

# **Title: Democratization in latin America**

*Author: Stéphanie Gaudron<sup>1</sup> , CEPN-CNRS and GREITD*

## **Abstract**

From the mid-seventies, the number of democratizations has considerably increased, shaping the third wave of democratization according to S. Huntington.

The Latin American Spanish speaking experiences constitute our sample for this paper which consists in knowing why the authoritarian regime disappears to give place to the process of democratization.

The modernization theory is one of the possible explanations for democratization (Lipset, 1957). In this paper we study the experiences of 16 Latin American economies to criticize it. To analyze the correlation between economic development and the nature of the political regime and the influence of the former on the latter, we have chosen to keep first the variable usually used per capita gross product (p.c.g.p.).

We deduct from it, on the one hand, the p.c.g.p. in authoritarian regimes being very scattered, that it is not possible to associate a low nivel of p.c.g.p. with authoritarianism.

Our result is the same one, with regard to the democratic regime and our conclusions join those of S. Mainwaring (S. Mainwaring, 2000). On the other hand, the influence of economic development on democratization is not significant. So we have tried to find out if this conclusion didn't come from a bad measure of economic development, and have substituted the Gini Indice for the p.c.g.p. But we reach the same conclusion that the development level does not indicate the nature of the political regime. Also, we have checked that in the seven economies which experimented a continuous increase of p.c.g.p. during the authoritarian regime, half had an unequal distribution of wealth.

---

<sup>1</sup> ATER in International Political Economy at Paris -Nord University, Villetaneuse.