

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE BRAZILIAN STATE

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This essay is devoted to a critique of the interpretation of the present Brazilian regime given in a recent work by Philippe Schmitter, an interpretation that is organized around the themes of "Bonapartism" and "restoration/Portugalization" (Schmitter 1973). The basic problem treated by means of these concepts is that of the relation between the state and social classes in Brazil. Our argument will be that Schmitter's usage rips these concepts out of their original historical context and attempts to utilize them in a context in which they do not really fit. They are therefore only of limited use for understanding the nature of the post-1964 regime, and in fact their application can easily lead us to lose sight of what is specifically new in the political economy of Brazil today. Having made our criticisms, we will advance a number of alternative hypotheses about how that regime's relation to the fundamental classes of Brazilian society should be understood.

Although our purpose in writing this essay was and remains that of clarifying certain features of a specific national reality, the problem that we raise here is of much wider import in the social sciences. In the first instance, this problem takes the form of a misuse of historical analogy, or in the case of the work criticized here, of a misuse of several intertwined historical analogies. As a generic intellectual problem, the dangers of reasoning by analogy are more or less well understood in the social sciences, at least on an abstract plane. Unfortunately this does not prevent, especially among political scientists, the constant drawing of often very superficial historical parallels across widely separated temporal and cultural boundaries. The similarities to which such a procedure draws attention quickly tend to override the manifest differences between or among the situations compared, with the result that a grasp of the specificity of each historical situation is lost, and with the further result that realistic action within that situation becomes more difficult.

We would insist, however, that misused analogies are only an index of a deeper problem in political science, namely that of the way in which its subject matter is created. In the case of comparative political science as practiced in the United States, that subject matter is above all the structure of political institutions or processes and it is established by means of typological classification of a generally inductive sort—such classifications form the core of the "general theory" that graduate students in comparative politics are required to learn. Much of this political science is presumed to be scientific because it rests precisely upon the initial isolation of such political phenomena from their societal context

and from the “issues” that context throws up, and upon the rigor with which resulting classifications of examples of particular phenomena are drawn. Once established, the statically conceived, abstracted features of a political form can be externally related (“correlated”) to features or indices of other phenomena in the realm of the economic, the cultural, etc., from which derives the model of explanation that most political scientists find familiar. The most visible, manifest result of such procedures is their ahistoricism, by which we mean simply their lack of sensitivity to configuration and contextuality, their lack of attention to the dynamics of a particular instance by concentrating instead on the general result obtained (“scientific finding”). Again, at the most abstract methodological level, the pitfalls of this approach are more or less understood; but for a host of reasons, which we cannot discuss here, the actual practice of political science is such that necessary cautions are all too often abandoned.

The point to which our argument is leading is that the intellectual atmosphere created by such practices is conducive to drawing superficial analogies based upon formal characteristics of a political realm that is separated, or “autonomized,” from the rest of the social whole. The main danger in this procedure is not really the use of analogy, for such use can hardly be avoided, but rather the misuse that is rooted in the formalism of much political analysis. The paper we are about to criticize is a particularly striking example of the dangers of formalism in political analysis, an all the more egregious example because it comes from the hand of one of the most historically well-informed modern political scientists. To our minds it illustrates the powerful and distorting effects that are produced by the kind of social science training that both Schmitter and the present authors have undergone.

“BONAPARTISM” IN BRAZIL?

Schmitter first draws an analogy between the current Brazilian state and Marx’s conception of Bonapartism (Marx and Engels).¹ Schmitter applies the notion of Bonapartism at several different levels of abstraction, but in the first instance he points to the existence in Brazil of what we might term a “nonhegemonic bourgeoisie.” His argument is that the characteristics of delayed-dependent development in Brazil have resulted in a situation in which the Brazilian capitalist class is politically weak and divided, unable to exercise leadership with respect to the other classes of civil society, and, therefore, in many ways dependent upon and controlled by a relatively autonomous state, rather than being able to control the state itself *as a class* (Schmitter 1973, pp. 184–85). At a high level of abstraction, this formulation is generally unobjectionable. The main problem arising by implication is that the developmental path of Brazil is to be contrasted with that of certain European democracies in which the bourgeoisie is supposed to have achieved a class hegemony purely within civil society, outside of or without the intervention of the state power.² When the discussion becomes more concrete, however, numerous problems arise at once.

When we examine the way in which Schmitter would comprehend actual relations between the state and civil society in Brazil, including the bourgeoisie,

we see that he begins by citing a long passage from the *18th Brumaire*. This section deals with the independence of the executive power in mid-nineteenth century France and, he claims, is of "extraordinary applicability to contemporary Brazil." The passage refers to France in Marx's era as a country

. . . where the executive power commands an army of officials numbering more than half a million individuals and therefore constantly maintains an immense mass of interests and livelihoods in the most absolute dependence, where the state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals; where through the most extraordinary centralization this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity, an omniscience, a capacity for accelerated mobility and an elasticity which finds a counterpart only in the helpless dependence, in the loose shapelessness of the actual body politic. (Schmitter 1973, pp. 187–88)

The Brazilian body politic is therefore considered by Schmitter to be in a state of helpless dependence and loose shapelessness similar to the French—in his view, in fact, the pattern of class struggle in Brazil, as in France, has ended "in such a way that all classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fall on their knees before the rifle butt." To speak of all classes in this vein is obviously to place bourgeoisie and proletariat in the same relationship to an autonomous state, a problem which will be taken up in more detail later. Before discussing this issue, however, a number of preliminary matters need to be addressed.

First, it is necessary to ask what period of Brazilian history this picture is supposed to represent. We find that Schmitter would use this image of autonomous state power facing a shapeless political mass to refer not only to the present regime but also to previous periods of authoritarian rule in Brazil, particularly the years 1930–45. Hence he speaks of the present government as the "restoration" of a relatively permanent system of authoritarian politics (whose archetype is the corporatist regime of Salazar) after a period in which that system had undergone progressive decay (Schmitter 1973, pp. 185–86). We may then ask whether the picture portrayed by Marx is adequate to express the actual relationship of state to society in either of these periods of Brazilian development. In order to answer this question it is necessary to delve a bit more deeply into Marx's image of the state in France.

In brief outline, Marx has something to say about (1) the origins and degree of development of the state apparatus in France, (2) its contemporary bases of support, and (3) its general effect on civil society. The roots of this gigantic state power are traced by Marx to the period of absolutism, in which the task of centralization and differentiation of the state institutions was begun in the context of the political struggle between the monarchy and the feudal nobility. Thereafter:

The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all local, territorial, urban and provincial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute mon-

archy had begun—centralization, but at the same time the extent, the attributes and the agents of governmental authority. The Legitimist monarchy and the July monarchy added nothing but a greater division of labor, growing in the same measure that the division of labor within bourgeois society created new groups of interests, and therefore, new material for state administration. (Marx and Engels, p. 170)

The end result of all this development, if we are to accept Marx's picture as an accurate reflection of real conditions, is a state apparatus that has reduced the effective powers of local and provincial bodies virtually to naught and that is highly successful in extracting resources (especially taxes) from the society at large. In our estimation (necessarily a rough one), a similar degree of centralization and extraction has been achieved in Brazil only since the present military regime came to power. Only since 1964 have state and local governments in Brazil been deprived of real independence and a uniform, effective system of income taxation been developed (Schmitter 1973, pp. 193–94). Hence one cannot speak of an executive power on the French pattern during the *Estado Novo* or any period in Brazilian history prior to 1964. In any case, the historical processes by which these state powers were created in Brazil obviously differ substantially from those that occurred in France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Let us accept the contention, however, that the Brazilian state today possesses centralized powers and extractive capabilities comparable to those of the state described by Marx. We then ask: Does the power of the Brazilian state rest upon a social basis similar to that of the French state in 1850? To begin to answer this question it is necessary to quote some other passages from Marx's *18th Brumaire*: "Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent. . . . And yet the state power is not suspended in mid-air. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the small-holding peasants" (Marx and Engels, p. 171). With these remarks, Marx begins to establish an intimate linkage between the powers and special nature of the French administrative machine and a definite social class, a class that is, however, *noncapitalist*—the peasantry. A particular characteristic of that class is its more or less complete inability to organize itself for unified political action. For that reason it is unable to resist the depredations and regulations imposed upon it by an apparently all-powerful, parasitic bureaucracy. As Marx expresses it:

By its very nature small-holding property forms a suitable basis for an all-powerful and innumerable bureaucracy. It creates a uniform level of relationships and persons over the whole surface of the land. Hence it also permits of uniform action from a supreme center on all points of this uniform mass. It annihilates the aristocratic intermediary grades between the mass of the people and the state power. On all sides, therefore, it calls forth the direct interference of this state power and the interposition of its immediate organs. (Marx and Engels, p. 175)

The French bureaucracy, then, nourishes itself primarily on the heavy taxes that it levies on the small-holding peasants, rather than upon taxation of the nascent capitalist economy. Concurrently, due to the circumstances of its initial election, the Bonapartist regime manages to secure a passive and diffuse political support from the same peasant sectors, a support that leads Marx to speak of the regime as “representing” the small-holding peasantry even though state power is not used in their behalf. The clear implication of the analysis here is that this relationship between the state apparatus and a specific sector of petty-commodity production in the society underpins Bonaparte’s ability to effect the *temporary* political marginalization of the *capitalist* class. As Marx sums it up, in an apparently paradoxical sentence, “the political influence of the small-holding peasants . . . finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself” (p. 172).

A moment’s reflection should be sufficient to realize that the context in which the state operates in Brazil today is completely different from that described above. Whereas capitalism in Marx’s era was only becoming the dominant mode of production in France, in Brazil its dominance is already well-established. The state, therefore, must sustain itself (as far as the matter of resource extraction is concerned) primarily upon the capitalist sectors of the economy. In order to keep doing so, and in order to realize the ambitious developmental goals of the current state elite (military-technocratic), the state must take care to nurture the capitalist mode of production in Brazil. Whether or not such nurturance is compatible with the political marginalization of the capitalist class in Brazil is a subject we will come to presently.

Before opening that discussion we ask one further question: Does the state in Brazil today have an effect upon civil society similar to that seen by Marx in the case of the French state? Here the point to be emphasized is that the overall image presented by Marx stresses the ways in which the French bureaucracy *stifles every initiative* of civil society (he calls it “this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores” [Marx and Engels, p. 170]). The crushing weight of the administration falls with particular severity precisely upon the peasant—its taxes “rob his industry of its last resources and complete his inability to resist pauperism” (Marx and Engels, p. 175). Taking a more global view, it is fair to say that this parasitic state is not likely to contribute to the rapid development of the French economy, either in its capitalist or precapitalist sectors. In this regard the contrast with present-day Brazil is very striking, because one of the most salient features of the Brazilian political model is precisely the rationalization of the state apparatus for the purpose of stimulating the growth of the private economy (this is discussed in more detail below).

The foregoing remarks should begin to cast some doubt upon the use of the Bonapartist analogy when referring to contemporary Brazil. The central thrust is to argue that the state in Brazil, though it has similar powers, does not rest upon the same structural basis as the French state; hence is not likely to have a similar kind of autonomy, nor does it have a similarly restrictive impact on the development of civil society. We may now address the question of how

the actual political relation of various groups (here the capitalist and the working classes) to the state apparatus is to be understood.

CORPORATISM AND THE BRAZILIAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

In Schmitter's view the key concept to be applied in this regard is that of corporatism. The concept of corporatism plays a triple role in his essay—it is at once an element of his application of Bonapartism, a component of the "Portugalization" of Brazil ("corporatism is a cornerstone of the *sistema*"), and a buttress for the idea that the present regime is "basically restorationist." By way of evidence for his affirmation that after 1964 "the system returned to its unitary, central-imposed, corporatist configuration" (1973, p. 206), Schmitter notes that the military rulers moved immediately to reimpose on the working class the corporatist controls inherited from the Vargas era, and to reaffirm the sanctity of the Consolidated Labor Laws. The essential problem with this formulation is its excessive *formalism*; in his zeal to find formal institutional similarities between the present and previous regimes, Schmitter disregards the new content of or purposes to which these corporatist arrangements have been put. While the form has remained the same, one of the most important substantive aspects of the Vargas labor system, which aimed above all to tie the worker to the system by a guarantee of security of tenure, has not been respected. In setting up a Service Time Guarantee Fund, the government moved in the direction of undermining job security in order to increase the entrepreneurs' ability to dispose of labor power in what would be considered, from the capitalist's point of view, a more rational fashion (Fiechter, pp. 104–5). Examples of similar changes could doubtless be given, but the point would remain the same—the corporatist structures encapsulating the working class are not being simply "restored" but rather adapted to the requirements of the rapid capital accumulation that the state desires to promote.

Nevertheless, as a form of institutional arrangement corporatism continues to express something fundamental about the relation of the state to the working class. Can the same be said with respect to the relation between the state and the capitalist class? Evidently yes, if we accept Schmitter's judgment of the results of 1964: "Business, divided internally, regimented into unrepresentative corporatist institutions, and dependent on state licensing and credit, was in no condition to share power" (1973, p. 225). Thus, corporatist control of the bourgeoisie as well as the government's power to regulate the economy underpin Schmitter's image of both major classes in Brazil as "equally mute and equally impotent" in the face of state power. In terms of the *influences* to which it is subjected, then, the corporatist system has no class bias—bourgeoisie and working class are equally marginalized from the decisional centers of the state, which maintains "an exclusive hegemony in the identification and promotion of 'national objectives'" (1973, p. 218).³ All the same, Schmitter recognizes that the increased penetration of the economy by the state does not replace or even displace the established *interests* of private capital, which continue to be promoted by state power (1973, p. 191). The question then arises of whether in

protecting its economic power the state does not contribute to perpetuating the political influence of capital, and if so in what form.

We have already granted that the capitalist class in Brazil does not face the state as a unified entity with autonomous corporate and party representation. However, this is not the only possible mode by which the various fractions of capital can make their weight felt politically. In the discussion that follows some hypotheses about the interrelations of capital and the state in Brazil will be advanced, and it will be argued that the concept of corporatism is inadequate to comprehend those interrelations. Before doing so it is necessary to state some views regarding the general features of the "economic model" that was followed in Brazil between 1964 and 1974 and their implications for the interests and political influence of the different segments of capital.

Some of the essential features of the economic strategy of the post-1964 governments may be identified as follows:⁴ (1) a growth process led by the most modern, internationalized sectors of the private economy (generally consumer durables and capital goods), and fed by continual inflows of foreign capital and technology; (2) modernization and concentration of private enterprise in general, in order to increase productivity and develop the ability of Brazilian products (especially manufactures) to compete on world markets, thus helping to correct the chronic deficit in the balance of payments; (3) maintenance of a well-defined boundary between a state sector and the private sectors of the economy, with the former providing infrastructure facilities and basic inputs that are disproportionately used by the leading private sectors identified above; and (4) modernization and recapitalization of the state enterprises, partly in association with foreign interests, to assure that the future needs of the private sector for the inputs produced by the state will be met.

These objectives implied the structuring of a definite alliance of the different fractions of capital in Brazil, but one in which those fractions are favored *differentially* by the actions of the state power. The order of priority among fractions may be identified as (1) internationalized private capital, (2) state capital, (3) wholly Brazilian capital producing for export, and (4) wholly Brazilian capital producing wage goods for the internal market.⁵ The state then used its apparatus for economic policymaking and policy instruments to maintain this set of priorities while attempting to smooth over, as far as possible, conflicts among the various sectors. Despite the fact that internal conflicts continued all through the period, as Cardoso pointed out (1973, p. 162), a definitive *modus vivendi* was reached. This does not mean that there were no shifts in the relative extent to which sectors were favored over time; clearly, the policy change effected upon Costa e Silva's advent to power aided the interests of domestic Brazilian capital more than had the policies of Castelo Branco. Nevertheless, we would argue that up to 1974 the order of priorities itself did not change, although it is not impossible that significant change could occur in the future.⁶

It is necessary to underscore the dynamic intention and far-sighted character of this set of economic objectives. Only with difficulty can this intention be reconciled with ideas like "Portugalization" or "defensive modernization" employed by Schmitter to define the objectives of the present elite; it is here in

particular that the "Portugalization" analogy begins to break down. Schmitter would argue that the authoritarian response to modernization permits existing elites to manage the transformation of economic and social structures at minimal cost to themselves (1973, p. 205). What is most striking about the Brazilian model, however, is the willingness of the military elite to sacrifice the interests of certain segments of the traditional economic elites (e.g., industrialists in the wage-good sectors) in order to promote capitalist modernization and the integration of the Brazilian with the world economy. Out of this willingness grew the controversy over denationalization that was especially prominent in 1966–67 and which continues to agitate political life in Brazil⁷ (Fiechter, pp. 73–75). The ultimate aim of this policy, of course, is to advance Brazil to the status of a world power.

In the minds of Brazil's present rulers, the achievement of these economic objectives has been intimately connected with the development of the various apparatuses of government. As expressed in the Programa Estratégico de Desenvolvimento, "the efficiency and productivity of enterprises does not only depend on their own effort and decision, but in great part on the efficiency of the governmental machine and on other conditions which are included in the government's sphere of decision" (Ianni, p. 244). We may summarize the regime's objectives with respect to the state apparatus as follows:

1. General rationalization of bureaucracy, to improve the efficiency of all operations, to reduce unnecessary expenditures on personnel (partial demise of the Estado Cartorial) so that government does not constitute a financial drag on the economy, and to increase the economic resources at the disposal of the state in order to finance investment in state enterprises. Here the state must tread a fine line, deploying sufficient resources for its own sector without unduly reducing those available to the private sector.

2. Centralization of financial and economic decision-making powers at the federal level so that local and state governments are unable to pursue objectives that might conflict with the state's overall strategy; also, insulation of such decision-making power from interference by Congress or the party system.

3. Technification of economic decision-making in the federal government, along with attempts to increase the overall coordination of economic policy in order that development may be planned (such planning, however, not to exceed limits that are generally referred to as "indicative").

4. Development of a wide range of policy instruments to orient and stimulate private production.

What is implied in this set of objectives, when considered in relation to the economic objectives set forth above, is in our view a *mutual organizational adaptation* of the state apparatus and the structure of enterprises in order to make economic decision-making work most efficiently. It implies, in addition, that capital is not marginalized from the decision-making centers of the state but rather that its relations to those centers is to be restructured in a "technocratic" manner. The state, personified by the technocracy, is opened to influence from those economic sectors that can interact with it in a decision-making mode, which is considered modern and efficient and which allows the state to plan for

a longer time span than that to which many Brazilian enterprises have historically been accustomed. However, to the extent that private enterprise is able to meet the technocracy's requirements for entry into the decision-making arena, it is able to deal with the state apparatus on a more and more equal footing. The extent to which that "equality" will be reflected in policy outputs, however, will vary depending on how central a given sector is for the government's overall strategy.

To speak of an equal footing may seem strange to those who have grown accustomed to seeing the Brazilian state's ability to "penetrate" and "control" the private economy as very great. Many writings on the Brazilian economy tend to give the impression that the mere existence of "policy instruments" in the hands of the state implies that the potential powers that those instruments signify will be actually and fully utilized.⁸ As a counterpoint to this view we would argue that the state apparatus and private enterprise stand to one another in a political relation of *mutual dependence*, which places limits upon the real exercise of state power for the purpose of "controlling" the economy. In the present Brazilian context a great deal of the regime's legitimacy and even of the unity of the military elite depends upon the successful performance of the private economy. Within a framework of indicative economic planning, the final investment, production, and employment decisions in that economy remain in the hands of private entrepreneurs. The state will thus be eager to assure that the application of its policy instruments is having the desired stimulative and orienting effects. Such assurance, in our view, is likely to depend upon a fairly close and continual process of mutual consultation and review of policy. As that policymaking and review will depend very strategically on inputs of information and expertise provided by the private party, capital is likely to acquire a significant ability to shape state decisions in its own interests, although staying within the general parameters set by the overall strategy of development.

"CORPORATISM" DIFFERENTIATED

Given the present scarcity of concrete analyses of policymaking in Brazil, the views advanced above must be considered no more than hypotheses. In our view they are broadly consistent with hypotheses advanced by Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1975, pp. 201–9) in his discussion of "bureaucratic rings" (*anéis burocráticos*). The idea of bureaucratic rings was developed by Cardoso to analyze the nexus of interrelations of private economic interests and the state in the context of Brazil's bureaucratic authoritarian political regime, in particular during the period of the Medici government. According to his formulation (which is advanced tentatively, in full cognizance of the difficulties of empirical verification), rings are "circles of information and pressure" linking private entrepreneurs in those particular sectors of capital *favoured* by the Brazilian economic model to the occupants of bureaucratic posts. Cardoso's image of these relationships stresses their intermittent, ad hoc, and particularistic character—and the dominant role of the state actor in each. Thus, bureaucratic rings are not so much considered forms of pressure of civil society upon the state "representing"

class interests as temporary forms of co-optation, often of individual members of the capitalist classes, for the purpose of resolving specific problems of policy. Our hypothesis departs from that of Cardoso in that we suspect that such state/enterprise relations tend to be somewhat more durable and to aggregate and "represent" private interests on a broader (i.e., sectoral) basis, which implies that the state is less dominant in these relations than Cardoso's view would allow. It is difficult to believe, in the absence of sufficient documentation, that economic decision-making would work effectively if based on the kinds of unstable institutional linkages that are signified by the idea of "bureaucratic rings." However, existing studies do not permit one to choose between these alternative formulations, and Cardoso's hypothesis may turn out to be correct.

Some empirical support for the picture that we propose may be found in a prior work by Schmitter (1971, chaps. 8, 12, and 13 *passim*), although it is now out of date. Interviewing various officials in 1965–66, Schmitter found them, especially the younger, more technically trained among them (*tecnicos*), to be quite open to the input of class associations, desirous of accurate information about the conditions and wishes of a given sector of activity, and cognizant of the dependence of coherent policy on the participation of private capital. Unfortunately, and here is where the issue of "corporatism" is most concretely joined, they found the existing syndical entities, especially at the higher levels, ill-equipped to participate in the manner desired; such associations were typically unrepresentative, lacking sufficient coverage of the sectors they were supposed to speak for, technically unprepared to provide the kinds of information needed, oriented towards requesting special favors, and highly immediate in the kinds of demands they put forward. This led Schmitter himself to conclude: "As the decisional process has become increasingly technocratic and sectorial—beginning in the 1950s—this system of corporatist consultation concentrated in the major syndical confederations has become less and less viable" (1971, p. 344).

The trends he saw emerging at that time in the participation of the private sector in decision-making were varied. On the one hand, there was an increasing tendency for technocrats and administrators to bypass the higher level federations to seek consultation with the more specialized associations in the official syndical system. At the same time, and most significantly, there was a trend towards the creation of new *private* associations outside the control of the syndical apparatus, sometimes paralleling it, sometimes cutting across its organizational categories, and generally specialized in character. These private entities mushroomed during the 1960s and gained a significant place in the system of consultative committees, executive groups, etc., organized by the first military government. Often found in the more modern, heavily monopolized, and foreign dominated sectors of the economy, these associations were able to achieve greater coverage of the firms in their sector, aggregate information and opinions more successfully, and take a more aggressive stance vis-à-vis decision makers. Clearly, then, the representational monopoly theoretically granted to the officially controlled bodies was becoming seriously eroded, posing a threat (in Schmitter's own words) to the "basic quid pro quo of corporatism" (1971, p. 345).

In our view it is likely that the emerging trends identified by Schmitter in 1965–66, far from being submerged in a “restoration” of the older corporatist structures, have gathered momentum over the succeeding years. The government’s attempts to promote concentration and to mitigate the distorting effects of inflation via monetary correction are likely to have contributed (at least until recently) to an atmosphere of mutual accommodation between relatively specialized but fairly representative associations of capitalist interest, both within but especially outside of the official syndicates (and in addition at the level of individual firms), and a state apparatus increasingly dominated by technocratic decision making. A recent example of such accommodation is given by Celso Lafer, who notes that in 1974, when government policy shifted to the promotion of import substitution in capital goods, bureaucratic rings were formed within CACEX, the foreign trade department of the Bank of Brazil, which linked its officials to representatives of the major private associations in the machine building, electrical, and heavy-industrial fields (pp. 113–14). The picture that we hypothesize, therefore, is very different from what one would expect if the old corporatist apparatus of the Vargas era were simply *restored*. The present system is likely to be much better structured and more dynamic than the former, and “corporatist” only in a rather differential way; i.e., we suggest that the more central a given sector of activity is to the government’s strategy of development, the *less likely* is its relation to the state to be structured in a corporatist manner.⁹ Conversely, those sectors of capital less strategic to the Brazilian model of development (i.e., “traditional” industrial sectors), those less likely to be able to adapt to the new decision-making requirements imposed by the state apparatus and in any case with less to gain by doing so, will in general continue to be “represented” by the older corporatist structures, if in fact they have any institutional access to decision-making spheres at all.

This does not imply that the state does not possess a certain relative autonomy with respect to capital, but rather that the autonomy it possesses is less and less expressed through corporatist structures. In any case our view is not compatible with the idea of an “exclusive hegemony” reserved to the state in the identification and promotion of national objectives, nor with the image of a bourgeoisie that is either impotent or mute, as the Bonapartist analogy would suggest. Rather, we suggest that the dominant pattern is a rather close, sectoral integration of the most strategic segments of capital with the state, in a technocratic mode that insures the former’s active participation and influence over policy. Above all, the pattern of state/society interaction does not assure equality of access (or lack of it) to the state across classes but is heavily class biased—the representation of the interests of capital does not begin to be matched by that of the working class, whose participation in decision making is much more limited and closely controlled (and “corporatist”) than that of the bourgeoisie.

The state, therefore, is not able (as it was not in France) to protect and develop the economic power of capital without at the same time perpetuating its political influence. That influence is no less real though perhaps less important for being expressed in bureaucratic and technocratic forums rather than through

highly unified autonomous interest group and political party formations (the autonomy of which is easily exaggerated even in liberal-democratic forms of state).¹⁰ The capitalist class, rather than being marginalized politically, makes a definite contribution to the realization of its general interest, although the outlines of that general interest are defined by the directing state elite. The cardinal error of Schmitter in this respect is to conclude that the loss of political influence by a bourgeois class or fractions of it, which was temporary and conjunctural even in the case of France, could become a *permanent* feature of Brazilian politics in the context of rapid capitalist development.

THE "PORTUGALIZATION" OF BRAZIL

Up to this point we have concentrated our fire on Schmitter's analyses of the place of corporatism in contemporary Brazil because that concept is an integral element of his analysis of both Bonapartism and "Portugalization." Our critique of Schmitter's use of the corporatism construct rests upon the specific analyses that we make of the character of the economic model that underpinned the recent "Brazilian miracle" and of its consequences for various fractions of the capitalist class in Brazil (as well as other classes). Schmitter, by contrast, makes no sustained attempt to situate his specific political analysis of the Brazilian regime within any such economic and class context. This, in our opinion, is the principal reason why he is unable to grasp the limitations of the particular analogies that he tried to develop in his paper, and why his thinking about Brazil's recent political evolution suffers from defects of formalism and ahistoricism. However, his misuse of "corporatism" does not exhaust the problems of his political analysis, as we can discover by looking more closely at the idea of Portugalization.

At this point, criticism of Schmitter's formulations becomes somewhat tricky, for in truth he does not believe that a complete process of *political* Portugalization has occurred in Brazil, despite the postulated restoration of corporatist structures and the increased centralization and penetrative capacity of the state. Schmitter offers several reasons for this incompleteness, the most important of which is the specific place that he sees being occupied by the military elite per se within the Brazilian state. In making his analyses of the military's particular role, Schmitter explicitly contrasts the situation of Brazil with that of a hypothetically *stable* authoritarian regime, which in his view typically contains "a centrally manipulated balance between more or less equal institutional hierarchies" or corporations, of which the military is only one (1973, p. 219). Were the Brazilian military willing to accept a position of equality with other institutions such as the Church, the civil service, and "business"—and Schmitter clearly indicates that he thinks this is possible—the argument implies that the regime as a whole would become more stable and a major step toward complete Portugalization would be taken. As it is, the military insists on retaining a completely hegemonic role within the state, with the result that "subordinate actors do not know where decisions originate, how they are elaborated, or what the bounds

of permissible demand articulation are" (1973, p. 225). For this reason, relations between state and civil society in Brazil are supposedly characterized by such a high degree of unpredictability that it becomes difficult for the state to find an effective formula for legitimating itself.

In our view, this analysis presents a number of problems, even though Schmitter is clearly correct in arguing that the military in Brazil is not just another institutional pillar in a stabilized, corporative political order. In the first instance—and this derives from our previous arguments—the degree of hegemony exercised by the military in the identification and promotion of "national objectives" is clearly exaggerated. Schmitter simply gives insufficient weight to the role played by civilian technocrats, bureaucrats, and "business" in the formulation of these economic policies, which are the main instruments for promoting national objectives and even of specifying what is the real content of such objectives. The second and more important problem, however, is Schmitter's reasoning about why that supposedly excessive hegemony exists. Although he does not undertake to account for it fully, the focus of his implicit explanation is the content of the doctrine of national security (*segurança nacional*) elaborated by the military intellectuals of Brazil's War College. That doctrine is said to *assign* to the military their hegemonic role in the state as a whole. Here again we feel Schmitter misinterprets the situation—neither the doctrine of national security nor the practice of the War College has worked to exclude civilian participation in the promotion of Brazil's national objectives; quite the contrary, analyses such as that of Alfred Stepan have clearly demonstrated the consistent desire of the military since the 1950s to expressly include civilians in that effort. To ignore evidence such as this only serves to exaggerate the importance of the purely military element beyond the point of credibility.

Despite these criticisms, we must still agree with Schmitter on the basic fact—the place of the military institution within the Brazilian state goes well beyond the role that would be allotted to it in a truly Portuguese-style regime. However, rather than searching for the explanation on the purely ideological plane (the doctrine of national security), we search for it in the political logic of the economic model followed by the Brazilian regime over the period in question. Our view, although it cannot be spelled out in detail here, is that the costs imposed by that model, in terms of the immediate economic interests of *some sectors* of the traditional Brazilian elites, part of the bureaucratic middle class, and the great bulk of the lower classes, made it impossible for the Brazilian military to coexist peacefully with the kind of organized corporations that Schmitter views as integral parts of a stable system of authoritarian domination. Put another way, it is precisely because the Brazilian model did not correspond to a *socioeconomic* Portugalization that a complete *political* Portugalization was impossible. This should not be understood in an overly structuralist sense. Obviously the Brazilian miracle did not come about because the abstract requirements of a particular model of capital accumulation imposed themselves upon the political sphere by means of some vaguely conceived historical necessity; rather, a complex process of political class struggle had to take place before the Brazilian

political model could be consolidated. It is nonetheless true that the end result of that process was to adapt the state to the fundamental economic necessities of Brazil's associated-dependent development.

This way of analyzing the relation between state and society under the Brazilian military regime suggests a different perspective for viewing the unpredictability and illegitimacy that continue to characterize the political situation in Brazil. Everyone recognizes that there have been strong elements of arbitrariness within that situation, especially in regard to the behavior of the security forces of the state. We feel, however, that beneath the surface of unpredictability there was always a fundamental regularity (supplied by the very outlines of the state's economic project) that makes it difficult to accept that "subordinate actors do not know where decisions originate, how they are elaborated, or what the bounds of permissible demand articulation are." In our view, the nonconformity manifested periodically by various of these so-called subordinate actors is due not to any ignorance about the boundaries within which real power lies in Brazil or about the boundaries for the articulation of their own particular interests, but to the simple fact that they find those boundaries unacceptable. And if the present events in Brazil (June 1977) are any indication, they are finding those boundaries more and more unacceptable with the passage of time. It is this fundamental economic and political reality, and not the ideology of national security, that has always been at the root of the legitimacy problem of the Brazilian military regime.

CONCLUSION

While rejecting the concepts of Bonapartism, corporatism, and Portugalization as elaborated by Philippe Schmitter, the authors admit that they cannot as yet give a developed account of the relations between the state and social classes in present-day Brazil. By way of conclusion we will limit ourselves to making a few additional points of a general nature and then sum up our principal criticisms of Schmitter.

At the most global level of abstraction, we would say that the Brazilian state today is a capitalist one of a bureaucratic, technocratic, and military-authoritarian variety, and a state which possesses considerable *relative* autonomy vis-à-vis civil society. Following Cardoso, we might argue that it expresses a "pact of domination" (1975, p. 215) composed of an alliance of functionaries, state bourgeoisie, large private enterprises, and sectors of the new middle classes. That pact of domination aims to realize not the *common* interest of capital in Brazil, in the sense of a least common denominator reached by prior agreement of all the fractions involved, but a general interest of Brazilian capitalism whose outlines have been defined by the military-technocratic elite. This elite has taken the lead in structuring the pact by subordinating the interests of some fractions to others and reorganizing the state apparatus to serve the goal of rapid capitalist development.¹¹ Needless to say, this "general interest" was not formulated in a political vacuum, but rather in collaboration with various segments of civil society, including business, over a long period of time prior to 1964, e.g., through

discussions in the *Escola Superior de Guerra* (Stepan, pp. 172–87). The specifics of that interest have continued to be defined and fought over as the present regime has developed.

It is in the context of the attempt to realize this general interest that we would understand the “authoritarianism” of the Brazilian state today. Although the Brazilian state bears many structural resemblances to present and past authoritarian regimes, the content of the goals it is trying to reach is unusually progressive and modernizing from a capitalist point of view. The regime’s commitment to authoritarian forms of government, therefore, should not be seen simply, or perhaps even primarily, in terms of an abstract doctrinal commitment to authoritarian rule as such, especially insofar as that commitment implies a desire to preserve the privileges and hierarchies of a traditional social structure (as would be the case with a real “Portugalization”). Rather, the authoritarian features of the state are looked upon as necessary instruments to promote modernization over time, in which the benefits of growth will eventually be extended to all and in which a considerable amount of individual social mobility will occur (promoted by a heavy stress on education, especially adult education through the MOBRAF).

A statement that is particularly instructive in this regard was made by Roberto Campos in reference to the 1967 Constitution: “The strengthening of the executive, judged by many a sterile exhibition of authoritarianism, responded at base to a realistic exigency already perceived and admitted by modern parliaments. Administrative technification, the necessity for central planning, and the rapidity of the solutions required have made inevitable the displacement of a good part of the legislative initiative towards the executive” (Ianni, p. 245). In Campos’ mind, as we can observe, a close connection existed between the requirements of rapid capitalist development and an increase in centralized authority. His commitment to strong executive power was clearly pragmatic, utilitarian, and contingent (Campos subsequently criticized what he felt were excesses of authoritarianism in succeeding governments).¹² It is not clear, despite the existence within the military of a strong fraction who are committed ideologically to an authoritarian world view, that the majority of high-ranking military at any given moment have ever considered themselves pledged to authoritarian rule as a permanent form of political domination. In any case, it is clearly not true, as implied by Schmitter, that the authoritarian line had established its dominance in Brazil with the advent of the Medici regime. Had this been the case, the transition to the more “liberal” Geisel regime in 1974 would be incomprehensible.¹³

In summing up our critique of Schmitter’s position we would like to stress the following specific points:

1. Schmitter’s use of the Bonapartism concept, because it fails to take adequate account of the Brazilian regime’s class basis, reaches a false conclusion as to the political role of capital in the Brazilian state. In particular, he errs in believing that the temporary political marginalization of the bourgeoisie that is implied by that concept could become a permanent feature of a capitalist state, in Brazil or anywhere else.

2. As a consequence of the above, Schmitter's formulations exaggerate the *degree* of autonomy possessed by the state in relation to the capitalist class in Brazil, virtually to the point where the state ceases to have a class character at all. That exaggeration is bolstered by his one-sided analysis of the specific role of the military in that state. The essentially capitalist nature of the Brazilian state is thereby obscured.

3. Moreover, Schmitter also mistakes the *form* that relative autonomy currently takes by emphasizing the restoration of "corporatist" forms of interest organization, forms which we believe are becoming increasingly outdated in Brazil especially insofar as the bourgeoisie is concerned, although in a rationalized form they continue to serve as vehicles for controlling the working class.

4. The concept of Portugalization, used in a socioeconomic sense, is inadequate to encompass the social transformations that the Brazilian military regime desires to promote and has promoted, as a careful examination of the Brazilian economic model would have revealed. The military elite is committed to creating an advanced capitalist society in Brazil, not to preserving the traditional privileges of backward strata that were dear to the heart of Salazar.

5. Finally, Schmitter's analysis of political Portugalization is misleading about the extent to which that process has occurred (because it rests upon the erroneous judgments about corporatism already mentioned) and because it suggests that such a process could be completed in Brazil. On the contrary, we argue that the narrow class basis on which the military regime rests all but precludes the possibility of constructing a more Portuguese-like state in Brazil today.

In our view, Schmitter's errors are the result of an ahistorical use of basic political concepts, whether those concepts are drawn from Marxism (Bonapartism) or other sources (corporatism). That ahistoricism rests upon the isolation of the political sphere from the sphere of economy and class structure. Such isolation is the fundamental precondition for the more proximate error of method implied by the term "ahistorical" as used in this paper; viz., a superficial, often formalistic identification of similarities among political phenomena of widely varying periods that turn out, upon closer analysis, to disguise more fundamental differences in the way political structures work—precisely because such differences depend vitally on the class context in which such structures are set (France, Portugal, Brazil in the 1930s, Brazil today). Our basic contention is that such a procedure does not advance the understanding of Brazil's present authoritarian state or of any other form of state. We hope, however, that our purely critical effort may contribute to the clarification of some of the fundamental features of that state and of Brazilian political economy as a whole.

NOTES

1. Prior to the work by Schmitter analyzed here, the most interesting attempts to utilize the concept of Bonapartism in treating recent Brazilian history have applied it to the presidency of Janio Quadros. The most sustained of these attempts is probably that of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos (pp. 37–45). In his work, Ramos introduced the idea of Bonapartism as a situation in which a government places itself above political society, considering itself free of partisan ties and making a direct appeal to the mass of the

- people, and thereby transforms social classes into supplicants of the state. It is evident that such an undifferentiated view of Bonapartist politics shares much of the class-mystifying bias of Schmitter's application of the same notion to the military regime (this is discussed below). Nevertheless, Ramos had some important things to say about how the "crisis of representativeness" of Brazilian political parties in the 1950s had opened the door for a Bonapartist solution and also had the prescience to realize that such a solution would not succeed in Brazil. A similar viewpoint on the Quadros period is developed, though less fully, by Hélio Jaguaribe (pp. 224–25).
2. This problem is one of the potential pitfalls involved in making too radical a theoretical separation between "civil society" and the "state." On this question, and on the ambiguities inherent in the notion of hegemony that comes from Gramsci, the authors found useful the discussion by Nicos Poulantzas (pp. 136–51), although we do not agree with it in all respects.
 3. In a more recent paper, which undertakes an exhaustive and careful review of the concept of corporatism, Schmitter (1974, pp. 85–131) explicitly recognizes the real class bias of most structures of corporatist interest representation. He writes that "detailed analyses have not only revealed the fictitious physical existence of many of these sonorous organizations and their marginal influence over public policy, but have also unmasked their pretence of class symmetry and equality of access." A recognition of this bias in the specific case of Brazil also appeared in Schmitter's earlier book (1971, p. 332). Its absence in the paper under review is therefore all the more striking and hence serves as one of the principal foci of our criticism.
 4. The following reconstruction of the basic features of the Brazilian economic model and associated changes in the structure of the state apparatus has been greatly influenced by the work of Cardoso (1973, 1975) and Ianni.
 5. The rationale for this order of priority cannot be given in the present paper. It will form part of the subject matter of a separate work on the modern Brazilian state, which the authors hope to publish.
 6. Since 1974, in our opinion, complex political and economic changes have been taking place in Brazil that have called this order of priority into question without creating a new one to take its place. We hope to deal with these changes in detail in our future work.
 7. More recently, reflecting the growing prominence of state corporations in Brazil, the controversy over denationalization has been supplemented by and intertwined with criticism of "statization" (*estatização*). A major voice in this debate has been that of J. C. de Macedo Soares Guimarães, who recently propounded a program of destatization in *Jornal do Brasil* (6 Feb. 1976).
 8. A useful summary of the main economic policy instruments developed by the Brazilian state since 1964 is contained in Celso Lafer (pp. 82–100). This interesting work, meritorious in many respects, is nevertheless not exempt from the same criticism. A very different view of this particular question is contained in the article by Peter Evans. To our minds, Evans tends in the opposite direction of underestimating the frictions caused by "government regulation" in Brazil, by the growth of the state's productive sectors, and by the subordination of domestic Brazilian capital to other fractions of the dominant class.
 9. This differential pattern may or may not be reflected in the raw figures cited by Schmitter (1973, p. 208) to demonstrate the increased coverage of corporatist interest associations in Brazil since 1964. In any case, even assuming such new associations do not exist merely on paper, it is not at all clear that such uninterpreted data indicate a restoration (with some expansion) of a Vargas-style corporate system.
 10. Schmitter's more recent paper also has the merit of dealing with this question of the relation of interest groups to the state in modern liberal democracies, and in particular of suggesting that one might also find in those states a kind of "corporatism" whose genesis is very different from that which is encountered in authoritarian capitalist regimes.
 11. Our discussion here should not be taken to imply a self-consciously "capitalist" orientation on the part of the military elite per se. The question of the military re-

- gime's ideological self-representations is treated in a recent Master's thesis written in Brazil (Oliveira).
12. An example of such criticism, which also offers a plan for a carefully controlled political decompression, is contained in an essay entitled "The Brazilian Political Option" by Campos (Simonsen and Campos, pp. 223–57).
 13. A view of the process of transition to the Geisel regime, in which War Minister Orlando Geisel apparently played the key role, can be found in a recent book by Brazilian journalist Fernando Pedreira (pp. 273–90).

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