlands of Central and South America.

**Geographical Factors—Location** The relationship between physical position on the globe and a nation's or region's economic, political, social and military power. The location of Latin America in the Western Hemisphere has meant closer and more direct ties with the United States than with Europe after the colonies gained independence. The Panama Canal has promoted closer relationships by providing a more proximate linking of the great cities of the eastern and western coastal regions of the two continents. Mexico and the Caribbean countries, which include the island nations, Central America, and Venezuela, have tended to be subject to greater external pressures than the rest of the continental countries, especially because of political, economic and military pressures emanating from the United States. Those states located in the southern portions of the continent—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay—are particularly affected by the great distances to both Europe and the United States. The policies and actions of many smaller Latin states are also influenced because of their location next to powerful neighbors, such as the case of the “southern cone” states of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay that are located proximate to Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. *See also other GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS.*

**Significance** The location of Latin America has been a powerful geographical factor influencing and often determining political and economic outcomes. Independence was secured and maintained largely because of the great distance between Europe and South America. The efforts of the United States to establish hegemony and its interventions in Mexico and the Caribbean region were encouraged by the factor of location. The great distance separating the southern states of the continent from the United States and Europe has encouraged attitudes and policies promoting economic, political and military independence. Also, the great distance over which primary commodities must be shipped to reach the markets of the indus-