

## The Democracy Barometers

# THE RISE OF POPULISM AND THE LEFT IN LATIN AMERICA

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Latin America's "left turn" was the focus of a cluster of thoughtful articles in the October 2006 issue of this journal. Since then, the trend toward the left and toward populist governments has deepened. In South America, the rise of the left is unmistakable, with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela led by presidents with varying degrees and shapes of leftist ideology, while further north, in Mexico, a leftist presidential candidate was defeated by the narrowest of margins in the 2006 election. And of course, one must not forget about Cuba, the remaining dictatorship in the region, still firmly in the hands of the socialist left in spite of the protracted and serious illness of Fidel Castro. The most recent additions to the populist left are Bolivia's Evo Morales, who took office in 2006, and Ecuador's Rafael Correa, who began his presidency in early 2007. In Paraguay, the decades-old hegemony of the Colorado Party is being challenged by suspended Roman Catholic bishop Fernando Lugo, who espouses a mixture of leftist and populist rhetoric.

These are remarkable changes for the region. While leftists have held power in the past, never before in Latin America have so many countries been governed by presidents of the left. It should be added that the ideological variations among them are great, however. Presidents Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva of Brazil and Michelle Bachelet of Chile support free trade and close ties with the United States, while Hugo Chávez of Venezuela employs a rhetoric replete with praise of socialism and attacks on capitalism and the United States.

Populist governments are also on the rise. Latin American populism comes in right-wing as well as left-wing forms, and has a history that reaches back to the 1930s. The term “populism” is sometimes confused merely with charismatic, personalistic leaders who appeal to a broad voter base that crosses class lines. Populism properly defined, however, must include a core belief that the institutions of classical liberal democracy, especially legislatures and courts, are anachronistic, inefficient, and inconsistent with the true expression of “the people’s will” (or at least the populist officials’ interpretation of it).<sup>1</sup> Populist leaders typically propose instead to “listen to the people” with the aim of personally carrying out their will while isolating “rejectionists” who would deny it. In practice, populism often can mean running roughshod over fundamental democratic guarantees of civil liberties, especially free expression and the right to due process.<sup>2</sup>

What are we to make of the rise of the left and the resurrection of populism? The first of the two phenomena almost certainly betokens the maturation of democracy in the region, as the politics of region adapt to the coming to power of the opposition via the ballot box without serious threat of military intervention. As such, these trends may add up to little more than one of those pendular swings of the voters’ “mood” such as periodically occur in many established democracies. Alternatively and more ominously, the rise of populism and some varieties of leftist rule could represent a threat to democratic stability.

In order to take the full measure of the situation, investigating several key questions will be helpful. The first asks whether leftist political sympathies predominate in the region, and whether there is evidence of a shift to the left among the populace. A second would inquire as to whether Latin Americans support populism, meaning a style of governance that would do away with representative and judicial institutions in favor of concentrating power in the hands of the chief executive. Finally, it is worth investigating whether those who favor a leftist or a left-populist orientation are less supportive of democracy and more likely to favor some alternative system.

Answering these questions requires studying the beliefs and attitudes of Latin American<sup>3</sup> citizens across the region as well as examining how these beliefs have changed over time. Our ability to tap into the opinions of citizens worldwide has been greatly enhanced with the recent widespread expansion of crossnational surveys. The World Values Survey (WVS) is foremost among them, with the broadest coverage.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, outside the advanced industrial nations, coverage by region is spottier and in Latin America very limited. This gap can be filled, however, by regional surveys—a growing enterprise in the developing world. Many of these surveys use as their monikers variations on the name of the Eurobarometer, the grandfather of the genre, though

problems of sample design and execution mean that the data are not necessarily of uniformly high quality.<sup>5</sup>

The fullest coverage of the Western Hemisphere comes from the AmericasBarometer, a survey periodically carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) of Vanderbilt University and its consortium of more than twenty academic partner institutions, anchored at the Universidad de Costa Rica. The AmericasBarometer provides a rich—and indeed, the sole—source of data covering Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America.<sup>6</sup> The AmericasBarometer’s questionnaires and studies provide detailed coverage of democratic values and behaviors, and are publicly available at [www.lapopsurveys.org](http://www.lapopsurveys.org). The data itself is available for free public online analysis at that same site; the raw data rests in selected university repositories, and can be acquired directly from LAPOP.

In 2006, the AmericasBarometer interviewed more than thirty-thousand people in nineteen countries, including all the countries in Central America, much of South America, key cases in the Caribbean, and North America.<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of the United States and Canada, the hemisphere’s quintessential democracies, provides a unique baseline of comparison missing from most other efforts.

### A Threatening Trend?

How far “left” are Latin American citizens, and are they trending in that direction overall? Surprisingly, it turns out that ideologically, Latin Americans are actually slightly to the *right* of most respondents worldwide. We are able to say this because for many years, beginning with the Eurobarometer and the early iterations of the WVS, public-opinion questionnaires around the world have included a 10-point left-right ideology scale, with a score of 1 selected by those who self-define themselves on the far left of the political spectrum, and a score of 10 by those who place themselves on the far right. The arithmetic midpoint on this scale would be 5.5, but since whole numbers are accepted as the only possible choices, focus-group studies show that respondents almost universally tend to view 5 as the neutral (neither left nor right) point on the scale.<sup>8</sup> Respondents in most countries cluster heavily near the center of the scale, although there are exceptions: The mean figure for Belarus in 1990 was 3.88, while that for Bangladesh in 2000 was 7.56. The average score for the world, however, was 5.56. This comes from pooled WVS data encompassing more than 267,000 interviews across 84 countries and spanning the years from 1981 to 2004. This indicates a slight leaning to the right worldwide.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the WVS’s coverage of Latin America and the Caribbean has been limited, but the four countries included in the most recent (2000–2001) round yield the following average values: Chile, 5.22; Mexico, 6.55; Peru, 5.69; and Venezuela

6.32. In sum, both worldwide and in the limited set of Latin American countries studied via the WVS, opinion skews just slightly to the right of center.

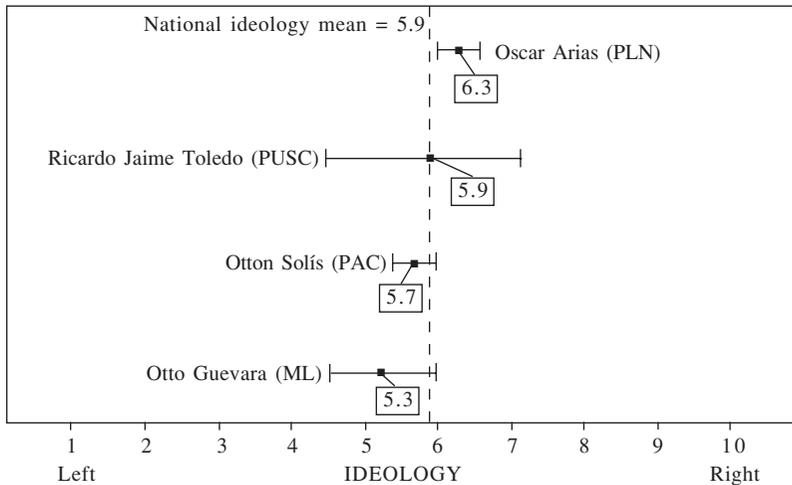
The AmericasBarometer data for 2006 reveal a regional average of 5.77, which places Latin America slightly to the right of the 5.56 world average.<sup>10</sup> The 2004 figure for the Latin American countries that were included in both the 2004 and 2006 rounds was 6.17, however, so it appears that there has been a recent shift to the left. Averages can, of course, be deceiving, but in this case they are not. Looking at countries that can be compared directly in the 2004 and 2006 AmericasBarometer rounds all but two of them moved to the left, and of the ones that did not, only one experienced a statistically significant shift to the right. Thus, the slight “shift to the left” has indeed occurred, and the trend is regionwide, but the magnitude of the shift is small and the center of gravity remains somewhat to the right. Moreover, longer-term trend data would need to be examined before we could be confident about the existence of any secular long-term trend.

For ideology to matter, it must translate into behavior—such as voting for candidates who espouse leftist or rightist positions—which is consistent with this or that ideological orientation. Since the AmericasBarometer includes questions not only on ideology but on party preference as well, we can analyze the relationship between those two and then go farther by examining election results as they relate to social class, employment, and other factors that might form the substance of various “cleavages” within a given society. What emerges is that ideological dispositions along the classic left-right continuum do indeed have a meaningful impact on partisan orientations for many Latin Americans, but national contexts matter a great deal.

In some countries, for instance, parties (and voters) split sharply into leftist and rightist camps, while in other places parties are hard to tell apart as far as ideological preferences go. Finding left-versus-right differences among the major Costa Rican parties is nearly impossible, while Nicaragua’s and especially El Salvador’s respective party scenes display sharp ideological splits. In Figures 1 and 2, the mean ideology score of those who supported particular presidential candidates are indicated with a small circle, and the 95 percent confidence interval around that mean is shown by a horizontally placed “I,” such that the larger the number of respondents who selected that candidate in the survey, the narrower the confidence interval.

In Costa Rica, the average ideology score on the left-right scale in 2006 was 5.9, and as can be seen in Figure 1, all the candidates who received significant numbers of votes in the election that year fell very close to that mean. The greatest deviation was only 0.6 of a point, and that was for voters supporting the Libertarian Party, which is at the very fringe of the Costa Rican political spectrum. The traditional right-of-

**FIGURE 1—IDEOLOGICAL DISPOSITION AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE:  
COSTA RICA**

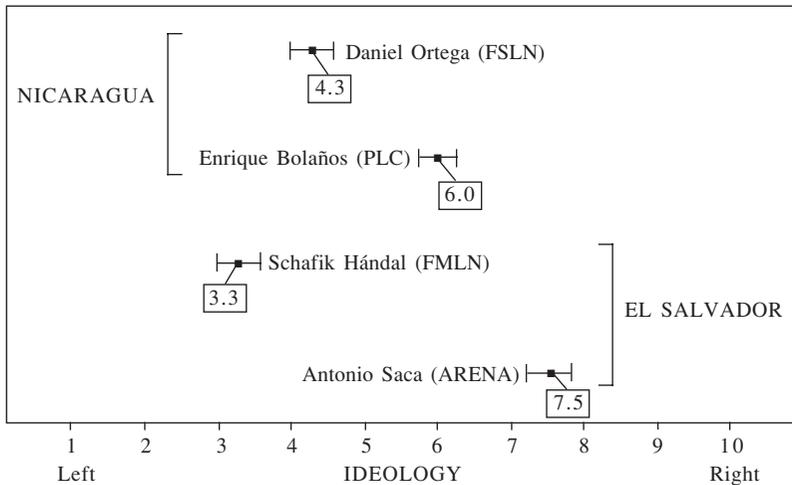


Horizontal lines indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.  
Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.

center Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC), which saw its electoral support collapse in 2006 amid scandals involving two former presidents, coincides directly with the national ideological mean. Interestingly, supporters of the traditionally left-of-center National Liberation Party (PLN) averaged 6.3, slightly to the *right* of the national mean. These findings dramatically illustrate the electoral realignment taking place in that country but speak even more directly to the very narrow range of ideological difference in Latin America’s oldest and most stable democracy. Even though the electoral scene has been marked by declining voter participation and evidence of declining support for the system,<sup>11</sup> Costa Rica remains at the top of all the countries in the region in terms of political legitimacy, and, as these results show, the ideological disagreements are very limited.

As noted above, Costa Rica’s Central American neighbors Nicaragua and El Salvador present considerably more polarized pictures (see Figure 2). In the former country, those who supported Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega—who in late 2006 won back the presidential office from which the voters had ejected him in 1990—are predictably a fair distance to the left of their fellow citizens who supported President Enrique Bolaños (r. 2002–2007) of the Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC). More importantly, the left-right ideological gap is far wider in Nicaragua than it is in Costa Rica—which one would expect to be the case if one holds, as we do, that ideology still matters. In El Salvador, the ideological chasm is much broader still. There, supporters of the 2004 presidential candidacy of Schafik Hándal (d. 2006) of the Farabundo

**FIGURE 2—IDEOLOGICAL DISPOSITION AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE:  
NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR**



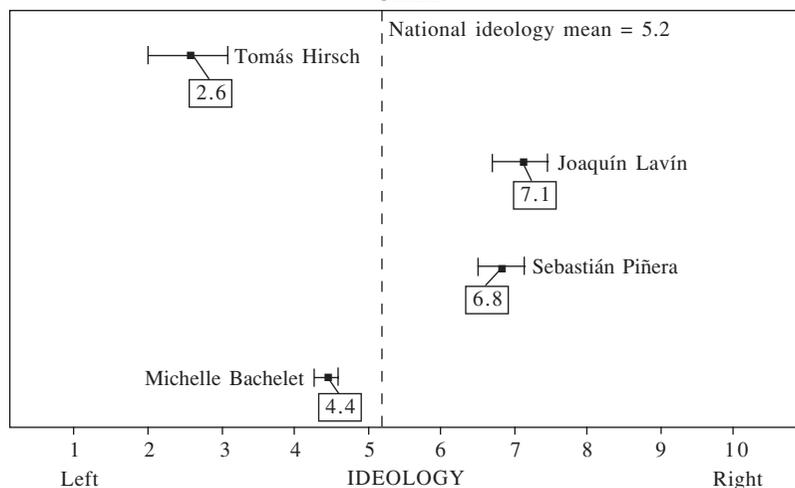
Horizontal lines indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.  
Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.

Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)—the leftist party that emerged from the guerrilla forces of the 1980–92 civil war—averaged a 3.3 as compared to the 7.5 ideology score registered by backers of Antonio Saca, the candidate of the rightist ARENA party that has won the presidency in every election since democracy was restored to that country.

Ideological cleavages also stand out in Chile, where Socialist Party candidate Michelle Bachelet won the presidency in a January 2006 runoff by attracting voters who were closest to the national ideological mean (see Figure 3). Far to her left was Tomás Hirsch, who espoused a more radical program during the campaign but won only a small vote share (which explains the wide confidence interval around the mean of the survey respondents who say that they voted for Hirsch’s party). The rightist candidate, Joaquín Lavín, attracted voters who were ideologically furthest to the right, while the center-right Sebastián Piñera, whom Bachelet beat in the runoff, had the backing of voters whom the AmericasBarometer data show as closer to the center than Lavín’s. In short, Chile’s voters in 2005–2006 held ideological preferences that mapped perfectly onto the spectrum of candidates from which the electorate had to choose.

Three key conclusions emerge from this review of ideology in Latin America. First, even as the region puts more “leftists” into presidential palaces, the median voter remains slightly to the right of world opinion (which itself is slightly right of center). Second, within the “slightly rightist” orientation that predominates among Latin Americans, voters have clearly moved somewhat toward the left even during the brief span

**FIGURE 3—IDEOLOGICAL DISPOSITION AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE:  
CHILE**



Horizontal lines indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.  
Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.

from 2004 to 2006. Third, the role of ideology in defining the electorate varies sharply from one country to another. In some cases, voters (and thus viable candidates) cluster heavily in the center while in other countries, vast ideological chasms separate voters, who in turn align behind candidates spanning the left-right spectrum. In short, the end of the Cold War has not meant any “end of ideology” (to borrow Daniel Bell’s famous phrase) for Latin America.

### The Shift to the Left and Democratic Values

Beyond the ballot box, the AmericasBarometer data show that ideology is relevant to the far deeper question of support for democracy. According to the survey, it is generally the case that people who self-define as more leftist also tend to view their political systems as less legitimate, and are less likely to favor democracy as a political system. A frequently used approach to measure democratic support in many contemporary democracy surveys is drawn from the work in postcommunist Europe of William Mishler and Richard Rose. The item has become known as the “Winston Churchill question,” after that statesman’s famous remark about democracy being the worst system of government except for all the other forms that have been tried from time to time. The survey measures agreement or disagreement with this statement: “Even though democracy has many problems, it is better than any other form of government.”<sup>12</sup>

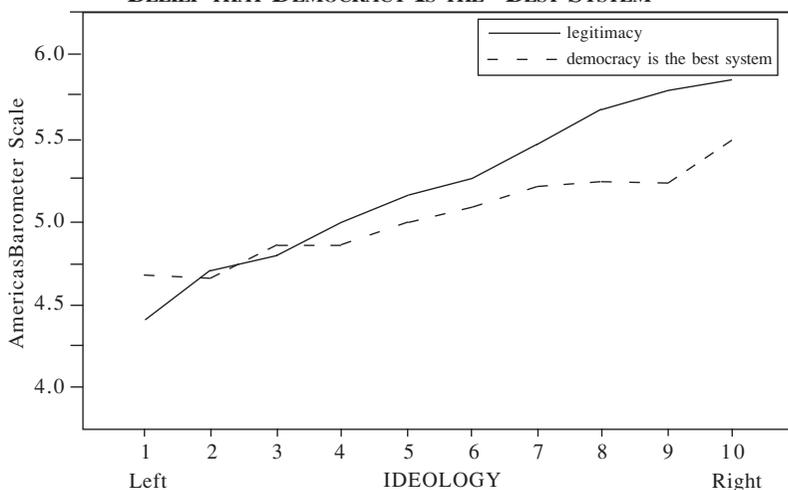
Another key dimension in democratic support is legitimacy, as de-

fined in the classic works of Seymour Martin Lipset and David Easton.<sup>13</sup> The AmericasBarometer uses a 10-point scale to measure the Churchill item, and a five-variable composite index (each of the five variables is measured on a 7-point scale) to measure legitimacy, thus avoiding the way that other research uses yes-or-no or 4- or 5-point scales—crude gauges ill-suited to capturing subtle but significant variations of opinion among citizens. As shown in Figure 4, the further ideology trends to the left in Latin America as a whole, the lower will tend to be both belief in the Churchillian view of democracy as the best system possible *and* belief in the legitimacy of the actually existing political system. This is a disturbing finding, especially in light of the findings reported above that a leftward trend is running and that ideology makes a difference in how voters view candidates. For the region as a whole, the finding that citizens of the Americas who line up on the left are less likely to prefer democracy than those on the right suggest that the movement to the left adds up to a move away from democracy, while the measurements taken using the legitimacy scale suggest that the left questions the authority of the regime to govern. Important exceptions are Chile and Bolivia, where it is the left that expresses higher support for democracy on the Churchill item.

With these worrying trends in mind, a search of the AmericasBarometer data for additional evidence points to a less democratic left in many, but not all countries of the Western Hemisphere. For example, respondents were asked: “There are people who say that what we need is a strong leader who does not have to be elected via the ballot. Others say that even though things don’t work, electoral democracy, that is, the popular vote, is always the best.” Only in Chile and Guatemala did respondents whose answers qualified them as left-of-center predominantly support electoral democracy and reject a strong leader. Everywhere else, it was rightists who were more likely than not to favor electoral democracy (it should be added that in several countries the difference between leftist and rightist respondents was not statistically significant).

Similarly, probes of political tolerance reveal that in most countries—Chile, Guatemala, and Mexico are exceptions—left-wing respondents are no more tolerant than their rightist fellow citizens. Interestingly, in prior studies of Latin America that LAPOP has conducted, leftists have often been found to be more tolerant than rightists. The questions used to measure tolerance have centered on the willingness of respondents to grant to opposition minorities basic civil liberties, such as the rights to vote, run for office, protest, and speak freely. It may well be that with the left now in power across much of region, left-wingers have become *less* tolerant of the now mostly out-of-office right. Testing such a hypothesis, however, would be a task well beyond the scope of this brief essay.

**FIGURE 4—IMPACT OF IDEOLOGY ON LEGITIMACY AND BELIEF THAT DEMOCRACY IS THE “BEST SYSTEM”**



Sig.<.001

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Is there evidence that citizens of Latin America would prefer populist-style governments rather than liberal democracies? As already noted, populism has many and varied meanings, but the current interest in it is directly linked to the growing South American trend to make constitutional changes, often through constitutional conventions or constituent assemblies, that focus power in executive hands while weakening judges and legislators. The most dramatic example is Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, but similar patterns are observable in Bolivia, Ecuador, and elsewhere. Do the surveys provide hard evidence that a preference for populism over liberal democracy is afoot?

Nearly all surveys of Latin America have found that citizens hold their national legislatures and judiciaries in low regard. The AmericasBarometer data confirm that picture. Respondents are read a long list of institutions and asked how much they trust each one. When we convert the numbers arrayed along the AmericasBarometer’s 1-to-7 scale to a more intuitively comprehensible 0-to-100 scale, the church scores at the top, with a mean trust score of 69 out of a possible 100 across the region as a whole. At the very nadir of public trust sit political parties, whose collective score of 35 is half what the church averages. The justice system averages 43, the legislature and supreme court score a 44, and law-enforcement agencies notch a 46. Of all the state institutions about which the surveys ask, only the armed forces—which garner a score of 60—manage to climb above 50 on the 0-to-100 trust scale. All the key representative institutions of liberal democracy languish in the negative (below-50) zone—a clear token of the public’s lack of confidence in them.

How low are these scores? The WVS uses a different metric, scoring trust in these institutions along a mere 1-to-4 scale. Yet an examination of the WVS rank-ordering shows that the lowest average trust score across all countries worldwide belongs to political parties, with the legislature and then the justice system the next least-trusted institutions. Across the globe, as in Latin America, the military is the most trusted state institution of all, and no state institution enjoys the level of trust that religious institutions do. In this sense, Latin America conforms precisely to the international pattern.

To obtain a more nuanced look, it is instructive to compare the Latin American results with identically worded and scaled questions and answers drawn from AmericasBarometer research done in the United States and Canada. Although confidence in parties is low in both Canada (49.1) and the United States (42.9), the Canadian score is the Hemisphere's highest, while the U.S. score ranks fourth from the top. In only one other country do parties average a trust score that exceeds 40, while in Paraguay and Ecuador the figures are below 30. When it comes to the supreme court, the gap with Latin America is greater. The highest courts of Canada and the United States score a 71.3 and a 67.1, respectively, while throughout Latin America and the Caribbean no court scores above 60, and half of them score below 50. The least trusted high courts are found in Ecuador (24.7), Paraguay (30.2), and Haiti (31.4). When it comes to public trust in the justice system as a whole, the pattern is the same: The United States and Canada are the only countries where the score is above 60. The Hemisphere's least-trusted justice systems belong to Ecuador (28.0), Paraguay (31.0), and Peru (32.6). Costa Rica, Latin America's oldest established democracy, comes closest to the United States and Canada with a score of 52.9.

With citizens placing so little trust in the traditional institutions of liberal democracy, one might expect to find the urge to jettison them running high along with a spring tide of populist sentiment. Yet this is not entirely what the survey evidence shows. Support for parties may be low, but when the 2006 AmericasBarometer asked: "In your opinion, can there be democracy without political parties?" only 44 percent regionwide agreed. (Outliers included Ecuador and Haiti, where 50.5 and 62.2 percent, respectively, agreed that there can be democracy without parties.) In most countries, a majority rejects the notion that there can be democracy without parties, yet a strong minority accepts the idea. It is hard to say whether this is good news or bad unless we dig deeper in search of a better way to interpret what these findings say about Latin Americans' willingness to accept populist rule.

To gain further insight into the appeal of populism, LAPOP developed a new set of items for the 2006 AmericasBarometer. These questions were designed specifically to gauge citizens' willingness to push aside parties, legislatures, and courts in order to hand power to the

executive. The LAPOP consortium built five items that formed a single dimension (using factor analysis) when the data were analyzed. One item, for example, read: “With which of these two opinions do you agree more: 1) For the progress of the country, it is necessary that our presidents limit the voice and vote of the opposition parties; 2) There is no reason that would justify that our presidents limit the voice and vote of the opposition parties, even if they hold back the progress of the country.”

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*Even when we control for wealth and education, the younger the age of the respondent, the more likely he or she will be to support populist measures at the expense of liberal democracy.*

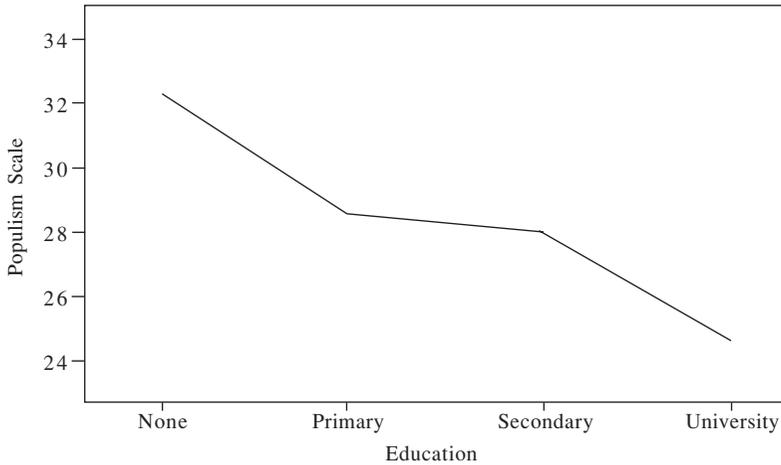
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The experts from LAPOP also created an overall scale to measure “support for populism.” According to this gauge, more than a third (36.3 percent) of all respondents refused to accept any populist measure, and only 15.2 percent of the respondents would support more than two of the five populist measures. Yet nearly half

(48.4 percent) of the respondents in the pooled data set were willing to accept two of the five measures, and almost two-thirds (63.7 percent) were willing to accept at least one such measure. By this reckoning, then, while only a small minority of citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean favor a wide variety of measures to strengthen the presidency at the expense of representative, liberal-democratic institutions, a substantial majority would accept at least one sharp cutback in the separation of powers.

What of the minority that rejects liberal democracy? In democracies, minorities can be important, especially if they assert their preferences with great intensity or are concentrated in a homogeneous sector of the population. Under certain sets of election rules, for example, mobilized minorities with a unified position can achieve victory when the opposition is divided. Minorities also can carry great weight in the street, should they decide to embark upon demonstrations, civil disobedience, or terrorism. It is important to know, therefore, where minority support for populist rule is strongest in Latin America. Seymour Martin Lipset’s classic work on “working-class authoritarianism” finds support in the contemporary data from the region. A regression analysis on the pooled data finds that populist sentiment is significantly higher among the poorer and less educated (see Figures 5 and 6).<sup>14</sup>

A surprising finding, however, is that even when we control for wealth and education, the *younger* the age of the respondent, the more likely he or she will be to support populist measures at the expense of liberal democracy and its guarantees of rights and freedoms. The surprise flows from the old and widespread assumption that older people are “set in their ways” and therefore more likely to support a government that puts

**FIGURE 5—IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON SUPPORT FOR POPULISM**

Sig. &lt;.001

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

limits on dissent. Fully explaining what draws today's Latin American youth to populism will require more analysis, but one plausible hypothesis posits that many older citizens of the region, having lived through the military dictatorships of the 1970s, are "immunized" against populist-authoritarian appeals in ways that younger citizens simply are not. The young know only the disappointments of the current democratic period, when economic growth across much of Latin America has been less robust than expected, and worse, has largely failed to reach the poor. Moreover, it may well be that older citizens are more jaded in general, having seen politicians of all stripes come and go, and therefore less willing to rally behind the latest political "flavor of the month." Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that Chile and Haiti—which have seen such political extremes in the last several decades—are the two countries where the older one is, the more likely one is to reject populism. Across the region as a whole, however, the results regarding age and populism should be seen as sobering. For they suggest that as the young people of today become tomorrow's electoral majorities, populism's appeal against the many checks, balances, rules, and frustrations of liberal democracy will only grow.<sup>15</sup>

The AmericasBarometer data point to some overall trends that merit careful attention. The ideological center of gravity in Latin America is, by world standards, slightly to the right, yet attitudes are moving to the left. Ideological cleavages in Latin America, long after the Cold War's end, still line up along a distinct left-right dimension, and voters support parties consistent with their ideological orientations. The gap between left and right is very narrow, however, in some countries (Costa Rica) but strikingly wide in other countries (Chile, El Salvador, and Nicaragua).

**FIGURE 6—IMPACT OF WEALTH ON SUPPORT FOR POPULISM**

Sig.&lt;.001

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Being on the left in Latin America has implications beyond the ballot box. For the region as a whole, those on the left are less likely to believe that their country's political system is legitimate, and are less likely to believe that despite all its flaws, democracy is still the best available form of government. Moreover, in most countries, the left is more likely to support strong leaders who offer weak support or even hostility to the checks, balances, and procedures that mark liberal democracy. A second and related trend is the rise of populist figures and governments, especially in South America. This trend emerges, no doubt, in part from the very low level of trust that many citizens place in key institutions of liberal democracy—especially parties, the courts, and the legislature. In some countries, such as Ecuador, trust in these institutions is abysmally low. This should come as no surprise given the events in Ecuador over the past decade, in which a succession of democratically elected presidents were forced by the legislature to leave office early even as the executive branch eviscerated the independence of the country's judiciary.

While demand for across-the-board measures that would add up to dictatorial rule is still very much a minority sentiment across the region as a whole, close to two-thirds of respondents would even now accept at least some sharp reduction in the institutional autonomy of the courts, the legislature, and opposition parties. Support for measures that would result in what Larry Diamond calls a “hollowing-out” of democracy<sup>16</sup> is moreover closely associated across the region with the poverty, lack of schooling, and youth of respondents. On the other hand, it is hard to underestimate the importance of the fact that Latin Americans now have

genuine choices of party and ideology that can be expressed in free and fair elections, so not all trends are negative. But the negative trends are real enough, and their potential effect on democratic stability in the region remains to be seen.

## NOTES

I thank Kirk and Darren Hawkins, José Miguel Cruz, María Fernand Boidi, and John Booth for their suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

1. Kurt Weyland defines populism as: “a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers. This direct, quasi-personal relationship bypasses established intermediary organizations or deinstitutionalizes and subordinates them to the leader’s personal will.” Kurt Weyland, “Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics,” *Comparative Politics* 34 (October 2001): 14.

2. Among the classic works exploring the elements of the populist tradition are Michael L. Conniff, ed., *Populism in Latin America* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999); and J.M. Malloy, *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977). For more recent view, see Kenneth M. Roberts, *Changing Course: Parties, Populism, and Political Representation in Latin America’s Neoliberal Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

3. The AmericasBarometer covers Latin America plus four Caribbean countries and the United States and Canada. In this article, when the term “Latin America” is used, it includes the Caribbean as well.

4. Ronald Inglehart et al., *Human Beliefs and Values: A Cross-Cultural Sourcebook Based on the 1999–2002 Values Surveys* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 2003), 200.

5. Some regional surveys present a mix of national samples and urban samples, while others limit themselves to the official national language, excluding significant linguistic minorities; since intranational variation on many opinion and behavior variables is often wider than international variation, direct comparisons of samples with sharply varying coverage can be seriously misleading. See Mitchell A. Seligson, “Improving the Quality of Survey Research in Democratizing Countries,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, January 2005, 51–56.

6. The countries were stratified into a small number of geographical regions (usually numbering four to six). Within each region, moreover, the samples were substratified into urban or rural zones. Questionnaires translated into widely spoken indigenous languages, such as Quechua and Aymara in Bolivia, and three Mayan languages in Guatemala were used where appropriate in each country.

7. As in the case of the AfroBarometer and the World Values Survey, careful survey work covering a wide array of countries is often practically impossible to accomplish within a single year. Additional countries are being added to the AmericasBarometer in 2007, but the data for those countries will become available only after this essay goes to press. Experts from participating countries met in Costa Rica in May 2006 to agree on a standardized core questionnaire, after which each country’s delegation was free to add items related to specific issues relevant to their home country or to specific interests of the researchers. For the training manual and questionnaires, visit [www.lapopsurveys.org](http://www.lapopsurveys.org).

8. A 0-to-100 scale would have provided a true neutral point, but the AmericasBarometer conforms to the World Values Survey standard of a 1-to-10 scale.

9. The WVS has expanded its range of countries over the years, moving from a concentration on advanced industrial democracies to one that now includes many countries from the developing world. Looking exclusively at the seventy countries surveyed since 1999, the mean ideology score is 5.58, nearly identical to the entire series since 1981, indicating no worldwide shift in the post-Cold War epoch. Worldwide, nonresponse on this question is typically higher than on other survey items. The WVS mean is based upon 193,531 individuals who responded to the ideology question on at least one wave of the WVS. The AmericasBarometer encountered a nonresponse rate of about 20 percent, which is typical for many surveys.

10. This comparison includes a subset of ten countries from 2004 that were also surveyed with the identical survey item in 2006.

11. See Fabrice Lehoucq, "Costa Rica: Paradise in Doubt," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (July 2005): 140–54, as well as the subsequent exchange between Lehoucq and former Costa Rican president Miguel Angel Rodríguez in the April 2006 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*.

12. William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Five Years After the Fall: Trajectories of Support for Democracy in Post-Communist Europe" in Pippa Norris, ed., *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 78–99.

13. See, for instance, Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960); and David Easton, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science* (New York: Knopf, 1953). We measure legitimacy by a 5-item series, each item in which is scored on a 1-to-7 scale and then transformed into a 1-to-10 index. Details can be found in John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Political Legitimacy and Participation in Costa Rica: Evidence of Arena Shopping," *Political Research Quarterly* 59 (December 2005): 537–50; Mitchell A. Seligson, "The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries," *Journal of Politics* 64 (May 2002): 408–33; and Mitchell A. Seligson, "The Measurement and Impact of Corruption Victimization: Survey Evidence from Latin America," *World Development* 34 (February 2006): 381–404.

14. Analysis of individual country data, not reported here, finds variation in these regression patterns. Extensive studies regarding each of the AmericasBarometer countries are available at [www.lapopsurveys.org](http://www.lapopsurveys.org).

15. An obvious alternative explanation is that as today's young people age, they will come to resemble their elders and therefore will be equally resistant to populist appeals. Unfortunately, the panel data that would help us to distinguish between those effects related to age in general and those related to membership in a specific generational cohort do not exist. See Glenn Firebaugh, *Analyzing Repeated Surveys* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1997).

16. Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).