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THE BLESSINGS OF TROUBLES

Scholarly Innovation in Response to Latin America's Challenges

Jorge I. Domínguez

Scholars have long responded to the challenges that lived reality poses before their eyes. The outpouring of social science research in response to the collapse of Germany's democratic Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis is perhaps the best known example of the past century but so too was the extensive scholarship regarding the Russian revolution and the onset of European decolonization in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Latinamericanist political scientists, too, have addressed an array of challenges that the region experienced over the past half century and, in so doing, contributed to broader scholarly debates in comparative politics.

In this chapter, I identify a number of scholarly insights that served well the study of Latin America and comparative politics more generally. The focus is on the work produced in response to experienced problems since the "take off" in the 1960s of the scholarly study of Latin American politics in the United States and Latin America, which owes much to Ford Foundation funding throughout the hemisphere especially in that decade. I take up four topics in approximate chronological order of their rise onto the scholarly agenda: the political economy of globalization, political regime transitions, presidentialist institutions, and voting behavior. The first two feature a much longer scholarly trajectory whereas the latter two developed with greater vigor since the 1990s. Each topic is intrinsically important. With regard to each, I argue that scholars of Latin America formulated a research agenda in response to the problems they perceived in the countries that they studied and, in so doing, contributed insights of value not just to those focused on Latin America but also more generally to scholars in comparative politics.

The Political Economy of Globalization

One salient question of our time has been the opportunities and constraints that the international economy presents for countries the world over. Europeanists focused on them in the 1980s and, with greater intensity, in more recent times.¹ Scholars sought to understand the structural bases for international economic engagement, the domestic consequences of adjustments to marked setbacks of the international economy, and the competitive strategies of firms and countries, which emphasizes domestic coordination to face the world as small countries engage in international markets. Recent scholarship has examined the impact of

international economic globalization on the welfare state and, generally, on the fiscal and budgetary policies of governments to compensate for costs imposed on domestic economies or to enhance the international competitiveness of firms.

Before the late twentieth-century focus on these questions by scholars in the North Atlantic world, a previous body of scholarship on the industrialized economies, rooted in central and eastern Europe and Japan, had emphasized the relatively benign effects of international competition for the development of country strategies: the later developers could learn from the early developers, adopt and adapt technologies discovered elsewhere, and better mobilize international resources.²

Latinamericanist scholars were among the first to examine the relationship between the international and the domestic economy much sooner. Much of the work in the late 1940s and 1950s clustered around Raúl Prebisch and his leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America. In the 1960s, this scholarly endeavor came to be known collectively as the "dependency" school or approach to the study of the region; it encompassed a variety of different strains. Dependency scholarship was rooted in an argument well summarized by Theotonio Dos Santos. Dependency, he wrote, is "a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subjected."³ Latin Americanists were much less surprised than Europeanists about the impact of the world economy in domestic markets, and some called the phenomena of the early twenty-first century by the same name as their predecessors had in the 1960s: dependency.⁴

By the 2000s, Latinamericanist scholars responded to the legacy of prior research in the region and the more recent scholarship in North Atlantic countries on the impact of globalization on the welfare state. In most Latin American countries, the notion of the "welfare state" is still an aspiration, not a reality. In the wealthier Latin American countries, the "welfare state" exists principally for those in the economy's formal sector.

In this more constrained context than what prevails in the prosperous North Atlantic countries, scholars of Latin America found that trade integration was most adverse to pensions and that the greater severity of business cycle downturns made countercyclical spending much less feasible at those times. On the other hand, the free play of democratic politics served to protect pensions in the formal sector thanks to the role of labor unions and union-connected political parties. More generally, the relationship between unions and parties was a key factor in explaining the success or failure of market-oriented adjustments and reforms in new international contexts—the closer the alliance between a union and a political party, the more restrained the union turned out to be, whereas inter-partisan competition for the leadership of the unions increased union militancy and reduced the likelihood of market reforms. The interaction between international effects and partisan and union politics contributed to sustained domestic inequality (e.g., pensions for the better off only), even as poverty rates began to decline in Chile, Brazil, and Mexico around the start of the twenty-first century. Democratic governments, however, tended to do a better job than their authoritarian predecessors at protecting spending on health and primary education, both to remedy social ills and to empower citizens and firms to face changing world markets.⁵

In Europe, the political economy of globalization by the end of the twentieth century had led to the growth of the role of the state by means of investing in education to make firms more competitive and also to compensate those adversely affected by globalization. In Latin America, the outcomes encompassed both trends that undermined the state and also trends that provided for new forms of state action especially under democratic regimes. The

Latinamericanist research on the asymmetrical impact of the world economy on domestic politics enriched the wider field of comparative politics, therefore, by demonstrating a wider variation in outcomes than the research on the North Atlantic countries had shown—international asymmetry magnified the impact of exogenous shocks for countries with fewer resources to mitigate them.

In terms of development strategy, Albert Hirschman was an early dissenter from the “happy talk” of scholarship regarding the already industrialized economies.⁶ Late-late developers, he argued, adopted technologies without contributing much to applied research or new technological development; they also were less likely to exhibit the entrepreneurial energies that Europeanist scholars had found in comparable firms in historical European contexts. In such situations of technological and entrepreneurial ineffectiveness, breaking out of dependency was difficult. Autonomous efforts to apply science to develop new products, dependency scholars claimed, would likely lead to buyouts by multinational enterprises, leaving little net additional domestic technological development while draining entrepreneurship.⁷

Dependency scholars did not, however, sustain a persistently lugubrious tone. There was also attention to successful strategies. One dependency-management strategy was to ride the international economy. Already in the early 1960s, Dudley Seers argued that Latin America's small open economies in Central America rode the business cycles of the international economy, generally experiencing low inflation and infrequent currency devaluations. Subsequent research showed that Central American economies long remained tethered to the business cycles of the international economy, with cycles of both out-performance and under-performance.⁸

A second successful dependency-management strategy created national champions in the production and export of primary products, ordinarily through state action. Successful cases featured several elements. (1) Multinational enterprises had been under-investing in their companies. (2) Government technocrats had been learning both the technical and business aspects required to run the enterprise. (3) Political parties and elite opinion coalesced to lead to a unanimous or nearly unanimous vote in Congress to expropriate the foreign firm. (4) Market-conforming state enterprises were created, right away or in a short time, that would remain profitable for many years. Multinational enterprises operating in Chile's copper sector were expropriated, yes, under the socialist government of President Salvador Allende but with political support from the entire ideological spectrum in the Chilean Congress. Chile's state-owned copper enterprise remained state-owned and profitable under the subsequent dictatorship of President Augusto Pinochet and since 1990 under democratic rule. Multinational enterprises operating in Venezuela's petroleum sector were expropriated upon a unanimous vote of Congress.⁹ The state-owned *Petróleos de Venezuela* would remain a highly profitable market-conforming state enterprise until Hugo Chávez's presidency.

A third successful strategy developed the domestic market capacity to industrialize and to join the industrialized world on one's own terms. Cardoso and Faletto, *gurus* of dependency scholarship, already foreshadowed in the 1970s that Brazil was en route to significant economic growth, which they labeled “associated dependent development” to signal its particular relationship to world markets. The relationship between a strong Brazilian state, capable of intervening effectively in domestic markets, along with multinational enterprises and national private firms, set Brazil on a path to growth.¹⁰ In the decades that followed, medium and small countries—Colombia and Costa Rica—would also wed the state and private firms to enable their economies to compete more effectively in international markets.¹¹

The least successful yet frequently-discussed strategy for dependency management in Latin America was regional trade integration or the creation of a common market. Despite moments of apparent success, most recently in the 1990s, attempts at intensifying economic integration in Latin America have had modest results. The southern common market (MERCOSUR/MERCOSUL), the Central American Common Market, or the Andean Community rarely account for more than one-fifth of the international trade of member states. The only significant intensification of economic ties occurred through embracing dependency—the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) advanced economic integration in North America and accounts for not less than two-fifths of the international trade of its member states.

The dependency literature became best known for what Latin American economies could *not* do—they could not grow, industrialize, integrate, or generate mass prosperity. My reading takes note of some key debilities of Latin America's growth path but it emphasizes the three main strategies that the region undertook, which served it well to address the practical problems that arose during the past half-century: ride international economy commodity booms (of which the most recent unfolded during the first decade of the twenty-first century), develop national champions (by expropriation if necessary) but ensure that they operate by market-conforming principles, and develop the domestic economy with a mix of state action and private markets to compete effectively. Some of Latin America's most successful companies in the new century—CVRD and Embraer, for example—began as state enterprises and the state remains an investor to some extent.

Market-conforming state enterprises are neither an oxymoron nor a legacy of Latin America's Jurassic past (when many of its state enterprises did not at all operate on market principles) but, rather, a normal component of the political economy of market-oriented democracies. In 2003, for example, the asset value of state-owned enterprises as a percentage of gross domestic product ranged between 15 percent and 35 percent in Sweden, Italy, France, South Korea, Turkey, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.¹² Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica pursued different variants of this strategy but, in each, state and private firms, domestic and international, were crucial. These approaches to dependency management served Latin America well as the twenty-first century opened.

With regard to state enterprises as well, Latinamericanist scholarship contributed more broadly to the study of comparative politics. Consider one example. In the last third of the twentieth century, the premier worldwide scholar on the spread of multinational enterprises was Raymond Vernon, whose professional affiliations spanned the worlds of business school and political science department. Vernon's early work focused on Mexico and more generally on Latin America. He drew from that scholarly experience to write about state enterprises and multinational enterprises in global contexts, anchored in and nurtured by what he learned in Latin America, and he engaged his own students in similar work. At the heart of his research was an endeavor to understand the intertwining between the state and business, the over-time changing asymmetries between multinational private firms and the states, and the rise of state enterprises as one response to the changing world economy.¹³

Political Regime Transitions

Alone among the regions of the world, Latin America has been a participant in the three waves of democratization evident since the nineteenth century and in both counterwaves of authoritarian rule.¹⁴ Latin America's democratization began in Uruguay and Argentina early in the twentieth century. Regime breakdowns repopulated the region with authoritarian

regimes in the 1930s. The second wave of democratic regimes appeared or reappeared in the aftermath of World War II, to break down in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the second authoritarian counterwave; by the second half of the 1970s, democratic regimes in the region had become an endangered species. Latin America's third wave of democratization began in the Dominican Republic in 1978 and Ecuador in 1979, thence spreading throughout the region. Early in the twenty-first century, there is an authoritarian counter-ripple: Autocratic tendencies marked President Hugo Chávez's government in Venezuela; in 2008, President Daniel Ortega's government engineered widespread fraud in municipal elections in Nicaragua and, in 2009, a military coup overthrew the constitutionally elected president of Honduras. In contrast, colonial Africa and Asia missed the first wave of democratization and Western Europe missed the second wave back to authoritarian rule. Latin America's public miseries and democratic triumphs are well reflected in a vast scholarly literature, which focused especially on the second wave of authoritarian rule and the third wave of democratization. Here, I attempt to account for the findings.

Structural economic conditions, such as the problems encountered with import substitution industrialization, turned out to matter less as explanations for the rise of the authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s than it may have appeared at first.¹⁵ Nevertheless, inflation, recession, various dimensions of the business cycle, ideas about the organizations of the economy, and international market shocks played important roles in regime change, sometimes as proximate causes, more often as background causes. For example, Latin America's prolonged and deep economic downturn of the 1980s facilitated exiting from authoritarian regimes that did not govern the economy well.¹⁶ But such conditions were mainly background—political actors had to act.

A key finding regarding the relationship between economics and political regimes is that dictatorship is most common in poor countries while democracies in poor countries are vulnerable to coups.¹⁷ Above some level of economic development, a democratic breakdown is extremely rare. Latin America, alas, has had many democratic attempts in poor countries and, as a result, also many breakdowns of such attempts. Latin America hosts also the only country worldwide whose democratic regime broke down even though it was above the level of development at which no other democratic regime anywhere broke down in the years past 1950: Argentina. In general, therefore, wealth buys many things, among them economic and political liberty but much of Latin America has lacked the "political insurance" of sufficient wealth to secure its democratic regimes.

International political factors—the Cold War—turned out to matter more as explanations for the rise and decline of authoritarian regimes than it may have appeared at first. The scholarship on bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, typically quite aware of international political economy issues, seemed often unaware of the Cold War. A key explanation for the sustained authoritarianism in Central American countries from the 1950s through the 1980s was the policy of the U.S. government in the context of the Cold War.¹⁸ Democratization in Central America in the 1990s had, as a necessary task, the dispelling of the demons that had seized hold of the U.S. government during the preceding decades. Similarly, U.S. Cold War policy is part of the explanation for military coups in Brazil in 1964 and Chile in 1973, just as the change in U.S. policy in the late 1980s also assisted with the end of authoritarian regimes in Paraguay and Chile.¹⁹

A principal distinction in the two types of political regime change turned out to be simple: the role of military coups. Such coups most often brought about the breakdown of constitutional democratic regimes. While coups sometimes depose dictators and open the path for democratic elections (Colombia in 1957, Venezuela in 1958, Paraguay in 1989),

coups are generally much less likely instruments for democratization. The scholarship on political regime change followed by military rule emphasized, first, the shift in the 1960s toward institutional military coups—in contrast to solo dictatorships—and also the greater emphasis in military doctrine on an ideology of "national security" that looked for enemies—most often labeled communists, real or imaginary—among fellow citizens.²⁰ In the 1960s and 1970s, the military also often expanded their roles to run state enterprises and manage the nation's politics.

As a result, the process of democratization often required ousting the military both from control of the state and also from their roles generally in law enforcement, the leadership of state enterprises, and the making of key budget decisions. The military often sought immunity from prosecution for acts they committed while running the government, including killings and torture of prisoners, and claimed prerogatives to set or to shape significantly policies on budgets, weapons acquisitions, personnel promotion, and other topics. Thus the process of demilitarization under constitutional democracies was often prolonged. The election of a civilian president was often just one step along a longer path toward democratization, which required substantial and sustained contestation. In the end, success was a tribute to inter-party competition in election after election.²¹ The actual realization of liberalization and democratization often took a great deal of time even after civilians returned to the presidency because, beyond lingering military claims of immunity and prerogatives, clientelist politics and traditional-politics authoritarian enclaves endured as well.²²

The interaction of three factors contributed to making military rule harsher in the 1970s than in the 1960s. First, in the 1970s the world economy was marked by slower growth and higher inflation, adversely affecting Latin America's economies. Second, the rising number of military regimes and the wide sharing of the Cold War "national security" ideology intensified and "normalized" the search for domestic enemies. Third, the military coups of the 1970s, and the rulers they buttressed, responded to, and generated, a rising spiral of political violence. Larger numbers of political killings, imprisonment, and torture were the responses of the rulers, to which the courts and other institutions responded poorly and unevenly.²³ More widespread urban insurgency, including terrorist actions in several South American countries and revolution in three Central American countries, were the responses from part of the opposition.

The scholarship on democratization in the 1980s emphasized the role of political elites—hardliners and softliners—in contestation, negotiation, and settlement in the light of political regime transitions. These processes, O'Donnell and Schmitter argued, were marked by "the high degree of indeterminacy embedded in situations where unexpected events (*fortuna*), insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even indefiniteness of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals (*virtù*) are frequently decisive in determining the outcomes."²⁴ A coup could take place in an instant. Liberalization and democratization would span months, and often years. A coup changed the political regime overnight. Democratization often involved partial, gradual changes, including concessions to the military or conservative elites that would only be reversed years later. An important corrective to this elite-agency approach, which underplayed the role of civil society, was research that showed that labor unions often played crucial roles in opening the gates that would subsequently allow civilian elites to negotiate the transition. The labor movement often placed on the public agenda issues of democratic rights and procedures that negotiating elites dared not forget.²⁵ Such union action linked the labor movement's voluntary collective action with its structural roots.

The political violence just mentioned was a backdrop to negotiations over democratization in the 1980s. Democratic elites wanted to avoid a hardliner coup either before or following a democratic transition and characteristically opposed a resort to violence. Authoritarian regime softliners held the specter of wider political violence from the opposition in order to induce the hardliners to agree to concessions.

The Latinamericanist scholarship on political regime transitions had a widespread impact. The O'Donnell-Schmitter book, just cited, would be discussed at Harvard Business School executive education programs held in South Africa to help elites prepare for their democratic transition of the early 1990s. One of their key collaborators in the O'Donnell-Schmitter project, Adam Przeworski, went from his work on South America to research on Eastern Europe. His work on both regions employed game-theoretic tools, emphasizing contingency and uncertainty to examine the role of political agency. Schooled in the very Southamericanist scholarship on regime transitions he helped to develop, Przeworski has focused his analysis on political action and criticized purely structuralist arguments that implied that modernization or economic growth led linearly to political democratization.²⁶ Major producers of the scholarship of regime transitions in Latin America, such as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, took their tools to analyze political transitions in former communist Europe, with a focus on institutional choices—how to constitutionalize the armed forces, how to design executive and legislative institutions preferably (see next section) along parliamentary lines, etc.²⁷

Political regime transitions, of course, have also strong normative dimensions—how to open up public spaces for citizens to express their views and to associate freely. The normative reasons are also real and pressing—how to avoid killings and torture. The passions that generate political transitions require an optimism whose roots are often difficult to fathom in societies where so many have suffered so grievously for so long. Thus it is worth quoting from a country and a time when optimism seemed a lost cause, just to remember that it is possible to imagine and wish better politics for the human condition. In *The Optimist's Salutation*, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867–1916) wrote as follows: “And thus let Hope be the ever-lasting vision among us.”²⁸

Presidentialist Institutions

Latin America is the world's only region to feature presidentialist rather than parliamentary systems in democratic regimes. (Europe and the Caribbean host parliamentary democratic regimes; the Middle East features authoritarian regimes; East and Southeast Asia mix presidentialist democratic and authoritarian regimes.) In an essay written in 1984, Juan Linz argued that presidentialist systems are inimical to stable democracy.²⁹ Empirically, most of the world's stable democracies have parliamentary regimes. In presidentialist systems, president and legislature are elected separately, which reduces the likelihood that the executive would command a legislative majority. Presidents are elected for fixed terms; the legislature may remove them only through impeachment, which often requires a super-majority. Both the president and the legislators claim legitimacy from direct popular election; they can deadlock the government and generate a constitutional crisis. Presidentialism intends to create a strong executive but often sets up the likelihood of confrontation, failure, and, in the extreme case, a coup to resolve the gridlock. In the Latin American cases, moreover, the mix of presidentialism and a multiparty system makes it more difficult to fashion stable governing majorities for democratic rule, creating propitious conditions for a coup.³⁰

A giant in the study of comparative politics, Linz was taken seriously by constitutional

Solons. Brazilians actually voted in a plebiscite on whether to adopt parliamentarism; they rejected it. This new Linz-tinted perception of an old problem spawned a new scholarship on the presidency, which for the most part generated a more benign reading of the relationship between presidentialism and democracy.³¹

A critique of anti-presidentialism starts from the claim that there is a spurious correlation. Parliamentary regimes developed in countries that have become wealthy; presidentialist regimes exist more often in poor countries. As already noted, democracy in poor countries is disproportionately vulnerable to breakdown and this—not presidentialism—may explain the breakdown of democratic regimes in much of Latin America. Moreover, there are no parliamentary regimes in Latin America; there are no pure presidentialist regimes in Western Europe. It is thus impossible to say whether, controlling for international, regional, and transsocietal *milieu*, presidentialism explains coups in Latin America and parliamentarism explains democratic stability in Western Europe. Breakdowns in one and stability in the other may be associated with factors other than institutional regime in the respective regions.

Moreover, not all presidentialist designs are alike. The associated institutional designs within which a presidency exists matter a great deal. The governability problem is lessened if presidents and legislatures are chosen in concurrent elections, which increase the likelihood that the president would gain stronger legislative support.³² More generally, concurrent elections along with electing the president by a plurality of votes cast (not through second-round majority run-off elections), and closed party list proportional representation rules for legislative elections, increase the likelihood of voter coordination in executive and legislative elections.³³ Compare Brazil to Mexico, Latin America's two largest countries, both with concurrent elections upon the election of the president. Mexico has closed party lists and plurality presidential election; Brazil has open lists and relies upon a second-round presidential election. Nearly 70 percent of Brazilian voters were ticket-splitters in the 2002 presidential election, whereas only about 9 percent of Mexican voters split their ticket in the 2000 presidential election. Gubernatorial coattails are stronger than presidential coattails in Brazil.³⁴ Institutional choices matter.

Coordination between president and legislature may also occur past the election. Where presidents must rely on their partisan powers to govern, executive-legislative coordination may follow the path of negotiation; where presidents rely disproportionately on their formal constitutional powers, presidents may use executive-decree powers and veto legislative bills. Presidents who confront or ignore the legislature undermine democratic constitutionalism and may reduce their own prospects to finish their term.³⁵ Here is a key to Brazil's circumstances notwithstanding the complications created by its electoral institutions: Brazilian presidents have very high constitutional powers but Presidents Cardoso and Lula preferred to use their partisan powers to work through Congress to enact their policies; they promoted changes in the institutional rules of Congress to foster party discipline and coordination, and they successfully employed these among other means to enact laws.³⁶ The partisan powers of presidents must be continuously constructed and renewed. Presidents are most likely to succeed in the legislature if they work with their fellow party members; presidents are likely to fail if they detach from or neglect their partisan allies.³⁷

Finally, since the late 1970s the coerced departures of freely- and directly-elected Latin American civilian presidents resulted in every case in new civilian presidents. In that period, no democratically elected Latin American president, ousted from office, was replaced by a military president. Presidential defenestration has in every case provoked a sort of political bargaining that resembled parliamentarism. This is a form of instability, perhaps more

worrisome than Belgium with Acting Prime Ministers for months at a time, but it is no longer the descent into military dictatorship.³⁸ Moreover, not all interruptions of a presidency are alike—coups bring down democratic regimes, but presidential impeachments are inherently proper procedures in democratic presidentialist regimes. The successful impeachment of the president in Brazil in 1992 or in Paraguay in 1999 sustained rather than derailed a democratic regime. Impeachments are one mechanism whereby presidentialist systems resemble elements of parliamentary systems.³⁹

In this subfield, the study of presidentialist systems in Latin America specifically, and comparative politics more generally, greatly overlap. As noted, Latin America is the world's only region to feature presidentialist rather than parliamentary systems in democratic regimes; outside of Latin America, add just a handful of cases. As a result, the generalizations with regard to presidentialist institutions apply well to Latin American cases and were developed first and foremost by Latinamericanist scholars. There would be no comparative politics of executive and legislative institutions in presidentialist systems if it were not for the comparative politics research program that Matthew Shugart and John Carey launched through their work on institutional design in Latin America.⁴⁰

Design matters in presidentialist systems. It accounts for a wide range of variation that the Latin American cases illustrate well, to the benefit of comparative politics scholarship worldwide and the enlightenment of constituent assemblies.

Voting Behavior

The third wave of democratization in Latin America opened a new window of opportunity for practice and research: elections and voting behavior. An ideologically "Right" authoritarian regime in Argentina and an ideologically "Left" authoritarian regime in Peru in the 1970s did away with elections. "Softer" authoritarian regimes, such as those in Brazil and Mexico, held elections either under rigged conditions or, especially in Mexico, infected by fraudulent practices. Today's senior Latin Americanists did not spend much time on elections and voting behavior when they were graduate students. Both the presence of elections and the absence of an older scholarship make this topic rife with opportunity for younger scholars.

Latin Americans vote especially when it is a novelty. "Founding" elections—as political regime transition scholars would expect—exhibit turnout rates considerably higher than in other elections, controlling statistically for other variables thought to be related to turnout. Similarly, the sustained adherence to the protection of political rights and civil liberties increase the likelihood of election turnout. Concurrent elections—following the implications from the previous section—generate higher levels of turnout in both presidential and legislative elections: there is more at stake, there is more media coverage, and more comprehensive partisan and social movement mobilization. Mandatory voting also increases turnout; it is 20 percent higher than turnout in countries with voluntary voting, controlling for other independent variables.⁴¹ In each such instance, the decisions of politicians may have a positive or negative effect on electoral turnout.

Latin American voters have several objectives in mind on election day. In broad terms, sociotropic retrospective national economic voting is an important explanation for voting behavior. This means that Latin American voters support the incumbent president's party when aggregate economic outcomes have been good during this presidency, and punish the incumbent's party when those national economic outcomes have been poor. Nevertheless, the choice of voters is constrained by institutional setting. Restrictive electoral rules

sometimes leave voters no choice but to punish an incumbent party by voting for a non-incumbent party that had, during a previous time in office, also been responsible for poor economic governance. Only if the electoral rules permit the rise of third parties, can voters back politicians who had never governed, thus punishing everyone who had ever governed badly, current as well as past incumbent parties.⁴²

In some countries, voters had to decide on the incumbent president running for reelection, who prior to his first election may have promised one set of policies but delivered quite another. Around 1990, about half of the successful presidential candidates across Latin America implemented as president policies at odds with the promises they had made during their election campaign. These "switchers" adversely burden democratic accountability. Carlos Menem in Argentina, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela, elected president within just over a year of each other, are examples of "switchers"—they ran for office as critics of market-oriented policies and went on to implement precisely those policies. In general, at reelection time, voters held their noses, voting to reelect those whose policies had generated economic growth (Menem, Fujimori) and punished Pérez, whose policies had not.⁴³

In some instances, more than one issue is salient. Peru started the 1990s suffering from both a severe economic crisis and high levels of political violence. With some hyperbole, Fujimori claimed credit for ending the political violence and reviving the economy. Voters considered his counterinsurgency success a solved problem, which thus had lower impact on the vote; at the time of his reelection, voters rewarded him more for the economic outcomes.⁴⁴ This capacity of the voters to discern on questions of importance connects with the previous discussion about ticket-splitting in elections. Voters seek different objectives in their voting for president and legislature, and thus may vote for different parties at different levels of government.

Not all voting is sociotropic. The longest-lasting form of voting responds to individual utility. Politicians and parties have employed clientelistic methods, including individual vote buying, patronage appointments, pork barrel for targeted communities, and the like. By the current century, however, individual vote buying had become less common even in countries, such as Mexico, where it was once widespread.⁴⁵ Research on vote buying in Argentina also demonstrates that its aggregate significance is important but modest; it may be focused on increasing turnout from those in communities favorable to a specific party. Moreover, not all parties in the same country are equally effective at using clientelist methods. In Argentina, for example, Peronists trump Radicals and other parties in the efficacy of use of clientelist practices to obtain voting support.⁴⁶

Voting behavior research raises the question of the role of parties in shaping the voting choice. As the twentieth century ended, many long-lived parties had not fared well. In Venezuela, which had had one of Latin America's most institutionalized party systems since its democratic transition in 1958, the two parties that had alternated in governing the country were badly battered. Acción Democrática lost the bulk of its voting support while COPEI (Christian Democrats) disintegrated. In the pivotal 1998 election that brought Hugo Chávez to the presidency, many voters abandoned their previous partisan affiliations, motivated by negative views of parties and dissatisfaction with their past performance. Venezuelans seemed frustrated with the shortcomings of the party system as a whole and its inability to provide citizens with voice and influence.⁴⁷

Some long-fragmented party systems remained so, in part as a result of the fraction of the population that is indigenous. The failure of most parties until the 1990s to represent indigenous peoples adequately led many indigenous voters to support a variety of small

populist or leftist parties, which contributed to high and enduring levels of party system fragmentation as well as the relatively low impact of parties on the voting choice. As significant indigenous parties emerged, especially in Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous voters rallied to support them, albeit to varying extent across time and region.⁴⁸

Where parties had not flourished until the 1980s, partisanship in the current century has proven strong: Brazil and Mexico. In Brazil's presidential election in 2002, the aggregate level of partisanship exceeded levels prevailing in the most recent elections held in Germany, the Netherlands, Korea, and Chile. To be sure, partisanship in Brazil was highly skewed to the benefit of the Workers Party (PT). This is the result of a quarter-century trajectory of party-building efforts as well as the increased frequency of the PT's electoral success. The PT's partisan organization and the involvement of its supporters in politicized social networks account for its success.⁴⁹

Partisanship in Mexico was difficult to discern before the highly contested presidential election held in 1988. The ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was the party of the state, with uncertain "sincere" allegiance from those whom it counted as its voters. A strong party of the left emerged only during and following that election, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). The long-suffering opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), was small and, for many years, as concerned about its ideological and partisan purity and integrity as it was about winning elections.

Mexico in the twenty-first century has three strong parties; each commands significant support from a fraction of citizens. The now well-studied Mexican case illustrates some key themes in voting behavior.⁵⁰ By the fall of 2005, before the three major parties had chosen their candidates for the July 2006 election, approximately half of all Mexicans had decided for which party to vote for the presidency. Since the mid-1990s, about two-thirds of Mexicans consider themselves committed to one of the top three parties. The principal effect of Mexican campaigns has been to steer voters to support the presidential candidate of the party that has been their ongoing underlying preference.

In every presidential election since 1988, three variables explain much about the distribution of voter preferences: partisanship, assessment of the incumbent president's performance (Mexico prohibits incumbent reelection), and the assessment of the country's economic circumstances. Each has been consistently significant in statistical and other analyses of public opinion and electoral behavior. There were relatively few partisan defectors in each election and, as noted, only limited split-ticket voting. Beginning in 2000 and continuing in 2006, candidate assessments played also a significant role. These were also Mexico's first campaigns that resembled those in other parts of the world. Television debates may have little impact in countries long used to them but in Mexico they are one factor in shaping the election choice. Negative advertising took off as a campaign tactic in the 2000 election and it resurfaced vigorously in the 2006 election. In both elections, negative advertising helped the eventual winner of each election—Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderón. Their party, the PAN, had transitioned from being the party of nice boys and girls to having a nasty edge, hungry for victory.

In many of these respects, Mexican voters turned out to be similar to those in well-established North Atlantic democracies where economic and partisan voting have long mattered. The novelty is that partisanship, so recent in Mexico, has so quickly developed deep roots. In Mexico, as in other recently democratized Latin American countries, research on public opinion and voting behavior has dispelled some stereotypes. Voters in Latin American countries do connect their preferences and interests to their voting behavior. They are capable of sustained loyalty to a specific party. They hold their elected representatives

accountable and know how to vote out bad rulers. They discern their electoral choices and behave accordingly.

Perhaps the most interesting contribution of the scholarship on voting behavior in democratic Latin America to the wider scholarship on voting behavior in comparative politics is to demonstrate a wider range of variation than is found in the North Atlantic countries. In Mexico as in Brazil, in El Salvador as in Costa Rica, partisan commitments matter, but from election to election campaigns matter more and thus a larger fraction of voters may change its behavior than has historically been the case in the North Atlantic democracies. Latin American voters, moreover, have adapted to democratic politics far more quickly than some of the agency-based elite-bargaining scholarship on political regime transition had expected—voters are not a tumultuous rabble threatening the consolidation of democracy. Voters in Latin American countries reward good governance and abandon long-supported parties that have performed badly, as good democrats should.

Constrained by international circumstances, long hemmed in by authoritarian regimes, and with their choice shaped by presidentialist contexts, voters in Latin American countries, to paraphrase Karl Marx,⁵¹ may not be able to make their history just as they please but, within circumstances they have not chosen, they try as much as possible to make their own history. They are the greatest source of hope for effective democratic governance in Latin America.

Conclusion

In 1959, with prodding and funding from the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Council on Higher Education of the American Republics, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council established the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies, which still exists. In February 1963, the Joint Committee convened its fourth conference, which was also the first that most foreshadowed the aims and design of this book in its broad assessment of social science research on Latin America. At this event, and for the widely-read book that followed, Kalman Silvert, at the time perhaps the most distinguished U.S. Latinamericanist political scientist, wrote as follows: "Latin America has always been a hearty consumer of European ideas and practices, and the university has long played a vital part in the process of importation, adaptation, and propagation."⁵² Silvert was correct, and his accuracy then serves as a benchmark for change.

Latin America's place in the world is unlike Europe's or North America's and its engagement with the international economy has been markedly more subordinate and asymmetric than that of the North Atlantic countries. Latinamericanist scholars had to construct arguments and evidence to assess Latin America's distinct interaction with international markets, specifically the greater burdens from marked asymmetries. The devastating European political experiences with war and genocide during the first half of the twentieth century were mercifully not replicated in Latin America, but this difference demanded of Latinamericanist scholars that they fashion their own frameworks to understand why democratic regimes in this region broke down repeatedly and why authoritarian regimes sprouted again and again. Latin America did not inherit the practice of parliamentarism; Latinamericanists had to figure out why their presidentialist systems varied as much and in what ways they resembled or differed from parliamentary systems. Only with regard to this essay's fourth topic—voting behavior—may Silvert's characterization still apply. Scholars of voting behavior in Latin American countries have for the most part adopted and adapted the theories and techniques first developed in the North Atlantic democracies to describe

and explain how citizens in Latin American countries choose their rulers. Yet, even with regard to voting behavior, the scholarship regarding Latin America shows a more diverse range of voter behavior and a more decisive link between the choice on election day and the consolidation of democracy.

The scholarship developed by Latinamericanists regarding the four topics in this essay has shaped how other scholars have thought about the politics of countries outside the North Atlantic world, starting with the relationship between poor countries in other longitudes and the world economy. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was founded by Venezuela; scholars first studied in Venezuela how a weak state bargained successfully with multinational firms.⁵³ A century ago, Brazil's State of São Paulo undertook the first successful world market intervention to prop up commodity prices, coffee in this case; scholars who worked on this case have had a broad impact on scholarship worldwide.⁵⁴ Latinamericanist scholarship also informed research on patterns of political regime change or endurance in former communist Europe and in East Asia and Africa. Latinamericanist scholarship helped to clarify analytical issues that surround the design and effects of presidentialist institutions worldwide and incorporated reams of new analyses and data regarding voting behavior into the canon of political science. Kal Silvert would have been proud that his historical analysis was not a forecast, and that *change* came to prevail in political science scholarship about Latin America.

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