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**State and Political Reforms
in Latin America: A
Comparison of the
Opinions of Politicians and
Citizens**



I. Introduction

State reform in Latin America began in the 1980s with the reduction in the state's roles and structure, the maintenance of which had led to increased public spending. Low state efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its central objectives led to the implementation of reform (Lora 2007, Gantman and Oszlak 2007, Revilla and Paramio 2006, Lechner 2003, Bresser-Pereira 1998). In this process of change, various opinions have arisen: from those who call for state control of all (or nearly all) economic, social and productive activities; to those who advocate for minimal state intervention.

The current debate has shifted from antagonistic postures to moderate positions on various points of the state reform agenda, such as the control and management of public services or natural resources, the degree of economic intervention, and state ownership of major companies and industries, among others. Hence, social and political debates have emerged on the effects of various reforms on the "crisis of representation." This is caused by the characteristics of a less profound link between elites and the public that has a decisive impact on the relationship between citizens and democratic regimes (Kitschelt *et al.* 2009: 302), as well as on how citizens perceive reforms.

It is fundamental to understand two perspectives on the state's role: on the one hand, the views and preferences of the political elite, specifically legislators; on the other hand, the perspectives of citizens, which when compared to the positions of the legislators should reflect the programmatic interests of citizens who elected them.

At the same time, understanding the preferences and perceptions of elites and citizens with regard to the state will allow us to identify whether their priorities for state intervention are similar, if their attitudes toward processes of privatization of services provided by the state follow the same trend, or if they share the same preferences on possible changes in the characteristics of political institutions.

The data on citizens has been provided by the Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), while the data on the political elites come from the Project of Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (PELA) of the Iberoamerican Institute of the University of Salamanca. The analysis includes sixteen countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay), selected according to two criteria: a) temporal overlap in conducting the field work of both surveys; and b) having relatively current data. The authors are solely responsible for the interpretation of the data, however.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we discuss briefly the framework of the reform process. Second, we identify the most important problems for citizens and politicians. Third, we describe their preferences regarding economic models. Fourth, we analyze the positions of legislators and citizens with regard to the functions that the state should assume and those that

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should be delegated, as well as their preferences over various tax financing mechanisms. Finally, we analyze their views on the ideal political and institutional reforms, for example in the electoral system, form of government and justice system.¹

II. Reform Processes in Latin America: Looking Back

In the 1980s, the prevailing model of the state was interventionist, paternalistic and centralist; this model eventually showed its weaknesses in the Mexican economic crisis.¹ In this context, reflection began regarding the role of the state and its ability to meet the multiple demands of society. What were the proposed answers to mitigate the weakness of the state? What types of reforms have been implemented? The first change in Latin American societies regarding the state was of a neoliberal nature. These changes were characterized by highlighting the consequences of a structural transformation caused by the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state, changes in the *Fordist* model of production and the emergence of new patterns of accumulation and competitiveness in a globalized economy (Lechner 2003: 4).

Neoliberalism proposed under the framework of the so-called Washington Consensus² appeared to be the best solution to remedy the crisis (Lechner 2003, Ortega 2007). In the first half of the 1990s Latin America was dominated by the agenda of Consensus that promoted opening economies, favoring free markets over the previous state intervention, reducing the weight of the public sector and stimulating exports as the engine of the economy (Paramio and Revilla 2006).

The economic policies that characterized the 1980s and 1990s emphasized the importance of implementing policies within an appropriate institutional framework. If the framework did not exist or did not working properly some "good policies" might fail. Hence, the quality of institutions and the possibility of their reform link to a multitude of political factors, since institutions reflect the interests of relevant actors in each society (Fukuyama 2007).

Based on the components of state reform (Bresser-Pereira 1998: 520), this document structures the analysis from the perspective of three processes: 1) the reduction or increase in state functions, downsizing through privatization, and/or outsourcing; 2) reduction in the level of state intervention in activities related to the production of utilities or natural resources management; 3) improvement of the conditions for good governance, that is, of the power of government, due to political institutions that guarantee effective interest mediation and that make governments more legitimate and democratic, contributing to the quality of representative democracy and improving accountability.

III. Problems Facing the State and Society in Latin America

The aim of this first section is to understand to what extent politicians and citizens have the same concerns about the problems facing the state and society in Latin America. Table I identifies similarities between the concerns of elites and citizens in terms of the main problems

¹Tax revenues failed to cover either national needs or the foreign debt. The measures taken to solve both problems were inadequate and the consequences were not only an extension of the debt and inflation in public spending, but also widespread discredit to the state and government agencies (Cano 2001: 31).

² Term coined by John Williamson in 1990 to characterize the economic liberalization policies promoted by international institutions, especially financial, as part of a strategy of structural reforms that became a symbol of neoliberalism.

in the cases of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Mexico. In these countries, representatives agree with the public with regard to economic issues, violence, lack of public safety, and unemployment.

Table I: Most Important Problem among Citizens and Politicians in Latin America

MAIN PROBLEM³	POLITICIANS	CITIZENS
Poverty and Inequality	Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua, Peru	
Economic Situation	Bolivia, El Salvador	Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador Nicaragua, Peru
Citizen Insecurity and Crime	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panamá	Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala Honduras, Panama, Uruguay Dominican Republic, El Salvador
Violence	Colombia	Colombia
Unemployment	Ecuador, Mexico	Mexico, Paraguay
Corruption	Paraguay*	
Agrarian conflict	Paraguay*	
Energetic problem	Dominican Republic	

Source: Compiled from LAPOP and PELA data (2006-2010)

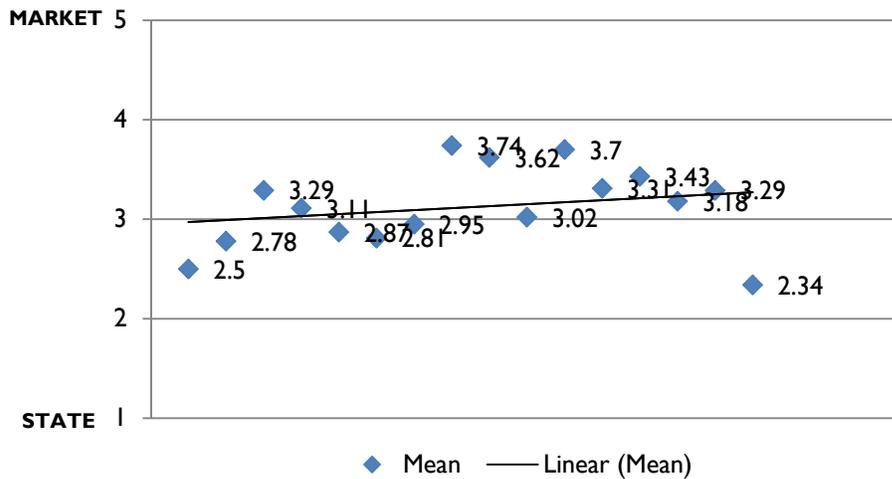
* The same proportion of deputies (19.4%) indicates both topics as the main problem.

IV. What Functions Should the State Perform?

For decades, Latin American countries have been characterized by a continuous process of state reform and institutional change, coupled with a democratic deficit and difficult social and economic contexts. Despite the progress made, the debate has centered on what the state *should* be doing to mitigate problems such as unemployment, inequality, poverty, or corruption. However, on the other side of the same reformist coin is an argument pointing to the importance of assessing the resources available to the state to act efficiently and effectively, describing a pragmatic approach regarding what can be done.

³ We use answers to PELA's open-ended question: "In your opinion as a Deputy, what is the main problem facing your country today?" and to LAPOP's question "To begin with, in your opinion, what is the most serious problem facing the country?"

Figure I. Preferences over Market or State Regulation of the Economy: Opinions of Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



Source: Compiled from PELA data (2006-2010).

Figure I shows that parliamentary elites neither defend the traditional extreme positions in favor of state administration and regulation⁴, nor advocate for a marginal state at the whims of market forces. The trend is a balance between government regulation and free market action, although countries like Uruguay and Guatemala are slightly distant from the regional trend, and represent opposing positions: more prone to greater state regulation (Uruguay) and willing to let the economy to function more freely (Guatemala). The level of agreement among representatives regarding their preferences on the management of the economy is much greater in Uruguay (0.97) than in Guatemala (1.20)⁵, compared to other countries.

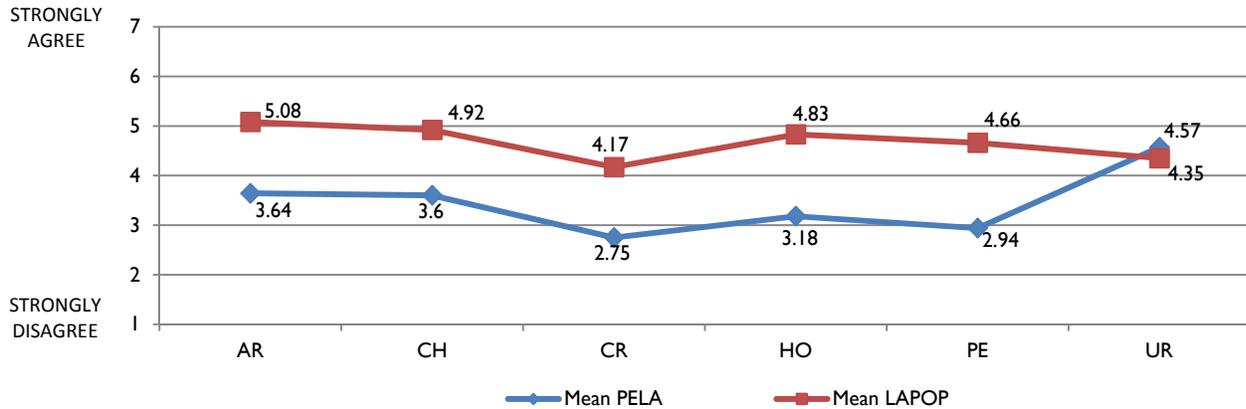
COUNTRY	Mean	SD*
Argentina	2.50	.84
Bolivia	2.78	1.13
Chile	3.29	1.15
Colombia	3.11	1.03
Costa Rica	2.87	1.12
Ecuador	2.81	1.28
El Salvador	2.95	1.18
Guatemala	3.74	1.20
Honduras	3.62	1.27
Mexico	3.02	1.19
Nicaragua	3.70	1.10
Panamá	3.31	1.19
Paraguay	3.43	.78
Peru	3.18	1.15
Dominican Republic	3.29	.98
Uruguay	2.34	.97
Regional Average	3.12	-

***SD=Standard Deviation**

⁴ We use responses to the question "In the debate on economic models of regulation, could you tell me if you are more in favor of an economy regulated by the state or the market?"

⁵ The elites of Argentina, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic also show higher levels of agreement.

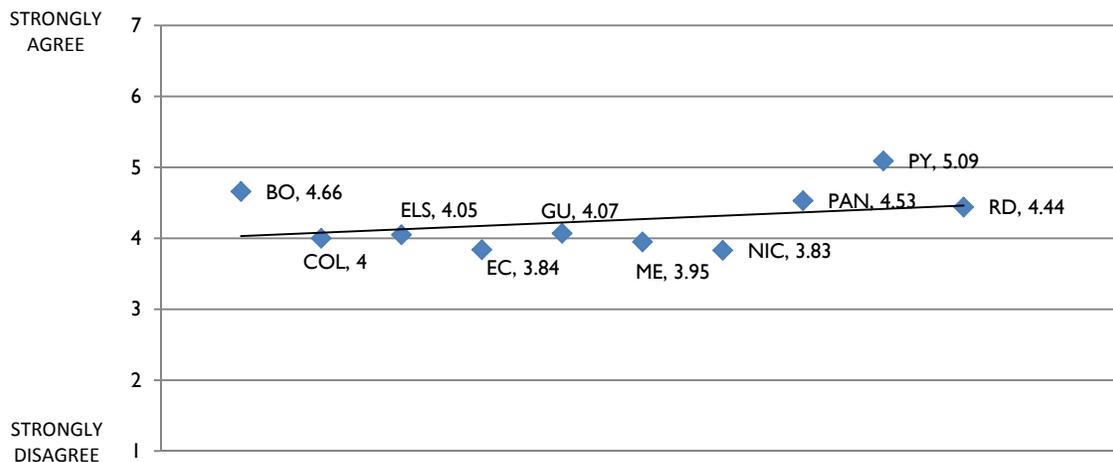
Figure 2: The State as Owner of the Top Companies and Industries: Views of Citizens and Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (Mean)



Source: Compiled from LAPOP and PELA data (2010).

The concept of the state being owner of the leading companies and industries⁶ has greater support among citizens than among legislators in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Peru.⁷ Uruguay, by contrast, is a case where agreement between politicians and citizens is evident (Figure 2). In the other countries of the region, citizens' preferences are similar to the noted trend; the case that deviates, though not substantially, is Paraguay, where citizens are more in favor of state-owned enterprises than politicians (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The State as Owner of Top Companies and Industries: Citizens in Latin America (Mean)



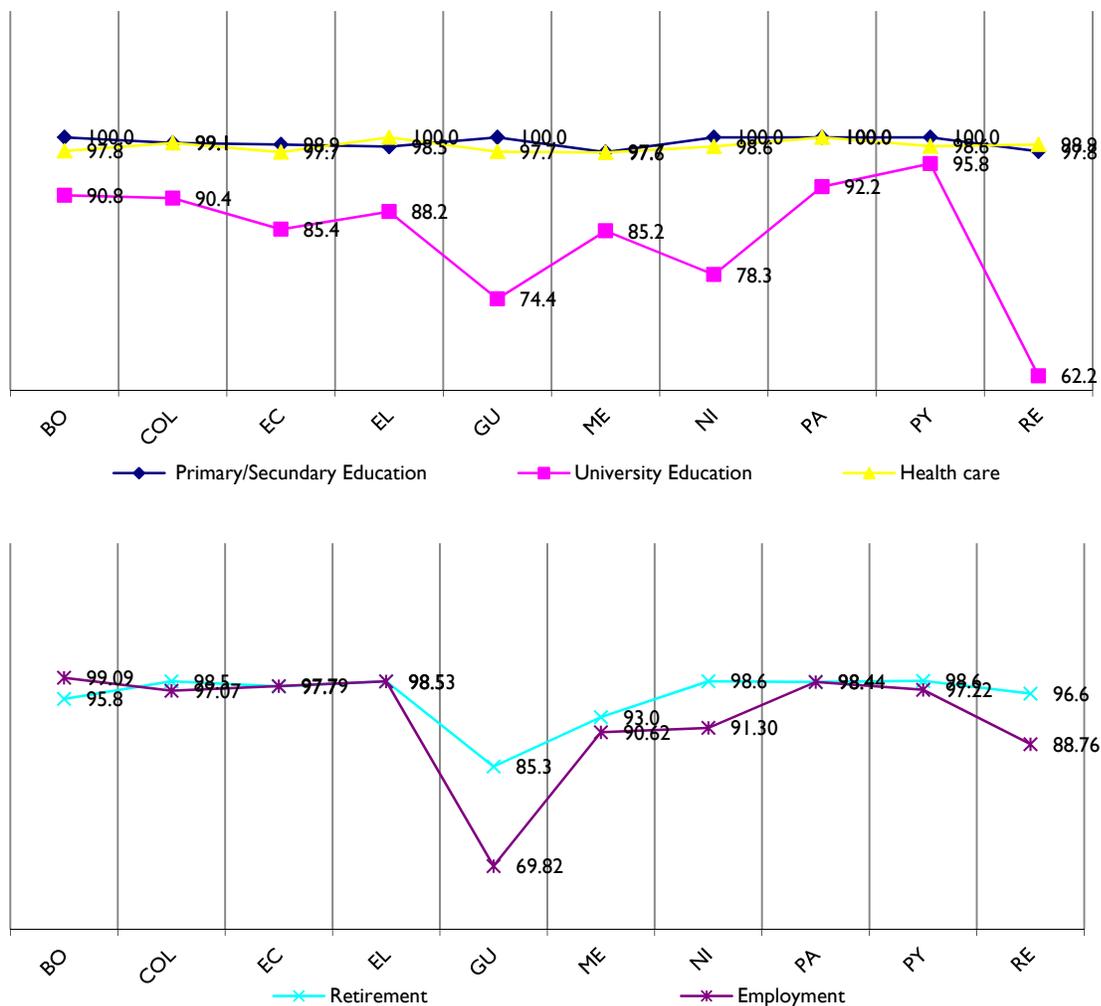
Source: Compiled from LAPOP data (2010)

⁶ We use the answers to the question "I will read a sentence about the role of the state. Please tell me how far you agree or disagree with them. The state, instead of the private sector should be the primary owner of businesses and industries in the country. "For both surveys, the scale is the same 1 to 7, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree".

⁷ Comparison between these countries is possible given that the technical characteristics of the questions allow for comparison between groups. For the fourth wave of PELA studies, the question is not included.

The region has undergone a process of economic improvement and progress on various social indicators (PNUD 2010: 94-95). These conditions are reflected in the concerns of politicians and citizens, for whom education and health care issues have no longer been a priority in recent years. In a few countries such as Uruguay, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic, education and health care problems require urgent attention⁸. Although education and/or health problems are not perceived as priorities, when deputies are asked what role the state should play in these activities, the general trend is that the state should be primarily responsible for guaranteeing conditions and access. With regard to the role of ensuring access to universal and free college education, the tendency is for the state to have a less active and responsible role.

Figure 4: The State and Its Traditional Functions in Percentages: Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (Very Much + Much)



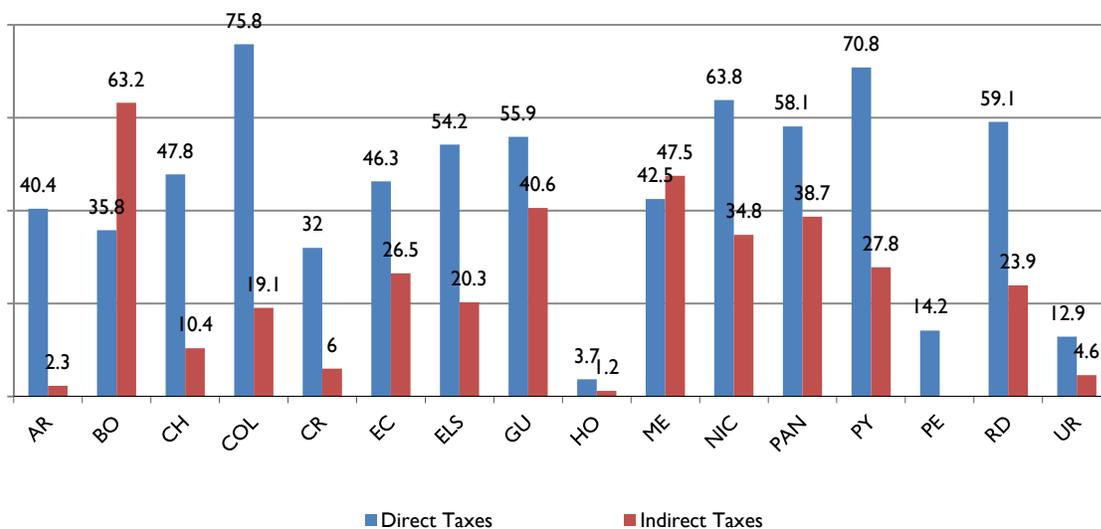
Source: Compiled from PELA data (2006-2009).

⁸ Between 15.6 and 29.4 percent of deputies in these countries point to the importance of these issues in their national contexts.

Although unemployment is a major concern among parliamentary elites and citizens in the region⁹, Latin Americans legislators perceive the role of the state as being to provide the conditions for job creation but not be the employer. Guatemalan and Dominican parliamentary elites agree to a lesser extent with this statement.

The method of financing the state is one of the key issues in any reform process. What resources should be used to finance expenditures for compliance with a certain set of functions? Do taxes constitute a feasible alternative? Should adjustments be made, or should evasion be monitored? To what extent are citizens willing to accept paying more taxes in exchange for better services?

Figure 5: Taxes and Tax Reform: Citizens and Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



Source: Compiled from PELA data (2006-2010)

Latin American representatives expressed a preference for direct tax measures¹⁰, while citizens are less willing to pay more taxes.¹¹

Within the regional context, Costa Rican (52 percent), Honduran (74.2 percent), and Peruvian (90.2 percent) legislators stand out. They claim that tax reform should be aimed primarily at reducing tax evasion, compared with their counterparts, who say that the most important steps are to increase direct taxes (Argentina, Chile) or to cut taxes (Uruguay).¹²

⁹ In general, this ranks among the top three problems mentioned by both representatives and citizens, along with crime and the economic crisis.

¹⁰ The data are from surveys conducted in years other than 2010 in the cases of Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay (see technical sheet).

¹¹ No more than 18 percent of Colombian, Guatemalan, Mexican, and Peruvian citizens are willing to pay more taxes to their municipalities to deliver better services. However, in the Dominican Republic, 35.7 percent agree. It would be interesting to delve into the social, cultural or governmental factors that can influence these preferences, but this is beyond the goals of this paper and remains for other analysis.

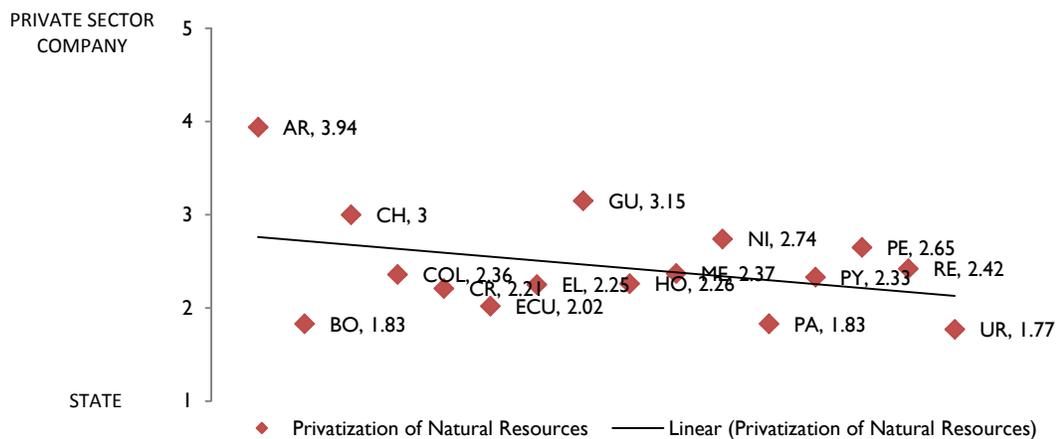
¹² Looking at PELA survey data collected from 2006 to 2009, representatives from Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic also prefer reforms whose main measure would be increasing direct taxes. Bolivian and Mexican

The question of what resources should support state spending and investment is a general theme in response to the debate on *what* the state should do in its traditional roles. In addition, those executing public policies as well as principal governmental actors are required to develop strategies for reducing tax evasion and increasing revenue in such complex contexts of social inequality and poverty as those in the region.

V. How Should the State Perform Its Functions: By Delegation or Collaboration?

Although Latin American deputies in general continue to prefer state management of traditional state functions, the issue of natural resources management is different. Despite what one might expect, attitudes to privatization of such resources differ from those towards privatization of public services.

Figure 6: The Privatization of the Provision and Management of Natural Resources: Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (mean)

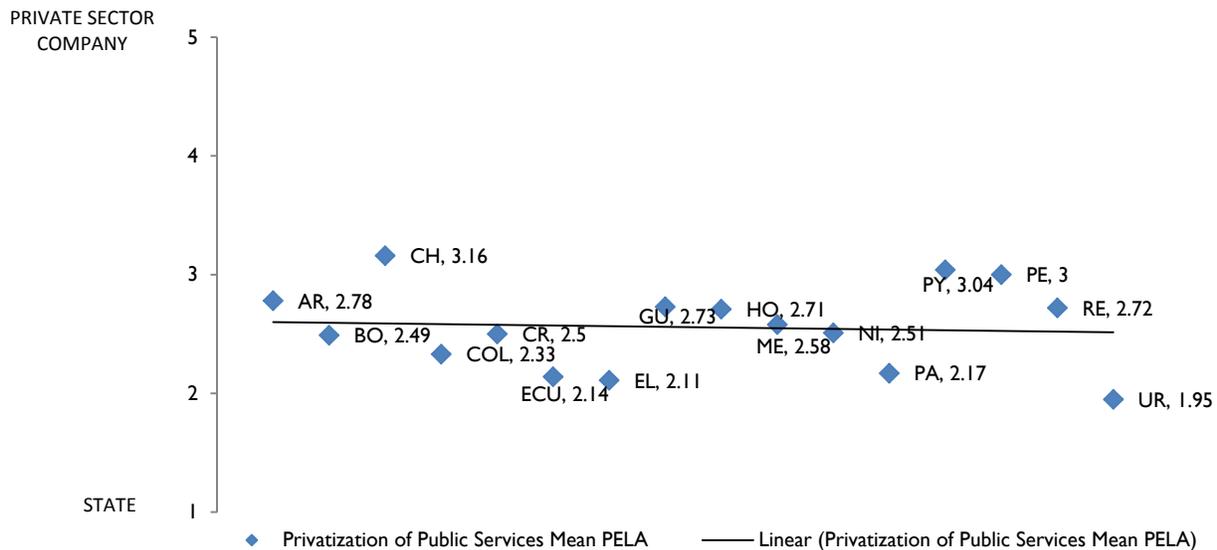


Source: Compiled from PELA data

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Natural resources must be exploited and managed by the state" and 5 "Natural resources must be exploited and managed by private companies," Argentine parliamentary elites clearly differ (3,94) from the regional trend on the matter of the privatization of the management of natural resources. They favor management by private companies, while Panamanian (1.83), Bolivian (1.83) and Uruguayan (1.77) elites prefer state administration. Chilean and Guatemalan elites also support privatization.

legislators, by contrast, prefer an increase in indirect taxes. These trends should be similar among legislators elected in 2010 in countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic.

Figure 7: Privatization of the Provision and Management of Public Services: Parliamentary Elites in Latin America (mean)



Source: Compiled from PELA data

With respect to the issue of privatization of public services¹³, the regional preference for the public sector to have a larger role than the private sector is widespread, with no cases that deviate substantially. However, the low dispersion in elite preferences again noteworthy, such that only countries like Colombia, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic are the only cases that stand out. In general, the regional tendency is towards equilibrium, or balanced management and delivery in both private and state enterprises can be provide these services.

VI. Which Institutional Changes Are Up for Social And Political Debate?

State reform programs tend to have limited effects, a characteristic that demonstrates the loss of state capacity to promote democratization.¹⁴

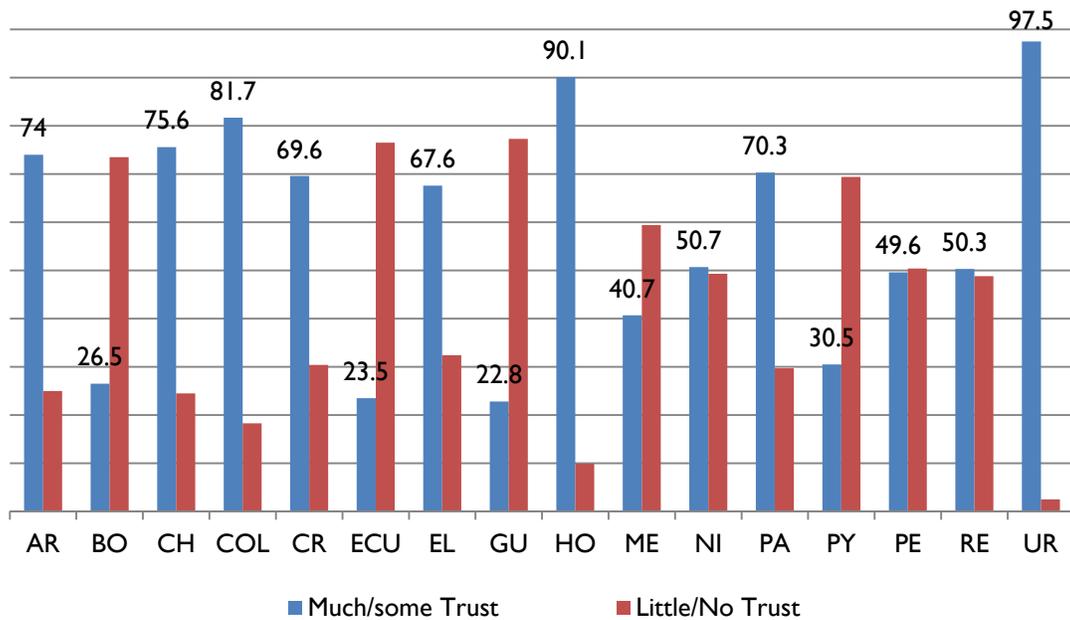
This implies the need to implement changes in the methods of conducting politics. Democratic institutions contain incongruencies that make it difficult to respond efficiently and effectively to socio-cultural and economic demands and transformations. The deepening of this crisis in recent decades has created the need for constitutional, political, and electoral reforms, which do not involve a set of general measures in Latin American countries (Alcantara 2004).

The representatives with highest levels of confidence (very much/somewhat) in political parties are: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and Uruguay. Countries with lower levels of trust (little/no) include: Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Paraguay. The cases of Peru and the Dominican Republic stand out because the proportion of deputies with high confidence is similar to the proportion expressing low confidence.

¹³ The scale is the same as the previous question, and ranges from 1 to 5 where 1 is "Public services must be operated and managed by the state" and 5 "Public services must be operated and managed by private companies."

¹⁴ "One example is the efforts, often unfruitful, at institutional reforms that do not take into account the substantial weaknesses of the state to implement policies. A more general example is the idea that technical strengthening of institutions implies that the state works better. A state without power has neither efficient bureaucracies nor institutions suitable for democracy"(UNDP Report 2010:149-150).

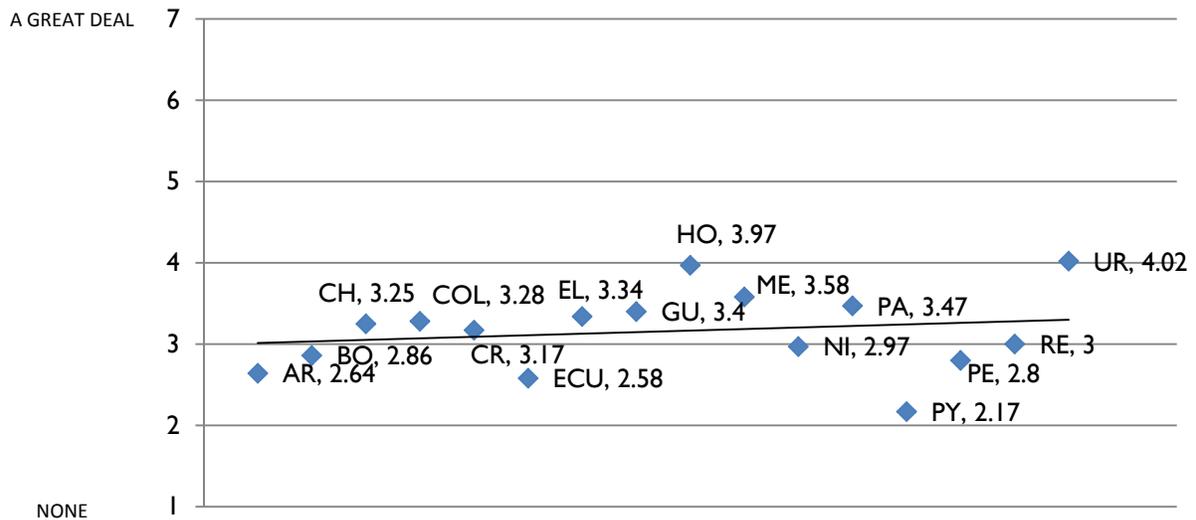
Figure 8: Trust in Political Parties (Percentages): Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



Source: Compiled from PELA data

The countries where citizens' evaluations of political parties are highest compared with the regional tendency are Uruguay, Mexico, and Honduras. The Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia and Argentina are below the regional average. Citizens and legislators with similar views are found in Chile, Colombia and Honduras, where both representatives and the represented have the highest levels of trust in political parties. By contrast, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Paraguay are among those countries where there are lowest levels of public and parliamentary confidence in these social actors. In general, citizens have less trust in political parties than legislators.

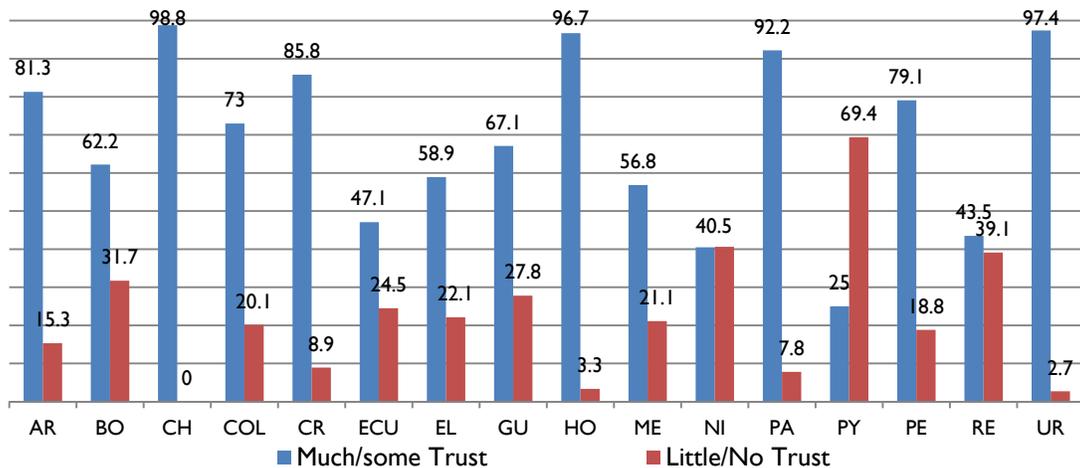
Figure 9: Trust in Political Parties. Latin American Citizens (Means)



Source: Compiled from LAPOP data.

Another major institutional reform is electoral reform, which has had different objectives in the countries that have carried it out. The creation or empowerment of electoral bodies to regulate elections and to monitor political parties in the electoral process has been predominant. These organs have been gradually consolidated, assuming greater responsibilities in the past few decades.¹⁵

Figure 10: Trust in the Electoral Body (Percentages): Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



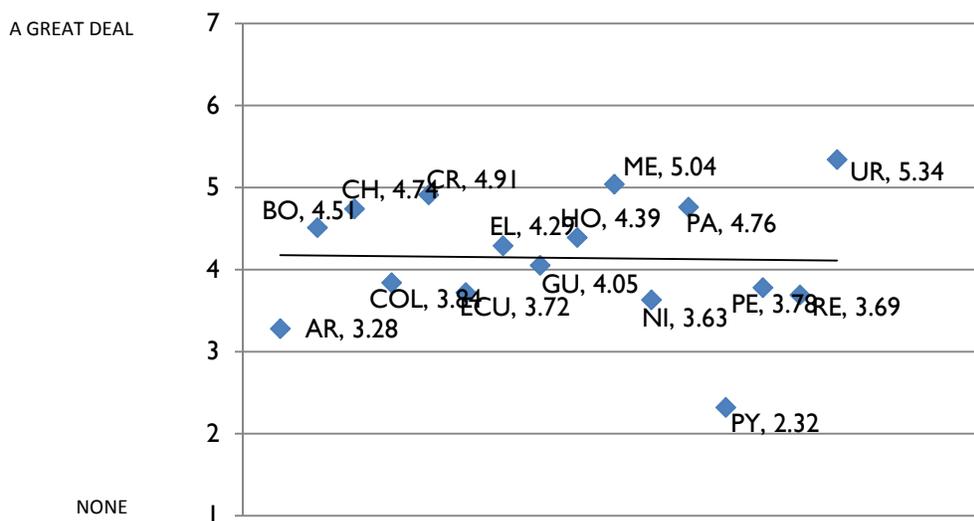
Source: Compiled from PELA data

¹⁵ The countries where the electoral body is most active are: Argentina, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Citizens' and legislators' confidence in electoral bodies seem to diverge in countries such as Bolivia, with low levels of confidence among legislators, but higher trust among citizens.

By contrast, in some countries both parliamentary elites and citizens have high levels of trust, as in Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay. There are also several countries where citizens and representatives agree in their low confidence in electoral bodies; this can be seen in Ecuador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. Uruguayan citizens exhibit especially high trust in the Uruguayan Electoral Court, and the same goes for Mexican citizens' trust in the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), which conducted a series of reforms in 1993, 1994, 1996, and 2007.

Figure 11: Trust in the Electoral Body: Citizens of Latin America (Mean)



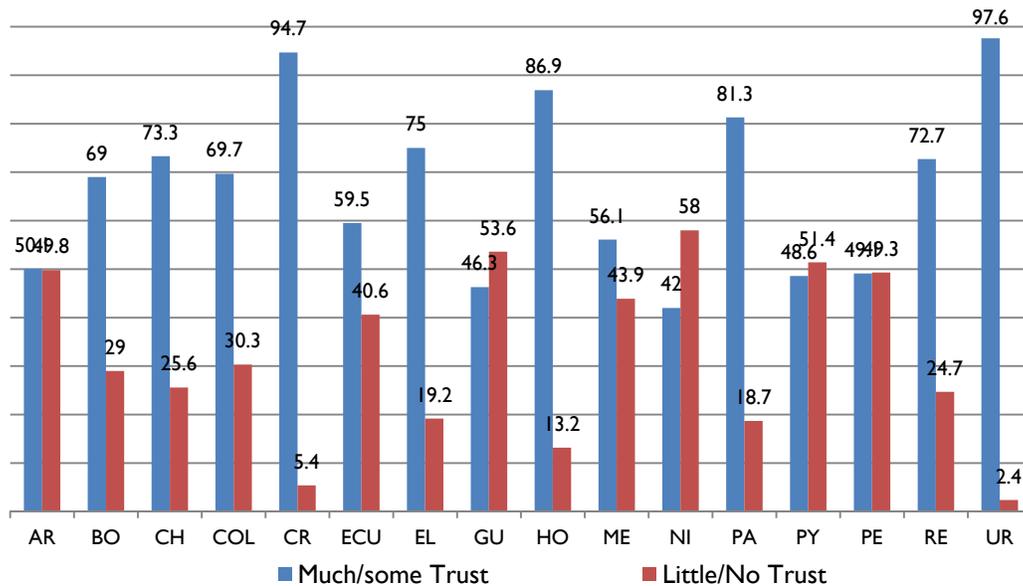
Source: Compiled from LAPOP data

Another central debate regarding the political and institutional reforms has been about the best form of government: parliamentarism vs. presidentialism. In the early 1990s, most presidential systems in Latin America were characterized by a strong executive branch, while some countries of the region incorporated some features of parliamentarism or semipresidentialism.¹⁶ To analyze this, we seek to compare the levels of trust in the president and the parliament, to highlight tendencies for these two institutions.

Among legislators, the countries with highest levels of trust in the president are Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. By contrast, countries with lower trust include Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador, and the lowest levels of trust are found in Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and Argentina.

¹⁶ Zovatto (2010) distinguishes several trends that have characterized these reforms: i) permitting the congress to censure and dismiss cabinet ministers or empowering the president to dissolve congress (Uruguay, Guatemala, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela, among others); ii) creating the position of chief of staff, which is partially responsible to the legislature (Argentina), or establishing the role of the executive vice president (Venezuela); iii) imposing controls to restrict presidential power to issue decrees, as well as strengthening, modernizing, and professionalizing the legislative branch.

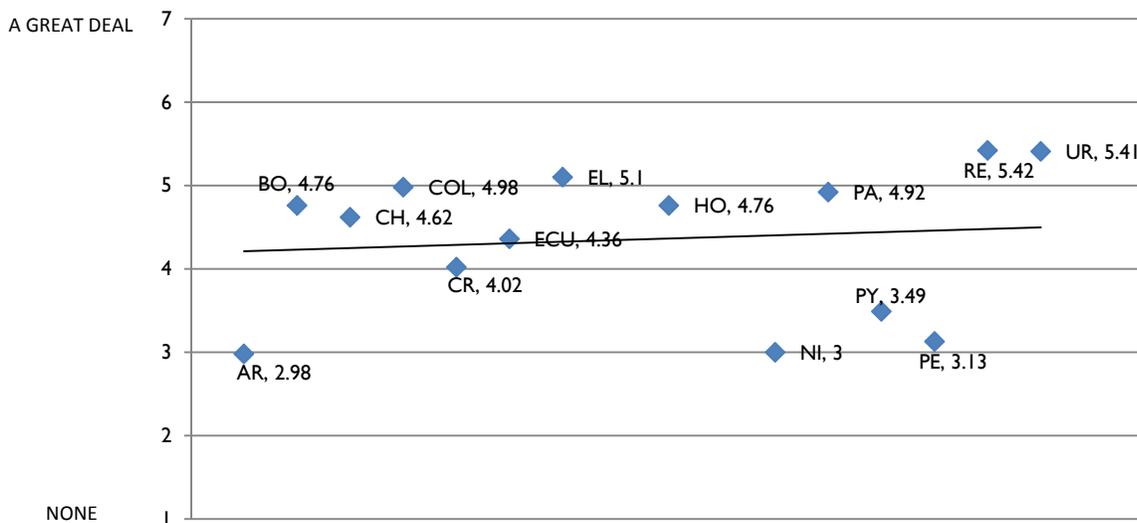
Figure 12: Trust in the President (Percentages): Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



Source: Compiled from PELA data

In terms of citizens, there are higher levels of trust in the president in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. Peru, Paraguay, and Nicaragua are below the average. The countries where there is a marked difference between citizens and representatives' levels of trust are Costa Rica and Uruguay. In the first case, citizens have higher confidence in the president; in the second, citizens have less confidence in the president than do legislators.

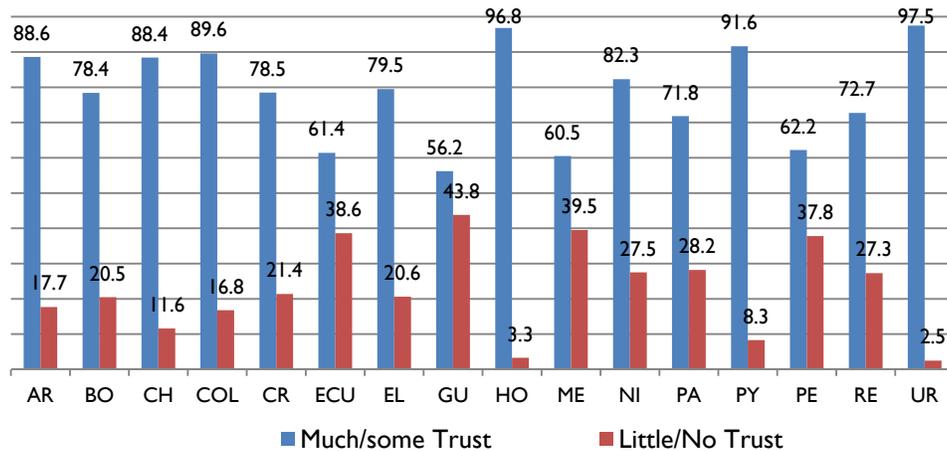
Figure 13: Trust in the President: Citizens of Latin America (Means)



Source: Compiled from LAPOP data (no data for Guatemala and Mexico)

With regard to parliament, the countries where representatives have the highest levels of confidence in this institution are Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Paraguay, and Uruguay, while representatives from Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru have the lowest levels of confidence. Among citizens, the countries with highest levels of trust are Chile, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

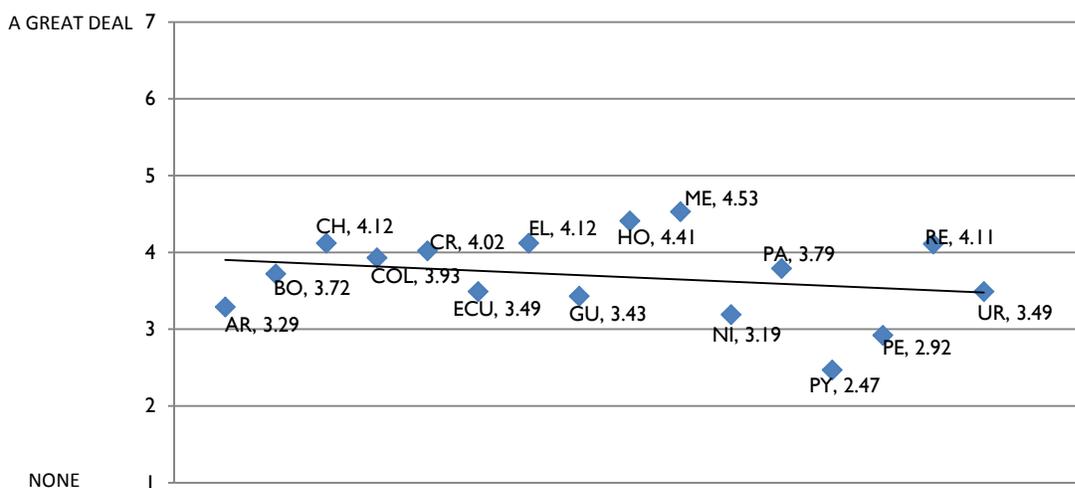
Figure 14: Trust in Parliament (Percentage): Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



Source: Compiled from PELA data

There seems to be a certain congruence in levels of trust in some cases such as Uruguay, where both groups have notably high levels of trust in the legislative branch. By contrast, in Paraguay legislators exhibit high trust in parliament, while at the citizen level, this country has among the lowest levels of trust. Mexico, for its part, is an example of a country in which citizens' level of trust exceeds that of the legislators.

Figure 15: Trust in Parliament: Citizens of Latin America (Means)

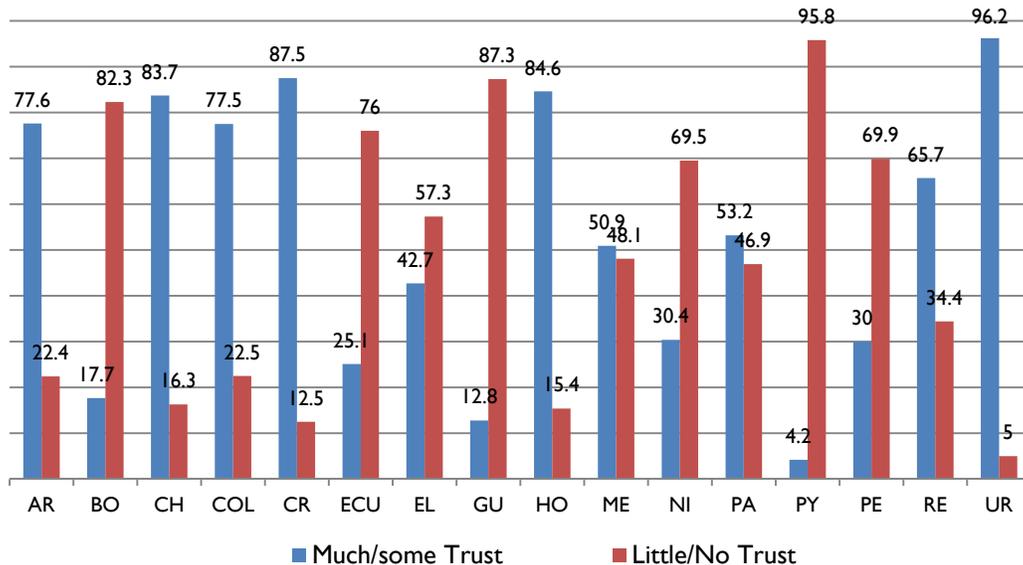


Source: Compiled from LAPOP data

Finally, another area where reforms have been implemented over the last decade is the judicial branch,¹⁷ which fulfills a number of vital functions within any political system, namely: defining the scope of the law, resolving conflicts, exercising political and social control and independence, and being an ideal for improving governance and democratic quality (Hammergen 1998). Given citizens' needs and expectations, when these characteristics are absent from the judicial branch, a series of negative social, political, and economic consequences are generated.

Compared with the other institutions discussed above, the judiciary is the institution legislators trust least. The highest levels of trust can be observed in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Uruguay. Lower levels of trust are found in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru. Paraguay, as in the previous figures, has the lowest levels of all the countries surveyed.

Figure 16: Trust in the Judiciary/Justice System (Percentages): Parliamentary Elites in Latin America



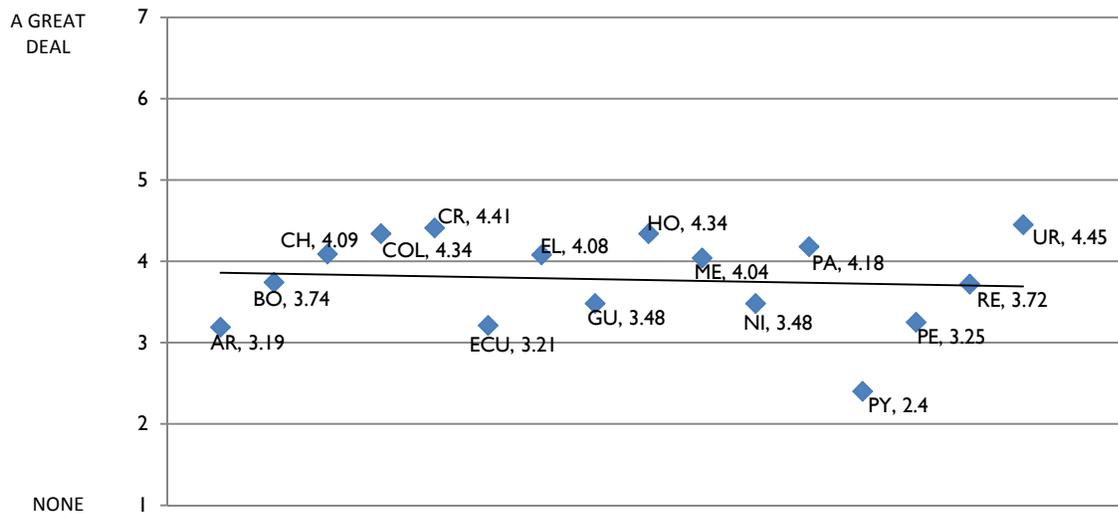
Source: Compiled from PELA data

Citizens seem to agree with deputies in their confidence levels. Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Uruguay remain among the countries with highest levels of trust, while in countries such as Ecuador and Paraguay, representatives express lower confidence in the justice system.¹⁸ Guatemala stands out as a country where legislators have low levels of trust, while citizens have significantly higher levels of confidence in the judicial system.

¹⁷ In Latin America, since the early 1980s governments, judicial leaders, social organizations and external aid agencies have made efforts to reform the institutions of justice; due to these reforms, there have been notable changes in many countries (Hammergen 1999).

¹⁸ For citizens, the data reflect confidence in the judicial system in general.

Figure 17: Confidence in the Judiciary/Justice System: Citizens of Latin America



Source: Compiled from LAPOP data

In general, it can be observed that legislators have a more negative assessment of the judiciary in terms of confidence. Citizens seem more optimistic towards the justice system, given their higher trust levels. The following table identifies the main problems with the judiciary, from the perspective of legislators.

Table II: Most Important Problems of the Judiciary: Parliamentary Elites in Latin America

Problem	First Place	Second Place
System of Judicial Appointment	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Paraguay, Honduras	Mexico, Costa Rica*
Pressure Of Economic Groups	Guatemala	Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala
Lack of Financial Independence	Chile, Colombia	Paraguay
Pressure from the Executive	Ecuador, Mexico	Panama
Corruption	El Salvador, Peru	El Salvador, Honduras Peru
Lack of Human Resources	Uruguay	Uruguay
Lack of Independence of the Supreme Court	Dominican Republic, Nicaragua	Nicaragua
Education of Judges		Costa Rica*, Dominican Republic

Source: Compiled from PELA data

* The same proportion of deputies (14.3%) indicates both as the second most important problem.

The two main problems most often mentioned in relation to the judicial system are the system of appointing judges and executive pressure on the fulfillment of the basic tasks of the judiciary. At the same time, two other common problems stand out: the pressure of economic groups and corruption. While the former problems appear to be widespread, corruption is limited to countries with the lowest levels of confidence.

VII. By Way of Conclusion

This analysis has addressed the views of legislators and citizens in relation to the state's traditional roles and the regulation of the economy. According to the data, some important trends in perceptions and attitudes of the legislators and citizens with respect to the state are the following:

- Elites advocate a balance of government regulation and free market action, though Uruguay and Guatemala deviate slightly from the general trend in the region, and are cases that represent opposing positions: more inclined to state regulation (Uruguay) and more supportive of the economy operating freely (Guatemala).
- Regarding privatization in the management of natural resources, citizens and legislators are fundamentally inclined towards state management. Meanwhile, regarding the privatization of public services, across the region there is a preference for both the public and the private sectors having a role. This perception is shared by all parliamentary elites.
- With respect to parties, it appears that in each country citizens and legislators share similar views. Chile, Colombia, and Honduras are among the countries in which both representatives and the represented have most confidence in this institution. By contrast, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay are among the countries with lowest levels of confidence. Overall, it seems that citizens have lower levels of confidence in parties than legislators.
- Opinions of citizens and legislators regarding trust in electoral institutions seem to diverge. In some countries like Bolivia, there are low levels of trust among legislators but higher levels of trust among citizens. However, in some countries there are higher levels of confidence among both the parliamentary elite and citizens, as in Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay.
- Regarding the debate between presidentialism and parliamentarism, there is still a preference for the figure of a stronger president on the part of citizens, while legislators have more trust in parliament.
- Concerning the judiciary, we find that legislators have low levels of trust while citizens seem to be more optimistic, indicating higher levels of confidence than legislators.

Despite the difficulty of reaching more specific conclusions regarding the relationship between the preferences and confidence of citizens and politicians, this analysis has yielded relevant results that emphasize the need to conduct more comprehensive studies on the relationship among citizen and legislator preferences. Also, it highlights the importance of the discussion on

future state reforms in Latin America, reforms which could increase the representativeness and the responsiveness between leaders and citizens.

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Technical Description of the Samples

Countries	DEPUTIES			CITIZENS	
	Study Number	Sample Size (N)	YEAR	Sample Size (N)	YEAR
Argentina	73	98	2010	1410	2010
Bolivia	62	98	2005	3013	2006
Chile	77	86	2010	1965	2010
Colombia	59	95	2006	1491	2006
Costa Rica	78	56	2010	1500	2010
Ecuador	72	121	2009	3000	2010
El Salvador	70	68	2009	1519	2010
Guatemala	68	97	2006	1550	2006
Honduras	74	91	2010	3000	2010
Mexico	63	128	2006	1498	2006
Nicaragua	66	69	2007	1596	2008
Panama	71	64	2009	1560	2010
Paraguay	69	72	2008	1540	2008
Peru	80	80	2010	1536	2010
The Dominican Republic	64	94	2006	1166	2006
Uruguay	76	79	2009	1500	2010