Bureaucracy and Politics

Juan Negri

Universidad Nacional de San Martín
jnegri@unsam.edu.ar

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Introduction

The bureaucracy in Latin America does not enjoy the best of reputations. States in Latin America are widely considered to lack administrative capacity, professionalization, coordination and coherence, while bureaucratic apparatuses are plagued by clientelism, human resources instability, patronage and patrimonialism (Iacoviello and Zuvanic 2010; Oszlak 2001; Panizza, Ramos and Scherlis 2018) .

The bureaucracy is a political actor and the root for many of these shortcomings is undoubtedly political. However, political science has more or less abandoned the study of public administration and Latin American politics has yet to scrutinize the bureaucracy as it did with other important political actors such as legislatures and the judiciary.

This exercise intends to move in this direction. The present chapter explores the question of the relationship between bureaucracy and politics in Latin America, with the objective of understanding the relative malfunctioning of bureaucracies in the region. The objective is exploring the role that politics plays in guaranteeing a professional and autonomous (Weberian) bureaucracy structure throughout the region.

I first examine an institutional explanation for bureaucratic performance. I will scrutinize the institutional arrangements that might preclude the existence of a professional, Weberian bureaucracy. Within the scarce literature on the topic, an

institutional account (and especially the "political economy/rational" version of it) has been a very common explanation for the lack of capable bureaucratic structures in the region (Spiller, Tommasi and Bambaci 2007; Scartascini, Stein and Tommasi 2010). Indeed, presidentialism, the weaknesses of Latin American assemblies and the lack of solid institutional arrangements that increase the transactions costs have been common when analyzing the question. This pure institutional perspective has produced some interesting and elegant insights. However, data collection has been problematic in this field and therefore results should be handled with care.

I will then "bring the state back in", under the assumption that the explanation for the current performance of state institutions might have be related to long lasting conditions of "Stateness" in the region (Evans 1992; Evans, Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1985). I will therefore review, first, a cultural explanation given for the underdevelopment of professional bureaucracies in the region.

Next, I analyze the question of the bureaucracy in a more historical perspective and relate the former with specific societal and partisan coalitions at the time of state consolidation. I will use some of the finest historical-institutionalist research carried out in the region (Collier and Collier 1991; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992) to demonstrate the association between certain decisions taken at critical points in history and State strength. These historical decisions seem to have determined a pattern of clientelistic utilization of the State apparatus in some countries but not in others. The partial evidence presented in this section suggests the importance of "state strength" and the conditions that foster it as crucial to understand bureaucratic performance in the region.

Before proceeding, I must point out that despite the poor reputation of bureaucracies in Latin America; there is a consensus in highlighting Brazil, Chile and

Costa Rica as relative over-performers in this respect. The literature on civil services in the region highlights the long term commitment to institutional building in these countries and the successes in administrative reform (Aninat, Londregan, Navia and Vial 2008; Geddes 1994; Evans 1995; Schneider 1991). I believe that both the institutional and statist accounts of bureaucratic performance that I review here can help understand these outlier cases.

I consider here bureaucracies as a single actor. However, I am aware that the bureaucracy should be analyzed as a heterogeneous actor, which takes diverse forms within a same country. Future research on bureaucratic performance should take a more agency-level perspective in order to grasp the micro-mechanisms of bureaucratic autonomy and capacity. However, I believe that something can be learnt from the country-level perspective I adopt (which is also common in the bureaucratic diagnoses done before).

The role of institutions

When studying the relationship between the bureaucracy and politics in Latin America, one needs to acknowledge the political landscape that predominates in the region.

In this section I review many of the institutional approaches of bureaucracies in the region. The argument posed by the institutional accounts (Bambaci, Spiller and Tommasi 2007) is that presidentialism coupled with unprofessional legislatures and executive as heads of the public administration has created a bureaucracy without a long-term principal. I go a step further and argue that the institutional structure creates a bureaucracy with a principal interested in discretionary use of the bureaucracy. This

aggravates the "delegative" nature of many of the region's democracies, where there is no horizontal accountability the President (O´Donnell 1994).

In short, I posit that the institutional structure present in Latin America is not conducive to cooperative results as lacks effective enforcement mechanisms. It generates benefits from reneging on agreements and therefore deviations from agreed-upon behavior are easily observed, especially when actor's interests do not align.

The Executive's role

By politicization I understand an effort to gear the bureaucracy towards the short term needs of the executive.

Presidents everywhere have an incentive to politicize the bureaucracy, displaying a desire of seeking control "over the structures and processes of government" (Moe 1985: 239). Presidential discretion is associated with a consistent maximizing behavior on the part of the President.

The reason is that bureaucracies are headed by an Executive enjoying concentrated incentive to maximize resources for the next election or remain in power. Therefore, the possibility to intervene in the operations of a bureaucratic agency providing such resources is highly tempting. In addition, the President is popularly elected by a generation of voters who may not give weight to the provision of public goods by a functioning bureaucracy to future generations. Therefore, there is an electoral incentive and discretional authority for the President to reinforce his power through bureaucratic interventions that will constitute a liability to any future President and future generations (this argument is taken from Shepsle 1991).

The socially desirable result is that the Executive does not interfere with the bureaucracy for its personal benefit. But if at any one time the President is concerned with his own reelection and/or keeping power, there will be no restrictions to use the significant resources that an agency subject to his or her authority may provide. The Executive may have committed itself not to interfere with bureaucratic agencies, but at any given time such interference is convenient given the rational nature of political agents. Even if the President would prefer, in the first place, the result "no electoral need to interfere; no bureaucratic interference"; in the second place "electoral need to interfere; interference" and, finally, "electoral need to interfere, no interference", the incentives will entice him to always select the second alternative.

The above described situation can also be illustrated as a one-movement game enjoying a single and inefficient Nash balance. All players would be better off if they could deprive themselves of their discretion to play their respective optimal strategies, but they have no credible commitment to do otherwise.

Are there solutions to this dilemma? External coercion may be a substitute for commitment. Laver and Schofield (1990) discuss the chances for credible commitments reached among members of a governmental coalition at the time cabinet positions are negotiated. In many Latin American countries, this external coercion rarely originates from coalition partners as it happens in Europe. Due to the fact that the government is not responsible to the legislature and therefore does not need a party majority supporting it (Linz, 1990; Lijphart 1994), Executives in Latin America do not receive pressure from a cabinet.

This is the norm in Latin America, but not so much in the United States, also a presidential democracy. Executives have a transient nature in all democracies, but the institutional arrangement in presidential Latin American countries do not offer a

solution to the problem of short term politicization of the public service, while in the United States it usually does. I argue that in the United States this external coercion can originate in Congress, which is a substantial difference with Latin America. I will develop this point.

The American vs. Latin American Congresses

The main issue behind the preceding discussion is that institutional arrangements might allow agents to make credible behavior commitments. As discussed earlier, executives both in the United States and Latin America have incentives to politicize bureaucracy. A key difference between Latin America and the United States resides in the fact that in the former the legislature is not able to impose limits to the Executive. In other words, the "arm of the future" (Shepsle 1991) plays a significant role in the institutional arrangement of the US legislators, but is non-existent in Latin America.

Game theory has explained the appearance of co-operational patterns among actors when games repeat themselves over time (Axelrod 1984). In the US, the protracted stability of legislators in their benches generates incentives similar to those described by Axelrod. I will elaborate this issue further.

Legislatures are popularly elected by voters who may or may not give importance to the preferences of future generations[1]. However, in the US (contrary to what happens in many Latin American countries) the legislature's high stability implies the existence

[1] Riker (1980) imagined that the institutional result of an inter-temporal constitutional convention in which all generations were represented ex ante would enter into a compromise to reduce public expenditure (Shepsle 1991).

of an interest by the actors in the body's relative power in the future. It is the opposite in the region: in general terms, the institutional framework reinforces the failure by Congress to play an active role in the formulation of public policy. In general, legislatures act more like a veto agent of the policies generated by the Executive (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tommasi 2002).

The United States Congress is a highly professional and institutionalized body (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tommasi 2002; Polsby 1968). It enjoys an elaborated institutional structure facilitating exchanges between its present members and over time (Weingast and Marshall 1988). It allows for credible commitments among legislators. In addition (and this is a key element), the American legislators' foremost interest is to be reelected. The Congressional operation maximizes their chances, as it was stated by Mayhew (1974: 81). This explains the relatively high reelection rate of legislators in the US. This temporal continuity forces them to be concerned about the future power of the body to which they belong. In other words, American legislators, taking for granted that they will be part of Congress for many years to come, are concerned about its relative power. In addition, and to the extent their reelection is tied to the government's performance, they take very seriously the discomfort that an underperforming bureaucracy may generate (this is the idea behind McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Thus, there is a significant concern by US legislators over matters that directly relate to their electoral districts. As a consequence, issues about bureaucratic performance are essential. Bureaucratic politicization affecting the latter, even in the future, is a reason for concern to the average United States lawmaker. On the contrary, Latin American legislators may not be concerned about placing future burdens upon bureaucratic capacity. Lawmakers will not be penalized for this, because typically will not be in Congress at the time the effects are felt.

This has important consequences for the legislative role in bureaucratic oversight. As the American politics literature has highlighted, it is in the legislative function where Congress establishes the conditions for bureaucratic and the executive branch oversight. At that point, Congress can specify the necessary rules, the accountability mechanisms and the specific appropriations to limit bureaucracy's discretion (Huber and Shipan 2002; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Palanza 2006). But this course of action is only rational if lawmakers expect to serve in Congress for an extended period of time. For the average Latin American lawmaker, carefully specifying control strategies is a waste of time. In addition, the lawmaker might prefer that her party also has access to those discretionary powers in the future. Using the McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) terminology, many legislatures in the region do not possess the incentives to set up "fire alarms" (Palanza 2006).

The little compromise with a legislative career also results in lawmakers who do not specialize in any particular topic. This is particularly evident regarding bureaucratic control and public policy monitoring, which require higher levels of information and technical capacity. As studies of delegation have underscored, less capable legislatures do delegate more (Epstein and O' Halloran 1999; Huber and Shipan 2002). Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that an uninformed and technically diminished Congress prefers to delegate to the executive branch issues that require both. In the United States, on the other hand, successful parliamentary careers result in highly specialized lawmakers. As a matter of fact, research has demonstrated a high level of contact between lawmakers and career bureaucrats in the United States (Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman 1981).

In addition, the US Congress' de-centralized system makes it very difficult for these commitments to be modified. Legislators choose and are assigned to legislative

committees close to the interests of their own electoral districts and stay in those committees during their whole term (Weingast and Marshall 1988). These committees operate as strong actors enjoying veto power against the legislative majority. In other words, even if a majority may prefer a different use of bureaucracy it would have to overcome the obstacle of the relevant committee's veto to reach the floor (Weingast and Marshall 1988)[2].

The committee system plays another, probably more significant role. As lawmakers are members of committees which provide important goods and/or services to their constituencies, they are aware of any bureaucratic malfunction that might occur. As it has been sharply pointed out in McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), legislators are ready to answer any "fire alarm" promptly, overseeing bureaucratic performance closely whenever necessary.

The combination of the legislators' permanence during several terms, the institutionalization of behaviors, the ease of exchanges between legislators, the possibility to enter into long-term commitments over time and the desire of legislators to involve themselves in issues of bureaucratic malfunction result in a collegiate body concerned with matters of bureaucratic performance and also committed to maintain bureaucratic autonomy in the future. In other words, US legislators are aware that their electoral future depends upon their capacity to show voters that they care about them and that, at the same time, that they have the institutional tools to reach commitments

[2] This is the so called "industrial organization" of the US Congress, where long term agreements are kept due to the allocation of authority to different committees. This way, legislators from committee X waive their rights to decide on subject Y in exchange for members of committee Y waiving their right to become involved in subject X. (Weingast and Marshall 1988).

among them to insure stability and autonomy of the bureaucratic agencies. In addition, legislators find it valuable that Congress acts as principal of the public apparatus.

The situation is quite different in Latin America. The main purpose of its legislators is to advance their political careers elsewhere, as in general there is no political future (or, at least, no successful political future) in Congress. Further, in terms of available resources, Latin American legislatures are clearly inferior when compared to its United States equivalent. The legislatures in Latin America (in general) are not a significant factor in the policy-making process, and have not effective oversight capabilities and budget authorities over the bureaucracy (despite formal rules, see Palanza 2006). The combination of uninterested legislators and scarce resources gives Latin American Congresses very few incentives to be involved in bureaucratic performance matters: rewards for strengthening Congress' role as the bureaucracy's principal will arrive late, and that is useless for the lawmakers' immediate electoral interests. Therefore, even in Congress had increased powers over the budget (which it does not have in many countries in the region), it is not interested in conditioning funding to performance. This way, legislators do not enter into credible inter-temporal engagements in favor of greater autonomy for the bureaucracy which, if enforced, would increase general welfare.

In other words, in the United States the game repeats itself, because legislators remain in office for several periods or at least aim to do so. This repetition encourages cooperation (Axelrod 1984) to maintain control over the bureaucracy, without yielding to presidential pressures while paying attention to the performance of the public sector. On the contrary, institutional frameworks in some countries (such as many Latin American ones) favor policy fluctuations.

The effects on bureaucratic performance

I will develop now an empirical test of the relationship between some institutional variables and their effects on the bureaucracy. These types of exercises are complicated by the fact that we currently lack reliable data on bureaucratic performance in the region. When analyzing the bureaucracy, authors have emphasized the need of a professionalized, "Weberian" bureaucracy (Rauch and Evans 1999). However, this has been seldom defined very specifically, and evaluating if a bureaucracy is Weberian enough has proven more difficult than it appears at first sight. Research has emphasized meritocratic recruitment and compensation, predictable and well rewarded career paths and autonomy from elected officials (Evans 1992; Zuvanic, Iacoviello and Rodríguez Gustá 2010).

A well cited article by Evans and Rauch (1999) and the work done by the Inter American Development Bank are usually the main sources of data on bureaucratic quality. Evans and Rauch collected survey data and constructed an indicator of bureaucratic competence and coherence in 35 countries. Although the effort is worthy, it is important to note the methodological problems associated with an expert survey (respondents answering on different criteria, for example). In addition, sometimes respondents are somewhat biased towards considering "good" bureaucracies the ones that have underwent New Public Management-type reforms, but do not pay enough attention whatsoever to the question of "Weberian" bureaucracies (Bresser Pereira and Sink 1999; Lora 2007).

On the other hand, the Inter American Development Bank data emphasizes autonomy and technical capacity (Zuvanic, Iacoviello and Rodríguez Gustá 2010). The former is defined as the degree of isolation from political manipulation and from rent-

seeking interests outside the state (Evans 1992). Bureaucracies secluded from political intrusion can act more efficiently without being captured by external particularistic interests. A bureaucratic body is autonomous if it is governed by its own regulations and rules[3]. Autonomy is defined as the competence and skills of officials needed to efficiently do the tasks they have been assigned. Merit, then, becomes a key aspect (Rauch and Evans 1999), as is considered to be the best recruiting tool in order to achieve this objective.

Bearing in mind these difficulties and therefore suggesting caution, I will employ data on Latin American bureaucracies merit criteria and functional capacity developed by Iacoviello and Zuvanic (2008, 2005) which allowed them to build a civil service development index. These indexes are the result of assessment of Latin America's public services according to a reference model developed within the IADB. I will measure the association between these civil service development indexes and assessments of Latin American assemblies, to test the ideas reviewed above: that the institutional arrangement in the region, where Congress does not seem to be able to adequately restraint the politicization of the bureaucracy by the Executive. The data based on IADB exploration of regional bureaucracies consists on a number of indexes, at their turn based on critical points that reflect "best practices" in bureaucratic management[4]. The first, the merit index, measures "to what extent there are objective, technical and

[3] Some authors have emphasized that extreme degrees of autonomy are also negative, as bureaucrats are out of the public control and therefore become non-accountable to public interest.

[4] I am aware that the indexes, the critical points and the "best practices" can be subject to serious objections to what is considered relevant and what it does not. In addition, bureaucracies should (and probably do sometimes) differ related to national contexts, and therefore the template should not be applicable to all countries identically. However, I believe that the IADB data is useful for the exercise.

professional procedures for recruiting and selecting employees, promoting them, compensating them and dismissing them from an organization" (Zuvanic, Iacoviello and Rodríguez Gustá 2010). High values represent established merit criteria and vice-versa.

The functional capacity index evaluates "how and how much existing procedures and practices in the civil service can influence employee behavior and if they serve the purpose of strengthening the commitment of officials to the institution and to their jobs" (Zuvanic, Iacoviello and Rodríguez Gustá 2010: 7). High values reflect established merit criteria in personnel management practices, and vice-versa.

Following Zuvanic, Iacoviello and Rodríguez Gustá (2010), I also present the civil service development index, which considers simultaneously both previous indexes. This index is the dependent variable in the simple correlations presented next.

As independent variables, I will utilize measures of legislative strength presented in Spiller and Tommasi (2011: 91). These include average year experience of legislators, average number of committees served per legislator, strength of the committees, appropriateness of Congress as a place for developing a political career (based on reelection figures), and an index of technical capacity of Congress. In addition, the authors present an overall Congress capacity index, which include all the previous weighted measures.

If the ideas developed in the previous section are correct, we should observe that whenever any given Latin American Congress is strong, bureaucracies should have a higher number in the development index. Table 1 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between these independent variables and the civil service development index.

(Table 1 about here)

As it can be seen, there is a strong and significant association between some of the variables analyzed and the development of the civil service. This lends support to the general idea that an important Congress that it is involved in the policy-making process can put a brake to the politicization aims of the Executive. The strength of the committee system is strongly (.606 coefficient estimate), positively and significantly associated with the development of the bureaucracy, giving leverage to some of the ideas presented in the previous section: that the committees systems where legislators are blissfully aware of the needs in public policy tend of their constituencies result in lawmakers alert to "fire alarms". It comes as no surprise that a stronger committee system results in a stronger bureaucracy.

Not surprisingly, the assembly's technical capacity is also positively correlated (with a coefficient estimate of .583) with the development index of the bureaucracy. This is very intuitive result and can be easily explained. It is related to the fact that Congress only can involve itself in the policy-making process if it enjoys a certain level of abilities. In general, legislators with adequate staff and resources plus a legal framework that incorporates the legislative branch in public policy will result in a more developed civil service.

Finally, an index that weights in the effectiveness of assemblies as lawmakers, the experience of legislators and their education, the strength of the committee system and the number of committees per legislator, the adequacy of Congress as an arena for advancement of political careers and the technical capacity of Congress results in a overall Congress capacity index. This index is also strongly correlated (showing a coefficient estimate of .569) with the public service development index, which measures merit and functional capacity in Latin America's public services.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate this strong relationship visually.

(Graph 1 about here)

(Graph 2 about here)

(Graph 3 about here)

These graphs make visually more compelling the strong relationship between measures of congressional institutional strength and bureaucratic development. Although this should be considered as partial evidence only, at a minimum the results presented here lend support to the insight suggested here that there is a connection between the role of the legislative assembly in its standing vis-à-vis the Executive branch and the involvement of the former in the public policy making process and the overall development of the bureaucratic actor. Although more work should be done in this respect, this has significant policy consequences. For many countries, instead of focusing on administrative reform based on new public management platforms, a probably strategy worth pursuing by reformist administrations is reinforcing the legislative connection of the bureaucracy and the former policy strength.

A cultural explanation

A very different perspective considers that Latin American states are characterized not only by incapacity to perform basic questions, but also its lack of responsibility and non-democratic nature, and the reasons for this are to be found in the

"nature" of Latin American States. According to this perspective, this nature is related to the historical legacy of patrimonialism and historical patterns related to it, which created a tendency of particular, rent-seeking interests that parasite the state.

This point of view scrutinizes the legacies of history for the reasons of this situation (Malloy 1977; Véliz 1980; Stepan 1978; Wiarda 2001 but see Diamond and Linz 1989 for a more critical perspective). Explanations go back to the Spanish Viceroyalties and the "Habsburg model" of royal government (Wiarda 2001). Spanish feudalism was more religious intolerant and more militaristic than its European counterparts given its experience with the *Reconquista*, the war against the Muslim occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, fought with the "sword and the cross". Spain "exported" its feudal institutions to Latin America at its peak of centralism, corporatism and authoritarianism.

This tradition permeated to the colonies. These State apparatuses then had no effective barriers between the administrative bureaucracy and private property, blending public positions in the bureaucracy and private interests. The frontier between State and government is blurred and institutional differentiation (including a proficient bureaucracy and an independent judicial system) developed very slowly or not at all. In addition, colonial Spain did not establish a legal order and a bureaucratic structure in which it could have delegated autonomous ruling power. On the contrary, administrative systems were authoritarian and centralized.

Latin American states, then, is a gigantic net of individual and corporatist privileges that rested on the monarch's authority and legitimacy (Wiarda 2001). States in the region lack strong institutions that could secure autonomy from society, the military and even foreign interests. This lack of autonomy explains successive alliances from above that are used in advantage of specific coalitions (O´ Donnell 1973; 1977). In

many cases, these alliances that occupy the State have had a "weberian façade", as are staffed by technocrats who seemingly follow neutral policies based on objectives. However, these technocratic alliances so common in the region (that have spanned both authoritarian and democratic regimes) have a strong anti-bureaucracy stance, dismissing the formal administrative corps as inefficient and ill-suited for government. The existence of these technocratic alliances is evidence, in reality, of the weakness of administrative bodies in the region[5]. In many specific cases the technocrats were specifically secluded from the formal bureaucratic bodies (Silva 1998: 107) as they were isolated from "politics" and "ideology" and could concentrate in the "scientific" and "pragmatic" approach to public policy. This approach debilitates the building of a trained bureaucracy.

This perspective underscores historic cultural patterns to explain some modern traits of States: the "aristocratic culture", characterized by social hierarchies, arbitrariness and discretion in decision-making processes, the relevance of personalism and *caudillismo* (local military bosses) in politics, the predominance of the patron-client relationship and the extensive network of clientele relationships as a way of vertical integration of society; all features that make extremely cumbersome the building of effective bureaucracies. However, this perspective is extremely static. It cannot account for some recent developments. In addition, its scope is too broad: it does not distinguish from different countries who do show different bureaucratic performance.

[5] On technocratic alliances under authoritarian regimes, the basic reference is O´Donnell (1973). On technocratic governments under democratic regimes, see Centeno and Silva (1998); Silva (1998, 2008) and Torre (1991, 1998).

A comparative historical analysis: the question of consolidating (and who occupies) state power

In this section I present an alternative explanation: that the question of bureaucratic performance is strongly rooted in the different class alliances that occupied the state apparatuses of different countries. This, at its turn, is the result of complex past experiences. In other words, the high ranking of some countries in the IADB work, for example, is the result of class structures and coalitions that emerged at a point in time and not of their current presidential powers and party systems (which differ considerably).

The methodology for this section is a "most similar design" (Przeworski and Teune 1970). The Latin American countries are similar in very respects, and therefore extraneous variance questions are more or less dealt with. Under this design, if a relationship between an independent variable X and a dependent variable Y is discovered, then the factors that are held constant through the selection of cases cannot be said to be alternative sources of that relationship. I admit that the assumption of "other variables held constant" is controversial.

Here I utilize a sociological historical perspective as the one pioneered by Moore (1966). As anyone interested in these topics know, the relationship between these variables is not simple. I am not claiming that X caused Y, but yet that some common characteristics of historical experiences seem to be necessary conditions to a successful process of state building and a professional autonomous bureaucracy. In this exercise I identify some key factors: the consolidation of state power and the incorporation in the world economy is a necessary condition. In addition, the existence of parties that protected elite interests and the establishment or not of clientelistic parties as the main

vehicle of mass incorporation also played a role. I claim that the utilization of the state apparatus in the incorporation periods in Latin American history (the critical juncture when the franchise was extended) had a long term impact in the professionalization of the bureaucracy. Not surprisingly, the countries that extended political participation through clientelistic networks experienced much more trouble in building effective institutions. On the contrary, were this process was carried out through the state, the latter seems today much more efficient and effective. At its turn, many elements helped define the type of incorporation (clientelistic or state-based) that a given country experienced.

In short, I distinguish between three paths. A **first path** is composed by the countries that were unable to successfully insert themselves in the international economy. These countries did not enjoy any economic prosperity and remained among the poorest of the region and, partially because of this, were unable to build efficient state structures and rank very low in every measure of bureaucratic strength. These countries might have been able to end overt challenges to state authority in their given territories (although sometimes very lately) but were not able to consolidate a strong autonomous political organization able to involve in the political and social spheres. These countries also usually receive the poorest democratic scores of the region, as prosperity based on exports was a precondition for later democratization (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). Countries that illustrate this path are the vast majority of Central American countries. Some of these countries (such as the Dominican Republic) are improving their bureaucracies. As their starting point is very low they are still lagging behind.

Second and **third paths** are composed by countries that enjoyed significant *export based prosperity,* which appears as a necessary condition for satisfactory

bureaucratic building as the lack of resources precludes any type of state strength. The expansion of agriculture exports produced a burgeoning and prosperous urban middle class and some industrial employment that at its turn resulted in pressures from below to open the oligarchic regimes. The difference between the second and third paths is given by the **agent in charge of political incorporation** of lower classes. As Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) argue, three agents shaped the political articulation of civil society in Latin America: the State, clientelistic parties or radical mass ones. This difference proved crucial, differentiating the second and the third paths. Where *clientelistic parties* were the agents of the incorporation of political masses, a professionalized and strong state organization did not appear as strongly as in the cases where *radical mass parties* or the *State* did (a similar argument for Europe can be found in Shefter 1977). In the latter cases, the State attempted to control the expansion of participation, weakening parties and unions but strengthening its apparatus through a professional bureaucracy. Where radical mass parties where the vehicles of political contestation, limited democracy took place but a professionalized State had an opportunity to appear. Clientelistic parties, on the other side, prevented the creation of a strong professional bureaucracy as its main objective was the electoral use of the state apparatus to bolster the relative strength of the coalition in power, and not of the state. In addition, they were prone to fragmentation, as the quest for power was the only binding element. Fragmentation also increased patronage.

What determines the appearance or not of clientelistic parties? Two intervening factors can be identified. In the first place, *the timing of industrialization* is an important element. Countries that industrialized early (before 1930) generated a large mass of workers that pressed for political opening. Where these masses existed, a large network of clientelism could be possible. On the other hand, countries which experienced a late

industrialization had a reduced number of workers which could be subject of political clientelism.

A second element is the *type of democratic regime* established after the first transition, which at its turn depends on the *degree of protection of elite interests.* The consolidation of a strong and competitive conservative party that effectively promotes the interests of significant sectors of the economic elites limited the openness of the early democratic experiences and prevented the appearance of strong popular based clientelistic parties. This was the case in countries such as Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica.

In short, if elite interests are somewhat protected, they are more able to keep a grip on the political process, maintaining a partially closed political process and a clientelistic, labor biased party is less likely to appear. In parallel, delayed industrialization also makes clientelistic parties less likely to appear.

On the other hand, where elites were not able to protect their interests, either political conflict delayed export prosperity (as in Peru) or popular mass parties established a more open democracy, but one in which the state was used as an electoral tool (such as in Argentina). This latter case precluded the building of strong and autonomous state. The surge of clientelistic parties was also helped by the availability of a large number of industrial employees that lacked effective participation (Germani 1962). This was the case in countries with early industrialization (Argentina, Uruguay, and Mexico) or countries not very industrialized but with significant labor intensive agriculture such as Colombia or Ecuador.

Therefore, **the second path** is composed of countries with significant *export expansion prosperity* and *non-clientelistic popular articulation*. These countries were able to strongly protect elite interests in the wake of democratization, usually through elite based parties. As explained before, if the interests of the dominant classes were

more or less shielded (helped by the geographically concentrated political arena), contestation was facilitated. If this was the case, ruling coalitions were able to reduce the use of the state apparatus as a tool for strengthening their position. This precludes the surge of *clientelistic parties* and other actors shape the political articulation of subordinate classes (the state or more radical parties but not clientelistic ones). The incorporation process in these countries has been labeled as *State Incorporation* (Collier and Collier 1991: 17). As opposed to the cases depicted above, the State is the actor that articulates the political incorporation of lower classes, which at its turn strengthens the State vis-à-vis societal actors. In these countries the incorporation was channeled through the legal and bureaucratic apparatus of the state, and has as objective the de-mobilization of the labor movement and creates, instead, a legalized and institutionalized labor movement (Collier and Collier 1991: 163). The incorporation through the state strengthened the bureaucracy, which had to develop the administrative expertise to deal with these issues.

Chile and Brazil share a common pattern: First, both countries enjoyed relatively low warfare in their territories during the independence wars. This assured them more cohesively linked territories, avoidance of territorial military leaders who threaten political organization (*caudillismo*), stronger state institutions and overall a somewhat shorter transition to oligarchic rule.

In addition, the geographical locus of politics took place in a reduced territory. In Brazil and Chile, the geographical concentration of the upper classes helped their political cohesion (Edwards 1928).

But more importantly, the agent shaping the political articulation of subordinate classes in both countries was not a clientelistic party, but radical mass ones and the State respectively. Although it does not share all of these traits, in Costa Rica a

remarkable two-party democratic rule after the Civil War in 1949 maintained the social state created by President José Figueres. This stability and welfare expansion strengthened the State apparatus.

The case of Chile combines rapid State consolidation and avoidance of clientelistic parties, witnessing the appearance of radical parties (typical of mineral-based economies). Bolivia and Peru also experienced radical mass parties but in the context of a weakened State and lack of territorial consolidation. Chile, then, emerges as particularly successful in building effective state institutions, as it avoided extensive warfare and channeled participation demands through non-clientelistic parties.

In Brazil coffee and sugar commerce flourished, and by the late nineteenth century, the landowning elites of southern Brazil were able to consolidate a liberal oligarchic regime with limited contestation. A consolidated state apparatus was available to oligarchic elites. Furthermore, there were no significant mass based parties who used patronage from the State. Labor intensive agriculture as the one that characterized Central Brazil was not conducive to the surge of clientelistic parties. In addition, populist leader Getúlio Vargas dismissed parties and therefore did not create a populist clientelistic party such as the Argentine Justicialist Party (Peronist). On the contrary, Vargas pursued its popular incorporation strategy from the state bureaucracy rather than a particular party (Erickson 1977; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992) which strengthened state institutions.

Overall, the relative autonomy of the State tended to be high in both countries. This allowed the building of a professionalized and autonomous public service. This is the case of Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica, which rank high in bureaucracy performance assessments. In addition to the historical elements just described, in all three countries patterns of continuity are particular noticeable. The common point in the three

examples is longer time horizons due to strong institutional stability. In Chile and Brazil this is also evident even during their authoritarian period, with military regimes that lasted about twenty years in both cases.

While these countries are remarkable in their continuity, the incessant changes in the institutional context in their regional counterparts precluded the rooting of a particular administrative style in the region. On the contrary, bureaucracies developed as geological layers of military and civilian regimes.

At its turn, the **third path** consists of countries where *elites were not able to consolidate in an upper class party*. An intervening variable in the strength of the oligarchy is its *territorial dispersion*. Some countries experienced a territorial conflict were elites from different regions fought against each other. This is the case of Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay and Peru. The countries that compose this second path did not experience the political cohesion of oligarchy and the latter had a much weaker position. The Independence Wars levied a heavy toll on these countries. It generated despotically strong but infrastructural weak countries, creating sub-national authorities with supranational armies (Centeno 2002).

In addition, as geographically vast, they were unable to consolidate State dominance over the whole territory. A common consequence of all this was the appearance of *caudillismo*, territorial military leaders that defied the legitimacy of the central state. This problem was especially acute in Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico, which were territorially challenged throughout most of the nineteenth century.

As already mentioned, these countries enjoyed agricultural based economy, which paved the way for clientelistic parties (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). As the continuity of oligarchy in political life was less strong, clientelistic parties

were able to utilize the state apparatus in their advantage and conflict ensued as elites resisted the former's rising dominance.

Political conflict ensued as elites fought back, usually with support of other nondemocratic forces, such as the army or the church (Gibson 1996). This conflict, plus the unrivaled influence of popular parties already mentioned, prevented the development of a professionalized bureaucracy. The reason is that in these conflicts the state apparatus was used as political tool to strengthen the governing coalition position. As elites were marginalized from the political process and some authoritarian reactions appeared, non-elite forces used the state in a clientelistic fashion to sustain their position. Therefore, the appearance of *clientelistic parties* (such as the Argentine Radicals and then the Peronists, both Liberal and Conservative parties in Colombia, the *Blanco* and *Colorado* parties in Uruguay and *Acción Democrática* in Venezuela) ensued (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). Clientelistic parties as catalyzers of lower classes incorporation pressures prevented the appearance of a professionalized civil service. Although clientelistic parties such as Argentine Peronism were crucial in opening the political system through mobilization of pressures from below and institutionalization of political contestation, they had a less positive role in state building as they tended to use the state electorally as a tool for political strength rather than institutionalization of the state (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). In Germani´s (1962) conceptualization, participation preceded institutionalization, which led to populism in these countries. Populism had a strong stance against building effective state institutions as it relied heavily on patronage rather than using institutions to follow a distinctive program. This incorporation dynamic has been labeled *Labor Populism* (Collier and Collier 1991: 17).

Figure 4 (adapted from Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; 170) depicts visually the three different paths.

(Figure 4 about here)

Admittedly, the three paths are idealized types that fit the cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile, and less so other Latin American cases. However, I believe that the previous analysis puts light over a neglected aspect of bureaucratic strength; namely, the role of the State vis-à-vis parties during the populist experience in Latin America and the pervasion of bureaucratic clientelism in some countries and not in others.

In short, I argue that the contemporary difference in capacity and autonomy of national bureaucracies can be found in the different patterns of mass incorporation. While some countries initiated clientelistic party-type incorporation, others initiated a state-centred incorporation process (Collier and Collier 1991; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Mexico were part of the first group, the last two cases being more "radicalized" (Collier and Collier 1991). On the other hand, Brazil and Chile can be found in the former. The latter pattern allowed for a professionalization of state structures, including a professional bureaucracy; and this resulted in the meritocratic bureaucracy in place in both countries today. On the contrary, the former type strengthened a party over the State (Peronism in Argentina, Liberals in Colombia, APRA in Peru, PRI in Mexico, AD in Venezuela), which resulted in patronage and clientelism emanating from a party, leaving the State structures blended with it.

Conclusions

Studies on the politics of the bureaucracy are still needed in the region. In general, we still know very little about the role of the bureaucracy in Latin American democracies, about the relationship between the bureaucracy and the elected officials, about the roots of bureaucratic performance and the divergence within countries in this respect or about the effects of politicization of the bureaucracy and how this operates. This work is just one small step in this direction, reviewing some of the intellectual production on the relationship between politics and political science and presenting some insufficient evidence on the country-difference in bureaucratic performance.

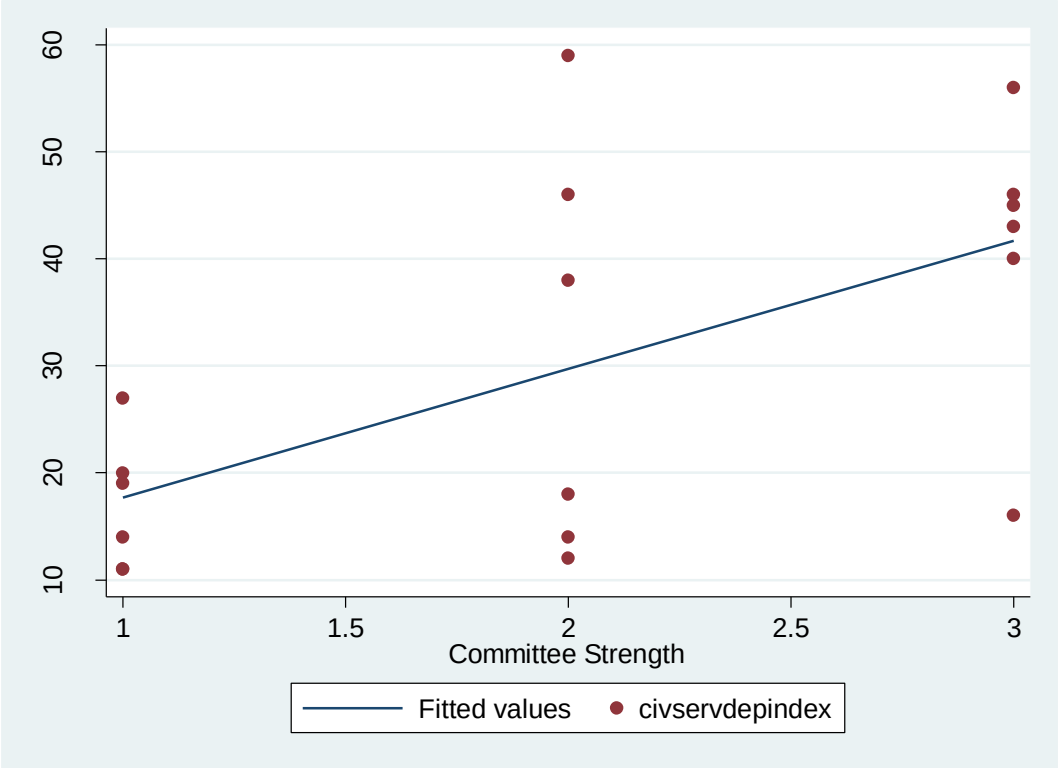
Needless to say, the research agenda on Latin American comparative politics needs to include qualitative and quantitative studies on bureaucratic politics; maybe not so much on administrative reform (which is important) but on the Weberianess of Latin American public administrations.

Table 1: Correlation coefficients between the capacities of Latin American Assemblies and Bureaucratic Development

	Average experience of legislators (years)	Average number of committees served per legislator (years)	Strength of committees	Congress as arena for career development	Congress Technical Capacity	CONGRESS CAPACITY INDEX
Civil Service Development Index (Standard deviations)	.26 (.294)	-.248 (.320)	.606* (.008)	.379 (.123)	.583* (.011)	.569* (.014)

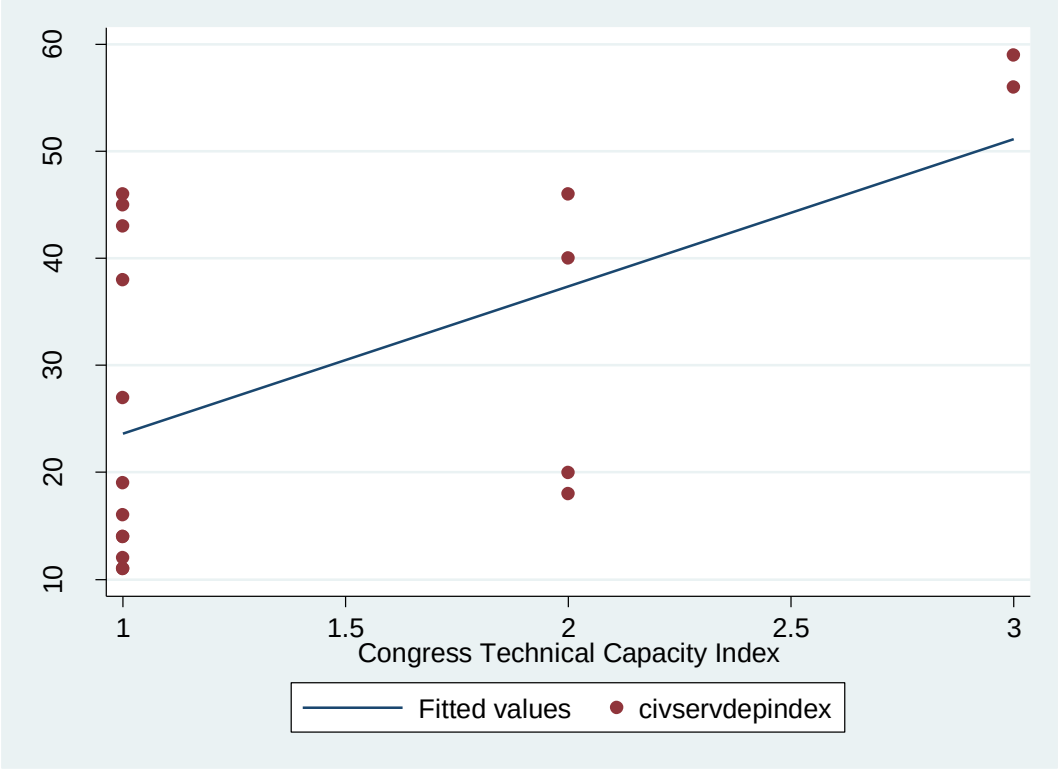
* Significant at the 95% level.

Figure 1: Strength of the committee system and civil service development index



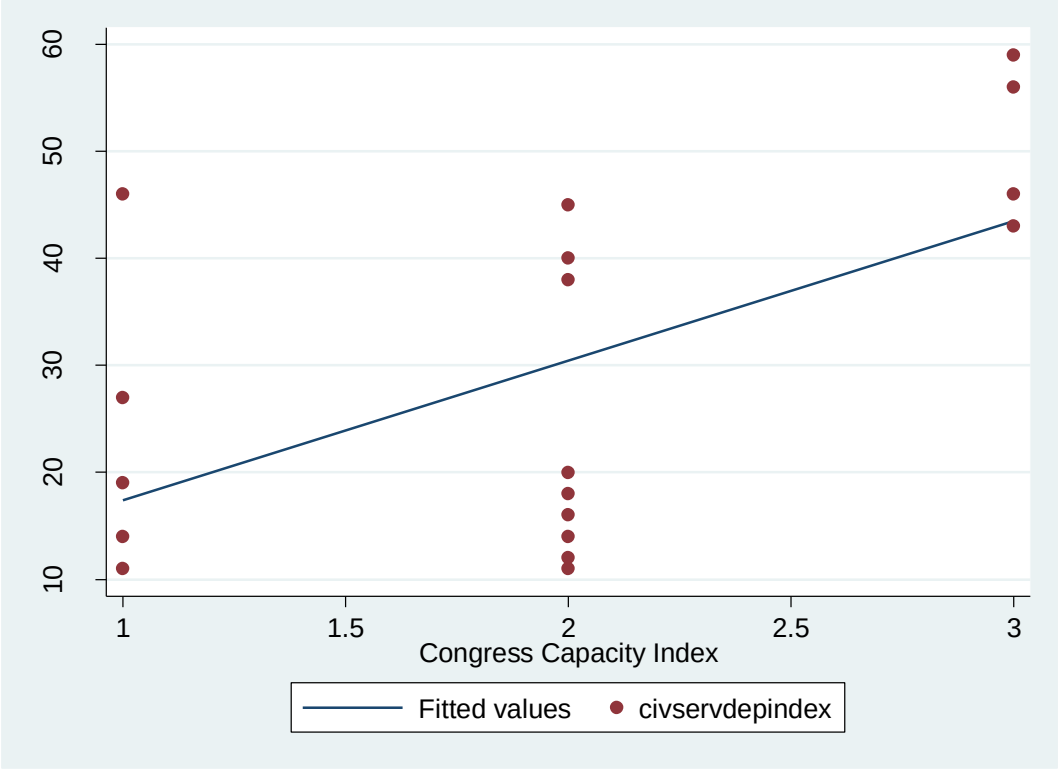
Source: Author

Figure 2: Congress Technical Capacity Index and Civil Service Development



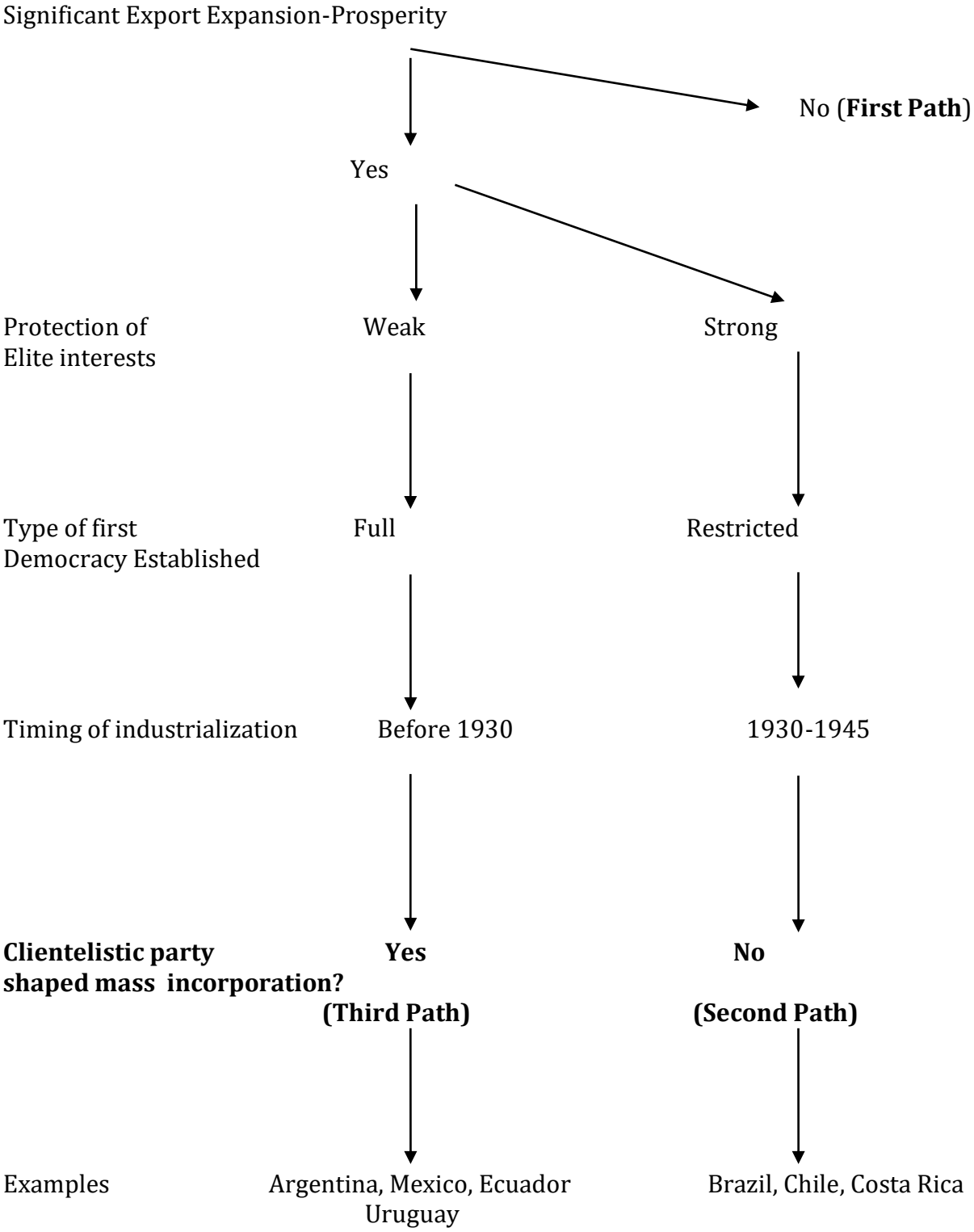
Source: Author

Figure 3: Congress Capacity Index and Civil service Development



Source: Author

Figure 4. Paths



Source: Author, based in Collier and Collier (1991) and Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992)

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