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The electoral effect of underdevelopment: government turnover and its causes in Latin– American, Caribbean and industrialized countries

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Abstract

The hypothesis that government turnover and attrition in the incumbent party share of the vote are more frequent and intense in non-industrialized countries (Latin America and the Caribbean area) than in industrialized countries, and the possible reasons for this difference, were explored through analysis of 328 post-war democratic elections. The data analyzed supported this hypothesis and therefore the conclusion that the structural economic situation of a country exerts a significant effect on voting behavior. This effect was found to be independent of occasional changes in the economy, electoral participation and of institutional factors such as re-election. However, the latter diminishes the frequency of turnover and the intensity of attrition in non-industrialized countries, and for this reason, its introduction could improve political continuity and policy stability. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

As the Latin–American and Caribbean democracies accumulate years and elections, the study of less dramatic effects of political life such as electoral behavior (Weiner and Özbudum, 1987; Remmer, 1991) have been added to the initial, and always justifiable theme of comparative studies: the analysis of the conditions related

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to the consolidation and rupture of popular governments. As there is already a long tradition of electoral studies in the consolidated democracies of developed countries, it seems pertinent to ask if one can speak of guidelines of electoral behavior which are common to non-industrialized countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean area. This paper explores this possibility in relation to certain specific aspects.

The paper centers its focus on one feature of Latin–American electoral processes already pointed out by Dix (1984): frequent losses at the polls of the party in power (turnover) and the reiterated electoral attrition of the same. This author notes how in the democratic countries of Latin America the parties in power find it extremely difficult to win the election following their ascent to power, or even to avoid a decrease of their share of the vote (Dix, 1984pp. 436–439). However, in Dix’s paper no comparison was made with the electoral results of other regions of the world to determine whether this was a singularity of Latin–American democracies and why it occurred. This is precisely the objective of this study. A comparison is made of turnover and electoral attrition of the parties in power in industrialized countries (North America, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand) and non-industrialized countries (Latin–American and Caribbean countries), in order to determine whether there are differences and the possible causes of the same. Latin–American and Caribbean countries are unique in that they make up two relatively large sets of non-industrialized democracies of different institutional tradition, within the same region of the world. This characteristic makes comparison more meaningful, in order to establish similarities and differences regarding the factors associated with turnover and electoral attrition within non-industrialized countries, and between them and industrialized democracies.

In a paper written in collaboration with Carmen Pérez entitled: “Electoral Processes and the Evolution of the Party System in Venezuela” (Molina and Pérez, 1996), a theory was proposed that the frequent turnover and permanent electoral attrition of the governing party have been characteristics of the Venezuelan political system, and are symptoms not of any particular crisis, but of its condition as a non-industrialized country. The paper stated that a population plagued with high levels of poverty, deficient public services, and with its basic necessities unsatisfied, all of which are characteristics of non-industrialized countries, lives in a state of “endemic discontent”. Because of this, it becomes highly difficult for a government to satisfy the majority of voters, or even those who supported the party during the election. As a consequence, it is quite normal to expect that the party in power will lose the next election and suffer a decrease in its share of the vote (electoral attrition). The exception would be that it win or better its share of the vote. If this explanation is correct for Venezuela, one could expect it also to be so at a comparative level. That is: non-industrialized countries should present, because of their social and economic conditions, a more frequent government turnover than that which occurs in developed countries, and electoral attrition for the party in power should be more intense in the former than in the latter. This is the hypothesis of this paper.

Our hypothesis implies that the levels of “discontent” should be higher in non-industrialized countries than in industrialized ones. This appears to be true. In the

World Value Survey, 1995–1996, conducted by Ronald Inglehart (Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan), there was a question as to the level of satisfaction with life in a general sense. Those interviewed had to respond on a scale from “1” (completely unsatisfied) to “10” (completely satisfied). The mean of the percentage of respondents considering themselves in the unsatisfied side of the question (people answering from 1–5) in industrialized nations included in both, this paper and the World Value Survey, (Germany, Spain, USA, Japan, Australia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Finland) was 17%. For non-industrialized democracies (Argentina, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) it was 31%. If we compare those that declared to be in the extreme unsatisfied side of the question (1–3), the mean for the mentioned industrialized countries was 4%, whereas for the non-industrialized ones was 11%. These data suggest that in non-industrialized countries there is a level of “satisfaction with life” lower than in industrialized countries, which gives support to the thesis sustained here about a relatively high level of discontent (endemic discontent) associated with underdevelopment.

“Discontent” has been considered as an explanation of political change mainly in the analysis of political violence, civil strife and system stability (Gurr 1968, 1993; Panning, 1983; Powell and Stiefbold, 1977; Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992; Inglehart, 1990). According to “relative deprivation theory”, unfulfilled expectations (discrepancies between value expectations and value capabilities) lead to discontent and eventually to protest, civil strife and political instability (Gurr, 1968). Elite mobilization has also been considered as a requisite for discontent to lead to political action (Tilly, 1978; Powell, 1982, p. 155; Powell and Stiefbold, 1977; Gurr, 1993). These studies have focused on extreme cases of discontent and political action, however it seems relevant to consider their relation to the idea of “endemic discontent” in the realm of electoral politics. For Gurr (1968)p. 1109), a feeling of persisting deprivation may stem from economic discrimination, giving way to continuous and strong discontent. This is different from what is alleged in this paper because underdevelopment, in the sense considered here, tends to affect the relation of all sectors of society with the government, and not only a particular social group. The scarcity of resources for state action in non-industrialized countries is conducive to acute deficiencies in public services in all areas of state action (police, health, etc). It affects all sectors of society, although not equally. The likely result is a general negative feeling towards the incumbent government, which is called here “endemic discontent”. Endemic discontent vis a vis persistent deprivation is meant to be more general and less intense, enough to be conducive to electoral action, but not revolution.

In the context of electoral politics, elite mobilization is a permanent factor. It is a structural component of competitive elections. Although its intensity and degree of success differs from one situation to another. There is always an opposition party trying to capitalize on “endemic discontent” during the election campaign. In that sense, elite mobilization is built into our explanation. The opposition channels endemic discontent to its advantage by bringing attention to the structural shortcomings in public services, by giving them a political slant against the government, and by mobilizing the vote.

Before indicating the methodology used here, it seems appropriate to consider alternative explanations found in the literature for high levels of turnover and the electoral attrition of parties in power in non-industrialized countries, particularly Latin–American countries.

2. High levels of electoral turnover and its causes

The explanations that have been proposed for frequent turnover in democratic non-industrialized countries can be divided into two categories: circumstantial and structural.

The circumstantial explanation sees frequent turnover as a phenomenon associated with crisis which are characteristically contingent, either political or economic. Remmer (1991, p. 781) on the one hand and Mainwaring and Scully (1995, pp. 462–465) on the other point out that the turnover frequently observed during the 1980s is the product of a general economic crisis which affected the region. If turnover is a product of random economic setbacks, it would be logical to find that there was less frequent turnover in times of economic bonanza. On a comparative level, in similar situations of bonanza or crisis, differences in turnover should disappear or be reduced to insignificant levels. Our thesis implies that turnover, although it may increase in times of crisis, tends to be high even in times of relative well-being in underdeveloped countries, and that the difference in relation to industrialized countries holds even when controlling for economic variations.

Pacek and Radcliff (1995) explain turnover in terms of the level of electoral participation and the variations in the economic situation. For these authors, an economic crisis in non-industrialized countries induces greater electoral participation directed towards producing a change in government (Radcliff, 1992, p. 445). In consequence, as participation increases, so does turnover. If the new government overcomes the crisis and there is a period of relative economic bonanza, the electorate which voted as a product of their dissatisfaction, will not have this incentive in the next election and abstain from voting. As a consequence, the government loses their electoral support, and attrition and turnover are likely to occur (Pacek and Radcliff, 1995, p. 756). On the other hand, in developed countries, economic downturns, according to these authors, lead to a decrease in participation. Pacek and Radcliff's proposal does not seem sufficient to explain the frequency of turnover in times of bonanza. Suppose that party A is in power, if an economic crisis occurs, according to these authors, the participation of voters favorable to the principal opposition party B should increase, and this party should win the elections. But, if later a period of bonanza occurs, the voters who elected B would abstain from voting and A would win again. If the absence of crisis continued for various periods, there would be no reason, according to the theory of Pacek and Radcliff, for party A to be displaced. There would only be frequent turnovers if there were frequent economic crises. In summary, the thesis of Pacek and Radcliff, implies that there is only frequent turnover when successive economic crises occur.

Dix (1984) presents a structural explanation of frequent turnover, based on two

factors: one is institutional and the other is related to the process of modernization. The institutional variable proposed by this author is the possibility of re-election. The fact that the majority of Latin–American countries have established a legal prohibition to the immediate re-election of the president, would be an important factor in explaining the constant electoral failures of the parties in power. The incumbent president, is less eager in creating favorable conditions for the victory of his organization, than he would if he was a candidate. On the other hand, support for the president does not transfer automatically to the new candidate, particularly if voting choice is highly dependent on the personal attributes of the candidates.

It is quite reasonable to assume that the possibility or impossibility of re-election is a factor which contributes positively or negatively to the success of the governing party. However, it is important to indicate that it is only a coadjutant element, not a principal one. If we assume that during the period of office the electors form an opinion (favorable or unfavorable) as to the management of government, and consequently as to the political organization in charge of the government, this appreciation is what serves as the fundamental basis at the moment of voting. If the evaluation is favorable, the fact that the president is not running for re-election, detracts from the governing party the extra advantage it would have if he were a candidate, and the extra votes his personal prestige would attract. If the evaluation is unfavorable, having a new candidate avoids the loss of votes which would be attributed to the personal rejection of the President. Not having the opportunity for re-election is, in the first instance, less advantageous, but not a characteristic which could explain on its own why people do not vote for the government candidate. What seems fundamental to explaining voting is the degree of satisfaction with the government, the impossibility of re-election should be seen as a complementary factor. In this sense, at the comparative level, between industrialized and non-industrialized countries, the main differences in turnover should be explained in the first place by the different economic conditions. Whether re-election is allowed should be seen as a secondary factor capable of softening or hardening these differences. When the economic conditions are similar, it should be expected that the re-election variable would play a larger part as a factor for explaining differences in turnover and incumbent party electoral attrition.

The other element pointed out by Dix refers to the process of modernization in Latin America. Dix points out that modernization has imposed an excessive increment in the demands made on governments, much greater than the existing resources can satisfy. (Dix, 1984, p. 442). As long as this excessive demand is seen as a structural situation caused by a permanent economic condition, it can be considered as a proposal similar to the one made in our basic hypothesis. On the other hand, if this excessive demand is seen as a transitory phenomenon, which can be faced successfully by means of political control procedures or by an increment in resources, without overcoming underdevelopment, it would be a circumstantial explanation, and would be contradictory to the basic proposition of this paper.

The explanation we propose is based on the proposals made by Dix, but within the context of a comparative perspective. Dix showed us that turnover and attrition in the governing party were frequent in Latin America. In this paper we propose

that these phenomenon in Latin–American and Caribbean democracies are much more frequent than in industrialized democracies, highlighting the explanatory value of the variable “economic development”. For the theoretical reasons already given as to the explanatory limitations of the variable “re-election”, it is assumed that its influence, although important as will be seen, does not have the same significance as economic development. The introduction of the Caribbean parliamentary democracies in the analysis, allows us to use “re-election” as a control variable of the effect of “economic development” on turnover and electoral attrition¹. According to our proposal, it would be expected that turnover and attrition in the governing party share of the vote would be the most intense in the non-industrialized countries without re-election, moderately intense in non-industrialized countries with re-election, of low intensity in industrialized countries without re-election, and the least intense in industrialized countries with re-election.

3. Variables, data, and methodology²

The database includes the postwar election results up until 1995, corresponding to the present democratic stage in 34 countries. Since the point is to know whether turnover or attrition in the governing party share of the vote is present in the election, the first elections are excluded. There are a total of 328 election results. For Latin America, all countries are included that present in their current democratic period at least three elections generally accepted as such in the literature. This selection was made to eliminate those countries that are not yet minimally stable. As a result, 38 elections in ten countries were studied.³ From the non-Latin Caribbean area, in order to guarantee a minimum of comparability, only countries with the following characteristics were selected: more than two hundred thousand inhabitants; at least three democratic elections in their present post-independence stage; and whose per capita national product in 1993 did not exceed the lowest level of the industrialized

¹ It is important to note that the effect of re-election on turnover is reinforced when the government is parliamentary. As we have said, it is expected that to allow re-election diminishes turnover. Even more if we are dealing with parliamentary governments where those who rule can advance the date of the elections in order to take advantage of a favourable moment of high level of popular support. Given the fact that the cases when re-election is allowed are also, almost all of them, cases of parliamentary government, it is not possible in this paper to separate the effect of both variables.

² The data used in this paper are available from the author by request.

³ The Latin–American countries analyzed (with the the number of elections in parenthesis are as follows: Argentina (2), Bolivia (2), Colombia (5), Costa Rica (10), Ecuador (3), El Salvador (2), Honduras (2), Peru (3), Uruguay (2), Venezuela (7). The sources for electoral results in Latin Aamerica and the Caribbean area are the *Encyclopedia of Latin–American Elections* (Nohlen, 1993), and elections reports in the *Boletín Electoral Latinoamericano* published by the Interamerican Institute for Human Rights.

countries, nor exceed in more than 150% the highest level in Latin America.⁴ A total of 19 elections in four countries were studied.⁵ In the case of industrialized countries, those which belong to the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) were chosen (Lane et al., 1991), excluding only those whose per capita national product was far below the rest, and which for that reason should be grouped in a different intermediate category (Greece, Ireland and Portugal). Thus 271 elections in 20 industrialized countries were included.⁶

3.1. *Dependent variables*

3.1.1. *Turnover*

Elections are classified in two categories, taking into account whether or not they produced a change in the party in power as a consequence of electoral results. It is treated as a dummy variable, with value “0” when turnover did not occur and “1” when it did. In countries with a parliamentary regime, turnover is considered to have occurred when the party of the Prime Minister was defeated, and the new chief executive came from a different political organization motivated by its electoral success, and not by an agreement within the previous government coalition. In presidential regimes,⁷ turnover was indicated by the fact that the winning candidate was not supported by the previous president’s political party in the first or only round of voting.

3.1.2. *Incumbent party vote change*

This indicates, with a positive or negative sign as the case may be, the change in percentage points in the share of the vote of the party in power in relation to the previous election. The incumbent party is considered to be the party of the prime

⁴ Some Caribbean democracies are too small to be validly compared with the rest of our countries; for example: Santa Lucia (pop. 142,000), SanVincente (pop. 110,000), San Cristóbal (pop. 42,000). Others, due to their economic characteristics, have a very high per capita gross national product which invalidates, for the purposes of this study, their grouping with the rest of the Latin–American and Caribbean countries (Bahamas).

⁵ Barbados (5), Belice (3), Jamaica (7), Trinidad and Tobago (4).

⁶ Australia (19), Austria (14), Belgium (16), Canada (15), Denmark (20) Finland (14), Germany (12), France (only the presidential elections) (5), Iceland (16), Italy (12), Japan (18), Luxembourg (11), Holland (14), New Zealand (16), Norway (12), Spain (5), Sweden (16), Switzerland (11), The United Kingdom (13), The United States (12). As a source of information on electoral results and governmental changes in industrialized countries the following texts were used: Woldendrop et al. (1993) and Mackie and Rose (1991, 1997), and elections reports in *Electoral Studies* and the *European Journal of Political Research*.

⁷ In the case of France, considered to be semi-presidential (Duverger, 1980, p. 272), the presidential elections are used for the analysis.

minister in parliamentary systems and the party of the president in presidential systems.⁸

3.2. *Independent variables*

3.2.1. *Economic situation of the country in each election*

According to the main hypothesis of this paper, the possibility and frequency of turnover is determined in part by the structural economic situation of the country. As indicators of this situation two variables were used; one referring to the level of industrialization, and the other to refer to the relative level of the per capita gross national product in relation to the rest of the countries. Let us look at each one.

Industrialization level: This is a “dummy” variable indicating whether the election took place in an industrialized country or not. It has two values; “0” for elections in non-industrialized countries, and “1” for elections in industrialized countries. Latin–American and Caribbean countries are considered non-industrialized. Elections in industrialized countries correspond to the OEDC nations previously mentioned.

Relative per capita GNP⁹: This indicates the relative economic situation of the country before the election. It is the result of the division of the per capita gross national product of the country¹⁰ by the per capita gross national product of the United States. The United States is used as a reference since it has maintained the economic leadership of the capitalist world during the whole period of study (even when its gross national product was not always the highest).

3.2.2. *Re-election*

This variable indicates whether the incumbent president or prime minister was running for office. In parliamentary systems it often occurs that the incumbent premier minister steps down a few months before the elections, and is replaced by a politician

⁸ In the variable “incumbent party vote change” the 1983 Jamaican general election is considered missing. This is due to the fact that for that election the opposition did not participate, which makes the variation in the incumbent party vote not comparable with the rest of the data, as well as the variation in participation. This is why the number of cases is 327 for this variable. The variation in the share of the vote for the incumbent party for the next election (1989) is calculated in comparison with the election prior to 1983.

⁹ The source for information on per capita gross national product is the World Bank (1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1997). The annual series of data on per capita gross national product begins in the year 1960, and there is also data for the years 1955 and 1950. For the elections between the years 1950–1960, the value for the year closest to the election included in the World Bank data was used.

¹⁰ For this variable, and all the variables based on per capita GNP, if the election occurred in the second semester of the year, the value for that year was used. If the election occurred in the first semester, the value from the previous year is used. It is supposed that if the election occurs between January and June, it is the economic situation of the previous year, expressed as per capita GNP that influences the decision of the voter. The variations, increases or decreases, are calculated with respect to the year previous to the year taken as corresponding to the election.

of his same party or coalition. It is the latter who runs as a candidate for the next term in office. When the switch takes place six months or more before the election, this paper considers it a case of re-election, otherwise not. It is a “dummy” variable with two values: “1” if the incumbent was running for re-election, “0” otherwise.

3.2.3. *Variations in the economic situation*

In order to consider the alternative hypothesis that turnover and the incumbent party electoral attrition are due to the occurrence of economic crisis, the following variables are used to indicate modifications in the economic condition during the period immediately prior to the election:

Change in per capita GNP: this variable indicates whether the per capita gross national product¹¹ increased, stayed the same or decreased in the election period with respect to the previous year. The variable is divided in two categories: “0” if it decreased and “1” if it increased or remained the same.

Percentage variation in per capita GNP: This variable indicates for each election the percentage of increase or decrease in the per capita gross national product from the previous year¹² (Radcliff, 1992, p. 445).

3.2.4. *Electoral participation*

In order to consider the hypothesis that the variations in turnout due to economic crises are what lead to turnover and attrition in the governing party share of the vote, an indicator of participation is included: the number of votes cast in relation to the total number of registered voters, expressed as a percentage. This is the indicator employed by Radcliff (1992, p. 445). However, we consider that for the purpose of determining the possible effects of the economic crises on participation in a comparative manner, this is not an adequate indicator. It is not adequate because if one wishes to measure the effect of the variations of the economy on participation, the most adequate dependent variable is *variation in participation* from one election to another, and not the level of participation in each election. The level of participation in each country tends to be related to variables such as the existence or not of the obligation to vote and the mobilization capability of the parties (Verba et al., 1978; Crewe, 1981). The effect of economic crisis could, if it existed, be reflected in the variations that occur from one election to another, even when the voting level remains high or low. For this reason we also use an additional interval variable that indicates the amount of “*variation in participation*” from the previous election, measured in percentage points.¹³

¹¹ See previous note

¹² See ¹⁰.

¹³ For the variables referring to participation, the 1983 Jamaican general election data is considered missing. This is due to the fact that for that election the opposition did not participate, which led to a quite unusually low level of turnout (2.7%), that is not comparable with the rest of the data. The variation in participation for the next election (1989) is calculated in comparison with the election prior to 1983.

3.3. Methodology

The effect of the structural economic situation on turnover will be established firstly through the determination of the degree of association between the ordinal variables mentioned before (*industrialization level* and *turnover*), controlling for the effect both of re-election and of economic crises (*change in per capita GNP*). The indicator of association used will be the statistic Somers' d_{yx} , given that an asymmetric relation is expected. Secondly, the Logit technique will be used in order to verify if in the analyzed elections, the structural economic situation of the country is associated with significantly different probabilities that a change of government occurs, taking into account the effect of variations in the economic situation, re-election and variation in participation.

In relation to changes in the incumbent party share of the vote: in the first place the mean variation for each group of countries is compared in order to determine if there is an important difference between industrialized and not industrialized countries. Then, the linear regression technique is used, including as independent variables the structural economic situation (using alternately *industrialization level* and *relative per capita GNP*), the *percentage variation in per capita GNP*, *re-election* and *variation in participation*. In this way, it will be possible to corroborate or not the autonomous influence of the structural economic situation on the electoral result.

4. Results

Our first result is that in elections in non-industrialized countries, turnover is certainly more frequent than in elections in industrialized countries. As can be observed in Table 1: in 68.4% of the elections in non-industrialized countries there was turnover, while this occurred in only 30.3% of the cases in industrialized countries. This is an important difference, statistically significant, which suggests that on a first analysis, the data collected supports the proposed hypothesis.

The relationship between industrialization level and turnover holds when controlled by re-election. When re-election is not on the agenda, turnover in non-industrialized countries occurs 77.8% of the cases, whereas it comes down to 25% in

Table 1
Turnover by industrialization level^a

	Industrialization level		Total
	0 Non-industrialized	1 Industrialized	
Turnover			
0 No	18 (31.6%)	189 (69.7%)	207 (63.1%)
1 Yes	39 (68.4%)	82 (30.3%)	121 (36.9%)
Total	57 (100.0%)	271 (100.0%)	328 (100.0%)

^a Significance: 0.000; Somers' d_{yx} : -0.38.

elections in industrialized countries. If the incumbent is running for re-election, turnovers occurs in 52.4% of the non-industrialized cases, and in 31.9% of the elections in industrialized countries. Turnover is more frequent in non-industrialized countries than in industrialized ones, whether there is re-election or not. However, the association is clearly stronger when re-election is not on the agenda (Somers' $d_{yx} = -0.53$; $P < 0.001$; $n = 100$), than in the re-election cases (Somers' $d_{yx} = -0.21$; $P < 0.05$ one tailed; $n = 228$). This finding suggests that re-election tends to subdue the tendency towards frequent turnovers in non-industrialized countries.

The relationship between turnover and the level of industrialization is maintained at similar levels when the effect of economic crisis is controlled. The level of the Somers' d_{yx} for association between turnover and the level of industrialization, which is -0.38 for all elections (Table 1),¹⁴ is maintained in -0.34 ($P < 0.05$; $n = 43$) when only the cases where the per capita gross national product diminished from the previous year are considered, and in -0.35 ($P < 0.001$; $n = 207$) when the analysis is applied only to cases where the per capita gross national product stayed the same or increased). This finding supports the thesis that the effect of the structural economic situation on turnover, is independent of circumstantial changes in the economy.¹⁵

Using the technique of Logit, the previous results are confirmed. The logistic regressions between turnover and the variables that indicate the structural economic situation of the country, percentage variation in per capita GNP, re-election and variation in participation, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the results of a logistic regression of turnover as a dependent variable in four different models. Model A, is a full model that includes as independent variables: the structural situation of the economy as a dummy variable (*industrialization level*), variation in the economic situation (*percentage variation in per capita GNP*), electoral participation (*variation in participation*) and *re-election*. It shows that *industrialization level* has a significant influence on *turnover* when the effect of electoral participation, variation in the economic situation during the past year and re-election, is also taken into account. In fact, using "R" as a measure of the relative weight of the independent variables, it can be seen that the largest coefficient belongs to "*industrialization level*". Model B is similar to A, but the variable referring to the structural situation of the country in this case is *relative per capita GNP*, which is also significant. Between these two models, "A" has a better fit (pseudo R squared of 0.18 against 0.11 of Model B), and also it shows (more strongly

¹⁴ When the association between turnover and the level of industrialization is controlled for variations in the economic situation (*Change in per capita GNP*), elections previous to 1960 are excluded because annual information on per capita GNP for those years was not available. This reduced the sample to 250 observations.

¹⁵ This is not to contend that economic crises do not have an effect on turnover. The association between *turnover* and the variable that indicates whether there was an increase in per capita gross national product change in per capita GNP from the year previous to the election showed a Somers' d_{yx} of -0.23 , and is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2
Logistic regressions with turnover as dependent variable^a

Independent variables	Model A B (SE)	R (Wald)	Model B B (SE)	R (Wald)	Model C B (SE)	R (Wald)	Model D B (SE)	R (Wald)
Industrialization level	-1.64** (0.37)	-.23 (19.34)					-1.60** (0.35)	-0.24 (20.53)
Relative per capita GNP			-1.12* (0.44)	-0.12 (6.65)				
Variation in participation	0.04* (0.02)	0.07 (3.86)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (2.62)	0.05* (0.02)	0.09 (4.57)	0.05* (0.02)	0.08 (4.01)
Percentage variation in per capita GNP	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.11 (5.76)	-0.04* (0.01)	-0.13 (7.71)	-0.03* (-0.015)	-0.09 (5.02)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.10 (5.67)
Re-election	0.11 (0.33)	0.00 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.30)	0.00 (0.19)				
Interaction (1) non-industrialized, no re-election ^b					2.06** (0.47)	0.23 (19.37)		
Interaction (2) non-industrialized, re-election ^b					0.98* (0.50)	0.09 (4.56)		
Constant	1.11* (0.35)	- (10.12)	0.70* (0.32)	- (4.69)	0.46* (0.21)	- (5.06)	1.15** (0.33)	- (11.99)
Nagelkerke, pseudo R squared ^c	0.18	0.18	0.11	0.11	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.18
Model significance	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001	P<0.001
Valid case	249	249	249	249	249	249	249	249

^a * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.001$. Each model includes as independent the variables for which coefficients are reported under its column.

^b Interaction between *industrialization level* and *re-election*. The interaction variable has three categories: 1) Non-industrialized — No re-election; 2) Non-industrialized — Re-election; 3) Industrialized.

^c SPSS (1999, p. 46) reports this statistics as Nagelkerke pseudo R square, Long (1997, p. 106) reports it as Cragg and Uhler pseudo R square.

than in Model B) the influence of the structural economic situation of the country on the probability of alternation.

Model D stems from Model A, but includes only the independent variables that are significant in the latter. That is: *level of industrialization*, *variation in participation* and *percentage variation in per capita GNP*. The results are similar to those already commented. From Model D it is possible to establish whether there is a different probability for turnover between industrialized and non-industrialized countries, according to our data. In fact, by holding constant both *variation in participation* and *percentage variation in per capita GNP* at zero, we can ascertain the independent effect of *level of industrialization* on the probability of turnover. In this situation, the probability of turnover for a non-industrialized country, calculated with the logistic regression equation, is 76%, whereas for an industrialized countries it is 39%. This result suggests that the structural situation of the country has a significant and important effect on the probability that the incumbent party continue or not leading the government. The chances of being defeated are significantly larger for governments in non-industrialized countries than for those in industrialized democracies.

In both full models (“A” and “B”), *re-election* is not significant at the level of 0.05. To explore the possibility suggested above, that re-election diminished the chance of turnover for non-industrialized countries, and that there is an interaction between *level of industrialization* and *re-election*, an interaction variable was created with three categories: 1) Non-industrialized — No Re-election; 2) Non-industrialized Re-election; 3) Industrialized. It was included in Model C as two dummies for the first two categories, leaving the third (Industrialized) as the base category represented by the constant of the equation. As can be seen, the results in Model C support the thesis that re-election has the effect of decreasing the chance of turnover within non-industrialized countries. The regression coefficients for the interaction dummies are both significant and positive. The one for elections in non-industrialized countries with no re-election (2.06) is higher than the regression coefficient for elections in non-industrialized countries with re-election (0.98). This indicates that within non-industrialized countries the probability of turnover, as expected, is higher when the incumbent is not running for re-election. In fact, holding *variation in participation* and *percentage variation in per capita GNP* constant at zero, the probability of turnover for a non-industrialized country with no re-election, calculated from the logistic regression equation, is 83%. Whereas for a non-industrialized country with re-election it is 63%. The probability of turnover for industrialized countries according to this model is 39%, the same as in Model D.¹⁶

As to the variations in the vote for the party in power (*incumbent party vote change*), and the effect which the structural economic situation exerts on the same,

¹⁶ Instead of one dummy for “industrialized” countries, we can include two dummies, one for industrialized countries with no re-election, and one for industrialized countries with re-election. In this case the regression coefficient for these dummies is not significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that from our data it cannot be concluded that re-election makes a significant difference as regard the probability of turnover within industrialized countries.

our first step consisted in comparing the averages for these variations amongst different types of countries, as can be seen in Table 3. As can be observed in all the categories, the average indicates a general tendency for attrition in the vote for the party in power: the average variation is always negative. In general, the performance of the government does not increase the share of the vote of the president's or prime minister's party (Strom, 1985, p. 745; Rose and Mackie, 1983). As was expected, the attrition is more accentuated in elections in non-industrialized countries than in industrialized ones. The average attrition in non-industrialized countries is -9.3 percentage points, while in industrialized countries it is -1.7 . As can be seen in Table 3, introducing re-election decreases the average attrition in both industrialized and non-industrialized countries, without neutralizing the effect of the level of industrialization. Within industrialized countries the average variation in the incumbent share of the vote is -1.2 when there is re-election, and -3.2 when there is no re-election. Whereas in non-industrialized countries it is -5.1 when there is re-election and -11.7 without re-election. These results suggest that both variables have an autonomous effect on the variation of the incumbent party share of the vote.

The regression of the variation in the vote for the party in power since the previous election (*incumbent party vote change*) by the economic situation of the country (*level of industrialization* or *relative per capita GNP*), the variation in the economic situation (*percentage variation in per capita GNP*), *re-election* and *variation in participation*, gave the results shown in Table 4.

Model A and C include all the independent variables considered. In the first one the structural situation of the economy is represented by the dummy variable *industrialization level*, and in the second by the interval variable *relative per capita GNP*. As can be seen, in both cases the variable related to the structural situation of the country has a significant and positive coefficient, indicating that the better this situation, the higher the expected share of the vote of the incumbent party. In both models the variables referring to the effect of variations in participation were found not to be significant. For this reason, Models "C" and "D" present regressions without

Table 3
Average variation in the vote for the party in power since the last election

Type of Country	Average variation (percentage points)	Number of elections	Standard deviation
Industrialized	-1.7	271	5.8
Non-industrialized	-9.3	56	12.0
Industrialized with re-election	-1.2	207	5.5
Industrialized without re-election	-3.2	64	6.5
Non-industrialized with re-election	-5.1	20	14.5
Non-industrialized without re-election	-11.7	36	9.9
Total	-3.0	327	7.8

Table 4
Regressions with incumbent party vote change as dependent variable^a

Independent variables	Model A B (SE) Beta	Model B B (SE) Beta	Model C B (SE) Beta	Model D B (SE) Beta
Industrialization Level	4.74** (1.21) 0.24	4.45* (1.47) 0.18	4.66** (1.21) 0.24	4.45* (1.47) 0.18
Relative per capita GNP	-0.08 (0.07) -0.06	-0.06 (0.07) -0.05		
Variation in participation	0.22** (0.05) 0.26	0.23** (0.05) 0.28	0.22** (0.05) 0.26	0.23** (0.05) 0.28
Percentage variation in per capita GNP	2.81* (1.07) 0.16	3.30* (1.07) 0.19	2.69* (1.07) 0.15	3.18* (1.06) 0.18
Re-election	-11.28** (1.09) -	-10.73** (1.11) -	-11.06** (1.07) -	-10.60** (1.09) -
Constant	0.22	0.20	0.22	0.20
R squared	0.21	0.19	0.21	0.19
Adjusted R squared	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$	$P < 0.001$
Model significance	249	249	249	249
Valid cases				

^a $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.001$. Each model includes as independent the variables for which coefficients are reported under its column. The reported coefficients are: B; partial regression coefficient; (SE); Standard error of the partial regression coefficient; Beta: Standardized partial regression coefficients.

this variable. Model C, which uses *industrialization level* to indicate the structural situation of the country, will be used as the basis for further analysis. The reason for this is that as Table 4 shows, this variable results in a better fit of the model, a better significance level and a higher beta than *relative per capita GNP*. The variation in the economic situation of the country (*percentage variation in per capita GNP*) and *re-election* also have a significant effect on the electoral fortunes of the incumbent party. It can be seen that as expected, recent improvements in the economic situation result in a better showing for the incumbent party. Similarly, when the president or the prime minister runs for re-election, one can expect from Model C that the incumbent party share of the vote will be 2.69 percentage points more than when this is not the case. Looking at the beta coefficients, it can be concluded that the most influential variable in the model is that referring to recent changes in the economy (*percentage variation in per capita GNP*). However, the beta coefficient for level of industrialization is very close, and higher than the one for *re-election*. These findings suggest, as the hypothesis of this paper states, that the structural economic situation of the country, and particularly whether or not it is industrialized, has an autonomous effect on the incumbent party share of the vote. This agrees and strengthens our previous results regarding the effect of this variable on turnover.

It is important to notice that the regressions presented in Table 4 show *re-election* as having an independent and significant effect on the incumbent party share of the vote, which in fact gives support to our previous finding regarding its influence on turnover in non-industrialized countries. Also, as the variation in the incumbent share of the vote is usually the cause for alternation, this finding gives support to the idea that having re-election generally reduces attrition and the chance of turnover.

Finally, we present our results with regard to the effects of changes in the economy on participation for industrialized and non-industrialized countries separately. This permits us to evaluate the alternative hypothesis explained before, according to which the differences in turnover between industrialized and non-industrialized countries is a product of the diverse consequences that economic crises exercise on participation. In the first type of societies the downturn in the economy would lead to a decrease in participation, whereas in the second, it would be associated with increases in the same (Pacek and Radcliff, 1995).

Table 5 shows the results of two sets of regressions for industrialized and non-industrialized countries. For each type of country two regressions are run with "*percentage variation in GNP*" as an independent variable. The dependent variable is in one case the "*variation in participation*" from the last election, measured in percentage points, and in the other, "*electoral participation*" which indicates the level of turnout for a particular election. The former is the variable that seems to adequately indicate the degree of change in turnout that could be due to the effect of variation in the economy, as was stated earlier. The latter is the one used by Pacek and Radcliff (1995). As can be seen, all the regressions are not significant, and for each dependent variable the direction of the relationship between participation and variation in the economic situation is the same for industrialized and non-industrialized countries. Therefore it should be concluded that there are no indications in our data that economic crises have a significant effect on participation, nor that this effect goes in one

Table 5
Regression of participation on percentage variation in per capita GNP^a

Type of countries included	Dependent variable Variation in participation		Electoral participation	
	Industrialized	Non-industrialized	Industrialized	Non-industrialized
Constant	−0.67	−2.32	81.96**	73.23**
Regression coefficient for percentage variation in per capita GNP	−0.02	−0.001	0.0006	0.13
R squared	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.01
Significance of “F”	0.60	0.99	0.99	0.45
N	194	55	194	55

^a * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.001$.

direction for industrialized countries and in the opposite one for non-industrialized countries. As a consequence, this suggests, contrary to Pacek and Radcliff’s thesis, that the reason for the differences found in the level of turnover between industrialized and non-industrialized countries is not due to the effect of economic crises on turnout.

5. Conclusions

The analysis realized here has confirmed, as the literature previously pointed out, that turnover has a high frequency in democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean region. This occurred in 68.4% of the elections considered in these countries. Such a high frequency indicates the presence of permanent structural factors which sustain it. The specific circumstantial factors which influence each country and each election such as the personality of the candidates, the electoral campaigns, the intensity of party identification, and the management of the economy in a particular period, are not a plausible explanation for such a permanent and extensive phenomenon. For this reason the hypothesis was proposed that high turnover in Latin–American and Caribbean countries was a consequence of their structural economic situation as non-industrialized countries, and of the attitude of “endemic discontent” towards governmental management associated with the same.

Based on the analysis of our 328 elections, the results show a significant difference between non-industrialized and industrialized countries in terms of turnover and electoral attrition for the party in power. The defeat of government turned out to be far more probable, and its electoral attrition more intense, in elections in non-industrialized countries than in industrialized ones. All of this adds support to the thesis that the structural economic situation certainly influences the electoral chances of a

governing party, and that there are substantial differences in electoral behavior between industrialized and non-industrialized countries.

These differences were maintained when we included in the study the analysis of alternative factors suggested by the literature: re-election, turnout and circumstantial economic crisis. The possibility of re-election appears to be a structural factor which influences turnover. It diminishes the tendency for turnover and electoral attrition for the party in power in non-industrialized countries, and probably reinforces the tendency for continuity in industrialized countries.

Although it is plausible to assume that circumstantial economic crisis accentuates the possibility of turnover and electoral attrition for governing parties, the analysis of the data that we have made in this paper leads us to the conclusion that the structural economic situation exerts an autonomous effect, which remains significant and important in times of economic crisis and bonanza. The results presented here suggests that the effect of *level of industrialization* on turnover and electoral attrition of the incumbent party share of the vote is at least similar in strength to the effect of short term changes in the economy, and clearly stronger than the effect of variations in electoral participation and re-election.

The statistical impact of the structural economic situation on turnover and the vote for the party in power was moderate. This suggests the presence of other factors, among which, undoubtedly are those related to the specific context of each election, and the particular characteristics of each political system. However, this does not lessen the fact that the differences between industrialized and non-industrialized countries were confirmed, and that the structural economic situation has a statistically significant influence, even when partial, on them.

One of the consequences of the fact that in non-industrialized countries turnovers are more frequent than in industrialized countries, is that political continuity is more difficult in the former. While in industrialized countries a political project tends to have various periods in which to be developed, in non-industrialized countries, most probably it will be discarded after four or five years, except in those cases where there is consensus among the major parties. It may be true that political continuity is not necessarily an advantage, but the fact that the political environment may be an obstacle to the execution of government programs, whether good or bad, cannot be considered as positive. It could be said on the basis of the comparison made in this study, that in non-industrialized countries, political continuity is excessively difficult. These difficulties are a barrier to the development of even the most positive and plausible projects. And this in turn implies that, except in cases of complete consensus, even the continuity of programs which lead to higher levels of well-being for the population are more difficult to maintain in the societies which would most benefit from them. In this sense, the lack of continuity which is derived from frequent turnover seems to be a factor which contributes to widening the gap of well-being between rich and poor democracies.

The results presented above suggest that the differences in relation to turnover and political continuity between industrialized and non-industrialized countries, can be diminished with the introduction of the possibility of re-election. In those cases where the barrier that non-industrialization imposes on the continuity of government pro-

grams could be reduced, without provoking new or major distortions, it might be convenient for countries in Latin America to propose the establishment of limited re-election. It has already been established in Argentina, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela.¹⁷

It might seem premature to speak of a model of electoral behavior specific to non-industrialized countries. However, the results of this research, as well as of others mentioned in the review of literature, demonstrate that it is not possible to automatically transfer to these countries the findings arrive at in the analysis of developed democracies, and that it would be highly fruitful to continue exploring the similarities and differences between both types of societies.

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¹⁷ On the contrary, the cases of Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, in which re-election was recently abandoned, illustrate the fact that re-election and political continuity cannot be proposed as a universal advantage. In some cases the danger of an abusive use of government influence makes it preferable, for the well-being of democracy, to maintain the non re-election rule.

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