Public Support for Due Process Rights: The Case of Guatemala

MITCHELL A. SELIGSON

Democracies have emerged throughout the world over the past decade, but events over the past few years have brought into question the long-term stability of those regimes. The October 1999 coup d'état in Pakistan that ended a (deeply flawed) constitutional rule dating back to 1985 is an illustration of the most dramatic mechanism by which democracies can be extinguished. The Pakistani case is not alone; as the new millennium dawned, sectors of the Ecuadorian military supported a populist uprising and removed the elected president from office, the sixth individual to hold that office in four years, and that was followed by the ephemeral coup in Venezuela.

Coupes, however, are far less frequent today than they once were, perhaps in part because the world community frowns on such overt assaults on democracy, and in part because of direct pressure from democratically elected leaders who fear for their own survival if their neighbors succumb to a coup. More common in recent times has been the erosion or “hollowing out” of democracy, to use Larry Diamond’s well-chosen term, through various restrictions of civil liberties. According to the most recent Freedom House ratings of democracy, between 1998 and 1999, while twenty-six countries around the world increased their democracy scores, eighteen declined in theirs.

The groundbreaking work of Jim Gibson on the McCarthy period in the United States has demonstrated that the policy preferences of citizens matter when it comes to support for or rejection of legislation restricting civil liberties. Extending these findings to the emerging democracies in the Third World is the purpose of this article. If citizens there do not support basic civil liberties, then one can predict that over time democracy will be eroded rather than consolidated. My interest, then, in this article is the policy preferences of the mass public on the issue of due process rights for suspected criminals. We know, of course,

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that the policy preferences of the mass public are not automatically translated into policy; however, we also know that in democracies, public preferences clearly matter and influence policy outcomes.

To test the international implications of the Gibson thesis, it is important to keep in mind the classic work of Prothro and Grieg. They found that when citizens are asked about their support for democratic liberties in the abstract, they are very likely to express high support for them, but once applied to specific and difficult test-case situations, such support is often found to lag considerably. As I will show, the difficult test case today in Latin America is no longer over the issue of Communist influence, as it was in Tallahassee, Florida, when Prothro and Grieg did their research, but in the issue on due process rights for suspected criminals.5

Invariably, governments justify restrictions on civil liberties by pointing to the need to control social deviance. More concretely, the worldwide concern over crime, in an era when crime has increased to unprecedented levels in many consolidating democracies, has led governments to propose and enact measures that erode democratic liberties.6 In many cases, fear of crime is increasing far above the actual increase in crime itself. For example, in one study conducted in Argentina from 1991 to 1994, crime rates increased by about 5 percent, while the number of newspaper articles reporting on crime increased by 112 percent.7

Increased crime appears to have had an impact on democracy in the past, and its consequences then were very serious for the survival of democracy. As Nancy Bermeo writes, “In 1920, twenty-six out of twenty-eight European states were parliamentary democracies. By 1938, thirteen of these democracies had become dictatorships.”8 Many theories explaining these breakdowns, which eventually plunged the world into World War II, taking with it not only democracy, but more than 50 million lives,9 have focused on economic crisis. The familiar argument is that Germany’s democracy broke down because of the extreme inflation the country suffered prior to the election of Hitler. Bermeo has shown, however, that this explanation simply does not work because the democracies that survived in Europe in the 1930s suffered economically no less than those that broke down. Bermeo’s important insight is that crime rates clearly distinguish the surviving democracies from those that collapsed. Her data show that in the cases of breakdown, preexisting homicide rates averaged three times greater than those of
the surviving cases. Consistent with this view, those who have studied the German case have argued persuasively that voters were supporting a "law and order" candidate.\textsuperscript{10}

If Bermeo is correct, and social disorder in the form of crime is a significant factor driving voters to support authoritarian solutions and the ultimate breakdown of democracy, then Latin America is a good place to test the thesis. Homicide rates usually are considered to constitute the most reliable indicator of crime, since few murders go unreported.\textsuperscript{11} In Bermeo's interwar data set, the homicide rate for the countries in which democracy broke down averaged seven per 100,000 population. Compare those rates with data from Latin America. The region has the dubious distinction of having the highest rates of crime and violence in the world. It is estimated that the homicide rate in Latin America is thirty murders per 100,000 persons per year, whereas it is about eight in the United States and about two in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Switzerland. The Pan American Health Organization, which reports for Latin America as a whole a lower average of twenty per 100,000 people,\textsuperscript{12} says that "violence is one of the main causes of death in the Hemisphere. . . . In some countries, violence is the main cause of death and in others it is the leading cause of injuries and disability."\textsuperscript{13} This means that in the region there are 140,000 homicides each year. According to this and other indicators, violence in Latin America is five times higher than in other places in the world.\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, according to Gaviria and Pages, the homicide rates are not only consistently higher in Latin America, but the differences with the rest of the world are growing larger. Consistent with the preceding data, using 1970–1994 data from the United Nations World Crime Surveys, Fajnzylber and colleagues found that Latin America and the Caribbean have the highest homicide rates, followed by sub-Saharan African countries.\textsuperscript{15}

If Latin America is a good place to study the impact of crime on attenuating support for democracy, Guatemala is ideal. According to the Centro de Investigaciones Económicas Nacionales (CIEN), the national violent death rate for 1996 was calculated at 58.68 per 100,000 inhabitants.\textsuperscript{16} That is a level eight times higher than found, on average, in the European democracies that broke down in the 1920s and 1930s, and fifty times higher than the ones that survived.\textsuperscript{17}

The purpose of this article is to examine the public policy preferences of Guatemalans on the issue of due process rights. I seek to determine, first, how supportive Guatemalans are of these basic democratic
procedural rights, and second, if it is possible to explain why some are willing to extend those rights while others are not. More generally, I seek to link a preference for regime type in the form of democracy or dictatorship with crime victimization, the fear of crime, and ultimately, support for restrictions of civil liberties among suspected criminals.  

Some studies have looked at victims, but few have attempted to identify a direct link between victimization, fear of crime, and support for anti-democratic policies. In this paper I examine that question. I do so by focusing on support for due process guarantees as the main dependent variable, and the factors that help explain why some Guatemalans support due process, even for suspected criminals, while others do not as independent variables. In order to do this I construct a measure of support or opposition to democracy based on two survey items. I then show how this general support relates to specific support for policies related to suspected criminals and social deviants. I then examine the factors that may be associated with support versus opposition to democracy. Although the first part of the article relies largely upon bivariate analysis for descriptive purposes, the heart of the empirical analysis is a structural equation model (SEM) in which the full set of predictors is used. I conclude by examining the linkages of support for democracy to the recent national plebiscite on constitutional reforms related to the peace process and to electoral preferences of citizens.

**The Data**

The survey (N = 1,200) was conducted in 1999 based on a sample design representative of the Guatemalan population. It was based on three prior surveys, conducted in 1993, 1995, and 1997, that form part of this overall project. The nation was stratified into five geographic regions, primary sampling units (PSUs) were based on census tracts and maps, and an appropriate number of PSUs was selected using PPS criteria. The sample design faced two limitations, however. First, in Guatemala about twenty-eight Mayan languages are spoken, and it would have been financially unfeasible to prepare versions of the questionnaire in all of them. As it turns out, fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Mayan language speakers are concentrated in four main languages: Kaqchikel, Mam, Q'eqchi, and K'iche. Versions of the questionnaire were prepared in each of those languages, and experienced interviewers who could deliver the questionnaire in those languages
were hired. For the 1999 survey, a fifth Mayan language was added, Ixil, since the survey plan included a special sample of the Department of Quiché. Since many Mayan-language-speaking Indians in Guatemala are bilingual in Spanish, the number of monolinguals not included in these five major languages is quite small, although precise numbers are not available. In an earlier study, I estimated that monolingual speakers of the remaining twenty or so languages in Guatemala probably comprise no more than 3 percent of the population. Second, in remote regions where sample segments of fewer than ten dwelling units were found, interviews were not conducted because the cost per interview was too great to be justifiable. In some instances, it can take as much as a ten-hour walk to reach a single remote segment in the mountainous regions.

The distribution of the sample is shown in figure 1. Each dot on the map represents six interviews, but the precise location of the dots within the departments is illustrative. Note that no interviews were conducted in the departments of El Petén, Retalhuleu, and Sacatepéquez because the sample was stratified by region rather than department, and these departments did not fall into the sample.

Figure 1. Distribution of 1999 sample of Guatemalans.
Support for Mano Dura

The efforts of survey researchers to measure attitudes associated with support for authoritarian practices have been fraught with difficulty. Beginning with the pioneering work of Adorno and colleagues at the end of World War II, social psychologists have been searching for ways to measure authoritarian predilections among the mass public. The difficulties with the initial F-Scale are well known. Many years later, after waves of criticism of that effort had been internalized by the field of social psychology, Bob Altemeyer made major advances in the construction of the reliable and valid Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (RWA). Unfortunately, since the scale was developed and refined in Canada, a low-crime, highly advanced, stable democracy, Altemeyer provides little evidence that could attest to its utility in developing countries where democracies are not consolidated. When I first attempted to use items from the Altemeyer scale in Bolivia, a nascent South American democracy, the effort proved unfruitful because the RWA scale items are structured in an “agree/disagree” format, that is especially susceptible to an acquiescence response set bias among the poor. It is not surprising that much of the early research suggests that authoritarian values are common to the working class. A great deal of this research, again, came out of the World War II experience. The findings, however, have been challenged by Robert Jackman, who stressed that it is education rather than class status that explains the findings. In a country like Bolivia, in which most people are poor and uneducated, there is a high probability that many respondents will register agreement with any “agree/disagree” question put to them. It is not surprising, then, that the scale did not work in Bolivia, and probably would not work in many other Third World democracies such as Guatemala.

Another approach to measuring authoritarian attitudes has been developed in a number of surveys employed by several polling organizations in Latin America during recent years. These pollsters claim that one frequently hears citizens demanding a government of mano dura. In English, there are various translations for mano dura, ranging anywhere from “firm hand” to “an iron fist,” but they all appear to suggest a preference for a nondemocratic regime. Respondents are asked if they favor a mano dura government. Conclusions have been drawn that directly link responses on this question to the assertion that Latin Americans are fundamentally authoritarian in nature.
Recent survey data from Costa Rica, universally acknowledged as Latin America's most consolidated democracy, present findings that question the putative linkage between a preference for mano dura government and a preference for dictatorship. In October 1999, 62.4 percent of the respondents in a national sample of Costa Ricans said that they preferred a mano dura leader. What are we to make of these results? They seem to indicate that even in a consolidated Latin American democracy, majorities of citizens prefer authoritarianism. But this conclusion is belied by another item in the same survey in which a strong majority opposed having a leader such as Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez become president of Costa Rica. Chávez, a former military officer, staged two unsuccessful coup attempts in Venezuela and served time in prison before being elected president. As president, he closed the legislature and the court system and has pushed through a new constitution that vastly expands presidential power and reduces legislative oversight. Further evidence that mano dura does not fully reflect authoritarian attitudes is that in a survey including national samples of Mexico, Chile, and Costa Rica carried out in 1998, nearly 84 percent of Costa Ricans said that democracy was preferable to any other form of government, whereas only 53 percent of Chileans, and 52 percent of Mexicans responded that way. These results suggest that respondents in Latin America can simultaneously prefer leaders who rule with a strong hand while preferring democracy over dictatorship.

"Strong-hand" leadership may be another way of saying that some citizens are demanding decisiveness, the ability to make decisions and carry out policy, rather than a preference for dictatorship. On the other hand, there may be other citizens who not only want a strong hand at the helm of government, but who also would prefer dictatorship to democracy as a form of government. In Costa Rica, only 6 percent of respondents in the 1998 survey mentioned previously selected the response, "Under certain circumstances a dictatorship is preferable to democracy." What do we find in Guatemala, a country with a very long tradition of authoritarian rule? When the identical question was asked in Guatemala, nearly one-third of respondents had no opinion, and an additional one-quarter either preferred dictatorship or indicated that it made no difference to them whether the country was run as a democracy or a dictatorship. In Guatemala a minority (44 percent) of all respondents unequivocally preferred democracy over dictatorship, compared
to 80 percent in Costa Rica. These results suggest far weaker support for democracy in Guatemala than in Costa Rica.

A broader comparative focus can be obtained from the 1997 Latin Barometer results for this question (see figure 2). The bars represent those who chose the democracy response, with the other two response categories in the question (i.e., a preference for authoritarianism or indifference to democracy or authoritarianism) comprising the remainder of the respondents. As is clear from this comparison, Guatemala scores at the bottom in Latin America. Unfortunately, the Latin Barometer suffers from serious problems in sample design comparability that make inter-country comparisons risky. The following results are based on weighted results that attempt to correct for the serious overrepresentation of highly educated respondents in many of the countries. With those adjustments made, the series is more homogenous in design than the original database.

![Preference for Democracy](image_url)

**Figure 2. Preference for democracy, by country.**
Taken together, these findings suggest that there may exist a hierarchy of respondents, ranging from those who both oppose a strong hand and favor a democracy to those who favor a strong hand and are not committed to democracy. In this paper, that hierarchy is constructed and then used to attempt to explain support or rejection of due process. First, however, it is important to provide the basic information on Guatemalans' preference or rejection of strong-hand rule. The actual question asked in Guatemala differs from the one UNIMER used in Costa Rica, where respondents were asked to approve or disapprove of strong-hand rule. In order to avoid acquiescence response set, the "agree/disagree" format was abandoned and a forced-choice alternative was used instead. In Guatemala, the question in its original Spanish version, along with the question number, is as follows:

¿Cree usted que en nuestro país hace falta un gobierno de mano dura, o que los problemas pueden resolverse con la participación de todos?

1 mano dura
2 participación de todos
7 no sabe
8 no responde

This format provides a balanced choice between two reasonable alternatives and entirely avoids the agree/disagree format that may be responsible for producing a high level of acquiescence response set in Latin American settings. This identical item was included in the prior national probability samples in Guatemala in 1993, 1995, 1997 and again in the most recent survey in 1999.

The results for this series of surveys are shown in figure 3, where two findings become evident. First, there is far more support for strong-hand rule than for participation of the population. Second, the support for strong-hand rule was very stable from 1993 through 1997, but then increased significantly in 1999. This increase occurred in the context of a presidential campaign in which law and order became one of the most prominent issues, if not the central issue. The victor in that campaign not only advocated a tough stand on crime but also admitted to personally having killed two men in a barroom brawl some years before. Pollsters claimed that this incident provided the candidate with a "macho" image as someone voters could trust to be tough on crime once he took office.
Figure 3. Preference for strong-hand rule in Guatemala, 1993–1999.

Preference for Democracy versus Dictatorship

The second question that helps build the hierarchy of preference for dictatorship or democracy asks respondents to select directly between democracy and authoritarianism. The wording is as follows:

¿Con cuál de las siguientes tres frases está usted más de acuerdo?
1. La democracia es preferable a cualquier otra forma de gobierno
2. En algunas circunstancias, un gobierno autoritario puede ser preferable a uno democrático
3. A la gente nos da lo mismo un régimen democrático que un régimen no democrático
4. No sabe/no responde

The wording of this item, identical to the Latin Barometer question analyzed previously, gives respondents a clear choice between opting
for democracy versus opting for dictatorship. Importantly, it also allows them to express an indifferent view (choice 3) separate from the “don’t know” response. Those who select choice 3 are saying that they see dictatorship and democracy as about the same, with no strong preference for either one. Figure 4 shows how Guatemalans responded when we asked this question in 1999, the first time it was included in the survey. The results differ from those of the Latin Barometer survey, but as noted, the Latin Barometer’s sample design had a number of weaknesses, and the survey was conducted only in Spanish, thus excluding monolingual Mayan speakers. The results of the 1999 University of Pittsburgh survey show that only slightly more than two-fifths of the respondents unequivocally prefer democracy, yet less than one in ten would outright prefer an authoritarian regime, far less than the three-fifths of the sample who opted for the mano dura response. The largest group of respondents either don’t know or see democracy and dictatorship as being indistinguishable.

![Preference for Democracy or Authoritarianism](image)

*Figure 4. Preference for democracy or authoritarianism in Guatemala, 1999.*
It is now possible to put these two sets of results together. It is already evident that since the proportion of Guatemalans who selected the “mano dura” response greatly exceeds those who prefer outright authoritarianism, it is a serious error to interpret a preference for a “strong hand” as necessarily indicating a preference for dictatorship. In order to examine more carefully the relationship between the desire for a strong hand and the political system preferences expressed by the respondents, it is necessary to cross-tabulate the two questions, as is done in table 1. These results show that although those who prefer participation over mano dura are more likely to prefer democracy over authoritarianism, the difference is small. More important, among those who selected mano dura, more than three-fifths would also prefer democracy to authoritarianism. This suggests that these two questions are actually measuring two distinct dimensions, and it would be wrong to assume that merely because most Guatemalans prefer a mano dura government, they would also abandon democracy in favor of dictatorship. Mano dura appears to be a preference for leadership and decisiveness. But only a minority of those who prefer mano dura are also supporters of dictatorship. Thus, to make sense of these preferences, we need to take them in combination.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of preference for mano dura with preference for democracy or authoritarianism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference for democracy or authoritarianism</th>
<th>Prefer mano dura over popular participation</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer mano dura over popular participation</td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate of all (%)</td>
<td>Mano dura (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian government</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In light of these findings, it is possible to construct a more nuanced picture of authoritarian values. This can be done by examining the various combinations of responses from the cross-tabulation of the two
questions analyzed previously to develop a typology of authoritarianism, and then to use that typology to examine the policy-preference implications of this combination of attitudes. In other words, we are linking regime-type preference to policy preference.

In table 1, there are four logical combinations. First, there are those who reject mano dura and prefer democracy over authoritarianism. These I label the committed democrats. As shown in table 2, they represent 29.3 percent of the entire sample. Then there are three categories of those who prefer mano dura. The largest concentration of respondents is those who prefer both mano dura and democracy, comprising 43.3 percent of the valid responses. I label these decisive democrats. That is, they select democracy as the regime type of preference but want a strong-hand government, which I take to mean decisiveness. The most clearly authoritarian responses are in the third set of cells, comprising those who prefer mano dura and authoritarianism; I label those decisive authoritarians. The last category is composed of those who prefer mano dura but are indifferent as to what form government takes. These are people who seem to have rejected government entirely, since they don’t really care if the system is democratic or authoritarian. I call these alienated authoritarians and view them as the group most dangerous for democratic stability, since they seem to lack commitment to any form of rule. In some ways, they remind me of the growing number of protestors worldwide who label themselves as anarchists and who have appeared in violent anti-World Bank/IMF demonstrations in Seattle, Italy, and other places around the world.29

Table 2. Typology of regime type preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Valid Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Committed democrats:</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reject mano dura and prefer democracy over authoritarianism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Decisive democrats:</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prefer both mano dura and democracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Decisive authoritarians:</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prefer both mano dura and authoritarianism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Valid Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Alienated authoritarians: prefer mano dura but are indifferent as to regime type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total excluded from this analysis*</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excluded are those with missing data on either variable or those who fall into the two cells that comprise illogical combinations, as explained in note 29.

**Policy Preferences for Due Process**

The 1999 survey included a series of items designed to measure the policy preferences of Guatemalans regarding crime, the treatment of suspected criminals, and policies toward the treatment of social deviance. The series includes the following eight questions, given here in their original Spanish-language version but translated later in the presentation of the results:

1. **En varias comunidades se han linchado a supuestos delincuentes. Algunos dicen que cuando las autoridades no cumplen con su responsabilidad la gente puede hacer justicia con su propia mano, otros dicen que no debe recurrirse a esas medidas. Con qué opinión está usted más de acuerdo?**
   1. De acuerdo con justicia propia
   2. Solo en algunas ocasiones debe recurrirse a eso
   3. Nunca debe hacerse justicia por mano propia
   8. No sabe/no responde

2. **¿Con cuáles de las siguientes frases está usted más de acuerdo?**
   Para que las autoridades puedan luchar contra la delincuencia, nunca deberían violar las reglas o leyes o algunas veces tienen que violar las reglas o leyes.
   1. Nunca deberían violar las reglas o leyes
   2. Algunas veces tienen que violar las reglas o leyes
   8. No sabe/no responde
3. Cuando se trata de combatir la delincuencia común, ¿con qué frase está más de acuerdo?
   Parar la delincuencia, aunque a veces se violan los derechos de la persona acusada, o nunca se debe violar los derechos de la persona acusada.
   1. Parar la delincuencia, aunque a veces se violan los derechos de la persona acusada, o
   2. Nunca se debe violar los derechos de la persona acusada
   8. No sabe/no responde

4. Cuando se tienen serias sospechas de las actividades criminales de una persona, ¿creé usted que:
   Se debería esperar a que el juzgado de la orden respectiva, o la policía debe entrar a su casa sin necesidad de una orden judicial.
   1. Se debería esperar a que el juzgado de la orden respectiva, o
   2. La policía debe entrar a su casa sin necesidad de una orden judicial
   8. No sabe/no responde

5. ¿Qué cree usted que es mejor? Vivir en una sociedad ordenada aunque se limiten algunas libertades, o respetar todos los derechos y libertades, aun si eso causa algo de desorden.
   1. Vivir en una sociedad ordenada aunque se limiten algunas libertades, o
   2. Respetar todos los derechos y libertades, aun si eso causa algo de desorden.
   8. No sabe/no responde

6. ¿Con cuál opinión está usted más de acuerdo: Algunas personas tienen ideas tan extrañas que es mejor limitarles su derecho de expresarse, o nunca se debería limitar el derecho de expresarse a una persona, no importando que tan extremas sean sus ideas.
   1. Algunas personas tienen ideas tan extrañas que es mejor limitarles su derecho de expresarse, o
   2. Nunca se debería limitar el derecho de expresarse a una persona, no importando que tan extremas sean sus ideas
   8. no sabe/no responde

7. ¿Con cuál opinión está usted más de acuerdo: Que para proteger los valores morales de la sociedad algunas veces hay que prohibir que algunas ideas y comentarios sean transmitidas por televisión, o no se debe controlar lo que es transmitido por televisión.
1. que para proteger los valores morales de la sociedad algunas veces hay que prohibir que algunas ideas y comentarios sean transmitidas por televisión.
2. no se debe controlar lo que es transmitido por televisión
8. no sabe/no responde

8. ¿Cree usted que el ejército debería combatir la delincuencia o que sólo la policía debería hacerse cargo de esos asuntos?
1. El ejército debería participar en la lucha contra la delincuencia
2. Solo la policía debería encargarse de combatir la delincuencia
8. No sabe/no responde

It was hypothesized that these items would form two dimensions, conceived of as comprising a “tough on crime” dimension (questions 1–6) and a “tough on social deviance” dimension (questions 7–8). The survey results conformed to these expectations, as shown by the factor analysis contained in the footnote.\textsuperscript{30} Nonetheless, there is wide variation in response to these items, and it is important to clarify this important variation prior to tracing the connections between support or opposition to authoritarian rule and support or opposition to policy measures in dealing with crime and social deviance.

**Tough on Crime Dimension**

The series of five items measuring attitudes toward police treatment of criminal suspects produced a very wide variation in response, ranging from fewer than one-fifth to close to one-half of the respondents supporting the violation of the rights of the accused. In no case, however, did a majority of Guatemalans (as a whole) support the violation of the rights of accused, a finding that stands in marked contrast to the grim view presented by the mano dura question alone. Once again, this finding suggests that it is very important to use multiple questions to analyze public opinion, and it also suggests significant variation in the particular circumstances that would justify violation of the rights of the accused.

The item with the lowest support for violation of the rights of the accused asks, “When there are serious suspicions of criminal activities of a person, do you think that (1) the appropriate court order should be awaited, or (2) the police ought to enter the house [of the accused]
without need for a court order.” Before I present the results of this question, note that when the identical item was used in Nicaragua in another survey in the University of Pittsburgh series, some respondents believed that the reference was being made to the respondent’s own home rather than that of the accused. This misunderstanding may have been responsible for the reluctance to select the option that implies violations of the rights of the accused. In any event, figure 5 shows the results. As can be seen, nearly three-quarters of the respondents support the right of the accused to have a judge issue a search warrant prior to the police entering his or her home.

![Diagram showing support for search without a warrant versus waiting for a warrant when criminal activity seriously suspected.](image)

*Figure 5. Support for search without a warrant versus waiting for a warrant when criminal activity seriously suspected.*

The second least supported item also uncovered strong support for the rights of the accused. This question asked, “With which of these two sentences are you in more agreement? In order for the authorities to be able to fight crime, they never ought to violate the rules or laws, or sometimes they have to violate the rules or laws.” Figure 5 shows
the results. Once again, strong support is found for following the rules rather than violating the rights of the accused.

![Pie chart showing support for authorities violating the rules or laws to fight crime.](image)

Figure 6. Support for authorities sometimes violating rules or laws to fight crime.

The findings thus far seem to show that only a relatively small minority of Guatemalans would support violations of due process guarantees. This was unexpected, given the long history of authoritarian rule in Guatemala and the contemporary problem of high crime. Yet, when we turn to a question that has immediate salience, the picture changes. Vigilante justice has become a regular occurrence in Guatemala. Nearly every week there are reports of suspected criminals being caught, often by spontaneously organized citizen groups, and murdered on the spot. Guatemalans have adopted the U.S. term for these atrocities: *lynchamientos*, or “lynchings.” By the count of the United Nations, some six hundred instances have already occurred. To tap into attitudes toward these lynchings, the survey asked: “In various communities suspected criminals have been lynched. Some say that when the authorities do not fulfill their responsibilities the people can take justice into
their own hands, while others say that these means should not be resorted to. With which view are you more in agreement?" Figure 7 shows the results. As can be seen, two-fifths of the respondents see lynching suspected criminals as an acceptable form of justice. Only slightly less than a majority would oppose such actions.

![View of lynchings](image)

*Figure 7. View of lynchings.*

Further evidence suggesting a willingness to violate the rights of suspected criminals is found in the following item: "When it comes to combating common crime, with which sentence are you more in agreement: (1) Stop crime, even though at times this violates the rights of the accused, or (2) the rights of the accused person should never be violated." Figure 8 shows that less than half of the respondents would be unwilling to tolerate violation of the rights of the accused. The non-response rate to this item was considerably higher than the others, however, perhaps because this item, unlike the ones that preceded it, is more general and mentions no specific violation of due process.
Until the return of civilian rule in Guatemala, the army had primary responsibility for many police functions. Once the peace accords were signed, the military agreed to gradually relinquish that role to a civilian police force, but under civilian police crime has blossomed. To measure support for the military playing a role in police matters, we asked, “Do you think that the military ought to fight crime or that only the police should take charge of these matters?” Guatemalans overwhelmingly support an anti-crime role for the military, as can be seen in figure 9. Since armies are trained and equipped to fight wars, not to prevent and investigate crime, a police role for the military is almost certain to involve violations of due process rights.

**Tough on Social Deviance Dimension**

The picture obtained from the “tough on crime” series shows a mixture of views, ranging from strong to rather weak support for due process guarantees. The three items measuring willingness to violate civil liber-
ties of social deviants show consistently higher levels of anti-civil libertarian views. On only one of the three items (support for free expression) does the majority oppose violating these liberties, and then the majority is only 51 percent. This item also had a higher level of non-response than the other items. On the other two questions, majorities favored limiting civil liberties.

The first question, i.e., that with the most support, asked, "With which view are you more in agreement: (1) Some people have ideas that are so odd that it is better to limit their right of expression, or (2) the right of expression should not be limited no matter how extreme their ideas are." Figure 10 shows the results.

Censorship of the media was supported by a majority of Guatemalans who responded. They were asked, "With which view are you more in agreement? (1) To protect the moral values of society, sometimes it is necessary to prohibit the transmission of some ideas by television, or (2) what is shown on TV should not be controlled." As shown in figure 11, only about 30 percent of Guatemalans are clearly opposed to censoring the media to any extent, while nearly half approve of censorship.
Support for the right of free expression: For those with extreme ideas

- Never limit: 51.0%
- Limit: 25.8%
- Don’t know: 23.3%

Figure 10. Support for the right of free expression for those with extreme ideas.

Censorship on TV

- Oppose censorship: 29.6%
- Approve censorship: 48.7%
- Don’t know: 21.7%

Figure 11. Approval for Censorship on TV.
The last item in the series shows the highest level of support for violation of the rights of social deviants. The question reads, "Which do you think is better, (1) to live in an orderly society even though some liberties are limited, or (2) to respect all rights and liberties, even if this causes some disorder?" Figure 12 shows the results. As can be seen, only one-quarter of the respondents chose the freedom option.

![Order versus liberty](image)

*Figure 12. Preference for order versus liberty.*

**Support for Democracy and Linkages to Due Process**

The central research question to be answered in this article is, Does a preference for authoritarianism translate into a willingness to violate the due process rights of the accused? That is, can we link a generalized, underlying value to specific applications? Answering this question is important because if a link exists, this suggests that key democratic norms, such as the right to due process, are at risk when political cultures exhibit authoritarian proclivities. On the other hand, if, as was suggested by critics of the Adorno research program in the post–World War II
period, these values do not matter because they are not linked to any operational outcomes, it is possible to be more optimistic about the survival of democracy.

I hypothesize that a preference for authoritarianism is linked to support for violations of due process rights, independent of other factors, with those who support a strong hand and an authoritarian government being more likely to support the violation of due process rights. Moreover, I hypothesize that crime victimization and a fear of crime help increase support for authoritarian rule, which in turn favors support for violations of due process rights. This means I am proposing that the crime wave being experienced in Guatemala over the past several years may have serious systemic consequences. Just as we worry in the United States that the post–September 11 environment may result in curtailment of due process rights of the accused, there is reason to be concerned in Guatemala.

Recall the fourfold typology developed at the outset of this article. The most authoritarian respondents were speculated to be those who prefer a strong hand and also do not see any difference between authoritarian or democratic rule. Thought to be slightly less authoritarian were those who prefer a strong hand and authoritarian rule. Next in the more democratic direction were those who, while still supporting a strong hand, prefer democracy over dictatorship. Finally, at the most democratic end, were those who reject the strong hand and prefer democracy over dictatorship.

As a first cut, I take a bivariate look to see if there is support for the hypotheses without the introduction of control variables. Figure 13 shows some of these results. In this figure the focus is on the violation of due process question series as dependent variables and the preference for authoritarian rule composite measure as the independent variable. Those who reject strong-hand rule and prefer democracy are less willing to violate the due process rights of the accused than are those who prefer strong-hand rule and reject democracy. These results clearly suggest that a preference for authoritarianism matters in policy-preference terms.

The second series of questions analyzed earlier in this article relates to freedom of expression. Is there a greater willingness to support freedom of expression among those who oppose a firm hand and support democracy as a preferred system? Figure 14 shows that there is. All three of the questions in this series show higher levels of willingness to repress
freedom of expression among those who prefer strong-hand rule. Perhaps of equal importance, however, is that even among those who reject strong-hand rule and prefer democracy, strong majorities favor order over civil liberties and censorship of TV to protect viewers over free expression. In other words, in Guatemala there seems to be a societal consensus on the need for limits on the freedom of expression.

**Factors That Explain Preference for Authoritarian Solutions**

We now move beyond the bivariate analysis to the multivariate view in order to test for the hypotheses proposed at the outset of this article. Multinomial logistic regression was used to analyze the factors that might explain differences among Guatemalans in their views on the due process rights of the accused and their support for censorship. (The tables are not shown, as full path models will be presented later.) The
Figure 14. Impact of preference for authoritarianism on willingness to repress freedom of expression.

predictors employed were age, gender, urban versus rural residence, wealth (as measured by material artifacts), income, ethnicity (as measured by self-identification and dress), and education. In addition, the measure of regime-type preferences constructed previously is included, namely the four-category measure of the combination of a preference or opposition for strong-hand rule and a preference for democracy or dictatorship. In each regression equation in which the questions about the rights of the accused were employed, the four-category measure was a significant predictor. Age, income, wealth, gender, urban versus rural residence, and education were not, however, significant predictors, nor was ethnicity for most of the variables. The working-class and ethnicity-based authoritarianism theses do not seem to fit the Guatemalan case.

These results suggest that Guatemalan views on the rights of the accused are not a function of socioeconomic, demographic, or ethnic differences. Rather, they appear to stem directly from Guatemalans’ attitudes about the kind of government they prefer—democracy or author-
itarianism. This, then, invites the question, What is responsible for variation in the preference for strong-hand rule versus democracy? An examination of system support, a multi-item index that measures respondent belief in the legitimacy of government, reveals an important component of the answer. Figure 15 shows that those who prefer democracy and reject strong-hand rule have significantly higher system support than do other Guatemalans. Since system support has been linked in other research to long-term stability of political systems, the importance of this connection cannot be overstated. Guatemalans who believe in strong-hand rule and dictatorship are both less willing to extend due process guarantees to the accused and less supportive of their political system in general.

![Relationship Between Preference for Authoritarianism and System Support](image)

*Figure 15. Relationship between preference for authoritarianism and system support.*

Searching for other predictors of regime-type preferences, we find that reading news in the newspapers is a significant predictor, as shown in figure 16. Among those who are committed democrats, more than
60 percent read newspaper news (as opposed to sports pages only or no newspaper readership at all), while among those who are alienated authoritarians, readership drops to only about 45 percent. Interestingly, attention to radio or television news was not a significant predictor

![Diagram of Impact of News Media Attention on Preference for Democracy](image)

*Figure 16. Impact of news media attention on preference for democracy.*

Interpersonal trust is also linked to a preference for democratic rule and opposition to mano dura. Figure 17 shows that trust increases along with preference for democracy.

*Path Analysis*

It is clear from the preceding analysis that a preference for democracy has important implications for policy preferences on due process issues. It has also been shown that a preference for democracy versus authoritarianism itself is a function of other variables, but the analysis thus far has largely been confined to the bivariate results. When taking this effort
to the next step, it would be useful to construct an overall model of preferences regarding the rights to due process of suspected criminals.

The clearest way to comprehend such a picture is by using a path analytic approach, calculated using structural equation modeling. Specifically, in the analysis that follows, maximum likelihood estimates are made for the variables of interest, drawing on the bivariate analysis already presented. It would not be especially illuminating to repeat this analysis for each of the policy variables explored. Rather, the approach is to take one variable from the “tough on crime” set and one from the “tough on social deviance” set and examine the results. Figure 18 shows the initial structural equation model for support for vigilante justice (P35A). The single-headed arrows show standardized coefficients. In the computed analysis, correlation coefficients of the exogenous variables are shown by two-headed arrows.

At the center of the initial model is the variable I have called preference for democracy. Recall that this variable is composed of the mano dura item and the item that allows a choice of democracy, authoritari-
anism, or indifference. As shown in the path diagram, the model tests for two basic specifications. One specification is that policy preferences, in this case a preference for vigilante justice, is a function of a preference for democracy, which in turn is a function of being informed politically (via newspaper readership), interpersonal trust, education, wealth, system support, and other variables for which there was no space above to provide the analysis, namely feelings of security and crime victimization. This specification would make support for democracy central to an estimation of policy preferences. The alternative model, also allowed for in the initial path model shown in figure 18, is one in which a preference for democracy is not central, but rather the predictors listed previously largely bypass a preference for democracy and go directly to the policy preference, in this case, a preference for vigilante justice.

When the model was run with the empirical data, the results shown in figure 19 emerged. Above and to the right of the boxes that represent the endogenous variables (e.g., preference for democracy, vigilante justice, etc.) are the Multiple R-squared total effects. The model presented here is pleasingly accurate, with an NFI (normed fit index) of 0.978 and a CFI (comparative fit index) of 0.980.54
One very clear message emerged from this modeling exercise: The principal finding is that all the paths favoring policy preference for vigilante justice run through the core variable of a preference for democracy. There is not a single significant direct path. In particular, while it was hypothesized that variables such as reading newspapers, interpersonal trust, system support, and tolerance might have a direct impact on policy preference, it is evident that none did. This means that a preference for democracy over authoritarianism is the key mediating belief that determines due process policy preferences. In terms of policy implications, the findings suggest that if one can increase support for democracy as a system of government, support for due process will follow.

There are further implications of the model. First, among the background variables that predict a preference for democracy, the strongest is system support. In other words, those who support the system are also supporters of democracy, a seemingly obvious finding; however, when thought of in inverse terms, this finding takes on greater importance, for it means that those citizens who do not trust their political system
are the ones most likely to be attracted to authoritarian solutions. A second finding is that crime victimization has no direct effect on preference for democracy or favoring vigilante justice. Rather, the effect of crime is on fear, which in turn, affects the preference for democracy. A third finding is that the strongest path in the entire analysis is between a preference for democracy and opposition to vigilante justice. Finally, variables such as reading newspaper news, interpersonal trust, education, and wealth each make a modest contribution to a preference for democracy.

The second structural equation produces a very similar result. Here the attempt is to try to explain a policy preference for limiting the freedom of expression of those who express extreme ideas (P35F). As can be seen in figure 20, crime victimization has no linkage to a preference for democracy, but its effect is mediated through feelings of security versus insecurity. The other variables present a virtually identical picture to the one just shown. The NFI of this model is 0.970 and the CFI is 0.971.

![Figure 20. Final path model of support for limiting freedom of expression.](image-url)
**Political Implications of a Preference for Democracy**

In contemporary Guatemala, citizens have the power of the vote, and with that power they can determine the direction of key public policies. A clear choice was presented to the voters in the November 1999 elections between a law-and-order candidate, Alfonso Antonio Portillo Cabrera and a more liberal candidate, Oscar Berger Perdomo. Under Guatemalan law, to be elected president a candidate must garner more than 50 percent of the votes cast. In the November 1999 election, the leader Portillo had 48 percent of the votes, and as a result a runoff election between Portillo and Berger was held on December 26. Portillo easily won with 68 percent of the vote.

To investigate what differentiates the leading candidates in terms of the attitudes of their support base, I turn once again to the fourfold categorization of support for democracy. From the survey results, it is clear that there are significant differences among these support bases. In the survey, respondents were asked about their opinions toward the leading candidates on a scale from very favorable to very unfavorable. This scale was converted into a 0–100 range. It was found that supporters of Berger were indeed much less likely to be supportive of mano dura, whereas the mano dura response was most common among Portillo supporters.

Two other important political figures about whom survey questions were asked are Rigoberta Menchú and Ríos Montt. Menchú is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and symbol of indigenous rights and opposition to military control. Montt, a former general who was president during some of the harshest years of the civil unrest, is a symbol of the imposition of governmental force to assure civil peace and order. Montt was running for a legislative seat in the 1999 elections from the same political party as Portillo and subsequently has been elected president of the legislature. The results revealed that Ríos Montt supporters were far more likely to prefer mano dura, while Menchú supporters were far more likely to reject the mano dura choice.

Finally, the relationship between support for democracy and support for the peace process was examined. The Consulta Popular in Guatemala involved a national referendum on key components of the peace process, which was narrowly defeated. The data analysis found a direct linkage between the two, with those who rejected a strong hand and preferred democracy being more supportive of the constitutional reforms.
Conclusions

This article has attempted to determine the importance of public opinion on support for civil liberties. Guatemala is an excellent place to conduct this test since, unlike the United States, it is not only a poor, unconsolidated democracy, but one plagued by extremely high crime rates. Evidence has shown that when properly specified, a preference for a democratic form of government is the central predictor of support for policies that protect the due process rights of citizens. Crime victimization is important, but only insofar as it affects feelings of security, which in turn have an influence on a preference for democracy. System support is also important, but again only as mediated through a preference for democracy.

In light of the poverty and high level of crime in Guatemala, there is little question that democratic stability remains an open question. The military remains a powerful force, yet a coup might not be necessary for them to see their preferred policies enacted. Rather, as the findings of this article suggest, voters may cast their ballots in support of candidates who will legislate restrictions on civil liberties, eventually “hollowing out” democratic rule until only the shell of the system remains.

Acknowledgments

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NOTES


6. For example, crime rates in South Africa and El Salvador are thought to be the highest in the world. See José Miguel Cruz, Alvaro Trigueros Argüello, and Francisco González, Los factores sociales y económicos asociados al crimen violento en El Salvador (Washington: World Bank, 1999).


11. In South Africa during apartheid, this was not the case among the non-white population, where murders were overlooked with great frequency.


15. Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza, Determinants of Crime Rates. Thirty-four countries were included in their study. The Latin America and Caribbean countries included are Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bahamas, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Barbados, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago, Bermuda, Suriname, Honduras, Antigua, Dominica, Belize, Panama, Guyana, Cuba, and El Salvador.


23. Mitchell A. Seligson, La cultura política de la democracia boliviana, así piensan los bolivianos, # 60 (La Paz, Bolivia: Encuestas y Estudios, 1999).
24. In the 1999 Freedom House survey, Costa Rica tied with Uruguay as the two Latin American countries with the highest scores.

25. The survey was carried out by UNIMER on a national probability sample of 1,201 respondents. Details of the method and other findings are found in *La Nación*, October 23, 1999, p. 1, and in the electronic edition, for that date.


27. Responses of “don’t know” were excluded.

28. Readers interested in the weighting scheme used, which corrects for the education bias using World Bank data, should contact the author.

29. There are two nonlogical combinations among those who reject mano dura. One group of respondents who rejected the mano dura preferred authoritarianism (*n* = 32), which on the face of it seems to make no sense. Another group that rejected mano dura and preferred participation said that they did not care if democracy or authoritarian rule prevailed (*n* = 55). These categories comprise only a relatively small number of respondents, and may involve misunderstanding on their part or some logic that is not obvious to us. In addition, 428 respondents did not have an opinion on either question, and they are coded as missing here. For analytical purposes, from here on in this article, I will work with the first four categories.

30. A principal component factor analysis on these eight items produced the following results. Variables are reordered to emphasize the two distinct factors, as shown by the boxed loadings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor vigilante justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat crime by breaking rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat crime by violating rights of accused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat crime by illegal searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army should have role in combating crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer order to liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit freedom of expression of extremist ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect morality by TV censorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


31. The line for illegal searches shows that those who prefer both strong-hand rule and dictatorship are more willing to violate the rights of the accused than are those who prefer strong-hand rule and are indifferent regarding dictatorship versus democracy.

32. See, for example, Steven Finkel, Edward Muller, and Mitchell A. Seligson, “Economic Crisis, Incumbent Performance and Regime Support: A Comparison of Longitudinal Data from West Germany and Costa Rica,” *British Journal of Political Science* 19 (July 1989): 329–51;
33. The analysis was conducted using AMOS 4.0 in conjunction with SPSS 10.05. AMOS does not operate with weighted data, so the results presented here differ slightly from an OLS approach. AMOS has the advantage of being able to handle missing data, a common problem in survey research. AMOS assumes normally distributed dependent variables, which is not the case with a dichotomous response, but the alternatives to AMOS such as EQS and LISREL not only impose severe limits on the number of variables that can be used (around twenty), but with this kind of data require a minimum of 2,000 to 5,000 cases for satisfactory results. Since the total sample size for the Guatemala database is 1,200, this solution is not feasible. See Geoffrey M. Maruyama, *Basics of Structural Equation Modeling* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 282. The alternative is to build the dependent variable as an index based upon the various measures of support for due process used here. When that is done, the results are virtually identical to the models shown here.

34. These indices should be higher than 0.9 to indicate a good model fit.