



Woodrow Wilson
International Center
for Scholars

Cynthia J. Arnson
Kenneth Roberts
Leslie Bethell
René Antonio Mayorga
Robert Kaufman
Felipe Agüero
Ariel Armony
Eric Hershberg
Roberto Russell

*Edited by Cynthia J. Arnson
with José Raúl Perales*

The 'New Left' and Democratic Governance in Latin America





Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

Latin American Program

The 'New Left' and Democratic Governance in Latin America

Cynthia J. Arnson
Kenneth Roberts
Leslie Bethell
René Antonio Mayorga
Robert Kaufman
Felipe Agüero
Ariel Armony
Eric Hershberg
Roberto Russell

Edited by Cynthia J. Arnson with José Raúl Perales

August 2007



Available from :

Latin American Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027

www.wilsoncenter.org/lap

ISBN 1-933549-20-3

Cover photo: © Jorge Silva/Reuters/Corbis
Supporters of Chilean presidential candidate Michelle Bachelet of the Socialist Party celebrate after presidential election results were released in Santiago, January 15, 2006.

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, established by Congress in 1968 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a living national memorial to President Wilson. The Center's mission is to commemorate the ideals and concerns of Woodrow Wilson by providing a link between the worlds of ideas and policy, while fostering research, study, discussion, and collaboration among a broad spectrum of individuals concerned with policy and scholarship in national and international affairs. Supported by public and private funds, the Center is a nonpartisan institution engaged in the study of national and world affairs. It establishes and maintains a neutral forum for free, open, and informed dialogue. Conclusions or opinions expressed in Center publications and programs are those of the authors and speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center staff, fellows, trustees, advisory groups, or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to the Center.

The Center is the publisher of *The Wilson Quarterly* and home of Woodrow Wilson Center Press, *dialogue* radio and television, and the monthly news-letter "Centerpoint." For more information about the Center's activities and publications, please visit us on the web at www.wilsoncenter.org.

Lee H. Hamilton, President and Director

Board of Trustees

Joseph B. Gildenhorn, Chair

David A. Metzner, Vice Chair

Public members: James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress; Bruce Cole, Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities; Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Tamala L. Longaberger, designated appointee within the Federal Government; Condoleezza Rice, Secretary, U.S. Department of State; Cristián Samper, Acting Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Margaret Spellings, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education; Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States

Private Citizen Members: Robert B. Cook, Donald E. Garcia, Bruce S. Gelb, Sander Gerber, Charles L. Glazer, Susan Hutchison, Ignacio E. Sanchez

Contents

- 3 Introduction
Cynthia J. Arnson
- 10 Conceptual and Historical Perspectives
Kenneth Roberts
Leslie Bethell
René Antonio Mayorga
- 24 Political Economy and the ‘New Left’
Robert Kaufman
- 31 Politics and Society
Felipe Agüero
Ariel Armony
Eric Hershberg
- 44 Foreign Policy
Roberto Russell
- 50 About the Contributors

Introduction

*Cynthia J. Arnson*¹

As a result of over a dozen presidential elections held in Latin America from late 2005 to the end of 2006, the idea that a “new Left” has come to power has defined popular as well as scholarly understanding of political developments in the region. The outcomes of the 2006 presidential elections in Colombia, Peru, and Mexico demonstrated that a perceived hemispheric “swing to the left” in Latin America is by no means universal. Nonetheless, there is truth to the perception that an unprecedented number of current presidents or their followers define themselves as leftists or represent parties or party coalitions historically defined as on the Left—the Chilean Socialists, for example, or the Brazilian *Partido do Trabalhadores* (Worker’s Party) and the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front). Taking into account Venezuela under Hugo Chávez (first elected in 1998), Brazil under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002 and 2006), Argentina under Néstor Kirchner (2003), Uruguay under Tabaré Vázquez (2004), Bolivia under Evo Morales (2005), Chile under Michele Bachelet (2006), Nicaragua under Daniel Ortega (2006), and Ecuador under Rafael Correa (2006), close to 60 percent of Latin America’s total population of 527 million live in countries governed by elected presidents to the left of the political spectrum.

That said, the desire to characterize broad political trends has not necessarily deepened our understanding of how or why left governments have come to power, the nature of the political systems from which they emerge, the types of social coalitions supporting them, the kinds of policies adopted by their leaders, or—most important of all— their impact on the future of democratic governance in the region. Analysts as well as policymakers have drawn a distinction between a “social democratic Left” (represented by Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay), and a “populist Left”

(represented by Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and, to a lesser extent, Argentina), each with different implications for domestic as well as foreign policy.²

As *Kenneth Roberts* argues in this report, however, such a dichotomy fails to do justice to the diversity of left expression in contemporary Latin America, a diversity better understood in relationship to political developments in the aftermath of neo-liberal structural adjustment in the 1990s. *Leslie Bethell*, moreover, points out that being on the Left in Latin America today means something different than it did in earlier historical periods (the 1930s, for example, or the years following the Cuban revolution). He questions whether populism itself is part of the Left, underscoring examples of right-wing populism in the region as well as the antagonism of historical populist leaders such as Brazil's Getúlio Vargas or Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón to the organized Left in those countries. *René Mayorga*, meanwhile, emphasizes the importance of institutional development, particularly that of party systems, as the key to making meaningful distinctions among left regimes. Today's "neo-populism," he argues, is characterized by a pattern of personalistic and anti-institutionalist politics not linked to a common set of economic policies, such as the import substitution industrialization of the past.³ As *Felipe Agüero* indicates, however, questions of institutional design have not typically figured prominently on the agenda of the Left, despite an urgent need to do so on questions of citizen security and the fight against crime and violence.

The deeper one delves, moreover, the more the differences surface. Most analysts agree, for example, that President Hugo Chávez's brand of top-down political mobilization, outside of and antagonistic to the institutions of liberal democracy, bears little resemblance to the kind of political representation in Brazil, Chile, or Uruguay, where left parties have moderated over time and participate fully in stable, competitive electoral systems. Even comparisons of supposedly similar regimes—the so-called "radical populists" of Venezuela and Bolivia—fail to capture the unique dynamics of social mobilization in each country, the distinct nature of linkages between social movements and the state, or the role (or lack thereof) of ethnic cleavages in shaping political outcomes. In terms of economic policy, *Robert Kaufman* indicates that left governments in the region have taken very different approaches to the realization of shared distributive goals, with some governments opting for market-oriented

strategies and others returning to past models of state control and economic nationalism. With respect to the making of foreign policy, *Roberto Russell* argues that the importance of ideological considerations should not be exaggerated; presumed ideological affinities among countries of the region do little to explain the persistent conflicts and tensions that exist. The principal divergences in foreign policy, Russell maintains, are more related to such issues as the density of linkages with the United States—something closely correlated with geographical proximity—and to the degree of support for free trade agreements with the United States.

This publication—the first of the Latin American Program's three-year project on "The 'New Left' and Democratic Governance in Latin America"—is based on presentations at a November 2006 workshop in Washington, D.C. Participants included *Felipe Agüero*, University of Miami and FLACSO-Chile; *Ariel Armony*, Colby College; *Leslie Bethell*, Oxford University, UK; *Javier Corrales*, Amherst College; *Eric Hershberg*, Social Science Research Council and Simon Fraser University, Canada; *Robert Kaufman*, Rutgers University; *Eugenio Lahera*, Chile XXI; *Juan Pablo Luna*, Universidad Católica, Chile; *René Mayorga*, Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM); *Cynthia McClintock*, The George Washington University; *Kenneth Roberts*, Cornell University; and *Roberto Russell*, Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Argentina.⁴ By exploring political trends and policy outcomes in eight countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, and Venezuela—the Project aims to understand why so many governments of the Left have come to power in Latin America at this particular moment in the region's history, and explore the impact of specific public policies in the areas of social welfare, citizen participation, human rights, and foreign relations.

A working hypothesis is that the electoral outcomes of the past two years reflect widespread popular dissatisfaction with the failure of two decades of neo-liberal reform to deliver broadly-shared social benefits, as well as with the incapacity of traditional political elites to respond to demands for greater equity, participation, and economic, political, and social inclusion. Although specific research linking voter concerns to electoral gains for the Left is only incipient, it is possible to correlate broader trends in Latin America with the changed political environment. Some 40 percent of all Latin Americans still live in poverty (defined as living on \$2 per day or less), and rates of Latin America's already high inequality have

worsened as a result of structural adjustment. Moreover, more than two-thirds of Latin Americans believe that their countries are governed for the benefit of a powerful minority rather than for the good of “the people.”⁵ Unemployment/underemployment and public insecurity due to crime top

The “rise of the Left” would appear to owe much to core problems arising from the quality of democracy as experienced by the average citizen: the persistence of poverty and inequality; the growth of the informal sector (with the concomitant decline of labor unions); *desencanto* (disenchantment) with the institutions of democratic governance, especially political parties; the difficulty of establishing adequate mechanisms of participation, representation, and accountability; and dislocations related to the domestic effects and foreign policy implications of globalization.

the list of public concerns throughout the hemisphere.⁶ Thus, the “rise of the Left” would appear to owe much to core problems arising from the *quality* of democracy as experienced by the average citizen: the persistence of poverty and inequality; the growth of the informal sector (with the concomitant decline of labor unions); *desencanto* (disenchantment) with the institutions of democratic governance, especially political parties; the difficulty of establishing adequate mechanisms of participation, representation, and accountability; and dislocations related to the domestic effects and foreign policy implications of globalization.

Over the life of the project, our research will be focused in two broad areas. First, we will explore questions of human rights and citizenship in a democratic society. As *Eric Hershberg* indicates, either as a product of the maturation of political democracy or because of the commitments and past experiences of individual leaders, efforts to establish accountability for past human rights violations have advanced considerably in the

Southern Cone. Over the last decade judges and groups in civil society have actively pressed for trials, reparations for victims, and a reversal of amnesty laws, aided by new initiatives at the international level that have provided new avenues and tools for seeking accountability.

Priorities for our exploration of human rights issues center on: 1) what dynamic of interaction between civil society, the judiciary, the military,

and a country’s political leadership explains why justice for past abuses is a greater priority in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay than in Brazil or Bolivia, which also suffered military dictatorship? 2) whether or not is there a link between the debate over past human rights violations and the ways left governments address the role of the security forces in responding to current problems of rampant crime, violence, and citizen security; and 3) what left have governments done to positively advance a “new” human rights agenda aimed at reversing discrimination based on ethnicity, race, gender, or sexuality.

The focus on “new” human rights begs the question, as *Ariel Armony* suggests, as to whether governments of the Left have an agenda that embraces citizenship rights, and will undertake to improve the quality of democratic life by fostering novel and more inclusive mechanisms of citizen participation. Much more is known about citizen participation in decision-making at the local level and its effects on democratization⁷ than is known about the ways national-level interactions between citizens, their leaders, and the institutions of representative democracy affect democratic governance. Are there forms of social mobilization and participation that undermine rather than enhance representative democracy? When the rights of citizenship are unevenly distributed, and a broad gap separates the theoretical from the practical enjoyment of rights (for example, because of discrimination, violence, impunity, or corruption), what policies have been adopted to reduce that distance?

The Project’s second area of priority is poverty and social policy. Perhaps no issue serves more as a common denominator defining today’s Left than the desire to address the massive poverty that exists, in varying degrees of severity, throughout Latin America. That addressing such poverty is a legitimate function and responsibility of the state and not simply of market forces appears to be another shared precept. In fact, no leader in Latin America has done more in recent history to reduce overall levels of poverty (within a very favorable international environment) than Chile’s Socialist President Ricardo Lagos (2000–2006), and both Lula and Chávez, among others, have implemented highly-visible anti-poverty programs that have helped consolidate an electoral base among the poor. Countries that have enjoyed a windfall from high prices for primary commodities—oil, gas, copper and other minerals—have had unprecedented resources with which to finance social programs.

A fundamental question to be addressed is whether the social policies of left governments are different than those of their predecessors, or simply involve a greater commitment of resources, both financial and symbolic. A similar question concerns the degree of policy latitude and innovation at the macroeconomic level (if any) as governments attempt to pursue social goals while fostering an economic climate conducive to growth and investment. A final question has to do with the role of *coyuntura*: how high international prices for primary commodity and energy exports have opened up new possibilities for state spending, and what will happen amidst heightened expectations should these prices decline significantly or collapse.

Regardless of whether the predominance of left or populist governments in Latin America today is a transitory phenomenon—another “swing of the pendulum”—or whether it represents a more enduring shift, the specific practices and policies adopted by these governments will mark the future of democratic politics in the region. Do these electoral victories reflect democracy’s maturation in Latin America or its decay?⁸ Will governments of the Left succeed in addressing what have been identified as democracy’s core deficits in the areas of social, political, and economic inclusion? What effect will these policies have on the quality of democratic institutions, their efficiency and transparency? In highly fragmented societies, will greater inclusion be at the expense of liberal democratic institutions? The questions at this stage are far more numerous than the answers. Far from academic, however, they touch on core issues concerning the quality of life for millions of the region’s citizens and the political choices of their leaders.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Latin American Program intern Antonio Delgado for research assistance, and to Program Associate Jessica Varat, consultant Carolina Fernández, and former interns Peter Knight and Sarah Walker for assistance with the November 2006 workshop. This and other activities of the ‘New Left’ Project are made possible by a generous grant from The Ford Foundation.

2. Jorge G. Castañeda went further, positing a normative distinction between “right” and “wrong” leftists. See “Latin America’s Left Turn,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.

85, No. 3, May/June 2006. Numerous authors in Latin America and the United States have been writing about the ‘new Left.’ See, for example, a special issue of *Nueva Sociedad*, “América Latina en tiempos de Chávez,” No. 205, septiembre–octubre 2006, with articles by Alain Touraine, Ernesto Laclau, Ludolfo Paramio, Andrés Serbin, Marta Lagos, Manuel Antonio Garretón M., Francisco Rojas Aravena, Mónica Hirst, Haroldo Dilla Alfonso, and Edmundo González Urrutia; and the *Journal of Democracy*, “A ‘Left Turn’ in Latin America?,” Vol. 17, No. 4, October 2006, with articles by Hector E. Schamis, Eduardo Posada-Carbó, Arturo Valenzuela and Lucía Dammert, Cynthia McClintock, Matthew Cleary, and Christopher Sabatini and Eric Farnsworth.

3. Political scientist Ruth Collier has defined populism as “a form of mass politics” based on a claim to represent ordinary or common people. Among populism’s common features, she identifies “mobilization or collective action from below,” “a particular leadership style, specifically strong, personalized, sometimes charismatic leadership,” “a reform or anti-status quo movement,” and a support base that “attempts to promote an identity as the ‘people’ rather than a class.” In Latin America, she argues, “classical populism represented a certain kind of inclusion and controlled mobilization of the new proletariat; neopopulism represents exclusion and demobilization.” See Ruth B. Collier, “Populism,” in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, eds., *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, pp. 11813–16.

4. Participants in the New Left project who did not attend the workshop are *Adrián Bonilla* (Ecuador), FLACSO–Ecuador; *Carlos Fernando Chamorro* (Nicaragua), *Revista Confidencial*; *Ana María Sanjuan* (Venezuela), Universidad Central de Venezuela; and *Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida* (Brazil), Universidade de São Paulo.

5. Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe Latinobarómetro 2006*, Santiago, Chile, December 9, 2006, pp. 65–66.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–41.

7. See, for example, the work of Brazilian scholar Leonardo Arvitzter on participatory budgeting by local governments headed by the PT; see also Andrew D. Selee and Leticia Santín del Río, *Democracia y Ciudadanía*, Woodrow Wilson Center Reports on the Americas, No. 17, March 2006; Benjamin Goldfrank and Daniel Chávez, eds., *The Left in the City: Participatory Local Governments in Latin America* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2004); and Joseph S. Tulchin and Margaret Ruthenburg, eds., *Citizenship in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

8. Claudio Lomnitz, “Latin America’s Rebellion,” *Boston Review*, September–October 2006.

Conceptual and Historical Perspectives

Kenneth Roberts

Leslie Bethell

René Antonio Mayorga

KENNETH ROBERTS

It is important to move beyond the conceptual morass of distinguishing between social democracy, populism, neo-populism, etc., and come to a more nuanced understanding of the Left, one that goes beyond the simplistic dichotomy of social democracy versus populism. Even if it is not possible to arrive at a consensus, we should at least try to clarify the conceptual basis for comparison, and determine whether populism is part of the Left and how the two might relate to each other.

The Left today is different than in other historical periods. To be on the Left today is to take a critical perspective towards the organization of society in accordance with principles of market individualism. Today's Left shows a willingness to employ collective political resources to supplement or modify the social outcomes of market exchanges. What characterizes the Left is:

- 1) a willingness to use state power to stimulate economic growth and correct for market failures;
- 2) a willingness to use state power and/or social organizations to reduce social inequalities and address social deficits; and
- 3) a commitment to deepen democracy through various forms of popular mobilization and participation in the political process.

Populism can locate itself on the Left, but there are leftist projects that are not populist and populist projects that are not leftist; we should keep in mind that there is also right-wing populism in Latin America and in Europe. A key difference is that left populism tends to emphasize

the redistributive dimension within a socio-economic framing of salient issues, and therefore often mobilizes lower-class constituencies against elite economic interests; right-wing populism will often use nationalistic or racial frames in its ideology and thus try to mobilize support across class lines.

Populism by definition is not easy to locate ideologically, and there can be elements of both the Right and the Left within any given populist phenomenon, as can be seen with Ollanta Humala, a presidential candidate in 2006 in Peru, for example. In addition to the malleability of its ideological expression, populism is also difficult to conceptualize because there is no clarity over the unit of analysis. Does populism refer to political leaders? To regimes? Political parties? Social movements? Or should we think of it as a strategy of political mobilization, or a particular set of economic policies? Populism has often been used to describe all of the above.

The classical populism of the 1930s to the 1960s—the era of import substitution industrialization (ISI) in Latin America—was more “integral” in that it tended to group together multiple dimensions: party, movement, charismatic leadership, statist and redistributive economic policies, etc. As the ISI model declined and entered into crisis, the different dimensions of populism became more disaggregated. Economists like Dornbusch and Edwards¹ stressed the economic dimensions of populism, essentially equating it with fiscal irresponsibility and a reckless neglect of market constraints. The problem, however, is that leaders of widely varying political types may adopt irresponsible economic policies. More recently, political scientists have highlighted the political dimensions of populism and fostered debate over the core attributes of the phenomenon.² Politically, populism represents a kind of top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by a dominant personality who challenges traditional political or economic elites. Populist political figures can thus adopt different kinds of economic policies, including neoliberal ones as well as traditional statist or redistributive policies. This economic malleability could be seen in a leader like former president Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990–2000), who wedded a populist style of political leadership to neoliberal economic policies. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, on the other hand, represents the kind of vintage or “integral” populism that pulls together both economic and political dimensions in a single package.

The Bolivian case is interesting, as President Evo Morales has adopted many of the nationalist, statist, and redistributive themes of traditional economic populism; but his political leadership is rooted in social movements that have repeatedly mobilized from the bottom-up, rather than the top-down. In political terms, then, the Bolivian case does not conform very well to the populist model; indeed, its strong bottom-up

pattern of social mobilization makes it the very antithesis of populism. It is an example of a social movement that forms a party and takes state power, rather than a populist figure who appeals directly to atomized masses from above.

But what, then, is the relationship between populism and the Left in contemporary Latin America? At least four different categories or expressions of left-of-center governments can be identified in the region today.

The first expression, seen in Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil, involves an established political party (or a coalition in Uruguay) that predates the era of neoliberal structural adjustment. These are post-

Marxist, institutionalized parties of the Left that survived authoritarian regimes and went through an extensive process of ideological renovation and moderation. They are often labeled "social democratic" parties, but it must be kept in mind that in the aftermath of neoliberal reform their organized labor constituencies are far weaker than those in European social democracy. Likewise, there is little to indicate that they will have the political or economic capabilities to create the kinds of redistributive welfare states that are associated with social democracy historically. Nevertheless, the fact that these leftist parties can be elected into national office and govern with political and economic stability is indicative of a maturation of democracy in a number of Latin American countries.

A second pattern is where a left-leaning government is rooted in an established party from Latin America's populist tradition, such as President Néstor Kirchner of the Peronist party in Argentina. A previous Peronist

government implemented Argentina's neoliberal reforms, but following the collapse of the neoliberal model with the economic crisis of 2001-2002, Kirchner's leadership has helped to revive the party's populist legacy. The return of Alan García to the presidency in Peru has also helped to revive his populist party, the *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA), but it is far from clear that this new government is part of Latin America's recent political shift to the left. García was elected as a "mainstream" alternative to the more radical populist figure Ollanta Humala, and his new government has been more conservative than leftist.

On the other side of the divide are leftist governments that are based on new political movements that emerged in the aftermath of structural adjustment, rather than on long-established political parties. This is most likely where traditional party systems have broken down. One pattern, which might be called the "populist Left," consists of a top-down process of political mobilization based on charismatic leadership, such as that of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Another pattern, which might be called a "movement Left," exists where autonomous social mobilization from below has been critical. The movement that brought Evo Morales to power in Bolivia falls into this fourth category. Morales' leadership is rooted in a powerful network of social movements that contributed to the overthrow of two elected governments and then effectively contested the electoral arena itself. The logic of autonomous social mobilization from below in Bolivia is quite different from that in Venezuela, where the political movement has been formed from the top-down around the leadership of Chávez.

These four quite different manifestations of the Left in Latin America have all mobilized political support by criticizing the social deficits of the neoliberal model, but the different Lefts have different implications for democracy in the region. Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil, for example, represent the maturation of democracy and the moderation of the Left, in part due to the fact that leftist parties are competing against rivals in institutionalized party systems. In contrast, the revived populist parties and the new political movements in Venezuela and Bolivia reflect not the maturation of democracy, but rather its crisis: namely, the failure of representative democratic institutions to respond effectively to social needs and demands. In countries like Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, and Bolivia, populist or leftist leaders operate in political systems where

The revived populist parties and the new political movements in Venezuela and Bolivia reflect not the maturation of democracy, but rather its crisis: namely, the failure of representative democratic institutions to respond effectively to social needs and demands.

opposition parties have virtually evaporated, and representative institutions are struggling to rebuild. The emergence of new populist and leftist movements, along with the revival of some old ones, is part of this reconstruction; it is too early to tell how effectively the opponents of these leaders and movements will enter the fray.

LESLIE BETHELL

In any discussion of the so-called 'new Left' in Latin America it is useful to begin by reminding ourselves of the history of the 'old Left' or 'orthodox Left'. And this involves first of all wrestling with the problem of definition. In broad terms, the 'Left' historically comprised those individuals, social movements and political parties that pursued the implementation of ideas which, to different degrees, had their origins in the English, American, French and Russian revolutions; that is to say, put simply, liberty and equality (the 'sovereign virtue'). To be on the Left was to be, in the first place, an opponent of absolute monarchy and the political power of aristocracy or oligarchy and a supporter of republicanism, constitutional government, civil liberties, political representation, ultimately universal suffrage, and democracy. But in the 19th century, and more especially in the 20th century, the Left became more associated with opposition to economic and social inequality and support for a more equal distribution of wealth and power (as well as anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism). The Left, both Marxist and non-Marxist, stood for a significant transformation of the capitalist system—in its more utopian form, an end to capitalism—and the creation of an entirely new kind of society: socialism (which was not always associated with, indeed was often in conflict with, any residual commitment on the Left to liberal, representative democracy).

The Left in its socialist manifestation was essentially a European concept. It was transferred to or adopted in Latin America without ever fully fitting or being applicable to Latin American economic, social, and political realities. The history of the Left in Latin America, despite the existence of anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, Trotskyists, etc., is essentially, at least until the 1960s, the history of Socialist or Communist parties and the individuals associated with them. And it is predominantly a history

of failure. Only Chile and Argentina (up until the Second World War) have had significant Socialist parties which have achieved a measure of electoral success. The single most important victory for the Socialist Left in Latin America, albeit short-lived, was the election of Salvador Allende as president of Chile in 1970. The Latin American Communist parties, which had a complex relationship with the Soviet Union (until 1943 through the Comintern), were for the most part small, isolated, illegal—and heavily repressed; they had little success in either promoting revolution or attracting electoral support. For one brief period only—between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War—Communist parties experienced substantial growth, especially in Brazil and Chile. But by the end of the 1950s they had become victims of the Cold War and have remained politically insignificant ever since. The one exception was Cuba, where the Communist party was able to capture the Revolution of 1959.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, the political space occupied in Europe by parties of the social democratic Left was occupied in Latin America by populism. Populism is, like the Left, an elusive concept, notoriously difficult to define. Populist parties and their 'charismatic' leaders mobilized the 'people'—*from above*. This for the most part meant a coalition between the 'national bourgeoisie,' the public sector white-collar urban middle class, and organized labor against the 'oligarchy' or 'elite' (and imperialists). Ideologically, populism was confused and confusing. Populist governments generally pursued state-led national economic development, fostered (limited) political inclusion, and achieved a degree of social justice through distribution and welfare provision for at least the unionized urban working class. Elected or otherwise, populist leaders were invariably authoritarian and at best ambivalent toward liberal democratic institutions. In his 1993 history of the Latin American Left, *Utopia Unarmed*, Mexican academic and diplomat Jorge Castañeda³ treated presidents such as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (1946–55 and 1973–74) and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1930–45 and 1951–54), and political movements like Peru's *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA) and Bolivia's *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario* (MNR) as phenomena of the Left, even though Perón and Vargas, for example, were always hostile to the Left as I have defined it, especially the Communist Left, and the Left was hostile to them. For other historians, the populist

regimes of Latin America were to be compared more with the European regimes of the fascist Right.

The Cuban Revolution provided a stimulus to the Communist Left throughout Latin America but, more important, it also fostered a new Marxist-Castroist revolutionary Left which aimed at taking power through armed struggle, with the support of the peasants as well as the organized urban working class. Although revolutionary movements, both urban and rural, demonstrated considerable strength in many parts of Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, not least in Central America where they had perhaps their greatest success in Nicaragua in 1979, the revolutionary Left in most countries was effectively suppressed by the U.S.-backed military dictatorships of the time. Only the Castro regime in Cuba survived.

Thus, the Left in Latin America was, in the words of Castañeda, “on the ropes” even before the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War in 1989-91. The Left throughout the world now entered a long crisis from which it is yet to emerge. Socialism was no longer thought to be a convincing alternative to capitalism. What therefore did it mean any more to be on the Left? But whereas in Europe the appeal of the ‘old Left’ had to some extent already been undermined by post-war economic growth and improvements in the material condition of the mass of the population and the social welfare policies of governments of the social democratic Center-Left, in Latin America the persistence of extreme poverty and extreme inequality—indeed their worsening during the 1980s and 1990s, ‘lost decades’ in terms of economic growth—combined with political democratization might have been expected to provide the Left with new opportunities.

Most Latin American countries had Socialist and Communist parties, old and new, in the 1990s, but only in Chile once again, following the fall of General Augusto Pinochet, did Socialists come to power or at least to share power. Elsewhere, despite Alain Touraine having declared “the end of populisms in Latin America” in 1989, the decade was characterized by the emergence of a new breed of populist presidents like Carlos Menem in Argentina (1989-1999), Fernando Collor de Melo in Brazil (1990-92), and Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990-2000), who extended the social base of ‘classic’ populism (mainly organized labor) by successfully mobilizing the political support of the poor, both urban and rural,

in democratic elections. In power, however, not only was their style authoritarian but they implemented a neo-liberal agenda that did little to improve the condition of the poor. The populists of the 1990s were ‘neo-populists of the Right,’ certainly not part of anything we could characterize as the Left.

In the first decade of the 21st century two democratically elected presidents, each with immense personal charisma, are representative of the two faces of what is called the ‘new’ Latin American Left: Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1998–) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2003–).

Chávez is a politician from a military background who—opposed to (and opposed by) Venezuela’s established parties, including the parties of the old Left—has sought to create a new political movement with a wider social base, appealing to the poor, now described as victims of neo-liberalism and globalization. He has introduced radically distributive social policies, especially in health and education. His administration is authoritarian, but combined with a degree of direct, participatory democracy. And, internationally, Chávez has closely associated himself with Fidel Castro, taken up stridently anti-United States positions, and attempted to influence the politics of neighboring countries—Bolivia and Ecuador (successfully), and Peru (unsuccessfully). Is this simply old-fashioned populism (‘Peronism with oil’), or a new type of populism (‘neo-populism of the Left’), or Latin America’s first experiment with a form of democratic socialism (what Chávez himself calls ‘socialism for the 21st century’)?

Lula is the leader of a political party, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), which was established in 1980 towards the end of the military dictatorship, uniquely in Brazilian political history *from below*, and independent of the Socialist and Communist parties of old Brazilian Left. The PT abandoned the label ‘socialist’ before the elections of 2002 which first brought Lula to power. In government he has maintained

To be on the Left was to be, in the first place, an opponent of absolute monarchy and the political power of aristocracy or oligarchy and a supporter of republicanism, constitutional government, civil liberties, political representation, ultimately universal suffrage, and democracy.

the 'responsible' economic policies of the previous two-term president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002), which, it could be argued, started out Center/Center-Left but ended Center-Right, but Lula is more committed to the reduction of poverty and a better distribution of income through compensatory social policies. In this he is supported by the remnants of the parties of the old Left (but not the new parties, like the *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade*, PSOL, to the left of the PT). At the same time Lula seems committed to the strengthening of Brazil's relatively new democracy. Apart perhaps from Chile, past and present, and along with Uruguay under Tabaré Vázquez (2004–), is this Latin America's first genuine experiment with social democracy? Or, in view of Lula's new dependence on the political support of the Brazilian poor since the elections of 2006, and the frustrations inherent in Brazil's complex political system, could he, too, be tempted by a form of 'neo-populism of the Left'?

An understanding of both Venezuela under Chávez and Brazil under Lula is fundamental in any discussion of what the 'new Left' in Latin America at the beginning of the 21st century represents.

RENÉ ANTONIO MAYORGA

The distinction between Left and Right is still useful for understanding contemporary Latin American politics. The term populism is also unavoidable, even if it is a slippery and loose concept. Populism is a recurrent phenomenon, and we have no other concept to analyze the political movements of the 1930s as well as what is currently taking place in Bolivia and Venezuela.

The distinction between a radical populist Left and a moderate social democratic Left is also necessary, as both types of Left have come to power. The more traditional distinction between a Marxist or communist Left and a modern Left does not grasp the various strands of leftist politics today.

The common thread between both Lefts is a concern for advancing social justice and reducing inequality, for distributing wealth, achieving social integration, expanding political participation, and deepening democracy. There is also a concern with strengthening the state and

reasserting the state's role in the economy. These basic motives connect the various Lefts in Latin America.

These similarities aside, the differences between the two Lefts are striking. Relevant contrasts concern the type of regime, the nature of political practices, patterns of decision-making, attitudes toward democratic institutions, the type of mass support and mobilization, economic policies, etc. One key political difference lies in the approach toward deepening democracy. While the social democratic Left aims at deepening democracy within the framework of representative democracy and the division of state powers, the populist Left's strategies for deepening democracy espouse a type of participative democracy mediated by an authoritarian, personalistic leadership which undermines democratic institutions.

We must also take into account the shifting context of the types of interaction between Left and Right in contemporary Latin America. Generally speaking, and as Bobbio claimed, the key distinction between Left and Right involves the contrast between a horizontal and egalitarian view of society, and a vertical, non-egalitarian view of society.⁴ So the fundamental difference concerns the attitude assumed by people and political leaders toward the ideal of equality. However, the linkage that has traditionally been drawn between progressive, democratic politics and the Left does not apply in cases such as Venezuela or Bolivia, given the anti-institutionalist, anti-democratic thrust of the governments there. The nationalist, statist, and indigenous-populist Left includes restorative and reactionary tendencies; by contrast, on the right end of the political spectrum, there are political parties that have adopted policies and practices more apposite to enhancing democratic regimes and institutions.

What theoretical perspectives might be useful to analyze the diverse Lefts and to distinguish the different political and ideological tendencies? First, one must take into account the different party systems in which the populist Left and the moderate Left are embedded. It is very important to deal with the nature and function of party systems: whether these systems are institutionalized or inchoate, moderate or polarized. Party systems are undergoing particularly contradictory processes that are triggering different kinds of governments. Whereas in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay social democratic governments have emerged within stable party systems—with interactions characterized by negotiation and coalition building—populist governments in Peru,

Venezuela, and Bolivia have arisen in the context of the decline and even the collapse of party systems.

A second important issue concerns the social sources of the Left's power and the nature of mass mobilization. For example, a dual strategy of social mobilization and electoral competition underpinned the strategy of Evo Morales and his successful quest for power in Bolivia. As the leader of a peasant union of coca growers, Morales engaged in contentious politics that were aimed at mobilizing different popular sectors around the demand of nationalizing natural resources and at challenging ruling political parties and economic policies. The transformation of a peasant union into a political movement (the *Movimiento al Socialismo*, or MAS) that considers itself a social movement was a key factor enabling Morales to contend for power democratically.

We also need to take into account the issue of performance—of the state and of other democratic institutions. What the Left actually does in power matters more in the end than its ideological discourse. That is not to say that ideology doesn't matter: the ideological orientations of left governments diverge radically because of stark differences between the social democratic and the populist Left, and even within the populist Left. For example, the ideology of the government of Venezuela—the so-called socialism for the 21st century—represents a mixture of disparate elements: Bolivarian ideology, nationalism, participatory democracy, statism, cooperativism, etc. The government of Evo Morales in Bolivia rests on an own brand of ethnicist ideology, of communal direct democracy, nationalism, and state intervention in the economy. The MAS assumes that economic and state reform is feasible through the strengthening of traditional indigenous communities and their rules of collective decision-making and consensus-building, a process that relies on assemblies that do not recognize minority views. Apart from being non-viable as a government mechanism at national level, communal direct democracy is intended to disguise the anti-democratic thrust of Bolivia's populist government, its undermining of the division of powers, and its concentration of power in the executive.

Contemporary populism, or neo-populism, is defined by a political core and is not linked to a specific economic policy. Neo-populism is a pattern of personalistic and anti-institutionalist politics rooted mainly in the appeal to and/or mobilization of marginalized masses.

This mass mobilization is centered on a charismatic leadership, regardless of whether the pattern of mobilization is top-down or bottom-up. Populism's political core encompasses not only a specific pattern of relationship between the masses and the leadership, but also a strategy for power. This strategy is ideologically legitimized both by an appeal to the people as sovereign and by a nationalist-statist discourse against entrenched elites. This conceptualization of populism—as a pattern of relationship, a political strategy, and an ideological, nationalist orientation—allows us to account for the different kinds of populism or neo-populism that have emerged in the region. Viewing populism in its multiple dimensions also helps account for two of its key features: policy flexibility and organizational malleability. These two features have clearly been manifest in the two strands of neo-populist politics

carried out especially by outsiders to the political system: the neo-liberal populism of the 1990s in Alberto Fujimori's Peru, and the more classical, statist-nationalist variant of populism represented by Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

How do populist governments act in power and what do they do to democratic institutions? What are their specific practices, and how do they undermine democratic institutions? Social democratic regimes in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are based on stable, multi-party systems in which political parties are able to represent different social interests. Government changes in these multi-party democracies have been gradual rather than disruptive. Populist governments in Venezuela and Bolivia, by contrast, are not based on multi-class alliances and are not embedded in multi-party systems. Rather, they are based on the support of subaltern sectors of peasant unions, informal workers, and the urban poor. These governments are rooted in extensive, loosely linked, decentralized grass-roots organizations, a heterogeneous array of peasant

Neo-populism is a pattern of personalistic and anti-institutionalist politics rooted mainly in the appeal to and/or mobilization of marginalized masses. This mass mobilization is centered on a charismatic leadership, regardless of whether the pattern of mobilization is top-down or bottom-up.

unions, neighborhood associations, informal workers associations, and the like. The regimes are not grounded in strong, cohesive parties. There is, however, an important difference. Whereas in Venezuela the regime is tied to the authoritarian, personalistic leadership of Chávez, in Bolivia the Morales regime—which conceives of itself as a government by and for social movements—is dependent on a political movement involving

a heterogeneous cluster of primarily indigenous social organizations.

The policies of populist governments have eroded democratic institutions and procedures as well as constitutional frameworks. In Venezuela Chávez has pursued an outright strategy of concentrating power in his hands, starting with the Constituent Assembly. In Bolivia, Evo Morales' strategy with respect to the Constituent Assembly is poised to replicate Chávez's model. Morales' party has broken the democratic rules of the game in the Constituent Assembly, by deciding

through majority vote—rather than through the two-thirds required by the Constitution—that the Assembly, as an original and plenipotentiary body, is not bound by any constitutional order. Economic policies in both countries reflect a clear strategy to restore state intervention and exert tight control over natural resources.

What explains the emergence of left governments in the Andean region? The main factor has been the deepening of socio-economic cleavages, something exacerbated by neoliberal policies as well as by policies and trends preceding the neoliberal shift.⁵ Other factors include the persistence of poverty, low-intensity citizenship, aggravated social inequalities, and the growth of the informal economy, all of which provided a background for the intensification of social conflict and mobilization, particularly in Bolivia. Institutional and political factors were also very critical. Leftist governments have emerged at a critical juncture, characterized by a backlash of popular sectors against political parties engaged in neoliberal policies. The governments in Venezuela and Bolivia are a consequence of the decline and breakdown of political parties; they are

Leftist governments have emerged at a critical juncture, characterized by a backlash of popular sectors against political parties engaged in neoliberal policies.

the result of the state's failure to solve acute socio-economic problems affecting the population. The combination of party collapse and state weakness engendered the political vacuum that was filled by populist leaders, political outsiders, and mass movements. Moreover, in Bolivia, a combination of successful democratization, economic slump, and the crumbling of the dominant political parties exacerbated traditional ethnic, cultural, and regional cleavages that cut across class divides. These factors polarized the political system and undermined the state.

NOTES

1. Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards, eds., *The Macroeconomics of Populism in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
2. See, for example, Kenneth M. Roberts, "Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case," *World Politics* 48 (October 1995), pp. 82-116; and Kurt Weyland, "Neoliberalism and Neopopulism in Latin America: Unexpected Affinities," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31 (Fall 1996), pp. 3-31.
3. Jorge Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1993).
4. Norberto Bobbio, *Derecha e Izquierda. Razones y significados de una distinción política* (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Taurus, 1995), pp. 135-52.
5. The combination of policies and trends included such things as the privatization of state enterprises, the adoption of tax and income policies fostering inequality, and the decline of agriculture in areas like the Bolivian highlands, which sparked migration to the cities.

Political Economy and the 'New Left'

Robert Kaufman

Many different Lefts have come to power recently in Latin America. Indeed, there are far more than two. Dichotomous distinctions between “good” and “bad” Lefts are too crude to capture important differences such as those highlighted by Kenneth Roberts: between social democrats [Michele Bachelet (Chile), Lula (Brazil), Tabaré Vázquez (Uruguay)], populist politicians at the head of labor based parties [Néstor Kirchner (Argentina), Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Mexico)], personalist leaders who mobilize support from the top down [Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Rafael Correa (Ecuador)], and those who emerge out of popular social movements from below (Evo Morales, Bolivia).

That said, there is still some utility to thinking in terms of a simpler continuum: between left parties that combine distributive goals with market-oriented policies and those advocating a return to more traditional forms of state control and economic nationalism. This distinction—broad though it is—raises two very different types of questions.

First, with respect to Lefts which are inclined to lean against market policies, one central puzzle is how they were able to resurface and gain power at all. During the 1990s, left projects of the kind now being pursued by Chávez, Correa, and Morales were assumed to have been buried in the ashes of the “heterodox” experiments of the mid-1980s. Constraints of international capital markets and fear of a return of instability were expected to drive left parties toward the center. So, what has happened in such cases? How will their projects evolve, are they sustainable, and what will be the effects on democratic politics?

With respect to Lefts that *have* moved to the center (e.g., Brazil's PT, the Chilean Socialists, the Broad Front in Uruguay), the question is

whether the constraints of a globalized economy allow the space needed to pursue more progressive and egalitarian social policies. Will these parties become programmatically indistinguishable from their competitors on the right? Might they succumb to pressures to adopt more expansionary policies? Either way, what will be the effect on their democratic societies?

Why the return to statism and economic nationalism?

Explanations for this shift must factor in a variety of economic and political explanations. Most fundamentally, market reforms have not met the high expectations of social progress hoped for in the early 1990s. Poverty has declined in many countries, but not as much as originally hoped. Perhaps even more important, the concentration of wealth and income remains very high, and has increased in some countries during the 1990s. The persistence of inequality, despite the high growth rates achieved since the early 2000s, appears to have deepened frustrations.

It is far from clear, however, that protests over inequality carry over into wholesale backlash against market reforms. While some of these reforms—privatization, for example—have been unpopular, there has been a good deal of support in the region for trade liberalization and for cautious fiscal management.¹ To explain why left political movements and parties have sometimes engaged in highly confrontational politics, one must look not only at disappointment with economic policies and neoliberal reforms, but also at disenchantment with the political system in which they are embedded.

The countries most vulnerable to polarizing movements of the radical Left have been those in which established party systems have been unable to build coalitions in support of coherent and sustained market-oriented policies. In Ecuador and Bolivia, such movements are products of long-term stalemate and fragmentation within the traditional political class. In Peru during the 1980s and Venezuela during the 1990s, they resulted from the failure of a succession of governments led by established parties to adjust effectively to the debt crisis. In all of these cases, the collapse of traditional party networks created political vacuums filled by populist champions and mass movements attacking the “political establishment” and claiming to speak for the poor.

How will the “anti-market Left” perform in office?

Governments now in office have been buoyed by the commodity boom of the early 2000s, but their current economic projects are unsustainable. This is true even of Chávez's petro-state, which has been running large fiscal deficits and has turned to price controls to keep inflation down. Morales' and Correa's projects of nationalization, regulatory control, and potential debt default face even greater technical obstacles and much stronger political opposition. Even the more moderate programs pushed by people like Kirchner, Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua), and Alan García (Peru) have led to uncertainties about property rights and regulation that may discourage investment and require substantial adjustments going forward.

Responses to such challenges are likely to depend on economic and political circumstances that are highly specific to each country. One option is to turn to more authoritarian controls, a process already well underway in Venezuela. This will be more difficult in Ecuador and Bolivia, however, where political leaders are much less secure in power and efforts to revise constitutions have been stalled. It is even less likely in Peru, Argentina, and Nicaragua, where leaders are more committed to working within a democratic process.

Whether such leaders will be willing or able to adjust to more sustainable growth paths, however, is also unclear. Vigorous mass movements in Bolivia and Ecuador, for example, place considerable constraints on current leaders. More moderate leaders in Argentina and Peru have a better chance.

What is the effect on democracy?

Again, this is highly contingent on specific political and economic conditions. Whether any of the current left populist governments can evolve in a more moderate direction will depend on whether they can pursue more realistic economic policies and—as important—whether they can establish political organizations that accept a role as one of several legitimate contenders for office. This is not entirely inconceivable in some cases. The best chances are for leaders who already operate within the framework of established parties. This would include Kirchner and possi-

bly Ortega, as well as some future president of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD) in Mexico. In Peru, the APRA party remains in shambles, but it could conceivably be rebuilt under García.

Given the populist bias against organized party competition, evolution in this direction would still be a tall order. The more likely outcome in the more radical cases is the creation of deep, polarized, and enduring political cleavages. While this may not produce overtly authoritarian outcomes, it is almost certain to make stable democracy very difficult to maintain. As in the aftermath of the Peronist experience of the 1940s and 1950s, the long-term prospects for Venezuela would be mutually destructive confrontations between Chavistas and anti-Chavistas. For Bolivia and Ecuador (and possibly Peru), one can imagine—as Ken Roberts has suggested—recurrent cycles of populism under a succession of different populist leaders.

The countries most vulnerable to polarizing movements of the radical Left have been those in which established party systems have been unable to build coalitions in support of coherent and sustained market-oriented policies.

Social Democratic Parties: What's left of the Left?

Because of the rise of Chávez and his admirers in other countries, the question of “what's left of the Left?” is asked less today than it was in the 1990s. Nevertheless, it does still pertain in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, and is relevant to moderate left parties in other countries as well.

Scholars have come to opposite conclusions about the long-term effects of “left parties.” Statistical work that I have done in collaboration with Alex Segura-Ubierno shows that presidents from “popularly-based” parties are more likely to press for spending on social security, a relatively regressive form of social expenditure, instead of on health and education.² Moreover, political scientist Karen Remmer has shown that “left” governments are more likely than conservative ones to adopt strict stabilization programs in the face of macroeconomic imbalances.³ Quantitative evidence on the other side has been presented in work by

Evelyne Huber and associates. They show that, where left parties dominate legislatures over long periods of time, spending on health and education tends to increase and the Gini index of inequality declines.⁴

It is unlikely that such empirical differences can be resolved by improved measures and more sophisticated modeling techniques alone. More qualitative and case-specific research is also required to investigate the dynamics of the policy process and the role played by party

competition. We can gain some insight into the opportunities and dilemmas facing left governments from a brief look at three important policy areas.

The first involves anti-poverty programs common in the region. Programs such as *Oportunidades* in Mexico and *Bolsa Família* in Brazil have been quite successful in encouraging families to maintain their children in school, and have made a visible difference in poverty levels. It should be noted, however, that anti-poverty programs have support across the political spectrum; they are not uniquely left projects. Indeed, in Mexico, they have been pursued and deepened by right-of-center governments. Moreover, such programs face severe and continuing fiscal constraints. *Bolsa Família*, for example, represents only 0.3 percent of Brazil's GDP, while

social spending—most of which is not redistributive—constitutes about 15–16 percent of GDP. For parties of the Left, attempts to reallocate additional funding to anti-poverty programs risks opposition from their traditional blue-collar and middle-class constituents, the primary beneficiaries of more conventional social security programs.

It follows that revenue constraints constitute a second major challenge for parties of the Left. Not only are spending priorities often inequitable, but most Latin American countries, with the notable exception of Brazil, are seriously under-taxed as well. Limited revenues exacerbate distributive

conflicts and impede efforts to broaden social safety nets. However, progressive income taxes are difficult to collect. This is so not only because of inadequate tax administrations, but because the extreme concentration of income reduces incentives of upper income groups to comply and makes it easier for them to opt out of public services in education and health. Value added taxes are not as progressive as taxes on income, but they are easier to collect and yield revenues that can be used to enhance the scope and quality of public services. In turn, tax compliance appears to work best when people think they are getting something in return. Moving in such a policy direction, however, will require many activists within the left parties to rethink deeply held beliefs about this issue.

The third policy dilemma concerns ways to accelerate job creation and growth. Economists agree that macroeconomic stability and budget balances are necessary conditions of growth, but there is little clarity about what additional policies might also be necessary for improving generally sluggish and erratic performance. Such uncertainties offer opportunities for creative thinking on the Left, even within the context of global market constraints. So far, however, it is hard to detect a comprehensive vision or program. In Chile and Uruguay, already small open economies, the Left has generally favored increasing ties to the United States, whereas the Brazilian government has been more inclined to build bargaining leverage through Mercosur. Distinctive strategies for enhancing the skills of the labor force, restructuring labor markets, or developing infrastructure have also yet to be clearly defined.

There is some risk that frustration in dealing with these challenges can tempt left governments into costly policy miscalculations. At the moment, pressures for a change in policy course seem especially strong in Brazil. The Lula government has presided over sluggish growth rates that are well below historic levels, and a turn toward a more active state role in investment and infrastructure can potentially have a positive effect. But without significant—and politically very difficult—reforms of the social security and tax system, it may be difficult for the government to sustain the necessary fiscal equilibrium.

The good news, in Brazil and elsewhere, is that these choices are likely to be made within fairly stable democratic systems in which voters can hold incumbent governments accountable for their mistakes. This provides a strong incentive for incumbent social democratic

Revenue constraints constitute a second major challenge for parties of the Left. Not only are spending priorities often inequitable, but most Latin American countries, with the notable exception of Brazil, are seriously under-taxed as well. Limited revenues exacerbate distributive conflicts and impede efforts to broaden social safety nets.

governments to proceed with caution, while still pressing for incremental improvements in employment and the distribution of income. Such incentives in turn, are likely to reinforce the durability and quality of the democratic systems. Even if social progress is slow, the integration of the Left as a contender in the political game offers a vital channel of representation for groups that have long been marginalized from Latin American politics.

NOTES

1. See Andy Baker, "Why is Trade Reform so Popular in Latin America? A Consumption-Based Theory of Trade Preferences," *World Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (April 2003), pp. 423-455.

2. Robert R. Kaufman and Alex Segura-Ubiergo. "Globalization, Domestic Politics and Social Spending: A Time-Series, Cross-Section Analysis 1973-1997," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (July 2001), pp. 553-87. The article, along with comments from Joan Nelson and Colin Bradford, was published as Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Latin American Program Working Paper No. 257, 2002.

3. Karen L. Remmer "The Politics of Economic Policy and Performance in Latin America," *Journal of Public Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Jan.-April 2002), pp. 29-59.

4. Evelyne Huber, Francois Nielsen, Jenny Pribble, and John D. Stephens. "Social Spending and Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean." Paper prepared for the meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, Washington D.C. (July 8-11, 2004).

Politics and Society

Felipe Agüero

Ariel Armony

Eric Hershberg

FELIPE AGÜERO

In assessing the various aspects of left governance, it is important to go beyond the more visible aspects of policy, especially social and economic policy, and explore institutional questions and the Left's stance on issues related to the political regime. Has the Left adopted a new approach to how participation and decision-making are organized? What are the precise mechanisms for expanding participation? And on the central issue of public order, which is of great importance throughout the hemisphere, does the Left have a distinctive or different approach? These are not questions about which the Left historically has had much to say.

The old Left, for example, was relatively unsophisticated in its approach to institutions and institutional design. To the extent that institutional questions were considered at all, they were viewed as matters to address or solve subsequent to gaining power. The main question centered on whether or not to use violence to gain power, and if so, how much. Democracy was viewed as a sort of "institutional waiting period" that eventually had to be superseded, but there was not much clarity as to what would replace democracy or the new forms it would take. Institutions were viewed mostly in an instrumental manner. During Salvador Allende's *Unidad Popular* government in Chile 1970-73, for example, the only proposal of an institutional nature—which never came to fruition—was for the consolidation of congress into a single chamber; but there was little thought given to the relationship of this proposal to the rest of the *Unidad Popular* project.

Then, of course, came the series of shocks that started with the military coups and the repressive regimes that ensued in many countries, followed many years later by the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the demise of

communist regimes. During that period the Left went through a number of experiences that had a deep and substantive impact on its subsequent evolution. One was the experience of exile and, as a result, the broadening of perspectives concerning the Left's failures and partial successes elsewhere. At the same time, the Left paid attention to the fact that new movements

were emerging in Latin America, often quite independent of parties. These movements raised the visibility of actors such as indigenous peoples and women, as well as concerns such as the environment.

Despite these experiences and learning, however, and after the transitions to democracy in the 1980s, the Left was mainly preoccupied with undoing the institutional arrangements established during the periods of military dictatorship. In many regards, the Left was reactive and remained focused on the past. This tendency characterized the approach to human rights, for example, as civilian governments and groups in civil society grappled with how to address the abuses of the past and dismantle the structures responsible for them. However, debates about the kind of institutional design necessary to carry out a forward-looking, transformative platform came up rarely, and even then, primarily

After the transitions to democracy in the 1980s, the Left was mainly preoccupied with undoing the institutional arrangements established during the periods of military dictatorship. In many regards, the Left was reactive and remained focused on the past... debates about the kind of institutional design necessary to carry out a forward-looking, transformative platform came up rarely, and even then, primarily in academic circles.

in academic circles. This was the case, for instance, regarding the debates over the constraints that presidential regimes imposed on governance and over new ways of expanding participation in the process of decision-making. Only in Brazil did the debate between the presidential and parliamentary alternatives occasionally go beyond those narrow circles.

Paradoxically, the dearth of proposals from the Left on institutional reform coincided with a period of important constitutional reforms in many countries, which offered opportunities for addressing institutional questions: periods of constitutional reform provide opportunities to debate such issues as participation and inclusion, as well as horizontal

issues such as executive branch-legislative relations. The views adopted by the Left in these processes merit careful analysis. In Chile the Left, together with others in the government coalition, was a major proponent of the constitutional reforms of 2005. These led to completing the democratic transition by, among other things, updating the regime to the essentials of democratic representation.

Reform processes in other countries need to be studied to ascertain the positions of the Left. In Ecuador, for example, President Correa's proposals place a strong emphasis on social and economic reforms but their specific content is still uncertain. In Bolivia, proposed constitutional reforms squarely address issues of indigenous rights. And as in the other Andean countries, Bolivia confronts the thorny issue of regional autonomies, related both to the indigenous issue and to the desires of opponents of the Morales government. Both sets of autonomy demands pose daunting challenges for national unity and integrity. In Venezuela, Chávez's reforms have established a single chamber—a unicameral *Asamblea Nacional*—which in practice has strengthened the president's personalized, top-down control.

The Brazilian case is the most important one regarding constitutional reform, in that the drafting of the now relatively older 1988 Constitution was a central feature of the transition to democracy. At that time, the PT emerged as a major force with distinct and disciplined left features, parallel to the mobilization of social movements. The Brazilian case provides an opportunity to explore not only what kinds of issues the Left was defending at the beginning of the democratic transition, but also how the thinking of the Left developed as its leaders took power at the municipal and state level and eventually at the national level.

The expansion of left governance in Brazil from the local to the national level highlighted the influence of a new "participatory impulse" fostered by the rise of social movements. In Brazil, the emergence of the party of the Left and the rise of the social movement have been part of the same process, and the two developed synergies especially at the local and state levels. Much has been written about institutional innovation in Brazil in processes such as participatory budgeting at the local level. However, the lasting impact of these innovations and the role of left governance in them are being questioned by some in civil society who have become disillusioned with the partnership.

In other cases, such as Uruguay and Chile, participation is channeled largely through political parties. This raises questions about the relationships between parties, the electorate, and citizens in general, as well as about the ways that parties adapt or reform themselves in the face of new demands for participation.

A further example of innovation comes from Chilean President Michele Bachelet, who initially assigned half of all ministerial posts to women, a ratio that no longer exists. Recent efforts to establish quotas that would raise female participation in government that have succeeded in other countries have not succeeded in Chile. Similarly unsuccessful was the attempt in Chile to articulate a notion of "citizen government" through the appointment of large commissions formed by individuals and members of civil society organizations. The aim was to propose policy and reforms in areas such as education or electoral laws, but the commissions did not succeed in replacing the role of parties.

Finally, the Left has been particularly reluctant to grapple with questions of institutional design concerning public order. Latin America has one of the highest crime rates in the world and public opinion surveys routinely reflect the public's preoccupation with the prevalence of crime and violence. One way to address crime is through social policy, but the institutional response—what political scientists Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan have referred to as the "usable state"¹—is to create a modern, professional, technologically advanced, and democratic police force. Given the region's history of state-sponsored repression, the Left has been reluctant or slow to deal with how to create and provide leadership for an effective police force that would operate within a democratic context. If the goal is to overcome the threats posed by crime and violence, the Left's primary concern with prevention and with the social causes of crime is no substitute for an effective, institutional, democratic policy regarding the forces of coercion.

ARIEL ARMONY

Looking at the relationship between civil society and the state is important not just to understand more about the 'new Left' in Latin America; the study of the new Left can also help us discover some aspects of state-

civil society relations that have not yet been understood. There are three basic questions: 1) given changes in the political economy of the region brought about by neoliberalism in the 1990s, what difference, if any, does the Left make in terms of state-civil society relations, particularly in relation to social change? 2) how do the actions of new Left governments influence the organization of civil society and the conflicts within civil society? and 3) how permeable are new Left governments to demands from civil society?

The Left and State-Civil Society Relations

In thinking about the first question, one must consider that the fragmentation of traditional political solidarities such as class and a predominance of territorially-based demands—which are some of consequences of neoliberalism—present challenges for new Left governments. What are the new sources of collective identity to which new Left governments appeal, if not class? Who mediates the provision of social services, and how has that affected the kinds of mediations between civil society and the government? One must explore the particular mediations prevailing in each national context—be they through non-governmental organizations, political parties, unions, or markets—and ask, 'what difference do these mediations make in terms of the broader patterns of state-civil society relations?'

New forms of participation that challenge the boundary between civil society and the market also deserve a great deal of attention. Accepted theory (e.g., the "third-sector" literature) views civil society as independent of the state and as involved in not-for-profit activity.² In the 1990s, the expansion of certain sectors of civil society was predicated on the rationale that civil society should replace the state in areas such as the provision of social services. This model of society is also based on the assumption that each sector operates according to a principle that distinguishes its activities; therefore, it argues that the profitability of the market should be clearly separated from voluntarism in the third sector. However, as a result of the crisis brought about by neoliberal policies, civil society groups have become involved in the market in innovative ways.

Citizen participation that challenges the boundaries between civil society and the market is promoting diverse forms of "solidarity economics" in the region. Banco Palmas in Fortaleza, Brazil, is one of several

examples of this movement. A grassroots initiative with funding from European NGOs, Banco Palmas was designed to support local businesses and consumers. To achieve this goal, the bank introduced micro-credit lines at low interest rates and issued and circulated its own social currency, the Palmas. Pegged to Brazil's currency, the *real*, the bank's currency is accepted by local producers, shopkeepers, and consumers. Banco Palmas seeks to generate a sustainable, reinforcing economic circle of growth in the community while expanding networks of trust and solidarity among residents. While the outcome of this experience is yet to be assessed, it represents an interesting development in terms of grassroots economic activity. The federal government has shown interest in this model, choosing to support the bank's social currency and allowing the Palmas model to spread to other areas of Brazil.

These kinds of local experiences are relevant in the context of governing parties with a leftist ideology. As others observed earlier, the core of the 'old' Left involved a direct challenge to capitalism, that is, a change in property relations and the ownership of production. However, this goal is off the agenda now, leaving the 'new' Left with a key dilemma: how to conceptualize a "popular capitalism" that will take the place of the historically redistributive economic policies of the Left. Thus, it is worth exploring whether local experiences of "solidarity economics" are endorsed by left-leaning governments as building blocks of a new, feasible form of "popular capitalism." Of course, we would need to investigate the degree to which models such as that of Banco Palmas can be implemented on a greater scale and the effects of a potential collaboration between state and civil society in these grassroots market ventures.

The Left and Civil Society Organization

Are the policies of new Left governments promoting more effective citizen participation and more democratic forms of state-civil society relations? Three key issues stand out.

One concerns the relationship between civil society and political society. In countries such as Brazil and Bolivia, political parties have emerged out of social movements. It is thus useful to explore the contradictions between the dynamic of civil society and that of political parties. In other words, how does the "radical" or "participatory" democracy of

civil society relate to political democracy? In short, what happens to the relationship between the state and civil society when social mobilization is translated into political power? In Bolivia, for example, it is important to study the reshaping of the pact between state and society, especially regarding the question of ethnicity.

A potential avenue for research is to compare cases that offer different models of state-civil society relations under left-wing governments, as in the Brazilian and Bolivian cases. Students of Latin America have often viewed new forms of participatory democracy as positive for deepening accountability, transparency, and other dimensions of democracy. However, recent developments in countries such as Bolivia pose crucial questions regarding the relationship between political participation and democratic decision-making. In Bolivia, as René Mayorga has argued, former President Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada's political participation reform allowed so-

cial movements to become political forces. Social movements—the coca growers and others—began to conquer new spaces of political influence. Employing the mechanisms of representative democracy, these political forces gained access to power. Once in control of the state apparatus, however, the kind of participatory democracy that indigenous movements are fighting for is intended to displace representative democracy. Would this process result in a state occupied by social movements? What would be the potential implications for democracy if Bolivia continues on this path? What happens with state-civil society relations when the role of social movements follows a different path, as in Brazil?

Venezuela provides a contrasting, top-down model of civil society incorporation, which contains its own paradoxes. For instance, while tightly controlled by the state, the *círculos bolivarianos* have enhanced the mobilization capacity of some of the poorest and most marginalized segments of society. Is the social capital resulting from this experience, in

Students of Latin America have often viewed new forms of participatory democracy as positive for deepening accountability, transparency, and other dimensions of democracy. However, recent developments... pose crucial questions regarding the relationship between political participation and democratic decision-making.

which the state builds civil society, a source of potential autonomy from the state? Should we dismiss these top-down models of civic organization as largely authoritarian? Or do the range of links created between these forms of participation and the charismatic leadership of Hugo Chávez suggest innovative ways of organizing civil society?

Second, how do the actions of governments affect the organization of civil society itself, and how do government policies affect horizontal conflicts in civil society? The work of U.S. political scientists on the reciprocal influence between those in government and pressure groups could be helpful to respond to the first question.³ How do new Left governments create novel opportunities for influence by pressure groups? Sometimes, the tendency of government to extend its involvement in economic and social life may trigger increasing pressure group activity. Is this the case under left-wing governments in the region? We must explore whether politics under new Left governments have introduced new dynamics of civil society-state relations via traditional forms of representation, such as legislative politics. Changes in the work of legislatures can result in new points of access for civil society, thus expanding the kinds of opportunities for civic groups to exercise their political influence. Along these lines, we should also ask whether and when civil society emerges as a relevant actor influencing executive-parliamentary relations.

Third, what kinds of coalitions have developed around relevant issues such as citizen security, human rights, and distributional policies? Does the ideological orientation of the government contribute to mobilize citizens in a certain direction? In the case of policies regarding citizen security, for example, there are pro-order and pro-reform coalitions comprised of elected politicians, organized groups in civil society, and state institutions such as the police. Pro-order coalitions tend to support a *mano dura* on crime while pro-reform coalitions emphasize the protection of citizens' civil rights. Building on existing research on cases such as Argentina and Chile, it would be important to explore whether new Left governments make a difference in terms of coalition-building.

Some new Left governments have emphasized their commitment to human rights, seeking to address violations perpetrated by the dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. Support for this agenda, however, is not homogeneous across society. It is therefore important to understand how different sectors of civil society stress different conceptions of human

rights, how these notions inform government action, and how government and civil society reshape national versions of the country's recent history. In Argentina, for example, this process of grappling with the past seems to serve the government to assert its roots in a revamped past of glorified activism. There are ample opportunities to investigate how the recreation of these national myths shapes the discourse and action of both government and civil society.

In thinking about distributional agendas, the context in which these agendas are to be debated has changed. Under classic populism, "the people" consisted of labor, the national bourgeoisie, and the middle class running an expanded state. Nowadays, "the people" equals the poor and the marginalized, often seen as antagonistic to the urban middle class, which is now often viewed as part of the elite. Since the coordinates for the distributional debate have changed, one must investigate how the different new Left governments approach this debate and seek different types of alliances with sectors of society.

The Permeability of New Left Governments to Civil Society Demands

We know very little about the relationship between civil society and concrete policy outputs. What do social movements actually achieve in terms of social policy? Does activism lead to social improvements, and are new Left governments more receptive to the role of civil society in shaping and/or implementing social policy? We must ask whether innovative forms of participation expand access to policymaking, the degree to which these new avenues for civil society input are truly representative in a broad sense, and the impact that the new Left (in its various forms) has on such processes of citizen incorporation. These questions should elicit responses that move beyond group identity and assess the effectiveness of civil society, that is, its capacity to attain or influence policy results.

ERIC HERSHBERG

Amidst the debate about the likely impacts of left governments across Latin America, the absence of attention to human rights and accountability policies is noteworthy. In the Southern Cone and in Brazil, governments

to the left of the political spectrum have taken power in countries where human rights abuses under military rule were widespread and where important segments of civil society have called for truth, justice and reparations. What have governments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay done to hold accountable those who carried out human rights abuses during the dictatorships? Have governments of the Left approached this

Steps being taken in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay—particularly in terms of re-opening investigations and prosecutions—appear to go beyond what non-Left governments have been prepared to do. The aggressiveness of the executive branch in pushing for the investigation and prosecution of cases has been important.

issue differently than their predecessors? These questions deserve further exploration, and the experience of several years of progressive government allows us to reach at least tentative conclusions.

The 1980s literature on democratic transitions in Latin America held that two issues were non-negotiable if transitions were to be achieved peacefully. One was the sanctity of property rights; the other was the integrity of the military.⁴ The military hierarchy, in particular, was not to be challenged over its role in the repression that followed coups d'état carried out during the 1960s and '70s and that continued during the period of

military rule. The sanctity of private property has, indeed, remained off of the agenda in these countries, in large measure because of the Left's willingness to adopt market-oriented policies launched by some military regimes and continued by democratically-elected governments during the 1980s and '90s. However, it has not been possible to stifle public discussion of and activism around the issue of military impunity. Even in those transitions in the Southern Cone that did not follow the classic pattern involving negotiations between political actors and pacts among competing elites—as in the case of Argentina, where the military regime essentially collapsed—limits were soon placed on the process of human rights investigations and amnesties for human rights crimes were accepted by democratically elected leaders.

Yet governments that have tried to reach closure on this issue have consistently been unable to do so. They have faced what human rights scholar Alexander Wilde called “irruptions of memory”⁵—relentless

pressures from civil society to re-open cases, pursue investigations, and hold perpetrators of violations responsible for their actions. Try as they might, government officials have proven unable to keep issues of accountability off of the public agenda. This has led to growing numbers of prosecutions throughout the Southern Cone as well as modest steps toward provision of reparations to victims and their families.

Does a willingness to confront the past simply reflect a maturation of political democracies or is it a product of the particular forces in office at a particular point in time? Some of the ability to reckon with the past clearly reflects a maturation of democracy. At the outset of the transition, some claimed that for democracy to take root, it had to deal with the human rights abuses of the past. Others, however, claimed that the stability of fragile democracies depended upon the willingness of leaders to move beyond preoccupation with what had taken place and to focus instead on securing broad consent for sustaining competitive politics. These opposing positions signal the distinct logics shaping the behavior of the human rights movement, on the one hand, and governing actors on the other.⁶

Governments in the Southern Cone at an earlier stage of the transition process adopted a policy of acknowledging the abuses of the past and apologizing for them; in several instances, most notably Argentina and Chile, officially-sponsored truth commissions issued extensive reports detailing the murders, torture, and disappearances carried out by the military regimes. All of these measures were aimed at reaching closure without provoking the kind of clash with the military that prosecutions and trials would have entailed.⁷ For the most part it was only later, once democracies were clearly consolidated *and* once they were led by executives on the Left of the political spectrum, that there was a clear movement toward addressing human rights abuses through the courts, and for broadening both symbolic and material reparations.

Whether or not there is a qualitative shift in the approach to these issues once the Left comes to power remains to be determined. A preliminary answer is that the Left does make a difference. Steps being taken in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay—particularly in terms of re-opening investigations and prosecutions—appear to go beyond what non-Left governments have been prepared to do. The aggressiveness of the executive branch in pushing for the investigation and prosecution of cases has been important. The attitude of the executive branch toward challenging or

overturning amnesties has also shifted noticeably. The governments in all three countries have encouraged the trend in the courts to overturn amnesties and to broaden the range of crimes that fall under their jurisdiction. Today's governments of the Left have not only more actively favored trials and prosecutions, they have also been more aggressive in using symbols to advance a human rights agenda. It is no coincidence, for example, that Chilean President Michele Bachelet spoke out against the amnesty for the military while visiting Villa Grimaldi, the notorious women's prison in which she herself was detained.

The issue of how to deal with past human rights abuses touches on the broader question of the military's role in contemporary Latin American societies. Does the Left have a different view of the role of the military under democracy? For the most part the answer appears to be negative, with parties from across the political spectrum advocating a "modernization" of the military and a greater role in international rather than domestic conflict resolution. Yet there are interesting exceptions. Néstor Kirchner in Argentina, for example, is said to have a two-track policy vis-à-vis the armed forces. On the one hand, he has not been afraid to confront them on human rights issues; on the other hand, and similar to leaders such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela today or Juan Velasco years ago in Peru, he has made it clear to the military that it does have a role to play in a developmental project. The ways in which those two discourses by left governments might or might not overlap is worth further exploration.

Also worthy of note is the extent to which the human rights issues of importance in the Southern Cone have not found an echo in a country such as Bolivia. Confronting the violence of the past has not figured in the agenda of Bolivia's social movements or of the MAS, despite the history of abuses under the regime of General Hugo Banzer during the 1980s.

Finally, how governments deal with the political violence of the past intersects with the question of what to do about the violence of today, not only how to protect the citizenry from threats to their security but also how to protect the human rights of criminal suspects. Protecting human rights in the face of widespread citizen insecurity has become a central concern of the human rights movements across much of the region.⁸ Their attention is made all the more timely by the tendency of rightist leaders to favor *mano dura* policies in response to soaring rates of crime: such measures, less evident in countries governed by left-leaning

administrations, have encouraged arbitrary and violent conduct by police and security officials.

NOTES

1. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

2. A 'three-sector' model of society posits the existence of three sectors—the state, the market, and the 'third' sector of voluntary, nonprofit associations—with each sector operating according to a principle that distinguishes its activities, namely, coercion in the state, profitability in the market, and voluntarism in the third sector. See Ariel C. Armony, *The Dubious Link: Civic Engagement and Democratization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 29–30; Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, *The Emerging Nonprofit Sector: An Overview* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1996); and Robert Wuthnow, ed., *Between States and Markets: The Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

3. The work of Scholzman and Tierney suggested that, just as organized interests try to affect policy outcomes, the very act of engaging in that process exerts a reciprocal influence on the groups themselves. See Kay Lehman Scholzman and John T. Tierney, *Organized Interests and American Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1986).

4. See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

5. Alexander Wilde, "Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 31 (1999), pp. 473–500. See also Steve Stern, *Reckoning With Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2001* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

6. A particularly clear outline of this tension is Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Human Rights in Democratization Processes," in Elizabeth Jelin and Eric Hershberg, eds., *Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Justice and Society in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 39–56.

7. For the trajectory of policies aimed at mollifying critics in the military, see Carlos Acuña and Catalina Smulovitz, "Adjusting the Armed Forces to Democracy: Successes, Failures, and Ambiguities in the Southern Cone," in Jelin and Hershberg, op. cit., pp. 13–38.

8. See Mark Ungar, "Crime and Citizen Security in Latin America," in Eric Hershberg and Fred Rosen, eds., *Turning the Tide? Latin America After Neoliberalism* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2006).

Foreign Policy

Roberto Russell

Ideology and the distinction between “Left” and “Right” are not particularly helpful in understanding the main areas of convergence and divergence in the foreign policies of Latin American countries. The Left-Right framework leads to oversimplification as well as to a tendency to posit that similarities in practices, processes, and ideologies exist, when in reality the differences are much more important.

Without a doubt, Latin America today is much more politically diverse than it was in the 1990s. At that time, and with the exception of Cuba, the countries of the region embraced—some more forcefully than others—the so-called “Washington Consensus” and sought as a bloc to find various forms of accommodation with the United States.¹ By the end of the 1990s, profound changes in Venezuelan politics had brought to power a new leader, President Hugo Chávez, who was committed to reviving a strategy of opposition to the United States. Simultaneously though not as stridently, other countries broadened the scope of their resistance to U.S. preferences, by combining forms of accommodation and opposition. These strategies evidenced a fair degree of regional diversity. That diversity, in turn, had largely remained hidden for most of the 1990s, as countries of the periphery reacted cautiously to the end of a cycle of history (the end of the Cold War) and embraced liberal democracy and the free market.

In terms of foreign policy, the change in the political and ideological climate in Latin America plays itself out in different visions of the costs and benefits of globalization, the increased rejection of Washington’s preferences and policies, and the building of new alliances both inside and outside the region. Bolivia’s and Venezuela’s “swing to the Left” is fundamental in explaining the formation of a political axis reaching from Havana to La Paz to Caracas, and branching out to Quito, Managua

and, to a lesser extent, Buenos Aires. Certain domestic measures by the governments of Bolivia and Venezuela—the nationalization of natural resources or majority government control of telephone systems and electricity, respectively—have also had a significant impact abroad.

The international implications of the current political and ideological diversity of Latin America are reflected in a greater diversity in the orientation and content of foreign policies. The importance of ideology in determining those policies should not be exaggerated. Even the left governments that are the most radical—those of Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales—for the most part conduct their international relations more on the basis of pragmatism than ideology. The most compelling example is that of Chávez: his harsh anti-American rhetoric goes hand-in-hand with a great deal of pragmatism concerning energy relations with the United States, which, for its part, likewise combines rhetoric and pragmatism in its approach to Venezuela.

In short, despite the unquestionable importance of ideological factors in the foreign policies of left governments in Latin America, foreign policy is still essentially shaped by other factors. These can be categorized as either permanent or enduring. Permanent factors include a country’s size and geographic location. Enduring factors include a country’s relative power, its economic structure, the degree of diversification of its external economic relationships, and the nature and density of its links—among governmental as well as private actors—to the United States.

The left-right lens is also inadequate for understanding the main divisions within the region. How, then, can one explain the divide between northern Latin America and southern Latin America, a divide foreseen in the academic literature of the 1980s?² At that time, two criteria were used to explain the division: the density of linkages between sub-regions and the United States, and the degree of diversification in foreign relations. Today, northern Latin America, comprised of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, is undergoing a process of functional integration with the United States. The depth and full scope of that integration are as yet unknown, but the process will not be stopped by the building of walls or the implementation of rigid immigration controls along the southern U.S. border. Northern Latin America’s integration with the United States raises a number of geopolitical, economic, and security issues which are very different

from those in South America. The objective reality of this integration also raises major questions as to the political role and leadership that Mexico can or would like to exercise in the region beyond the southern border of northern Latin America.

A second cleavage in Latin America—between those who have or want to have a free trade agreement with the United States and those opposed to such an agreement—likewise cannot be explained purely by ideology. The division with respect to free trade was clearly evident at the fourth Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005. There, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela maintained that the necessary conditions for achieving a hemisphere-wide free trade agreement were not in place. The remaining countries expressed a strong commitment to achieving a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), a position reflected in the final Declaration of Mar del Plata. It is very probable that for opponents of the FTAA such as Venezuela, political and ideological considerations are paramount. However, Argentina's and Brazil's opposition is based on economic policy: both Lula and Kirchner have embraced a neo-developmental economic model that requires, among other policies, high levels of protection for national industries. Uruguay and Paraguay somewhat reluctantly joined Brasília and Buenos Aires in opposing an FTAA in order to maintain a unified position on the part of Mercosur. Those countries that defended the FTAA did so in the name of national interests which transcended merely ideological considerations.

Free trade agreements with the United States, unlike what Hugo Chávez and his supporters contend, cannot be explained as mere deference to the United States, "false consciousness," or the defense of selfish elites who oppose the "true interests of the nation." As the Chilean case demonstrates, free trade agreements can lead to the economic growth of the "peripheral" countries that sign them.

The distinction between Left and Right and the positing of a left-to-left affinity both fail to explain the issues of convergence and divergence in southern Latin America, a sub-region with greater fractures and diversity than northern Latin America. The only exception to this rule, as noted above, is the bond between Havana, Caracas, and La Paz, with Quito and Managua close behind. Ideological affinity has undeniably served to bring these five countries closer together.

In other cases, however, leftist political affinities are not translating into new convergences between countries. The left leanings of Uruguayan President Tabaré Vázquez and Argentine President Néstor Kirchner have not helped to contain an unusual political conflict between Argentina and Uruguay over the construction of pulp mills along a shared river. Nor did left affinities lessen the high-voltage dispute between Argentina and Brazil, on the one hand, and Bolivia, on the other, following President Evo Morales' decision to nationalize Bolivia's hydrocarbons. Political affinities between Lula and Kirchner and both leaders' neo-developmental economic model have not helped to overcome the ups and downs of the relationship between Argentina and Brazil, a dynamic that has prevailed since the beginning of the democratization process in both countries.

The Andean Community of Nations and Mercosur have their own unique dynamic. The Andean Community, comprised of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, languished after Venezuela's departure in April 2006, but seems to have revived a bit with the return of Chile as an associate member. In the case of Mercosur, the shift to the Left in three of the four Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) has not served to overcome the many areas of stalemate within the organization which are due, above all, to economic factors. Indeed, the root cause of disagreements in Mercosur has to do with the different size of the member countries' economies, something that naturally leads to different positions regarding integration and commercial policy.

Understanding Mercosur's current problems requires examining the political mistakes made by Argentina and Brazil, particularly with

Despite the unquestionable importance of ideological factors in the foreign policies of left governments in Latin America, foreign policy is still essentially shaped by other factors. These can be categorized as either permanent or enduring. Permanent factors include a country's size and geographic location. Enduring factors include a country's relative power, its economic structure, the degree of diversification of its external economic relationships, and the nature and density of its links—among governmental as well as private actors—to the United States.

respect to the asymmetries with Mercosur's two smaller members. The importance of Mercosur as a strategic option for Uruguay and Paraguay was exaggerated, as demonstrated by Uruguay's effort to conclude a free trade agreement with the United States.

In fact, the Chilean model of international insertion has more appeal today in Montevideo than does the idea of belonging to a bloc that has yielded meager benefits for the country and whose strategic value is very much in question. Moreover, the absurd conflict with Argentina over the pulp mills has helped to broaden support in Uruguay for a trade strategy that is bilateral in nature. Paraguay, in the meantime, sees itself in the mirror when it looks at Uruguay and has therefore adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Of all the Mercosur partners, Paraguay has the least problem with Uruguay's negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States. For both Uruguay and Paraguay, practical rather than ideological considerations explain the interest in bilateral trade agreements as the mechanism for international insertion.

By contrast, political considerations linked to Hugo Chávez's internal and regional strategy for power account for Venezuela's movement toward the south of Latin America. The energy benefits Venezuela would bring to Mercosur—in exchange for which Venezuela did not need to be incorporated as a full member—pale in comparison to the problems associated with its membership. Venezuela brings with it weak democratic credentials, a foreign policy structured around concepts and alliances that differ from those of the rest of Mercosur's members, and a defense policy that will complicate the effort to move forward on collective and cooperative security in the region.

Hugo Chávez's projection of power in Latin America has had a divisive effect that cannot be ignored as a root cause of sub-regional fragmentation. The history of South America has taught us that strategies of opposition as well as of submission to the United States are factors of division among Latin American countries. As in the past—but this time with greater economic resources that others have had previously—Chávez and his strategy are divisive factors. Furthermore, it is likely that Chávez's approach will stimulate to greater U.S. attention and presence in South America, thereby giving rise to another powerful factor of fragmentation.

In mid-2007, the impasses within Mercosur, the risk of defection of its two smaller countries, and the destabilizing potential of Hugo Chávez'

political ambitions in South America led to a cautious rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil. Both countries have demonstrated greater realism as well as a willingness to tackle some of the serious problems that have paralyzed Mercosur, especially those having to do with asymmetries between members and with institution building. Brazilian authorities have been more willing to recognize, including publicly, that Brazil made certain mistakes in regional foreign policy (including, for example, by showing disdain for the interests of other partners, systematically refusing to concede spaces of sovereignty to them, and acting unilaterally). Brazil also seems resolved to bear the costs that any process of integration would logically demand of the larger members and to accept that there is no place in the region for unilateral leadership. For its part, the Kirchner government has explicitly recognized Brazil as its main ally and interlocutor in South America. Argentina also appears to have put an end not only to its frequent cutting remarks but also to a course of political action more focused on blocking the realization of Brazil's goals than on building a relationship of true friendship. Once again, common interests and aversions, not any ideological affinity between Lula and Kirchner, explain this rapprochement.

NOTES

1. I use the term "accommodation" as did Stephen Walt in *Taming American Power: The Global Responses to U.S. Primacy* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), pp. 180–217. Walt describes a variety of ways that weaker countries align with the United States, the dominant world power, in order to advance their own interests.

2. See, for example, see Luis Maira, *¿Una nueva era de hegemonía norteamericana?* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1985).

About the Contributors

FELIPE AGÜERO is associate professor of international studies at the University of Miami.

ARIEL ARMONY is the Audrey Wade Hittinger Katz and Sheldon Toby Katz Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor of Government at Colby College.

CYNTHIA J. ARNSON is director of the Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

LESLIE BETHELL is director of the Centre for Brazilian Studies at the University of Oxford and Professorial Fellow of St. Antony's College.

ERIC HERSHBERG is professor of political science at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada.

ROBERT KAUFMAN is professor of political science at Rutgers University.

RENÉ ANTONIO MAYORGA is a researcher for the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM) in La Paz and former Wilson Center fellow.

KENNETH ROBERTS is professor of government at Cornell University.

ROBERTO RUSSELL is the director of the Master's Program in international relations at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella in Argentina.

Latin American Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027
Tel: (202) 691-4030
Fax: (202) 691-4001

www.wilsoncenter.org/lap