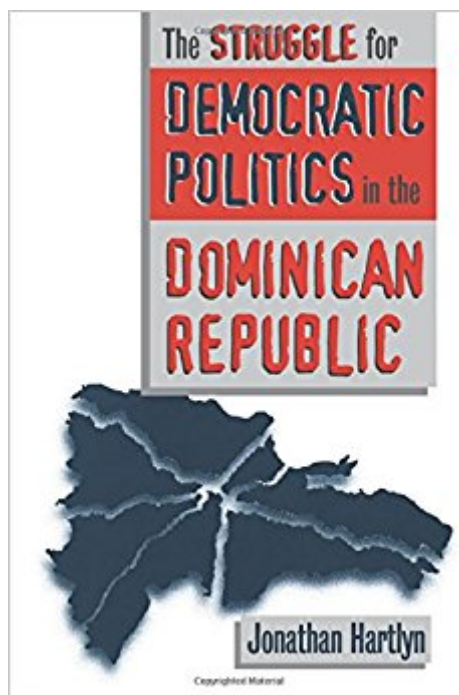




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# The Struggle For Democratic Politics In The Dominican Republic (H. Eugene And Lillian Youngs Lehman Series)



## Synopsis

Over the past several decades, the Dominican Republic has experienced striking political stagnation in spite of dramatic socioeconomic transformations. In this work, Jonathan Hartlyn offers a new explanation for the country's political evolution, based on a broad comparative perspective. Hartlyn rejects cultural explanations unduly focused on legacies from the Spanish colonial era and structural explanations excessively centered on the lack of national autonomy. Instead, he highlights the independent impact of political and institutional factors and historical legacies, while also considering changes in Dominican society and the influence of the United States and other international forces. In particular, Hartlyn examines how the Dominican Republic's tragic nineteenth-century history established a legacy of neopatrimonialism, a form of rule that found extreme expression in the brutal dictator Rafael Trujillo and has continued to shape politics down to the present. By examining economic policymaking and often conflictual elections, Hartlyn also analyzes the missed opportunity for democracy during the rule of the Dominican Revolutionary Party and the democratic tensions of the administrations of Joaquin Balaguer.

## Book Information

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A colorful and insightful portrait of Dominican politics."Choice"The definitive study of Dominican politics."American Political Science Review"[W]ell written and welcome for the way in which it deals with the complex nature of Dominican political history."E.I.A.L.""An exhaustive record of recent

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Informative and theoretically rich . . . the book is well written and welcome for the way in which it deals with the complex nature of Dominican political history, and will provide a useful tool in understanding both Dominican politics and the importance that political-institutional factors have on regime transitions.--E.I.A.L.This is a well-written, informative, and theoretically sound book that will become an indispensable source for anyone interested in understanding Dominican politics. It is a compelling account of the obstacles and opportunities for democratic consolidation in the post-Trujillo period.--Rosario Espinal, Temple UniversityOne of the most insightful works available on Dominican politics in comparative perspective. The author brings an informed theoretical acumen to bear on the sometimes complex Dominican case. In addition, his skillful use of comparisons with other Latin American societies moves this study well beyond the limitations of one country's political experience.--Christopher Mitchell, New York UniversityThe definitive study of Dominican politics."American Political Science ReviewFascinating reading for anyone interested in Latin American political development in the late twentieth century.--European Review of Latin American and Caribbean StudiesAn exhaustive record of recent Dominican politics, characterized by incisive analyses and direct prose.--Journal of International Studies and World AffairsA colorful and insightful portrait of Dominican politics.--Choice

Jonathan Hartlyn's, *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* ("DR") explains the advancement of democratic politics in the Dominican Republic, with a particular emphasis on the period after 1961. To establish a historical context for his analysis he has surveyed the Country's political history up to 1961 (pp.22-59). He believes that the bitter struggle for democracy in the Dominican Republic was frustrated by a mixture of historical circumstances and political-institutional pre-conditions, further intertwined by what he calls neo-patrimonialism. He stated that: "It is the interaction of forces and individuals, mediated by institutions and their failure or limited success in establishing new institutions and patterns of behaviors at critical junctures that have marked either the reinforcement of authoritarian and neopatrimonial patterns or the limited success of democracy

in the country."Hartlyn sees no evil in the crisis ridden elite led democracy in the DR.He therefore confidently quoted O'Donnell's and Schmitter's argument (p.63) and extensive literature that favors untrustworthy elite- led transition from above that is non-revolutionary rather than transition from below. Hartlyn's democracy is one that entails some superficial political contestation, inclusiveness and the rule of law (p. 10).Such a system,as Francis Lappe (1998) found out, merely shifts power from one set of unreliable elites to another who are truly not democratic in governance, accountable only to a small influential minority within the population.

Para mÃ- que he seguido con pasiÃ n el desarrollo social y polÃ- tico de la RepÃºblica Dominicana durante la Ãºltima dÃ©cada, el libro de Jonathan Hartlyn es como una especie de bÃ¡lsamo dentro la abundante y desigual historiografÃ- a sobre este tema. Armado de un marco conceptual novedoso y una excelente investigaciÃ n de primera mano, la obra de Hartlyn analiza las causas de la continÃºa crisis del sistema democrÃ¡tico en Santo Domingo, despuÃ©s de la muerte de Trujillo en 1961. El autor reta las principales interpretaciones (especialmente la escuela de la dependencia) que explican el surgimiento de caudillos, dictadores y lÃ- deres autoritarios en la historia de la Isla, motivado Ãºnicamente por la debilidad del estado y el imperialismo norteamericano.El proceso polÃ- tico dominicano, propone Hartlyn, tiene que entenderse como una interracciÃ n de los diferentes sectores sociales con las fuerzas de poder interna y externa: sin que una opaque la otra. Durante los Ãºltimos 40 aÃ os, los electores han tenido, seÃ ala el autor, que debatirse entre las prÃ¡cticas autoritarias (de tipo neopatrimonial), encarnadas en la figura de JoaquÃ- n Balaguer, y en los intentos (fallidos) de los dos gobiernos del Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) por alejarse de esa posiciÃ n antidemocrÃ¡tica. Los doce aÃ os de Balaguer (1966-78), productos del golpe de Estado al gobierno de Juan Bosch en 1963 y la eventual intervenciÃ n de tropas norteamericanas en 1965, son vistos por Hartlyn como parte de la transiciÃ n de la dictadura trujillista (calificada de neosultÃ¡nica) a un rÃ©gimen de caracterÃ- sticas neopatrimoniales. DefiniciÃ n que el autor utiliza a lo largo de su libro para describir al "gobernante que maneja al paÃ- s como sÃ- fuera una extensiÃ n de su hogar"[la traducciÃ n es mÃ- a, p.3] No obstante, en el Ãºltimo perÃ- odo del gobierno de Balaguer (1974-78) las condiciones -tanto nacionales como internacionales- que propiciaron inicialmente el fortalecimiento del estado neopatrimonial fueron declinando. En poco tiempo, fenÃ menos como la movilizaciÃ n del campo a la ciudad, la emigraciÃ n y el urbanismo permitiÃ , explica Hardlyn, una mayor independencia de los nuevos sectores econÃ micos con relaciÃ n al estado. De esta forma, los grupos en lucha fueron canalizando sus intereses y necesidades en estructuras polÃ- ticas, en este caso el PRD, mÃ¡s

abiertas a los cambios de poder. La victoria electoral del PRD en 1978 fue, arguye el autor, la oportunidad perfecta para abandonar el neopatrimonialismo y consolidar el proceso democrático en la República Dominicana. Durante los ocho años de administración perredeísta (1978-84), ni Antonio Guzmán ni Salvador Jorge Blanco fueron capaces de eliminar los elementos neopatrimoniales legados de los doce años de Balaguer. Según Hardlyn, estancados los proyectos sociales y las reformas institucionales, Guzmán y Jorge Blanco optaron por prácticas neopatrimoniales para lidiar con la inflación y la paralización de la economía, afectando su popularidad rápidamente; unido al crecimiento de la corrupción y la lucha intrapartido, los líderes de PRD crearon, de acuerdo con el autor, las bases para la vuelta nuevamente de Balaguer en la década de los ochenta. Dentro de un marco social y económico distinto en 1986, Balaguer modificó el carácter neopatrimonial de su régimen, ajustándolo a las nuevas realidades de la política mundial. Ante las exigencias de Estados Unidos y los organismos internacionales financieros y diplomáticos (el Banco Mundial, el Fondo Monetario Internacional y la Organización de Estados Americanos), Balaguer orientó, afirma Hardlyn, las funciones neopatrimoniales del estado en dirección hacia las zonas francas, el turismo y la tecnología como nuevas fuerzas de producción y acumulación de capital. Además de utilizar los recursos del Estado para mantenerse en el poder a cualquier costo; afectándose, de este modo, la credibilidad y la confianza de las instituciones en el proceso democrático. La constante del proceso electoral, tanto en las elecciones del 1990 como las 1994, fue las reiteradas denuncias sobre fraude en ambos comicios para beneficiar la candidatura de Balaguer, alega el autor. Sin embargo, la crisis poseleccionaria del 1994 puso sobre el tapete la intolerancia hacia las prácticas neopatrimoniales, provocando un ajuste en el propio proceso electoral a través de enmiendas a la constitución. Por primera vez desde 1966, ni Balaguer ni Bosch corrieron como candidatos presidenciales, siendo electo en esta ocasión el joven Leonel Fernández, aspirante por el Partido de la Liberación Dominicana, agrupación política fundada por el propio Bosch en 1973. Para Hardlyn la victoria de Fernández, aunque ensombrecida por la alianza con el Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC) de Balaguer, mantiene la esperanza de un mayor fortalecimiento de la sociedad civil, en pro de un estado constitucional permanente y democrático. Esta es la agenda que los nuevos sucesores, a juicio del autor, tienen que asegurar. Finalmente, el libro de Hardlyn es lectura obligada para repensar el difícil y complejo proceso democrático en la República Dominicana. A tono con las nuevas discusiones teóricas en el campo de las Ciencias Sociales, la obra llena con éxito las expectativas sobre el tema, como uno de los modelos que la historiografía política dominicana debe, a mi entender, emular o superar.

This volume is by far the best English language analysis of Dominican politics to appear in the last decade. Hartlyn's extensive in-country experience and theoretical understanding of politics in developing democracies make this a premier case study. While his sophisticated analysis of neo-patrimonial vs neo-sultanistic regimes will be beyond the vocabulary of casual readers, it will delight professional political scientists. His critique of conservative as well as liberal administrations since Trujillo is even handed and insightful. What he omits in terms of comprehensive economic trends and pressures, he more than makes up for in terms of detailed interest group maneuvering and inter-party fights. His analysis of the influence of US policies vis a vis the Dominican Republic during the last century is equally insightful.

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