

Readings and Notes for Governance of Latin America (SS6CG1)

SS6CG1: Compare & contrast various forms of government

SS6CG1a: Explain citizen participation in autocratic and democratic governments. [i.e., the role of citizens in choosing the leaders of Mexico (presidential democracy), Cuba (autocratic), and Brazil (presidential democracy)].

In world governments, the roles of citizens can be classified within 2 types of government: autocratic & democratic. In an autocracy, power & authority is given to a single leader. The citizens of autocratic governments have no say in what goes on in politics. In contrast, in a democracy, citizens have lots of political power. This is exercised through voting.

Mexico & Brazil have democratic governments. Both countries hold elections where citizens elect leaders who they feel will best represent their interests & pass fair laws. There are many political parties for citizens & leaders to choose from. Citizens of both countries also elect the president who is expected to enforce the laws & represent their nation. In Mexico, presidents serve 6-year terms & in Brazil, they can serve 2 4-year terms. The voting age varies in both countries. It is 18 in Mexico & 16 in Brazil.

Cuba is a Latin American country that is an autocracy. Cubans can vote for leaders at 16, but this is meaningless because there is only one political party, The Cuban Communist Party. There is no true representation of the people in Cuba. The president is appointed by the Communist party. The current president, Raul Castro, was hand chosen by his brother, Fidel Castro. A Castro has ruled in Cuba since 1959.

Vocabulary:

- **Autocratic:** a government where political authority rests with a single leader
- **Democratic:** a government where political authority rests with a nation's citizens
- **Political party:** an organization which represents a specific political agenda and socioeconomic positions within a given nation

- Most world governments are _____ or _____
- _____: power is held by a _____ leader
- _____: citizens have _____ say in government
- _____: citizens have _____ of power
- In a _____, power is exercised through _____.
- _____ & _____ are democratic countries in Latin America
- _____ are held to place good leaders in office
- _____ vote for leaders in a _____, including the _____ who enforces the laws & is to represent the nation
- Cuba has an _____.
- The only political party in Cuba is the _____.
- Citizens have no true _____ or voice in Cuba's government.
- The current president of Cuba is _____.

SS6CG1b: Describe the two predominant forms of democratic governments: parliamentary and presidential.

There are 2 types of democracies: parliamentary and presidential. In a parliamentary democracy, citizens elect members of the legislature or parliament to represent their interests and pass laws. Elected members of the legislature then elect the nation's chief executive or prime minister. This leader is always a member of the nation's leading political party. In a presidential democracy, citizens elect the nation's legislators and chief executive or president. Mexico & Brazil are presidential democracies.

- 2 types of democracies: _____ and _____
- In a _____ democracy, citizens elect members of the _____ or parliament.
- Members of parliament then elect the nation's _____, called a _____.
- In a _____ democracy, citizens elect members of the _____ and the _____, called a _____.
- _____ and _____ are _____ democracies.

Vocabulary:

- **Parliament:** common name given to the legislature in a parliamentary democracy
- **President:** title often given to the head of government (and state) in a presidential democracy
- **Prime minister:** title often given to the head of government in a parliamentary democracy

SS6H1c. Explain the impact of the Cuban Revolution and describe the current relationship between Cuba and the United States.

Prior to 1959, Cuba was a relatively American-friendly nation. The island had suffered under the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista since 1952. However, U.S. investment on the island was booming – particularly with regard to the sugar industry.

All of this changed on January 1, 1959 when Fidel Castro seized power and declared the island a communist state. All American owned property on the island was declared the property of the state. Also, all Cuban-owned private businesses, factories, and farmland were taken by the government. Basic personal freedoms of expression were suspended. Media outlets were shutdown. Even churches were closed and their property seized.

In response to Castro's takeover, the U.S. placed an economic embargo on Cuba, which blocked the island's sugar exports to American markets. The Soviet Union became fast friends with the new Cuban leadership. The U.S.S.R. agreed to purchase its sugarcane as well as provide the Castro regime with weapons and military training.

Although the Castro regime did provide improvements to education and healthcare, civil rights on the island were severely restricted. Having a communist state situated 90 miles from America did not sit well with the U.S. government.

During the Cold War, the Cuban government agreed to allow the U.S.S.R. to build a missile launching complex on the island and store a substantial amount of intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles there. This was discovered by U.S. intelligence in 1962, sparking a thirteen-day standoff known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev argued that the placement of missiles in Cuba was due to the presence of American Jupiter missiles in Italy and Turkey. The Soviet government also claimed the move was in response to the failed American-backed coup against Fidel Castro at the Bay of Pigs one year earlier.

Although the Kennedy administration diffused the situation through diplomatic means, the Cuban Missile Crisis was arguably the closest the world had ever come to a Third World War.

U.S.-Cuban relations remained tense for the next half-century. Only recently have diplomatic relations been normalized between the United States and Cuba. Each nation reopened its embassy in the other's capital in July 2015. The U.S. eased trade restrictions on Cuba in January 2016. Two months later, Barack Obama became the first U.S. president to visit Cuba in 88 years. In addition, the decades-old American policy of permitting Cubans to immigrate to the U.S. without a visa was suspended as of January 2017.

- Cuba was friendly with _____
- Suffered under _____
- U.S. investment _____

- Fidel Castro took power and made it _____
- All property taken by _____
- Personal freedoms _____

- U.S. placed _____ on Cuba
- U.S.S.R. agreed to purchase its _____
- Also provided Cuba _____ and military training

- Castro provided _____ to education and healthcare
- Civil rights were severely _____
- U.S. government did not like having a _____ state so close

- Cuba allowed U.S.S.R. to build a _____ launching complex
- This sparked a 13 day standoff known as the _____

- Soviets argued placement of missiles in Cuba was due to _____ missiles in Italy and Turkey
- Soviets claimed was due to failed _____ at the Bay of Pigs

- Cuban Missile Crisis was closest we came to a Third _____

- U.S.-Cuban relations remained _____
- Each nation reopened its _____
- U.S. eased _____ restrictions
- Permitting Cubans to _____ to U.S. without a visa was suspended

Vocabulary:

- Batista, Fulgencio – former president and later dictator of Cuba prior to the 1959 Cuban Revolution
- Castro, Fidel – former communist dictator of Cuba who led the ouster of Fulgencio Batista in the 1959 Cuban Revolution
- Cold War – sociopolitical, military, and economic conflict between the world's Western capitalist democracies (i.e., Western Europe and the United States) and its Eastern communist regimes (i.e., the USSR and China) from the end of World War II through 1991
- communist – an economic system wherein private ownership is largely forbidden and all industries and resources are under the control of the state
- coup – the act of overthrowing an existing governing authority
- Cuban Missile Crisis – 1962 Cold War event wherein the Soviet Union, with the agreement of the Castro regime, placed intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles on the island of Cuba which were capable of striking the United States
- embargo – economic policy which blocks all trade with a given nation, typically due to safety and/or humanitarian concerns; embargoes are also enacted to sanction enemy nations
- Kennedy, John F. – president of the United States at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Khrushchev, Nikita – leader of the Soviet Union at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Soviet Union – abridged name used to describe the former communist government of Russia during Cold War; also known as the U.S.S.R.

SS6H1d. Explain the impact of poverty, the war on drugs, and migration to the United States on Latin America.

There are several prevailing socioeconomic issues which affect Latin Americans. These same issues have also had a dramatic impact on the development – or the underdevelopment – of the region.

Rampant poverty is a major concern throughout Latin America as a whole. Even in the case of Brazil, who is a BRICS nation and one of the region's fastest growing economies, the level of rural poverty is over 50%. In a region of nearly 650 million people, one in five lives in long-lasting poverty. This is due largely to a lack of high-quality, high-skill employment opportunities and inadequate investment in education. Over half of 15-year-olds in Latin America are illiterate; math and science scores across the region are especially low. Such statistics make it easy to understand why the region is struggling economically.

Most of Latin America was once dubbed the "Third World". However, since the end of the Cold War, the term "developing nation" is more commonly used to describe this region.

The war on drugs throughout Latin America is another issue discouraging development. Cocaine production is most pronounced in the Andean region of South America (i.e., Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia). Central America and Mexico serve as the corridor through which the drugs are funneled into the United States. U.S.-backed efforts to inhibit regional drug trafficking have only been slightly successful. This is due in large part to government involvement with the various drug cartels of the region. Civilian casualties in Latin America associated with narco-terrorism number in the tens of thousands.

Between the war on drugs and the general lack of economic opportunities in the region, many Latinos have immigrated to the United States in search of safer living conditions and staple work environments. This pattern of mass migration to the U.S. has occurred both through legal naturalization as well as illegal immigration via the nearly 2,000-mile long U.S.-Mexico border. Government corruption, minimal job and education opportunities, and narcotics-driven gang violence have contributed to a record surge in unaccompanied minors entering the U.S. since 2011. Latinos at present make up the largest minority group in the United States.

- Socioeconomic issues have had a dramatic impact on the _____
- _____ is a major concern
- Due largely to lack of _____ opportunities and inadequate _____
- Over half of 15-year-olds in Latin America are _____
- Most of Latin America was once dubbed the _____
- Now the term _____ is used
- The war on drugs is another issue discouraging _____
- Central America and Mexico funnel _____ into the U.S.
- Efforts to slow drug trafficking have not been _____
- This is due to government involvement with drug _____
- Civilian casualties with drugs are in the tens of _____
- Many Latinos have _____ to the U.S.
- This has occurred both through _____ and _____ immigration
- Government corruption, job and education opportunities, and narcotics-driven gang violence contributed to a surge in unaccompanied _____ entering the U.S.
- Latinos make up the largest _____ group in the U.S.

Vocabulary:

- Andean – geographic term for countries located along the Andes mountain range of South America
- BRICS – political science term used for the world's five fastest-growing economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- cartel – a group which dominates the trade of a specific product or service
- Cold War – period of time, from the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, characterized by frequent military and diplomatic rows between the United States and U.S.S.R.
- emigrate – to relocate to a new country for the purpose of employment
- Latino – general term for those with Latin American ancestry from a Spanish-speaking country
- narco-terrorism – violent extremism associated with the illegal drug trade, particularly as relates to cocaine or heroin
- naturalization – the process by which a citizen of one country may become a legal citizen of another country
- rural – an area that is largely countryside; this is in contrast to an urban (i.e., city) area
- trafficking – the illegal smuggling of people or products (especially drugs or weapons)