**Handout on Paper #1**

Students will choose one of the following eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia. In a light research paper of 7-8 pages, the author will focus upon one sequential transition (e.g., a transition from democracy to authoritarianism or vice versa; a shift from liberalism to developmentalism to neoliberalism) and construct a path-dependent model for explaining the sequence of events leading to and leading from this transition.

**Research Tasks**

As a light research paper, this assignment will require that students begin immediately to search for and read secondary sources on the topic selected. This will require using library databases such as Academic Search Premier, Proquest, PAIS, and EconLit, to find articles on the selected country and the outcome variable that is the focus of the analysis. I recommend that the student first read the chapter in Skidmore and Smith (2006) that pertains to the country so that the researcher has a firm grasp of the basic political and economic history of the case.

**Analytical Focus**

The focus of the first stage of research should be on defining a “critical juncture” around which the path-dependent argument should flow. For example, if the focus is on the rise and continuation of populism and ISI in Argentina, the antecedent conditions would be economic liberalism during the 1920s, the crisis would be the Great Depression and WWII, and the policy/political response to this crisis would be the coming to power of Juan Perón, the Partido Justicialista and the phenomenon of Peronist politics. The crisis of this political-economic system would then be analyzed with some reference to the rise of a new (unstable) order subsequently.

Students are free to select any historical period and any length of time, though I recommend that the historical sequence outlined should fit only one path-dependent sequence as outlined by Mahoney and as we discussed in class: antecedent conditions, crisis, critical juncture and transition, institutionalization (legacy), reactive sequence and new crisis.

The nature of the analysis should be both descriptive and evaluative. Historical data and narrative should be used to set up some generalizable and comparative points that can be shown to change over time. For example, if the focus is on Peronist politics, the paper may detail the extent to which populism was important/useful. In this case, populism might have been more useful in consolidating Perón political power than in first acquiring power. It clearly was insufficient for keeping him in power during the mid-1950s.
Structure of the Paper

Following Mahoney’s example, the paper should first provide a succinct overview of the path to be analyzed more specifically later in the paper. In a paper of 7-8 pages, this is best done in the first two paragraphs of the work. Then, the student should tell the reader how the path is to be analyzed, beginning with a consideration of antecedent conditions, proceeding to an analysis of the crisis and the subsequent critical juncture, and so on. Students ought to use subheads to clearly demarcate the various sections of the paper.

A figure, much like the one used in class or employed by Mahoney, to map out the path-dependent sequence is highly recommended.

Evaluation

These papers intend to give students a more in-depth understanding of the history of a major Latin American country. The assignment also encourages students to employ historical data to illustrate and support evaluative arguments. Both pedagogical goals are satisfied with clear structure, precise writing and editing, copious use of historical data, including quantitative as well as qualitative data whenever possible.

Consequently, the best papers will have all of the following elements:

(1) The structure of the paper will be extremely clear with a succinct overview of the paper and its argument at the beginning of the work, in the first two paragraphs. Clear communication with the reader throughout the work so that one is never lost at any point in the paper regarding what the author’s intentions are.

(2) Solid to excellent use of secondary sources and empirical narrative and quantitative evidence to illustrate (a) aspects of each stage of the path-dependent model and (b) how events/historical variables changed over time.

(3) Good use of tables and figures through references in the text to these items, which are to be included at the end of the paper. These items will not count towards the page limit.

(4) A bibliography, not counted toward the page limits, which will follow the required format as indicated on the bibliographic handout available off the course webpage.

Support and Schedule

Prof. Montero will offer a voluntary discussion section regarding this assignment during common time on Tuesday, Sept. 30 in Leighton 305 (the classroom).

DUE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 5 P.M. AS A SINGLE PDF FILE IN EACH STUDENT’S HAND-IN FOLDER ON THE COURSES DIRECTORY