Latin American Capitals: Local Executives Since the Second Wave of Democratization (Conceptual Overview)

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This study examines local executive power in nine Latin American capital cities. Latin America's capital cities, with a few exceptions, trace their origin to efforts by Spain and Portugal to occupy, hold, and control the New World. Spanish and Portuguese colonists quickly established city systems in the conquered territories that were to become the nineteen countries of contemporary Iberoamerica. These colonial city systems differed little from their twentieth century counterparts.

The Iberoamerican colonial period lasted for more than three centuries, and throughout much of that time representatives of the Spanish and Portuguese crown ruled their New World empire from three great cities. Mexico City, capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain, oversaw territory that extended from Costa Rica and the Caribbean Sea to Northern California. Lima, capital of the viceroyalty of Peru, ruled over half of South America: from Panama, along the West coast, to Tierra del Fuego in the South. Finally, from the city of Salvador, Portugal governed the other half of South America, its colony of Brazil. However, in 1763 the Portuguese crown moved Brazil's capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, a location from which to better control the lucrative commerce in gold.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the twilight of colonial rule, Spain reorganized her New World empire in a vain attempt to exercise control more efficiently. Royal administrators reduced the sized of the empire's territorial subdivisions. They increased to four the number of viceroys, and they established four captaincies-general, a kind of smaller viceroyalty comprised of territories over which viceroys based in Mexico City and Lima had experienced difficulties in exercising royal authority. The leaner Viceroyalty of New Spain no longer included the Captaincies-General of Guatemala (Central America) or Cuba. The Viceroyalty of New Grenada (Colombia and Ecuador) was separated from the Viceroyalty of Peru, as was the Viceroyalty of the Plate River (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and part of Bolivia), and Venezuela and Chile each became Captaincies-General (Hardoy 1993, 109-110).

The capital cities of Spain's four viceroys and four captaincies general, along with Rio de Janeiro, each became the capital city of a newly independent country after Spain and Portugal lost their New World empires. Throughout the nineteenth century these nine cities were the political, economic and cultural centers of their respective countries; in other words, primate cities. Brazil again moved its seat of government, from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia in 1960, and early in the twentieth century São Paulo became Brazil's most important economic center. Thus, Brazil could be seen as having two capital cities, one political and the other economic. This interpretation would conform with Arnold Whittick's thinking in the *Encyclopedia of Urban Planning*, where a capital city is defined as "the chief city or town of a country, generally the seat of government. Sometimes a country is thought of as having two capitals, that which is the seat of government and that which is the commercial center," like The Hague and Amsterdam in the Netherlands; Bern and Zurich in Switzerland; Quito and Guayaquil in Ecuador; Ottawa

and Toronto in Canada; Rabat and Casablanca in Morocco; and Washington and New York in the United States.

Whittick's expansion of the concept of capital city to include separate political, economic and (possibly) cultural locations is not appropriate for this volume. Here we discuss and analyze the power and influence of the local executive when that executive, and the national executive, exercise jurisdiction in the same location, the seat of government. This is the most common situation in Latin America, and throughout the world.

The nine capital cities discussed above, with the exception of Brasilia, are locations from which power has been exercised for at least two centuries. All grew rapidly after the Second World War. Table 1 reveals that as recently as 1930 only three of these Latin American capitals boasted more then one million inhabitants, and the population of two (Caracas, Guatemala City) remained below 200,000. The situation will have changed dramatically by century's end, with the number of inhabitants in these cities ranging from 2.1 million (Guatemala City) to 25.8 million (Mexico City); and the population of the countries over which they exercise authority will vary from 165 million (Brazil) to 12 million (Cuba and Guatemala). In other words, Latin American capital cities are some of the world's largest and most important urban metropolitan centers.

The purpose of this study is to examine the notion of local executive power in Latin American capital cities toward the end of identifying and explaining the behavior of local executives when governing and shaping their cities, and to assess their capability to achieve desired outcomes. This introduction develops five major themes. First, we identify and analyze the powers granted to local executives in Latin American capital cities. Second, we argue that critical differences among the outputs of municipal governments in these cities depend on whether the president appoints the local executive or whether control of important dimensions of that executive is in the hands of individuals elected by popular vote. In general, we expect that local executives appointed by the president to be more responsive to the governing national coalition's priorities for the country and to the role that national political leaders expect the capital city to play in advancing those priorities. Elected local executives, on the other hand, should be more responsive to the quality of life concerns of capital city residents. Third, we argue that when the institutions of local government in the capital city divide power and authority between an elected local executive and a municipal legislature the preferences of capital city residents become even more important in urban policy making.

Fourth this orientating framework posits a two way relationship between demand making by capital city inhabitants and national political development. We view demands by capital city inhabitants

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as critical in launching the second and third waves of democratization that swept over Latin America, and the reverse wave that snuffed out the former in all but three Latin American countries. We also see each of these waves as influencing how local executives in capital city were selected, the kinds of resources that they allocated, how they did it, and who benefited. Finally, this framework emphasizes the influence that local executives exerted on the shaping of their cities' built environments, an activity that historically provided signature projects with high meaning for the nation and services for capital city residents. In this context were are especially interested in the influence of the local executive and on the different symbolic functions served by built environments in authoritarian and democratic political regimes. Finally, in the tradition of Harold Laswell (1979), this theme views the city's built environment as a record of triumphs by the politically victorious, the signature of their power.

Local executive: the structures of power: Two factors structure local executive power in Latin American capital cities: the territorial organization of the built environment comprising the capital city and the formal powers that have been conferred. Territory containing the Latin American capital cities in this study is organized either as a Federal District (Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina) or as a municipality (Cuba, Guatemala, Peru, and Chile). A second dimension of territorial organization influencing the power of the capital city local executive is the extent to which the capital's population and built environment has spilled out of the Federal District or core municipality. Powers or functions conceded to the local executive take several forms: ones in relation to the national power; ones as the highest police authority in the Federal District or municipality; ones in relation to the municipal administration. In addition, if there is a municipal council the local executive has powers or functions in relation to that institution; however, these will be addressed in our discussion of the context of the difference made by the existence of a local legislative body.

      territorial organization;

            Federal district or municipality

            spill over of urban built environment

      formal powers or functions

            in relation to the national government

            in regard to the police

            administering the municipality or district

Appointment, election and resource allocation:

On the eve of democratization's second wave capital city local executives (governors, intendants, regents, mayors, etc) were appointed by the president and exercised both police and local administrative powers. A few second wave democracies provided for the election of capital city local executives, although the majority continued to be appointed by the national president. Not surprisingly, in all bureaucratic authoritarian regimes of the 1970s capital city chief executives were appointed and tightly controlled by the presidents. With the ascendency of third wave democracies throughout the region, many new democratic constitutions provided for election of a capital city mayor. Venezuela's long-lasting second wave democracy followed suit, although appointment of Mexico City's mayor (regente) remains a presidential prerogative. Even in Latin American capitals with elected local executives, however, the national government retains important powers. All presidents retain powers to protect locations from which the national government functions, and without exception a president appointee retains responsibility to preserve law and order. This means that elected municipal executives have no control over the police or their authority is limited to forces with responsibility for matters such as traffic control.

> <u>powers and functions in relation to the national government</u>
>> when appointed by the president
>> when popularly elected
> <u>powers and functions to police</u>
>> when there is a single, presidentially appointed mayor
>> when there is an elected mayor and a presidential appointee
> <u>powers and functions to administer the municipality</u>
>> when appointed by the president
>> when popularly elected
> <u>What kinds of differences in the local executive administration of the city (style and output)</u>

<u>depend on whether the mayor comes to office through election, rather than through appointment?</u>

When power is shared with a legislative body:

Several Latin American capital cities had traditions of municipal legislative institutions prior to 1943. Most did not. During second wave democratization elective legislative institutions became the norm for Latin American capitals. The authoritarian political regimes that ruled during the 1970s either abolished capital city municipal councils or replaced elected legislators with appointee of the national governments. Again, with third wave democratization, local legislative bodies became the norm in capital

cities. The legislation establishing these local councils, reflecting a new consensus that democracy at the national level would only be secure when local institutions became more truly democratic, often granted greater powers than capital city councils had enjoyed during second wave democracy. Enduring second wave democracies in Colombia and Venezuela also gave increased powers to municipal councils in Bogotá and Caracas. Thus, in the 1990s capital city municipal councils were on a more equal footing with the local executive. We anticipate that this development increased the influence of local interests with the mayor, especially where the mayor was elected by popular vote, and decreased the influence of the national government.

> What were the most important differences in the balance between capital city local executives and legislative power during the political regimes of democratization's second and third waves?
> What kinds of differences can these changes make in how the local executive governs the capital city and allocates resources?

Capital city interest articulation, national political development, and the priorities of local executives:

The residents of Latin American capital cities are among their country's most influential individuals and groups. Three kinds of elites normally reside in this location: national elites, regional elites residing in the national capital, and local elites. The capital city middle class is often the larger and more influential than all other middle classes combined. The capital city's urban poor, while comparatively powerless, receive more attention than have-nots at any other location in the country. Thus, this work assumes that groups residing in the capital city had an important role in initiating the second wave of democratization, empowering the authoritarian political regimes of the 1970s, and in overthrowing them when they no longer served their interests. With this in mind, we hypothesize that capital city local executives, regardless of whether they are appointed by the president or elected, respond to demands by residents of the capital city. Thus, at least since early in the second wave democratization we expect that the decisions of capital city executives, to an important extent, were influenced by the preferences of capital city residents.

> Did the demand articulated by capital city residents during second wave democratization change the behavior of local executives in the capital city?; Why or why not?
> Did the demands by capital city residents, that accompanied the reverse wave of authoritarianism, influence the behavior of local municipal executives in the capital

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city?; Why or why not?

Did the demands by capital city residents, that accompanied the transition to third wave democratization, change the powers and behavior of local municipal executives in the capital city?; Why or why not?

Brokering and the Shaping of Built Environments: Local executives in capital cities interact with the national government, other municipal institutions, and a variety of interest groups when crafting policy to shape the built environment. The attributes of the built environment itself also influences policy making, and in exploring the impact of these attributes for policy making in which the local executive plays a central role this research will focus on three concerns. First we identify the relevant attributes of the capital city on the eve of second wave democratization and those which continue to be important, that is, constancy and change, across the region and over the past fifty years. Second, we need to know which high-level meanings Latin Americans associate with their capital cities, and to what extend they are shared, and by whom. Third, keeping in mind the instrumental functions of capital cities, we will identify the extent to which urban form and architectural elements communicate meanings such as national identity, political legitimacy, purpose, pride and aspiration, and what repertories are available.

Centrality, a core value on the eve of second wave democratization, reflected a determination to guarantee national unity following the decades of civil war that plagued Latin American countries throughout the nineteenth century. Commitment to this core value is weakening in the face of third wave democratization's demand for decentralization and the emergence of secondary cities as centers of influence and power. Latin American capitals, especially the primate cities, continue as "front regions" that are meant to communicate desired messages, although these are often ambiguous and there is much disagreement about what they should be. Latin American society appears more heterogeneous in the late twentieth century, and there are few, if any lexical symbols and shared cultural essence has diminished.

Values associated with third wave democracy, such as civil liberties, equality, high standards of living, and health, do not really have physical equivalents, other than good environmental quality, the attributes which mainly communicate middle-level meanings to multiple groups. Still, throughout the region modernization (meaning imitating the North Atlantic countries) remains a widely shared high-level meaning. The centers of Latin American capital cities, as front regions, utilize higher standards of services, skyscrapers, mass transit, airports, retail outlets, hotels, national libraries and universities to communicate these meanings. Improved communications, international banking and business headquarters, and the frequent presence of substantial expatriate communities, also emphasize the Latin American capital city's

centrality in contacts with the larger world. Thus, extreme contrasts exist between the centers of Latin America's national capitals and the rest of the metropolitan area, the secondary cities and, most especially, the countryside (cf. Rapoport 1981). Such contrasts did not weaken in the 1980s, characterized as a lost decade from the perspective of regional economic development. They are becoming less acceptable given the power of mass media to communicate the magnitude of these differences to even the most remote periphery, and growing awareness of this gap has spawned demands for a more equitable distribution of resources among the regions and zones of the cities.

The prevailing type of political regime, as we have seen, also changed between 1945 and the 1980s. Dictatorships prior to the second wave of democratization, and bureaucratic authoritarian regimes installed by the reverse wave that ended these experiments, emphasized military authority, strident nationalism, economic power, and bureaucratic control. In contrast, democratic political regimes stressed, responsive, accountable government, rule by law, human rights, equality, and efficient services. Thus, an important difference between democracy and charismatic authoritarian rule is that it is less dependent on, and less able to politically socialize through, high-level meanings of settings, or public rituals, or ceremonies.

Democracies, as well as authoritarian political regimes, seek to communicate national identity, but it is unclear which physical elements can communicate "national identity," or how. Such attempts may actually conflict with the settings required by current or "third wave" of democracy. Thus, attempts to give national identity to hotels, office buildings, airports, parks, and universities have been only marginally successful (cf. Barnard 1984). It has even proven difficult to design signature projects as national symbols due to lack of clarity in the concept, variability of interpretations, conflicts, etc.

Built environments are no longer central in communicating high-level meanings. Democratic values such as, freedom, equality, fairness and the rule of law are conveyed through actions and through alternative symbolic systems, notably constitutions and other documents, legal codes and bureaucratic requirements. The capital cities of democratic political regimes are systems of settings for activities meant to provide and safeguard the good life and standard of living. In contradistinction, capital cities during authoritarian political regimes were artifacts in themselves, essential components of the system of authority or, at least, a material embodiment of it. They always the highest expressions of high style, front regions that encoded cultural values and aspirations through repertories of culture-specific elements. This depended on shared schemata and strong control, the former now absent and the latter difficult if not impossible. In third wave democracies city planning and even architectural design involve innumerable negotiations and compromises.

Capital cities in Latin America, with the possible exception of Brasilia, have no overall form and, as such cannot communicate any meanings. It is doubtful that high-level meanings can be communicated by parts of cities or even single elements. Moreover, capital elements are an ever-smaller part of large metropolitan agglomerations and even smaller cities; they also become less visible amidst the proliferation of signs, advertisements, lights and other semifixed elements that provide the requisite redundancy to identify the very much more numerous non-political types of settings. Moreover many of these new elements dominate capital functions. Thus, in the early 1950's Venezuelan government ministries housed in General Pérez Jiménez's twin towers created a noticeable different area in Caracas and communicated the intended high-level meanings. Today these ministries are barely noticeable vis-à-vis hotels and office buildings, which the new ministries resemble, and hardly noticeable with respect to Caracas as whole. The new Simon Bolívar University, unlike Venezuela's Central University built in 1954, is far from central Caracas and lacks the distinctive architecture that made the Central University a national showcase when it opened.

Arguably, the function of Latin American capitals continues and, in most cases, they remain centers; still dominant; still contrasting with periphery as the place where one must be to succeed and as the source of values, fashions, lifestyles, manners and so on. But the physical equivalents of urban morphology are less pronounced. Thus, although function is still important and, in some cases even more important, morphology during the third wave of democracy has become less important. Latin American capital cities still project power, but not so much because of their built environments (Rappoport 1993, 57-60).

Recent attempts to impose monumentality, as in Bogota's National Administrative Center (CAN), are often seen negatively, possibly because government today becomes increasingly like a corporation. Citizens play the dual role of shareholders and consumers of the end product: government, good or bad. Democratic governments are expected to be competitive, provide competent management and give value for money, each citizen judging success or failure and, if dissatisfied, ousting the management, since authority is only delegated. The setting for this type of government may well be the office tower or suburban corporate center.

Since Latin American governments are expected to be secular, sacred symbols that legitimate and create awe are unavailable; "civil religion" is also frequently lacking. There is often a deep distrust of government, a reluctance to allow oneself to be manipulated by symbols, as was the case in the bureaucratic authoritarian political regimes which collapsed in the 1980s. Yet, the view persists that the capital city must somehow act as a national symbol and remain an important embodiment of national identity and power.

Well into the twenty-first century Latin American political leaders will use the built environments of their capital cities to symbolize modernity. Modernity, because it looks to foreign models, may be in conflict with national identity and, in any case, is being used increasingly by secondary cities. Thus, for the shapers of contemporary Latin American capitals all that seems left are attempts to achieve higher standards of environmental quality, but these are sought by all cities and achieved by many that are not capitals.

It seems likely that the search for symbolic, high-level meanings for capitals, which can be communicated through built environments, will have few successes in the era of third wave democracy. There appear to be no physical forms or repertories of attributes that can communicate appropriate high-level meanings. Yet, in Latin America most capital city chief executives, and most presidents, hope to leave physical monuments in the capital city to themselves and their rule. Construction of these projects also provides opportunities for rewarding supporters, building political machines, and acquiring personal wealth. Thus, shaping the capital city's built environment remain an important issue area. The policy process surrounding it places individuals exercising local executive power at the center of a web of decisions that mobilizes the most important national and local elites, as well as mass with the power to threaten political stability.

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City	1910	1930	1950	1960	1970	1980	(estimated) 1990	(estimated) 2000
Buenos Aires	1,575	2,101*	5,251	6,930	8,550	10,060	11,710	13,180
Rio de Janeiro	1,446	1,480*	2,377	3,282	---	---	---	---
Mexico City	471*	1,049	3,050	5,220	9,120	14,470	20,250	25,820
Santiago de Chile	461	857	1,430	2,120	3,010	3,750	4,550	5,260
Havana	364*	632	1,198	1,448	1,751	1,940	2,040	2,210
Lima - Callao	156	265*	1,050	1,750	2,920	4,590	6,780	9,140
Bogotá	138	240*	700	1,320	2,370	3,720	5,270	6,530
Guatemala	86	155*	400	544	733	1,020	1,460	2,100
Caracas	79	181	680	1,310	2,120	3,170	4,180	5,020
Brasilia	--	---	40	140	540	1,190	2,400	3,720

Table 1   Population of Selected Capital Cities in Latin America

1910 - 2000 (in thousands)

* estimated

APPENDIX "A"

Latin American Capitals: The Mayors and their Cities

(Chapter framework/first cut)

Research Question: What has been the capability of the mayor (or executive power in general) to shape the physical and socioeconomic face of the Latin American capital city since the second wave of democratization (1943-62)?

I. Background
        A. Overview of the capital city's evolution until the breaking of the second wave of democracy
                1. demographic
                2. extent of primacy within the national system of cities
                3. socio-economic characteristics
                4. built environment characteristics
                .
        B. Overview of the institutional arrangements (and the reasons for the form they took) through which political elites controlled the capital city until the breaking of the second wave of democratization
                1. Territorial status
                2. Executive power
                        a. presidential appointment vs. elections
                        b. police powers
                        c. socio-economic prerogatives
                        d. prerogatives to shape the built environment
                3. Legislative institutions
                4. judicial institutions

II. Institutional evolution since the second wave of democratization
        A. Overview of how the second wave of democratization impacted on the country of which your city is the capital
        B. Local government in the capital city (or metropolitan area) and the second wave of democratization
                1. new kinds of institutions established
                2. new procedures for recruiting leaders into the capital city executive
                3. what kind of mayor did those crafting second wave political institutions
                want to create for the capital city?   why?
        C.   Local government in the capital city (or metropolitan area) and the reverse wave (if relevant) that installed an authoritarian regime
                1. new kinds of institutions established
                2. new procedures for recruiting leaders into the capital city executive
                3. what kind of mayor did those crafting the authoritarian political institutions want to
                create for the capital city?   why?
        D.   Local government in the capital city (or metropolitan area) and the third wave (if relevant)
                1. new kinds of institutions established

2. new procedures for recruiting leaders into the capital city executive

3. what kind of mayor did those crafting second wave political institutions want to create for the capital city?   why?

III. The process by which by the capital city mayors exercised influence (and responded to influence exercised by others)

    A. in second wave democracy with:

        1. national executive

        2. political parties

        3. interest groups

        4. municipal bureaucracy

        5. municipal council (if any)

    B. in authoritarian regime (if relevant) with:

        1. national executive

        2. political parties

        3. interest groups

        4. municipal bureaucracy

        5. municipal council (if any)

    C. Mayor's exercise of influence in current democratic system (to what extent is it exercised differently than during second wave democracy - or between 1943 and 1962, when second wave democracy swept the region)? What accounts for the similarities and differences? (possible explanations - political learning, political mobilization, socio-economic/technological change)

IV. In what basic ways has the socio-economic and physical faces of the capital city changed since 1943, and to what extent did decisions by the mayor (or other chief municipal executives) shape those changes?

    A. socio-economic face

        1. how did it change ?

        2. to what extent did the mayor shape the change?

        3. what were the most important constraints on the mayor's ability to shape the changes?

    B. physical face or built environment

        1. how did it change ?

        2. to what extent did the mayor shape the change?

        3. what were the most important constraints on the mayor's ability to shape the changes?

IV. Conclusions

    A. tie back to basic research question

    B. We also might comment on (speculate about?) whether the performance of the capital city mayor as a factor influencing the course of national political development.