

Research on Latin America's "Velvet Coup" from the perspective of power structure*

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Abstract: The new types of military coups that have emerged since the 21st century have become a major challenge on the development path of Latin America. These coups have the characteristics of less violent color, military personnel participating in the coup but not governing, left-wing governments being overthrown by right-wing forces, and easy recurrence. This article will It was named "Velvet Coup". Combining the cases of Venezuela, Honduras and Bolivia, this article uses the power structure development theory to analyze the root causes of the "Velvet Coup": With the rise of the power status of left-wing forces, the equalization of power structure caused the national development model to change from exclusion to exclusion. The transformation from a military coup to an inclusive one seriously threatens the vested interests of the right-wing oligarchic group, leading the group to violently subvert the left-wing government. Due to the decline of the military group's power status, the nature and form of military coups have undergone major changes, and the traditional political-driven transformation has Economically driven, the "Velvet Coup" appeared on the historical stage as a new type of military coup, and had a major impact: the left-wing government's exploration of radical development models was restricted, and the United States made strategic mistakes in its policies towards these coups, which led to its own country's interests and international image are damaged. In the next ten years, Latin America is likely to see more "velvet coups" surrounding disputes over development models and interests. China needs to formulate corresponding strategies to properly deal with the impact of such coups on China and Latin America. The impact of the "Belt and Road" construction.

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Since the third wave of democratization, along with changes in the international environment, military coups in developing countries have significantly decreased. Some scholars, including Huntington, have made optimistic predictions: "The threat of coups to democracy and political security will become increasingly severe. "It's getting smaller and smaller". However, the development of events in recent years has been contrary to expectations. Military coups in the Third World still occur from time to time. In addition to dozens of coups in sub-Saharan Africa, in Asia, Pakistan (1999), Thailand (Military coups have also occurred in countries such as Myanmar (2006, 2014) and Myanmar (2021). Coups in Latin America are not extinct. Following the coup in Haiti (1990), the coup in Peru (1992) and the coup in Venezuela (1992) Since the 21st century, there has been a trend of military coups in Latin America. Coups have occurred in Venezuela (2002), Honduras (2009), and Bolivia (2019). The last three coups are obviously different from traditional types of military coups and have some common features. The new characteristics of the coup represent a new coup model, which has had a profound impact on the political stability and development paths of these countries. Its essence, characteristics, roots and impact are worthy of in-depth study.

A review of previous research and new theoretical approaches

Regarding the new type of military coup in Latin America, academic circles at home and abroad have not yet carried out systematic research. The three traditional theoretical approaches to explain the coup problem, namely economic development determinism, new institutionalism and elite radicalism

theory, also have their own limitations. At present, domestic academic research on such coups is still limited to the analysis of single cases, and they have not yet been studied as a new type of political security issues. International academic research on this phenomenon has just begun. Barry Cannon (Barry Cannon) Cannon proposed the concept of "smart coup" to summarize a series of abnormal regime changes that have occurred in Latin America since the 21st century. He pointed out that the way in which the Latin American right-wing participates in politics is divided into two categories, namely electoral type (Political parties, non-party electoral movements) and non-electoral categories, the latter of which consists of two strategies: coup and lobbying. Smart coup is a subtype of coup strategy. The introduction of this concept is groundbreaking, but there are still several shortcomings. First of all, the connotation and extension of the concept of smart coup are not reasonable. Smart coup includes two types of illegal and legal regime changes, such as the 2012 impeachment case of the President of Paraguay. However, in this article's view, regime change that occurs within the scope of the law is Neither should be included in the category of coup. Secondly, the conceptualization of "smart coup" is not enough.

Samuel Huntington "Reforming Civil – Militar yRelations" in Journal of Vol 4 1995 p 15 In 2010, the

Ecuadorian police force launched an attempted coup against the then President Correa.

As a low-income country, Therefore, it is unconvincing to use economic crisis or per capita income level to explain the emergence of new coups. Another flaw of such theories is that they only use quantitative research to confirm the correlation between low development levels and coups. However, it is impossible to confirm that there is a causal relationship between the two, let alone which is the cause and which is the effect. Regarding the role of economic factors, Guillermo O'Donnell once proposed that a higher level of development will lead to bureaucracy. Authoritarianism and triggering coups. However, this theory is mainly used to explain the traditional military coups that occurred in Latin American countries in the second half of the 20th century. It has insufficient ability to explain new types of coups.

The second type of theory believes that the inherent flaws of the presidential system led to the coup. Juan Linz and others proposed that the presidential system has two structural characteristics, namely dual legitimacy and term rigidity. The former means that both the president and Congress are elected by voters. They are produced and have equal legitimacy. The latter means that the elected president has a fixed term. When the president and Congress conflict, it is difficult for both parties to obtain concessions from the other party, resulting in a long-term political deadlock, prompting the opposition to use illegal and violent means to expel the president. The probability of a coup is higher. The serious partisan differences among Latin American countries make this problem more likely to occur. 3 If we only look at the probability of political deadlock, Linz's criticism of the presidential system has some truth. However, if it is further extended to Linz's conclusion will encounter challenges when it comes to political instability and coups. As Anthony Mughan pointed out, the United States, which also implements a presidential system, has not been troubled by coups. 4 As long as the presidential system remains unchanged, However, the types of coups in Latin America have changed. Therefore, this new change cannot be explained from the perspective of institutions. In addition to the presidential system, Linz and other scholars also emphasized the auxiliary role of partisan differences, but they did not analyze the partisan differences in Latin American countries. Therefore, the analysis of the root causes of coups from the perspective of the presidential system is still superficial. In-depth exploration of the causes of partisan differences in Latin America is a more valuable direction.

The third type of theory emphasizes the "radicalism" of the opposition elite. This theoretical school believes that the attitude of the opposition elite is very important. If they completely disagree with the policy orientation of the current government and hold a zero-sum concept, they will launch a coup. When elite preference for democratic institutions is weak, the probability of a coup

For related discussions, see [Argentina] Guillermo O'Donnell, translated by Wang Huan and Shen Mingmin: «Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: South American Political Studies» Beijing: Peking University Press, 2008

Higher. As coup initiators, opposition elites should be highly valued. However, this view only focuses on the attitudes of elites and ignores other political actors involved in coups. It does not study the objective constraints faced by opposition elites and cannot explain the new type of coups in Latin America. It is easy to have recurring characteristics.

Generally speaking, the issue of new coups in Latin America has not been systematically studied, and it is difficult to apply traditional theories to explain it. This article intends to use the power structure development theory as the basic analytical framework to conduct a systematic analysis of the root causes of new coups and other issues.

The theory of development of power structure adopts the perspective of political economics to analyze national development issues. Power refers to the ability of an individual or group to make others or other groups obey. Power does not only refer to political power, but also originates from many types of power resources, including economic resources and violence. resources, ideological resources, organizational resources, etc. The power structure refers to the distribution pattern of power resources among major interest groups. It can be divided into two types: equal and concentrated. The equal power structure is conducive to the formation of inclusive development. model and promote political and economic development. A centralized power structure will form an exclusionary development model, causing a country to fall into a long-term development trap. Compared with the theoretical path of previous studies, the power structure analysis is more holistic. First of all, it not only It includes elite analysis, and also includes the analysis of interest groups at the middle and lower levels of society. Groups such as labor and farmers are also included in the analytical field of view. Secondly, it is not limited to political analysis, but adopts a comprehensive perspective of political economics. Use The power structure analysis method can explain the nature and characteristics of the new coup from the perspective of the rise and fall of the power status of interest groups and the game of interest groups.

2. Main Characteristics of Latin America's "Velvet Coup"

Compared with traditional coups, new coups and regime change processes are more "smooth" and have low intensity characteristics, so this article calls them "velvet coups". Since the beginning of the 21st century, three "velvet coups" have occurred in Latin America. April 2002 On the 11th, large-scale anti-government protests broke out in Venezuela. The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and other senior generals took the opportunity to announce their renunciation of support for left-wing President Chávez and arrested him. Private entrepreneur Pedro Carmona took office. Interim President

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ÿ Gao Bo: «Development Trap from the Perspective of Power Structure: Based on the Analysis of Venezuela's "Punto Fijo System"», published in «International Political Research», Issue 1, 2020, pp. 9-36. The "Velvet Coup" proposed in this article

ÿ " draws on the term "Velvet Revolution", which refers to the late 20th century revolution in Central and Eastern European countries. form of regime transition that is relatively stable and less violent during the period.

Two days later, the coup was reversed. Chavez was rescued by loyalist soldiers and took office again as president. The "4 11 coup" failed. 2 The 2009 military coup in Honduras was jointly initiated by the conservative right-wing economic and political elites and the military, because the then president José Zelaya's attempt to carry out radical reforms offended the interests of the conservative elite. In June 2009, the army arrested President Zelaya and exiled him to Costa Rica. Subsequently, the right-wing Congress declared Zelaya Asia resigned and established an interim government, and the coup was successful. 2 In October 2019, large-scale political riots occurred in Bolivia due to disputes over the election. 3. The commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the chief of police publicly called on President Morales to resign and revoked his personal protection. 4 Morales was forced to resign, and conservative politician Jeanine Áñez announced that he would take office as interim president. 5 At the end of 2020, Bolivia held another election, and the Movement for Socialism party under the leadership of Morales re-elected Won and came to power. 5 From these three coups, we can summarize the "Swan"

Five Characteristics of the "Coup"

First, the violent color of coups is not prominent. Traditional military coups in Latin America are relatively violent. Not only do the two sides often exchange fire during coups, but successful coups are often accompanied by large-scale violent suppression and purges. The last wave of coups in Latin America occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, they mainly included the 1964 Brazilian coup, the 1966 Argentine coup, the 1973 Chilean coup and the Uruguay coup. In the Chilean coup, Pinochet led the army to besiege the presidential palace, and President Allende was forced to Suicide. After the coup, the military governments in these countries launched the so-called "dirty war" and carried out large-scale political persecution of left-wing politicians, trade union leaders, resistance movement members and other dissidents, using methods including murder, imprisonment, torture, exile, etc., with tens of thousands of victims in each country, and the progressive left-wing forces were severely weakened. In comparison, the level of violence in the "Velvet Coup" was low, and there was no large-scale exchange of fire. There was no subsequent large-scale repression and purges. This can be attributed to the progress of globalization and the spread of democratic values in the past half century. The international community generally opposes large-scale violence and human rights violations, which is difficult for the coup initiators to bear. Large-scale violence was abandoned due to the high cost of international sanctions.

1 2019年10月，玻利维亚发生大规模政治骚乱，原因是选举争议。3. 武装部队总司令和警察总长公开呼吁总统莫拉莱斯辞职，并撤销了他的个人保护。4 莫拉莱斯被迫辞职，保守派政客珍妮·阿涅斯宣布他将担任临时总统。5 2020年底，玻利维亚举行了另一场选举，莫拉莱斯领导的社会主义运动党再次当选，莫拉莱斯再次上台。

2 2009年10月，洪都拉斯发生军事政变，由保守派右翼经济和政治精英以及军队联合发起，因为时任总统何塞·泽拉亚试图进行激进改革，触犯了保守派精英的利益。2009年6月，军队逮捕了总统泽拉亚并将其流放到哥斯达黎加。随后，右翼国会宣布泽拉亚下台并成立了临时政府，政变成功。

3 2019年10月，玻利维亚发生大规模政治骚乱，原因是选举争议。3. 武装部队总司令和警察总长公开呼吁总统莫拉莱斯辞职，并撤销了他的个人保护。4 莫拉莱斯被迫辞职，保守派政客珍妮·阿涅斯宣布他将担任临时总统。5 2020年底，玻利维亚举行了另一场选举，莫拉莱斯领导的社会主义运动党再次当选，莫拉莱斯再次上台。

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5 «Bolivia President Morales announced his resignation», Xinhuanet, November 11, 2019, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/>

6 «Arce sworn in as President of Bolivia», Xinhuanet, November 9, 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/>

Second, the military participates in the coup but does not govern. Different from traditional military coups, in the "Velvet Coup", the military is no longer the "protagonist", but only a participant and "tool". The military in Latin American countries is a relatively independent interest group. From independence to the end of the 20th century, the alliance between the military and the economic elite dominated the power structure. Only a few countries, such as Mexico, had their military controlled by civilian governments. From the mid-20th century, with the rise of technocratic groups, military personnel launched a series of coups and was in power for a long time, occupying a dominant position. The Pinochet military junta in Chile was in power from 1973 to 1990, and only gave way to a civilian government after being rejected by a referendum. The Brazilian military junta was in power from 1964 to 1990. In 1985, it was in power for 21 years. The Argentine military government was in power intermittently until 1982. The military government in Uruguay was also in power for 12 years. Bolivia also experienced more than 10 years of military rule before democratization in 1982. Overall During this period, military governments experienced governance failures. They usually lost their governing status and political prestige in severe economic crises and political turmoil. Their rebellions and humanitarian crimes were often investigated afterwards. Later Latin American armies learned from this. After learning the lessons, we realize that we do not have the various resources required for long-term governance, and we no longer covet long-term usurpation of political power. In addition, the current international community as a whole is opposed to the military government, and the price of international economic and political exclusion is also that of the military. It is unbearable for the government. Therefore, the status of the Latin American military in the power structure has been significantly reduced, and it has become a secondary partner in the alliance with the economic elite. In the recent coups, the military has not been the main initiator of the coup. They usually Participate in the coup under the temptation of the interests of the economic elite, and immediately transfer political power to the civilian government after success, and support re-election through legal procedures to gain legitimacy for the coup and the new government, in order to minimize their own risks.

Third, coups are all violent rebellions in which right-wing conservative forces overthrow left-wing progressive governments. After the third wave of democratization, the possibility of Latin American left-wing forces coming to power through elections has increased. The emergence of the "Pink Wave" is a manifestation of this. In this In the three coups, the Chavez, Zelaya, and Morales governments that were overthrown were all left-wing governments. They represented the interests of labor, farmers, and Indians. They all carried out radical redistribution reforms in an attempt to reorganize society. order, thus offending conservative vested interest groups, which mainly include private business groups, large real estate owners, multinational corporations, right-wing political elite groups, etc. In Venezuela, the composition of right-wing conservative groups is relatively diverse, including large Entrepreneurial groups, leaders of traditional political parties and conservative military generals, as well as trade unions aligned with traditional political parties

David Mares and Rafael Marínez (eds) Debating Civil - Military Relations in Latin America Chicago: Sussex Academic Press 2014 [Argentina] Written by Guillermo O'Donnell Translated by Wang Huan and Shen Mingmin: «Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: South America Political Research» Beijing: Peking University Press, 2008

“现代国家”与“威权主义”的争论：现代国家与威权主义的争论。北京：北京大学出版社，2008年。

organizations and some middle-class groups. In Honduras, the opposition is centered on traditional oligarchic groups, including mining, export agriculture, and media tycoons. There are also leaders of the two traditional right-wing parties, the Nationalist Party and the Liberal Party. These economic and political elites also use clientelism to The Internet has controlled some people. In addition, military generals and multinational companies are also important components of this group. In Bolivia, the Santa Cruz elite group, which mainly operates export agriculture and oil and gas industries, is the core force of the opposition. They also have access to The failure of import substitution industrialization and the subsequent neoliberal reforms have enhanced the power status of the right from both ideological and economic resources. The right-wing conservative forces will use various methods to oppose the radical reforms of the left-wing government. If they find it difficult to block reforms through legal means and regain political power through elections, military coups will become their final choice.

Fourth, governments that come to power through coups are supported by the United States. Left-wing governments in Latin America usually hold an anti-American stance, and their radical policies often harm the economic and strategic interests of the United States. Therefore, they are hostile to the U.S. government and conservative forces. Venezuela It is extremely rich in oil, gas and mineral resources. It is adjacent to the Caribbean Sea and the Panama Canal. It is the fulcrum of the US foreign strategy. After taking office, Chavez pursued a radical anti-US policy and used oil as a weapon to form an international anti-US alliance and became the US government. "A thorn in the side" of the United States. Honduras is a maritime neighbor of the United States. It is an important partner of the United States on immigration and drug issues. It is also the hub of U.S. military operations in Central America. The U.S. Soto Cano Air Force Base It is the only military connection point between the United States and the South American continent. American companies have also made huge investments in the country's mining and hydropower industries. Bolivia, as the world's largest coca-growing country, is the United States' main partner in the "war on drugs" One. As a leader of coca farmers, Morales is regarded by the United States as the "Bin Laden of Latin America." The US Agency for International Development directly provides assistance to the opposition parties and their ruling local governments, which led to the mutual expulsion of ambassadors between the two countries in 2008. On the eve of the coup, U.S. conservative senators met with representatives of the Bolivian opposition many times to support them. It should be said that the root causes of the three coups were conflicts of interest and changes in power structures in their respective countries. They were not created by the United States. However, Latin American countries They generally rely on the United States and the international institutions under its control in the fields of economy, trade, finance, and military assistance. In the current international environment, the military and right-wing elites of these countries will not dare to rashly launch a coup without the approval of the U.S. government. Therefore, The United States controls the "switch" of coups in Latin America. Coupists only dare to take

action with the support of the United States. Fifth, the probability of recurrence of "Velvet Coup" is relatively high. Among the three coups that have occurred, there have been two Repeatedly, the overthrown left-wing president/party was able to return to power. Chávez himself was very important in society

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He has broad public support among the people at the bottom, and he was born in the army and has a certain foundation in the army. After being elected as president, he promoted a group of followers to important positions in the army. Therefore, he successfully regained power 47 hours after the coup. Since then, he has Chavez won several important elections and was able to rule for a long time. After the coup in Bolivia, Morales was forced to go into exile overseas, but he and the party he led still have a deep mass base. In the 2020 general election, "fight for The Socialist Movement won with a clear advantage and returned to power. The right-wing forces in Honduras are strong. After breaking away from the right-wing, Zelaya was overthrown before he had time to cultivate his own political base. He also lacked influence in the army and therefore failed to return to power after the coup. ¶ Judging from the repeated cases, if the left-wing government has a broad social base and a well-organized political party, then the possibility of restoration through elections is very high. If it also has influence in the military, it is possible to restore power in a short period of time. It needs to be emphasized that although the military is an independent interest group, it is not monolithic within it. It will be divided due to ideological tendencies, religious sect differences, class origins and other factors. Generally speaking, Latin America The military has a strong conservative color, but in some cases more radical left-wing military leaders and their groups may appear, such as the Peronists in Argentina, Velasco in Peru, and Chavez in Venezuela. Therefore, the military The internal balance of power between the left and right wings is also an important factor in determining whether a new type of coup can succeed.

Three Roots of the "Velvet Coup"

In the context of the increasingly powerful left-wing progressive forces, the essence of the Latin American "Velvet Coup" is the redistribution of major interests. The external manifestation is a dispute over the development model between the left and right wings. Its roots are obviously different from traditional coups. In the 20th century, In traditional coups in the middle and late stages, military groups are often the main initiators of coups. They covet political power and hope to implement a "disciplined" development model that is conducive to national security. They cooperate with other interest groups (including right-wing economic elite groups)) have maintained a certain distance. ¶ In addition, traditional coups are deeply affected by the international environment of the Cold War. External powers are often one of the main driving forces behind coups, such as the 1973 coup in Chile. The "Velvet Coup" mainly reflects the profound internal affairs of Latin American countries. Changes in the power structure, especially changes in the power structure caused by the increased mobilization ability of left-wing organizations, pose a serious threat to the right-wing economic elite group. In short, traditional military coups can be called "politically driven coups", while "velvet coups" can be called Called an "economically driven coup"

¶ [Argentina] Written by Guillermo O'Donnell, translated by Wang Huan and Shen Mingmin: "Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: A Study of South American Politics", Beijing: Peking University Press, 2008. Regarding the relative independence of military groups, it can be See Ben Ross Schneider's Business Politics and the State in Twentieth-Century Latin America Ambridge: Cambridge University Press

Before the "Velvet Coup" occurs, there are often changes in the power structure, which then trigger changes in the development model. This means major changes in the distribution of interests and intensification of conflicts. Since the colonial period, Latin American countries have highly concentrated power resources. In the hands of the oligarchic elite group, the highly unequal exclusionary development model has continued for a long time. The general public has been marginalized in the distribution of interests, which has caused social divisions and struggles. Due to the imbalance in the distribution of power resources, the oligarchic elite group is often in the struggle. Since the end of the 20th century, the power structure of Latin America has once again undergone major changes. The driving force comes from the following aspects. First, the failure of the neoliberal model triggered a series of economic crises and the deterioration of income distribution, which led to the vigorous rise of social movements and the growth of left-wing parties, including the labor movement, women's organizations and student movements in Chile, indigenous organizations and coca farmer movements in Ecuador, Bolivia and other countries, the anti-privatization movement in Costa Rica, in addition, the Venezuelan left-wing party Movement for the Fifth Republic Political organizations such as the Brazilian Labor Party and the Brazilian Labor Party have also achieved rapid growth. The left-wing forces have made new progress in organizing and mobilizing the people. Secondly, in terms of ideology, the Latin American left has proposed localized and diversified socialist ideas for the 21st century, including Venezuelan President Chávez's "21st century socialism", Ecuadorian President Correa's "citizen revolution" thought, and Bolivian President Morales's "communitarian socialism" have, to a certain extent, filled the gap in Latin America after the drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The vacuum of left-wing thought has produced a certain degree of social appeal. The left-wing has more ideological and organizational resources, and its status in the power structure has increased significantly, reversing the downward trend of left-wing power for more than half a century. With this, They try to win political power through elections and promote changes in the development model, and the conflict with the oligarchic elite group tends to intensify. Thirdly, the privatization and liberalization reforms since the late 20th century have reduced the power resources of the political elite and increased the number of oligarchs. The economic resources of the group. In Mexico, the financial giant Carlos Slim colluded with the Salinas government and acquired the large state-owned Mexican Telecom Company and some financial institutions at extremely low prices. He once became the richest man in the world. Menem During this period, Argentina also carried out large-scale privatization and exposed many rent-seeking corruption scandals. Some entrepreneurs who maintained close relations with high-level government officials obtained huge profits from it. In some Latin American countries, the power of entrepreneurial organizations also increased. Strengthened, such as the powerful "Mexican Business Council" in Mexico, of which Slim is the leader. Finally, the power of right-wing conservative parties has expanded, but not as rapidly as left-wing parties. Since the late 20th century, some Latin American countries have Right-wing political parties have also grown. For example, Chile's conservative parties, the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and the National Renovation Party (RN), have received support from the business community and are committed to building a social foundation for the middle and upper classes of society. They won the election in 2010 and brought big companies to power. Sebastián Piñera was promoted to the presidency, and far-right politician Álvaro Uribe and his newly formed conservative party Democratic Center (CD)) also won in Colombia In addition, emerging conservative parties in Peru, El Salvador

However, from the overall perspective of Latin America, right-wing parties have the characteristics of "elite parties" and "oligarchic parties". It is difficult to quickly expand their social base when the neoliberal model is frustrated, and their development momentum is not as good as that of left-wing parties. Therefore, From

the perspective of power resource distribution, since the beginning of the 21st century, a new trend of "two rises and one fall" has emerged in Latin America, that is, the power status of the left-wing and oligarchic groups has increased, and the power status of military groups has declined. In the face of challenges from the left, In addition to conducting electoral competition, the powerful oligarchic elite group also uses media warfare, investment reduction, capital flight, parliamentary obstruction, street protests and other methods to resist. When these methods fail to work, the oligarchic group will unite with conservatives in the military. Launching a military coup, using violent means to overthrow the left-wing government, promoting the return of the exclusionary development model, the military group became its coup tool. From the perspective of the long-term trajectory of power structure changes, the showdown between the left and right in Latin America at this stage can be called the "battle of the century" "It is the result of the long-term accumulation of economic and social contradictions, and it also bears the obvious mark of the times. Therefore, the first 30 years of the 21st century will be a turbulent era in which the left wing continues to attack the highest political power and the right wing frequently launches "velvet coups."

(1) Venezuela: A power struggle in a stalemate. The Venezuelan

radical left emerged in the political vacuum created by the collapse of the old system. At the end of the 20th century, Venezuela experienced a profound economic and political crisis, and the Punto Fijo System collapsed. The traditional power structure has been weakened. In the Punto Fijo system established in 1958, an alliance composed of political elite groups, private entrepreneurial groups, military groups and some privileged trade unions monopolized political and economic power and distributed oil within it. income, excluding the vast majority of social members, gradually forming a rent-seeking and corrupt society, reducing economic efficiency, triggering the great crisis in the 1990s and the "Caracas Riot" that resulted in more than 4,000 casualties. In the 1998 general election, the two traditional parties, the Democratic Action Party and the Christian Socialist Party, received only 11% of the votes. This marked the collapse of the Punto Fijo system. This great change created the "dark horse" Chavez in the political arena. Chavez He has served in the military for a long time and has a certain foundation in the army. In 1992, he led a military coup aimed at overthrowing the Punto Fijo system. He gained political popularity and was elected president in 1998. He was a rising star in politics. After being elected, he It was only then that he began to vigorously promote the construction of political parties and grassroots organizations. In the first few years of his administration, the political foundation was not yet solid.

After taking power, Chavez tried to change Venezuela's development model and carried out the practice of "21st century socialism". Politically, Chavez believed that representative democracy and the socialist model implemented in the 20th century

• The "Punto Fijo System" is a political, economic, and social operating system composed of a series of systems and organizational structures. It is named after The political agreement reached by the main political parties in the seaside town of Punto Fijo in 1958 existed from 1958 to 1998.

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and maintained close contact with the conservative generals of the Venezuelan army. In 2002, USAID's funds invested in Venezuela reached US\$2.2 million. After the Chavez government came back to power, the funds increased sharply to US\$8.9 million in 2003. These forces jointly planned the "4 11 coup" against Chavez.

From the perspective of power structure, Venezuela at the time of the coup was in a period of transition between the old and new structures. Although the old power structure was severely weakened, the economic elite group still controlled abundant economic and media resources, and maintained close ties with some labor unions and military generals. It has formed an alliance and received support from the US government, maintaining its strong strength. Although the Chavista faction has mastered the highest political power, its political foundation is not yet solid enough. It has formed an evenly matched power structure with the opposition. This is the reason why the Venezuelan regime has repeatedly changed hands. , the root cause of the long-lasting political deadlock.

(2) Honduras: Extremely unbalanced power structure. The

traditional power structure of Honduras is characterized by high concentration. First of all, the Honduras oligarchic elite group is very powerful and monopolizes most of the country's economic, political and social resources. In the 1980s, At the beginning, under the initiative of Miguel Facussé, the country's richest man, a mining and export agricultural magnate, big businessmen, right-wing politicians, military generals, media oligarchs and other forces formed the far-right "Association for Progress of Honduras" ", realizing the merger of economic elites and political elites, further enhancing the collective action capabilities of the oligarchic elite group. The oligarchic group also used methods such as buying votes, giving out small favors, and threats of violence to control a large number of people at the bottom, and established a political clientelism system. Controlling the elections and state machinery, the country's power structure has been highly centralized. Secondly, the left-wing power in Honduras is relatively weak. The oligarchic elite group has long used violent means such as assassinations, illegal detention, and torture to attack the progressive left-wing forces. A large number of trade unions have Leaders and activists of peasant organizations, student movements, and environmental organizations have become victims of violence by the military, police, and right-wing private armed forces. This has led to the weakening of the left wing in Honduras and further imbalances in the power structure.

Under the rule of the oligarchic group, Honduras became an extreme rent-seeking and corrupt society. In the 1990s, the government carried out large-scale privatization of mining resources, granted a series of tax exemptions to private mining companies and abolished the environmental monitoring system. The law Mining giants such as Facusé gained huge profits from it. During the period when Facusé's nephew Carlos Facussé (Carlos Flores Facussé) was president (1998-2002)

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ě In 2009, in the Valley Aguán area alone, 46 farmers were killed by military police and Fakusai's private armed forces due to disputes over land property rights. For details, see Dana Franký "Hon Duras: Which Side Is the US on?" June 11ý 2012 [https://www.thenation.com/article/archiv e/honduras-what-side-us/\[2021-07-06\]](https://www.thenation.com/article/archiv e/honduras-what-side-us/[2021-07-06])

The regional initiative aroused the doubts of the U.S. government. Conservative forces at home and abroad in Honduras formed a strong alliance. They were worried that Zelaya would be in power for a long time after the re-constitution, so they overthrew the Zelaya government with a coup.

President Zelaya only controls part of the executive power, does not have the allegiance of the military, and does not have strong popular organizations and political parties to rely on. He is obviously weak in the power comparison with the oligarchic group. Compared with the other two countries, Honduras The changes in the power structure were the smallest and most superficial. They were not enough to support a profound reform or break the exclusionary development model. Therefore, the country did not see repeated changes of political power after the coup. The oligarchic group maintained its control over political power. Long-term control, the coup was successful.

(3) Bolivia: The status of left-wing power has risen, but the distribution of power resources is uneven. Under the leadership of Morales, Bolivia has explored the form of "communitarian socialism", the core of which is the growth of Indian peasant organizations. At the end of the 20th century, new freedom The failure of socialist reforms triggered strong dissatisfaction among the middle and lower classes of society. The "war on drugs" launched by the United States and the right-wing government's campaign to eradicate coca cultivation also inspired widespread resistance from Bolivian coca farmers. In the process, large-scale corruption occurred in rural areas. Large-scale mass mobilization and organization. With the help of traditional village community organizational forms and extensive cross-regional alliances, Indian farmer organizations such as the "United Federation of Peasants and Workers of Bolivia" and "Indigenous Center of Eastern Bolivia" have grown rapidly. Based on these organizations, Evo Morales formed the Movement for Socialism party and began to appear on the national political stage as a leader of coca farmers. The party also formed alliances with labor unions, neighborhood organizations, middle-class professional organizations, etc., forming a powerful progressive alliance representing the interests of the middle and lower classes of society, the wave of large-scale protests they launched led to the resignation of the right-wing president and the decline of traditional political parties. In 2005, Morales won the election as the candidate of the Movement for Socialism and became the leader of the movement. The first Indian president in the history of the country. Since then, the electoral advantage of the Movement for Socialism party has been consolidated. It won the three general elections between 2005 and 2015 with 54% of the vote. After 2009, it also won a majority in the parliament. During this process, Bolivia's power structure has undergone significant changes. Although the traditional elite group still controls economic, media and other resources, the traditional right-wing parties have declined and have repeatedly lost in important elections. Political resources have shrunk severely. The left-wing forces The organizational resources of the organization increased significantly, forming a strong political party, which was successfully transformed into a political party through elections.

At the end of the 20th century, the United States launched a "drug war" in Latin America in an attempt to prevent the import of large quantities of drugs from Latin America. As a major coca-growing country, Bolivia was an important partner in the drug war. With the support of the United States, the Bolivian government launched a campaign to eradicate coca. Ke planting movement

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With political power resources in hand, executive and legislative powers have been mastered, and significant progress has been made in the equalization

process of Bolivia's power structure. Changes in the power structure have led to corresponding changes in Bolivia's development model.

People at the bottom have begun to share the dividends of economic growth. The inclusive development model has The prototype is beginning to

emerge. The "National Development Plan" proposed by the Movement for Socialism advocates breaking the development model dominated by

colonialism and neoliberalism, getting rid of dependence on the export of primary products, and establishing a diversified and integrated new

economic model. The new model advocates In terms of state intervention, the state must be deeply involved in strategic industries (oil and gas,

minerals and other resource extraction industries) and be responsible for promoting infrastructure construction, financial development and

technological progress. This runs counter to the neoliberal policies of previous governments. The second term in office In 2016, Morales announced

After the nationalization of oil and gas, the tax on multinational companies increased from 18% to 50% of total profits. From 2005 to 2018, the third subordination in the country's his

the tax amount soared from US\$62.9 billion to US\$6.2 billion, accounting for 10% of the total profits from 2005 to 2016. 1/3 of the average annual

total fiscal revenue. Most of the sharply increased fiscal revenue was invested in the social field. The Morales government also carried out the

largest land reform since the 1952 revolution, distributing millions of hectares of state-owned land to There are more than 800,000 landless and

landless farmers, and for the first time, the amount of land occupied by small farmers exceeds that of large estates. Bolivia's GDP increased from

US\$9.549 billion in 2005 to US\$40.895 billion in 2019, an increase of twofold in 15 years. This period was the fastest growing period in the country's

modern history. The Gini coefficient dropped from 0,612 (extremely unequal) in 2002 to 0,413 (relatively equal) in 2018. Bolivia went from being

the most unequal country in Latin America to the most One of the most equal countries, the decline ranks first in the region. During the same period,

the proportion of the poor population dropped from 66.8% to 33.2%, and the extreme poverty population dropped from 35.1% to 14.7%. It can be

said that during the Morales administration, Bolivia The social conditions have been significantly improved, and at the same time, sustained and

rapid economic growth has been achieved. The new development model has good momentum, and Morales has also used this to consolidate his

electoral base.

However, the new development model offended vested interests and met with fierce opposition. Like most Latin American countries,

Bolivia's oligarchic elite group controls the country's natural resources and economic lifeline, excluding most members of society. Within the elite

group, marriages are formed through marriage In other ways, they were closely integrated until the 1970s when they split into two major groups,

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During this period, the La Paz Group received a large number of infrastructure construction contracts from the government, and cooperation with the government was greater than confrontation. However, the large real estate and oil and gas profits controlled by the Santa Cruz Group were threatened, so they fiercely opposed the new development model and the Morales government. They established civil organizations such as the "Civil Association for the Defense of Santa Cruz" and the "Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Tourism", used clientelist networks and racist propaganda to control large numbers of people, and formed a powerful opposition force. They once mobilized more than 1 million people participated in street demonstrations and large-scale violent riots. The Morales government gave in under pressure and raised the upper limit of land expropriation from 12,500 acres to 25,000 acres, and exempted many types of large properties. In addition, multinational companies are allowed to develop oil and gas resources in protected areas. After making concessions, the relationship between the government and the Santa Cruz Group has been eased to a certain extent.

Starting from 2016, as commodity prices in the international market fell, the Morales government's fiscal revenue dropped sharply, and the social expenditure plan was greatly affected. In order to maintain the new development model, the government began to increase taxes on private enterprises, which led to elite groups. The conflict with the progressive government re-intensified, and the La Paz Group and the Santa Cruz Group began to join forces to instigate anti-government protests. By 2019, Morales ran for the presidency for the fourth time and won, which became the basis for the coup. The trigger: Just after the election, the right-wing launched large-scale protests and riots. At a time of political polarization, the military's position became key. For a long time, the Bolivian military has formed interests with the right-wing economic and political elites. Community, the bloody suppression of popular protests led by the Movement for Socialism in 2003 and 2005 was condemned by the international community. After Morales came to power, he punished the military and replaced some generals, but he has not yet established a strong leadership within the military. Cultivate your own support. When the riots escalated, senior military generals announced the withdrawal of protection for Morales, completing the coup without firing a shot and overthrowing the left-wing government.

From the perspective of the power structure, the equalization of Bolivia's power structure has reached a high level. The left wing has mastered abundant political organizational resources, which has become the basis for their return to power in 2020. However, the left wing's power resources are mainly concentrated in Peasant organizations, trade unions, political party organizations, and administrative and legislative bodies do not have strong control over the military and do not control the lifeline of the national economy. Therefore, they are obviously vulnerable and are easily destroyed by the "Velvet Coup".

In general, the root cause of the "Velvet Coup" lies in the changes in the power structure. From the perspective of the stages of changes in the power structure, the "Velvet Coup" can be divided into two types, namely, "critical coup" and "strangling coup". Critical coups are represented by the cases of Venezuela and Bolivia. The power structure of the host countries has changed.

¹ In 2008, with the support of the US Embassy, large-scale violent riots occurred in four eastern provinces of Bolivia. Far-right youth organizations attacked the government and left-wing individuals, occupied 75 government offices, and killed 17 people in Pando Province. An Indian farmer. For details, see Linda Farthing's "An Opportunity Squandered" d? Elites' Social Movements and the Government of Evo Morales" in Latin American Perspectives 2019: 215 - 217

Significant changes have occurred, approaching the critical point of transformation from centralized to egalitarian. Other methods of resistance of the oligarchic group are ineffective, and they have to resort to violent means to subvert the left-wing government. The stranglehold coup is represented by the Honduras case. The oligarchic group has a strong role in the power structure. Occupying an absolute advantage, fearing that radical reforms would bring about chain reactions, they used violent means to nip the reforms in their infancy. It can be seen that the "Velvet Coup" can occur either in the early stages of changes in the power structure or at the end of changes. In the mid-term stage, the difference is that critical coups are more likely to be repeated, while stranglehold coups are more likely to succeed.

Four Impacts of the "Velvet Coup"

The "Velvet Coup" means the change of hands of national political power, which not only affects the political economy of the country where the coup occurred, it has had a major impact on the economic structure and has also had a major impact on international relations. First of

all, the "Velvet Coup" will have a profound impact on the country's development model. Regardless of whether it succeeds or not, the "Velvet Coup" will have an impact on the country's development path. From now on According to some cases, control of the military is the key. Left-wing governments that cannot control the military will be severely restricted. Left-wing governments that can control the military have greater policy autonomy. In countries where coups have been successful, such as Bolivia and Honduras, coups Everyone has drawn a "red line" for the left wing of their country and will not allow overly radical reforms. In Bolivia after the coup, Morales did not continue to participate in the presidential election. Instead, he launched the moderate leader of the party and the former economic leader. Minister Arce ran as a presidential candidate. After the Movement for Socialism returned to power, the government prosecuted and arrested interim President Ñez and related officials for "sedition", but did not hold the military and police leaders accountable. This reflected This reflects the weakness of most left-wing governments in the power structure, that is, the lack of violent resources. As long as the military is still in the hands of right-wing forces, left-wing governments will be restricted and find it difficult to promote in-depth social changes. Further improvements in the power structure will also be hindered or even regressed. As a result, the country continues to be trapped in the "development trap".

The constraining effect of the coup on the left was even more obvious in Honduras. The right-wing government that came to power after the coup completely reversed Zelaya's radical policy orientation and immediately began a new round of neoliberal reforms, including reforms to the electricity, water conservancy industries and even the education system. It carried out large-scale privatization and once again delivered huge profits to the oligarchy. The right-wing government also severely restricted trade union rights, canceled workers' medical insurance and cut social expenditures. The poverty rate and extreme poverty rate in Honduras rebounded again. In 2012, they have risen to 61.2% and 25.3% respectively, which means that 1/10 of the country's population has returned to poverty. In terms of foreign policy, Honduras has resumed its pro-American and supportive stance of foreign capital. The "Model City Law" passed by Congress stipulates: In the processing economic zone dominated by multinational companies, the Constitution and laws of Honduras will no longer be implemented, and the basic rules will be formulated by multinational companies instead. The following year, the new government announced its withdrawal from the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas.

Coups and regime changes have in most cases had a negative and negative impact on bilateral relations. The United States has neither achieved its set goals, but also damaged its international image. This is actually a major mistake in its foreign strategy.

Finally, the left-wing ruling countries in Latin America have taken a clear opposition position to the "Velvet Coup", which has had a positive impact on the corresponding bilateral relations. In particular, Cuba has obtained major strategic benefits from it. In the face of the "Velvet Coup", Latin American countries have become divided in their positions. Basically, they are divided. The ideological line is drawn above. Right-wing governments support coups, while left-wing governments condemn coups and illegal regime changes. They usually do not recognize the interim governments established after coups. Generally speaking, left-wing governments in Latin American countries actually face the threat of "velvet coups" Every coup can arouse a feeling of bitterness, so they strongly condemned the coup. After the coup in Venezuela, 19 members of the Rio Group issued a joint statement condemning the coup and announcing that they would not recognize the interim government. After the coup in Honduras, Brazil, Venezuela and other countries collectively expressed their voices through the Union of South American Nations and the Bolivarian Alliance of Americas, trying to help Zelaya recover. After the coup in Bolivia, left-wing governments and leaders in Latin America publicly condemned the coup. Mexico provided political support to Morales. Asylum. Afterwards, in order to facilitate Morales' contact with Bolivia, Argentina's left-wing President Fernandez provided him with political asylum.

The most noteworthy one is the approach of the Cuban government. Cuba has long maintained close relations with leaders of left-wing political parties in other Latin American countries. After the "Velvet Coup", Cuba has firmly supported the overthrown left-wing president every time, not only finding ways to ensure the safety of his life, he will spare no effort to help him resettle. This strategy has achieved positive results. After Chavez was resettled, Venezuela and Cuba established an extremely close strategic partnership. Venezuela provided Cuba with a large amount of oil assistance. Cuba has played a key role in alleviating economic difficulties. After the coups in Honduras and Bolivia, Cuba adopted the same strategy. Although the direct effect is not obvious yet, it has undoubtedly consolidated its core position among Latin American left-wing forces. For the Cuban socialist regime, it has played a key role. Both survival and development have played a strategic role.

Five Conclusions

The essence of Latin America's "Velvet Coup" is the dispute between the development model and the interest distribution model. Since 2015, as Latin America's development has entered a period of crisis, this competition has also entered a white-hot state. Due to the concentration of power structure and the high degree of inequality in interest distribution, Latin America has always lacked endogenous economic growth momentum.

Li Wen: "Perspective on the coup in Venezuela, a major oil-producing country: Interview with Jiao Zhenheng, associate researcher at the Institute of Latin America, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences", published in "International Petroleum Economy", Issue 8, 2002, pp. 9-16.

Over-reliance on the external world's demand for primary products drives economic growth, and therefore it has been in a development trap for a long time and cannot extricate itself. Since the international financial crisis in 2008, insufficient aggregate demand worldwide has led to insufficient global economic growth momentum, which has led to the Latin American economy entering the In a state of stagnation, economic dividends have been reduced, competition for interests has also intensified, and the exclusionary development model has solidified. Under the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Latin American economy has been hit hard and will enter a long-term recession. The political landscape will also undergo new changes, and there will be new changes in the future. More left-wing governments have come to power. So far, the left-wing Castillo has won the 2021 general election in Peru. The center-left forces in Chile have won a 2/3 majority in the election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly. Many other Latin American countries have also emerged. There are similar signs. Therefore, in the next ten years, Latin America is likely to see more "velvet coups" surrounding disputes over development models and interests.

The left-wing exploration of an inclusive development model is a new attempt by the Latin American people to escape from the development trap. Despite various policy mistakes, it contains new opportunities to achieve healthy development. The "Velvet Coup" restricted this kind of development in a covert and violent way. Exploration will make Latin America continue to fall into a development trap. Many developing countries face a similar situation to Latin American countries, that is, they are trying to establish a new development model without fundamental changes in the traditional centralized power structure, and they are obstructed by vested interest groups. Under such circumstances, such efforts often face serious challenges and are difficult to achieve success.

The "Velvet Coup" will not only affect the development of Latin American countries, but will also have an impact on the triangular relationship between China, the United States and Latin America, and will pose a test to China's diplomacy. Looking around the world, we can find that other developing regions are also facing similar economic and political situations as Latin America. "Velvet coups" are likely to appear on a wider scale around the world. Against the background of intensified strategic competition between China and the United States, judging from the characteristics of this coup and the experiences and lessons learned by other countries in dealing with it, China's diplomacy should be prepared for a rainy day. From the perspective of global strategy, Make appropriate responses from a high altitude and promote the development of the "Belt and Road" and the construction of a community with a shared

future for mankind. (Editor-in-charge Xu Rui)