

**The Latin American Left's Mandate:
Free-Market Policies, Economic Performance, and Voting Behavior in 18 Countries**

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Abstract

The rise of the left across Latin America is one of the most striking political events of the last decade. Existing arguments variously interpret the left's success as the result of anti-free market voting or the failure of rightwing incumbents to deliver economic growth. Whether the new left has a *policy* or *performance* mandate has implications for the left's staying power in office, the type of policies it may pursue in power, and the voting behavior of Latin American electorates. Nevertheless, most existing arguments are speculative or use inappropriate measures. Using a new measure of voter ideology called vote-revealed leftism (VRL) and a time-series cross-sectional analysis of *aggregate* public opinion indicators generated from mass surveys of 18 countries from 1996 to 2008, we show that the left has a clear economic policy mandate; however, this mandate is significantly more moderate than many observers might expect.

The new millennium has ushered in leftist governments across Latin America. With the election of Fernando Lugo as Paraguay's president in April 2008, every country in South America except Colombia and Peru had elected a left-of-center president during the prior decade, and not a single leftist party has lost its re-election bid.¹ In Central America, Guatemala and Nicaragua elected left-leaning presidents in 2006 and 2007, respectively, and Mexico's 2006 election saw a leftist candidate lose by just half a percentage point.

Observers have interpreted the electoral success of left-of-center presidential candidates as everything from a sign of electorates' wishes for the "final unraveling of the so-called Washington consensus" (Samuelson 2002) to an endorsement of free trade (Castañeda and Navia 2007). Still others have argued that Latin America's "left turn" does not have roots in economic policy *per se* but rather in economic performance, stemming from a raft of anti-incumbent votes cast against right-of-center incumbents who presided over sluggish economic growth as the twentieth century ended (Arnold and Samuels 2008; Bruhn 2006).

The distinction between these competing accounts is of more than just academic interest. Many supporters of the left wave are excited by the prospect that the new breed of electorally-oriented leftists will do what the socialist and communist left of the past could not do: cement a long-term winning coalition, reverse the market-oriented Washington Consensus policies of the past two decades, and move the region consequentially toward socialism. For its part, conservative forces, including domestic political actors, capital interests, and foreign policymakers, have reacted with heightened concern that this "radical policy mandate" interpretation of Latin America's "pink tide" may be accurate.

But if conventional wisdom among scholars is correct, then leftists have won office not on the basis of their economic policy offers, but as punishment against right-wing incumbents who governed during the so-called "lost half-decade" of economic stagnation from 1998 to 2002.

¹ This count excludes Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana.

Voters thus would have granted the left a “performance mandate” to deliver economic recovery, regardless of the types of policies it pursues. As a result, the left’s tenure in government would then be more vulnerable to economic performance and might be particularly threatened as the current financial crisis expands to the developing world. In addition, radical leftist leaders, like Hugo Chávez, would be taking advantage of circumstantial victories to institute anti-market policies.

To date, most arguments about the rise of the left and its meaning have been speculative and fail to adjudicate between rival arguments with empirical rigor. In this paper, we determine whether and what type of mandate the left has by pinpointing the microfoundations of its electoral success. Using a variety of public opinion measures and structural variables that span a decade of elections from across Latin America, we show that declining enthusiasm for market reforms among voters, rather than negative evaluations of incumbents’ economic performance, accounts for the rise of the left. Nevertheless, voters’ policy opinions have shifted much less than advocates of a radical policy mandate argument have suggested, and in fact have moved from mildly pro-market to a preference for centrism. As a result, we argue that voters have given the new left a “moderate policy mandate” meant to empower leaders to reverse some aspects of Washington Consensus policies while maintaining, but not furthering, others. Besides explaining the rise of the left, our argument also demonstrates that voters’ moderation, and not just the constraints imposed by international markets and domestic budget constraints, explains why most left-of-center leaders have pursued surprisingly moderate economic policies that leave most of the right’s market reforms in place. Our findings thus confirm neither the fears of the right nor the excitement of the left, but instead point to voters’ desire to slow or stall certain aspects of the reform process rather than implement socialism.

The first section of this paper documents the extent of the left’s rise across countries and over time using a new and improved measure of the left’s electoral support. The second section examines the existing policy and performance mandate arguments as well as other plausible

explanations in more detail and makes our case for the moderate policy mandate argument. The third and fourth sections specify a series of hypotheses and offer time-series cross-sectional tests. The final section concludes.

How Sharp a Left Turn?

The left is on the rise, but whether and how far Latin American voters have moved to the left in their electoral behavior remains unclear for at least two reasons. First, even if voters chose left, center, and right parties in the same proportions before and after 1998, leftist leaders could win due to coalitional dynamics among political elites and the alchemy of second rounds in presidential elections. For instance, Néstor Kirchner won election in Argentina in 2003 after losing in the first round to former president and free-market stalwart Carlos Menem, and Daniel Ortega became president of Nicaragua in 2006 with a lower vote share than he garnered in his prior losing bid because his opponents failed to coordinate on a single candidate. Second, eight of Latin America's eighteen countries have not yet elected left-of-center governments, namely Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. Once these less attention-grabbing cases are incorporated into the analyses, the so-called region-wide move to the left among voters may disappear.

At first blush, depicting whether and to what extent voters across the region have moved to the left in their electoral choices would seem easy to accomplish. Typically, scholars tally the percent of votes cast for leftist parties or candidates to measure the left's strength (Murillo et al. 2008; Stokes 2008). However, deciding which parties count as leftist across countries and over time leads to debatable decisions that nonetheless have a major impact on the final tallies. Even if analysts could agree on such a coding, this binary approach obscures meaningful ideological differences among left parties, and excluding non-left parties neglects potentially important shifts in voter support among center and right parties. For instance, if the vote share of all leftist parties remained the same across two elections but rightist parties lost 20 percentage points to centrist ones, the electorate would have moved consequentially to the left in a way that could

not be captured with a binary coding scheme.

As an improvement on existing measures, we introduce a new measure called *Vote-Revealed Leftism* (VRL). VRL expresses with a single number the degree of support for candidates with leftist ideologies in a given election by taking into account the ideological positions and relative electoral success of *all* competitors. To obtain VRL, we assign each candidate or party an *Ideology* score that ranges from 1 (farthest right) to 20 (farthest left) using data primarily from a 2006 survey of experts, the Wiesehomeier-Benoit (W-B) dataset, and supplementing this with older expert survey results when needed. (See the reviewers appendix for details.²) We then multiply this ideology score by each candidate's *Vote Share* and sum these products for all contenders in the election to produce that election's VRL. Formally, for parties or candidates $i=[1..n]$, VRL for election t is given by

$$VRL_t = \sum_{i=1}^n Ideology_{it} * VoteShare_{it}$$

Because VRL employs ideology scores as a continuum, it preserves crucial fine-grained distinctions among parties along the entire ideological spectrum. VRL thus distinguishes between what commentators have referred to as the “carnivorous” versus the “vegetarian” left or the social democratic versus the populist left (Castañeda 2006; Vargas Llosa 2007).³ Similarly, VRL also incorporates the ideology and vote share of moderately sized and minor parties, improving on schemes that tally only a single party as the left (Stokes 2008). Moreover, VRL can detect an electorate's ideological shift even when a left candidate's vote share remains the same across elections but voters re-allocate their votes among center and right parties. Finally, unlike the binary approach, VRL is invariant to the number of parties or candidates in a given

² If published, this appendix and ideology data will be available at our websites.

³ For example, VRL reflects the difference between Chávez's radical MVR in Venezuela (Ideology=18.4) and Lula's more moderate PT in Brazil (Ideology=14.6).

election and thus significantly improves the validity of cross-national and cross-temporal comparisons.

Figure 1.A summarizes VRL for all presidential and lower-house legislative elections in 18 Latin American countries between 1995 and 2009.⁴ The central tendencies of VRL in each year appear as lowess-estimated lines. (Lowess functions much like a moving average to smooth across election years, thus showing region-wide trends without the artificial bumpiness that could occur simply because countries use different electoral calendars.) Country-year labels (e.g., “nic96”) represent VRL for a given presidential election (VRL_{pres}). Labels in capital letters (e.g., “BRA02”) refer to elections won by left-of-center presidential candidates ($Ideology > 10.5$). We use only first-round results for presidential elections because run-offs do not offer the full slate of candidate options and thus obscure voters’ first preferences.

[Figure 1 here]

Four findings are evident. First, Latin Americans’ presidential vote choices clearly moved to the left. VRL_{pres} increased by 2 points (about one standard deviation and 18% of the observed range) from 1995 to 2008. Within countries, VRL_{pres} increased from the first to the last election in all but three cases (Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama), and this increase was more than 0.5 in all but six cases. The left turn in voting behavior is thus not an illusion induced by the coalitional alchemy of second round elections, nor is it driven entirely by the flagship cases seen in international headlines; rather, there has been a real underlying leftward shift.

Second, despite the leftward shift, both the amount of change in VRL_{pres} and its endpoint are moderate. Voters moved from an estimated VRL_{pres} of 7.95 in 1995, firmly on the center-right, to a centrist position of 9.96 by 2008. This is the rough equivalent of moving from the center-right Brazilian Social Democracy Party of Fernando Henrique Cardoso ($Ideology = 7.5$) to

⁴ For reasons of data availability discussed below, we confine our analysis to elections since 1995.

the centrist Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (Ideology=9.5). It is nothing like moving from Mexico's market-oriented National Action Party of Vicente Fox (Ideology=3.7) to Chávez's socialist Movement for the Fifth Republic in Venezuela (Ideology=18.4), or even to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's more moderate Workers' Party (Ideology=14.6). Moreover, VRL_{pres} is left of center in only eight of the 16 elections won by left-leaning candidates. *Thus, in electoral terms, Latin America's "left turn" is really a move from an average preference among voters for center-right presidential candidates to a preference for centrist candidates.*⁵

Panel B of Figure 1 depicts the underlying building blocks of the moderate leftward shift in VRL_{pres} by reporting estimates of the percentage of the presidential vote that each of five ideological camps received in each year. The center-left and left collectively won about 20% of the vote in 1996 and 40% in 2007, but this increase came at the expense of the center and center-right, not the right. Indeed, the right's support remained steady between 1996 and 2007. Moreover, by 2007 the median voter (designated by 50% on the y-axis) teetered between the center and center-right. Thus, these data also show that Latin American voters' aggregate preferences have moved toward the left but not to the left.

Third, Panel A shows that leftward movement at the presidential level was punctuated, not steady. VRL_{pres} increased from 1995 to 1998 and again after 2003. In the intermediate five years, VRL_{pres} remained steady, despite the fact that economies stagnated during this period. *Thus, the electoral move to the left occurred most rapidly when economies grew, not when they sputtered*, a descriptive finding that is inconsistent with the performance mandate argument.

Finally, despite the leftward shift in presidential elections, Panel A shows the near absence of a leftward shift in voters' congressional preferences. Between 1996 and 2009, VRL_{house} increased by a mere 0.5, all of which occurred between 1996 and 1998. At the country

⁵ Our use of static W-B ideology scores could overestimate this shift, but in the reviewers appendix we discuss why this is not the case.

level, VRL_{house} increased by more than 0.5 in just nine of 18 of countries, and almost all VRL_{house} scores show voters' collective ideological preferences to be firmly center to center-right. In short, *the left turn in Latin America has been a strictly presidential phenomenon*. For this reason, our analysis focuses on presidential elections; however, after developing our explanation for the rise of the left below, we are well-equipped to explain why the leftward shift in legislative elections has been so limited.

Why Has the Left Turn Occurred?

Over the last two decades, Latin Americans' collective preferences in presidential elections have moved to the left, even if they have remained more centrist than some might expect. Does this shift in vote choices respond to an underlying change in policy preferences or is it an artifact of voting out right-of-center incumbents who performed poorly in office? Most arguments about Latin America's left turn fall into one of these two camps, and both are epitomized in the following 2002 headline from *The Economist*: "A backlash against the free market? It's not that simple. Latin Americans just want governments that perform." We label the claim embodied in the article's question—that there has been a "backlash against the free market"—as the "policy mandate" argument. We label the claim in the *Economist's* answer to this question—that voters just want governments that perform—as the "performance mandate" argument.

The policy mandate approach argues that voters were particularly attracted to the left because they were "fatigued" with market reforms (Lora, Panizza, and Quispe-Agnoli 2004) and wanted a policy alternative. Many observers take the fiery statements of victorious presidential candidates as evidence that voters granted not just a policy mandate, but a *radical* policy mandate to "unravel" the Washington Consensus and usher in a "post-neoliberal" era (Hershberg and Rosen 2006; Roberts 2008; Samuelson 2002). For instance, Chávez railed against "savage capitalism," Lula warned of the potential "economic annexation" of Brazil by the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, Kirchner spoke of the "lamentable and disastrous"

policies espoused by the International Monetary Fund, and Evo Morales referred to the “*vendepatrias*” [country sellouts] who benefitted from foreign investment.

Despite its flamboyant appeal, the radical policy mandate argument faces an empirical anomaly that has led many scholars to dismiss it. Notwithstanding rhetorical flourishes and selected reversals of market policies – particularly concerning privatization – most new left leaders in Latin America have maintained the core aspects of the Washington Consensus (Cleary 2006; Hunter 2007). Because of its moderation in office, recent scholarship has speculated that the left must only have a mandate to improve macroeconomic performance. According to this now-dominant line of thought, voters reacted against economic downturns during the lost half-decade (1998-2002) by casting out incumbents who happened to be overwhelmingly pro-market (Arnold and Samuels 2008; Bruhn 2006; Haber 2005; Murillo et al. 2008; Sader 2008). In this scenario, the left came to power merely because it was more likely than the center and right to be out of office during recessionary, and thus anti-incumbent, times. As the region’s economies rebounded after 2003, many leftist leaders remained in power because retrospectively oriented voters decided that the new incumbents had performed well (Castañeda and Navia 2007). Analysts have also argued that some rightist incumbents were blamed for what voters perceived as rising crime and governmental corruption (Di Tella, Donna, and MacCulloch 2008).

The performance mandate argument is also appealing because it seems to corroborate the large body of work on “retrospective voting” in Latin America (Remmer 1991; Stokes 2001b) and reaffirms analysts’ skepticism about positional issue voting in a region where voters are typically thought to privilege candidate personalities, particularistic benefits, or incumbent performance (Dominguez and McCann 1996; Stokes 2001a). Nevertheless, this argument does not offer a satisfying explanation for the rise of the left. First, a performance mandate argument says nothing about the ideological content of the anti-incumbent vote. Latin American elections feature multiparty competition, and in elections where leftwing challengers initially won the

presidency, centrist and rightist non-incumbent parties still won 36% of the vote. Voters' increasing support for left-of-center parties is thus intentional. Second, in nearly 15% of the presidential elections in our dataset, the incumbent's party did not run a candidate, making retrospective performance evaluations virtually impossible. Finally, as evidenced in Figure 1, the left wave gathered force after 2002 when economies across the region were in recovery, not decline.

As a new alternative to these two existing approaches, we argue that voters have granted the new left a *moderate* policy mandate. We agree with the radical policy mandate school that a vote for the left is not simply an expression of anti-incumbency but *does* contain policy-driven content. Mass support for market policies has fallen and this has pushed many citizens to vote for the new left; however, we depart from the extreme version of the policy mandate claim for two reasons. First, as depicted in Figure 1, voters have cast their ballots for centrist ideological forces, on average.

Second, citizens are both ambivalent and surprisingly moderate in their views about the Washington Consensus. Figure 2 shows yearly estimates of the percent of all Latin American citizens that support globalization, privatization, and the market system in general. (See the reviewers appendix for details on index construction.) The intensity of support for globalization – shown with the thin line – and the absolute level of support for privatization and the market's suitability – shown in thick lines – all declined since the mid-1990s. These declines, however, should not be overstated. First, the proportion of citizens supporting globalization was incredibly high (about 85%) and did not decline, despite a slight fall in the intensity of this support. Second, even at its nadir in 2007, more than 50% of respondents believed that the market was the most suitable economic system, and even 30% supported the least popular policy of privatization. Finally, the downward shift in enthusiasm for the market was modest in size, ranging from 10 to at most 20 percentage points. In sum, overall support for the market fell, but positive attitudes were somewhat buoyed by the fact that voters like free trade. This picture of mixed support for

the market suggests that voters did not cast their ballots to give new left leaders a mandate for radical economic policy change.

[Figure 2 here]

A full explanation for the origin of these issue attitudes is beyond the scope of this paper, yet previous research has established that voters' ambivalence and moderation stems from the fact that citizens have reacted to the Washington Consensus not with their *labor-market* interests in mind, but rather as *consumers* (Baker 2009). Instead of opposing trade liberalization as it tightened labor markets and widened wage inequities, citizens embraced globalization because it lowered the prices, increased the quality, and expanded the variety of consumer goods (Baker 2003). Similarly, privatization has not been universally reviled despite the inevitable job losses occurring in formerly state-owned enterprises. Rather, a sizeable minority of citizens appreciate expanded consumer access to telecommunications, potable water, and electricity, even if the majority is skeptical of the resulting price increases in utility services (Nellis and Birdsall 2005).⁶ Thus, we argue that many voters' decisions to choose left-of-center candidates reflected their declining enthusiasm for various market policies, but the leftward shift in their vote choices was tempered by their genuine approval, as consumers, for certain aspects of Washington Consensus policies.

This consumer-oriented microfoundation helps define the distinction between our policy mandate argument and the performance mandate counterclaim. Citizens' assessments of incumbents' market policies stem mainly from highly visible effects on specific economic

⁶ This consumption-oriented approach also explains why support for both policies declined after 1995. Most of the gains to consumers from trade occurred before the mid-1990s, so the availability of inexpensive foreign goods had become the status quo by the mid- to late-1990s. At the same time, the price increases from utility privatization were highest in the late 1990s (Baker 2009).

consumption indicators, including the availability, quality, and prices of utility services and tradable goods. In contrast, performance evaluations reflect trends in overall personal economic well-being and national economic growth. After all, much of macroeconomic well-being is determined by criteria over which modern Latin American governments have limited control, such as international capital flows, commodity prices, interest rates, foreign demand, and exchange rates (Friedman 2000). Similarly, personal welfare fluctuates largely independently of government policy (Kramer 1983). Research in public opinion thus finds the causal link between macroeconomic trends and support for market reforms to be modest at best (Graham and Sukhtankar 2004). Thus, following existing specialized research on public opinion, we argue that citizens conceptualize their policy preferences as more narrowly focused evaluations of the direct effects of governmental policy, while performance evaluations reflect broader trends in macroeconomic and personal well-being, regardless of their policy roots.

Defining and Detecting Mandates

To date, competing explanations for the rise of the left in Latin America have not been tested adequately. Instead, most existing scholarship and journalistic commentary rests on anecdotal evidence and an analytically dubious link between voters' intentions and elite rhetoric. Those who favor the policy mandate hypothesis commonly impute the preferences of electorates (or median voters) using the campaign statements of winning candidates and then conclude that this shared policy preference constitutes a mandate. Work that favors the performance mandate explanation similarly focuses on the left's moderation once in office and concludes that voters could not possibly have granted such leaders a mandate to stall or reverse market reforms.

Interpreting mandates with only elite rhetoric in hand – an argument Dahl referred to as the “primitive theory of the popular presidential mandate” (1990: 361-62) – is obviously circular reasoning. Instead, we agree with Kelley that “to ask what an election means is to ask what beliefs and attitudes made voters pull one lever and not another” (1983: 43). The motivations

behind vote choices may be at wide variance with candidates' rhetoric, even in polarized electoral contests, because voters may ignore prospective policy statements or they may select candidates based on retrospective evaluations, candidate images, clientelist linkages, or a large series of "valence" issues on which all voters can easily agree (such as nationalism or lower crime rates). Relying on elite rhetoric alone is particularly problematic in a world region that is prone to "mandate betrayals." In many Latin American elections in the 1980s and early 1990s, voters elected statist presidential candidates only to receive market-oriented policies after inauguration (Stokes 2001a). Yet mandate violators were not always punished by voters in public opinion polls and many were returned to office. As a result, policy agreement between electorates and winning candidates cannot be assumed.

Investigating electoral mandates and, more specifically, the reason for the rise of the left in Latin America thus requires an analysis of the relationship between elite preferences and public opinion. Our empirical strategy is to test for correspondence between voters' evaluations of particular policy packages and performance criteria, on the one hand, and the electoral success of different ideological options, on the other. Some research on American politics argues that voting decisions can be so complex that one can never definitively determine the content of a mandate in a *particular* election (Dahl 1990). We agree that single case studies pose difficulties for such causal assessment and thus investigate the ideological slant of election outcomes across 18 countries and 13 years with a pooled time-series dataset of 48 presidential elections between 1996 and 2008.⁷

We conduct this country-level, rather than an individual-level, analysis because the

⁷ The number of elections in our statistical analyses is slightly smaller than that reported in Figure 1 because the use of lagged measures of public opinion means that the analysis begins in 1996 and because public opinion data for one country, the Dominican Republic, are not available until 2005.

essence of the debate about the left's mandate lies in explaining why it is more electorally successful in some countries and years than in others. To gain leverage on this question, we need to test whether changes in public opinion lead to corresponding shifts in the ideological profile of voting behavior across elections, not whether certain opinions make some individuals more likely to vote for the left than others. Individual-level relationships between explanatory variables and vote choices can remain the same across elections even if consequential aggregate shifts in both variables were to occur. For instance, if an incumbent candidate's vote share fell because the economy soured and *all* voters shifted their performance evaluations of him downward, then an aggregate level analysis would correctly show that the candidate's probability of winning fell due to poor performance in office. However, the strength of the individual-level correlation between performance evaluations and vote choice would be equivalent in both elections and thus would entirely miss the causal importance of the incumbent's performance. We agree with Kramer that in studying public opinion and election outcomes across elections, "it is the *aggregate* time-series evidence—rather than that based on individual-level survey data—which is most likely to yield valid inferences about the underlying individual-level behavioral effects we are trying to measure" (1983: 93).

If the policy mandate argument holds, then leftist leaders should be more successful at the polls in countries and in election years when market-oriented economic policies are less popular. Alternatively, if the performance mandate argument holds, then leftist challengers to non-leftist incumbents should be more electorally successful in countries and in election years where economic growth is sluggish or negative or where other performance criteria such as personal security or government corruption are perceived as major problems. When leftists are incumbents, they should conversely benefit from growing economies or perceived success in other performance indicators.

Measuring Mandates

Because mandates are based on voters' attitudes, preferences, and perceptions, we rely as much as possible on public opinion measures for our independent variables, using the annual Latinbarometer survey of 18 countries that began in 1995. Our approach is to construct attitudinal indices from multiple survey items (when available) not only because any single survey question suffers from measurement error but because using an index helps smooth out the inevitable differences that occur across countries and over time in the salience of particular election issues. For instance, issues associated with market reforms have become politicized in different ways across elections. The issue of privatization of water and natural gas resources loomed large in Bolivia's 2005 elections, whereas the debate over free trade dominated the policy discourse of presidential elections in Costa Rica and Peru in 2006. (Details on the construction of all public opinion variables appear in the reviewers appendix.)

We test two issues that could drive a policy mandate. First, we tap *Mass support for the market* with an index of seven survey questions that cover the full array of market policies implemented in Latin America—privatization, North-South trade, South-South trade, and liberalization of foreign investment inflows—as well as overall support for free markets. If decreases in pro-market sentiment cause increases in VRL_{pres} , then we will conclude that the left has a policy mandate to slow, stall, or reverse the Washington Consensus.

Second, we also test for a possible mandate regarding relations with the United States (Arnold and Samuels 2008; Seligson 2007). Some new left leaders are vociferously critical of the United States in general and the George W. Bush administration in particular, which was highly unpopular throughout Latin America. For instance, President Chávez of Venezuela famously referred to President Bush as “the devil” when he addressed the United Nations in September 2006, and three different leftist presidents expelled United States embassy officials in 2008 and 2009. Bilateral trade agreements with the United States have also been contentious in some countries. We thus include a measure of *Mass anti-Americanism* from the

Latinbarometer series. If increases in anti-Americanism cause increases in VRL_{pres} , then we will conclude that the left has a policy mandate to implement an anti-United States foreign policy.

In testing the policy mandate argument, we rely on voters' attitudes and preferences about specific policies rather than on their ideological self-placement (Arnold and Samuels 2008; Seligson 2007). Self-reported left-to-right ideologies are summary measures that suffer from three problems. First, voters may not understand these labels or conceptualize politics in spatial terms. Indeed, about 20% of respondents to public opinion polls across Latin America do not answer questions about left-right orientation. Second, voters who do answer may understand the meaning of left and right orientations differently (Zechmeister 2006). Finally, even if voters had a common understanding of "left" and "right," this measure of ideology summarizes rather than separates voters' positions on multiple policies. Thus, if we found that voters in countries and election years with more leftist ideologies chose more leftist candidates, we would have uncovered little about the underlying reason for the rise of the left.

We test four versions of the performance mandate hypothesis. First, we examine economic performance with an index of *Evaluations of economic welfare* that includes citizens' assessments of the current national macroeconomic situation (sociotropic evaluations), their own personal financial situation (pocketbook evaluations), their concern over meeting basic needs (consumption security), and their estimation of whether they would be unemployed in the subsequent twelve months (employment security). We also consider objective economic trends as measured by *Change in GDP* and *Inflation* in the year preceding the election and change over the incumbent's entire term (World Bank 2008). If the performance mandate explains the rise of the left, then negative economic performance and negative performance evaluations under non-left governments should increase VRL_{pres} . Conversely, where the left is in power, negative economic performance and evaluations should decrease VRL_{pres} .

Our second performance criterion concerns crime. Along with the economy, personal security has been the primary concern of citizens in Latin America's new democracies. To test

whether the left's mandate is based to any extent on reducing crime, we use a binary measure of self-reported *Crime victimization* in the previous twelve months. More crime victimization should increase VRL_{pres} when the non-left is in power and decrease VRL_{pres} when the left is the incumbent.

Third, we test the effect of *Corruption perceptions* on vote choices. Fueled by major corruption scandals in nearly every country in the region, voters often cite unscrupulous officials as reason to "throw the bums out." We employ Transparency International's index of corruption that gauges perceptions of corruption by country experts in the business and economic analysis communities. If the left has ridden an anti-corruption mandate to office, then VRL_{pres} should rise when rightwing incumbents are perceived as corrupt and fall when leftwing incumbents are.

Finally, we evaluate the causal impact of *Mass support for democracy* with an index created from two questions. A number of scholars have interpreted the rise of the left as a backlash against the failures of democracy and political representation (Arnold and Samuels 2008; Kaufman 2007; Roberts 2008). We thus test whether leftist candidates gained when right-leaning incumbents oversaw increasing mass frustration with democracy.

As is evident from these hypotheses, the performance mandate argument is inherently interactive: leftists should do well when they are not incumbents *and* mass performance evaluations are negative. They should also do well when they are the incumbent *and* evaluations are positive. Alternatively, leftists should do poorly when they are not incumbents and mass performance evaluations are positive as well as when they are incumbents and such evaluations are negative. To test for these interactive effects, we include the *Incumbent's ideology* (determined using the W-B dataset) and interact it with the performance indices. To ease interpretation of the various interaction coefficients and their main effects, we re-center incumbent's ideology so that a center-right incumbent equals zero (i.e., subtract 5.75 from the original ideology score, giving it a possible range of -4.75 to 14.25). This strictly cosmetic adjustment means that all main effects coefficients on the performance indicators in our analysis

can be interpreted as the impact of that performance criterion on VRL_{pres} when a center-right president is in office. (We label coefficient names with “CR” to remind readers of this re-centering.)

Scholars have suggested four other plausible explanations that we also consider. First, we test Stokes’s (2008) theoretical expectation that left parties should prosper where globalization has expanded market-induced risk and volatility, with citizens choosing leftist parties in the hopes that it will provide a protectionist antidote. If this prediction is correct, then *Trade as a percent of GDP* should be positively correlated with VRL_{pres} .

Second, Stokes (2008) further argues that the size of the state may affect voter support for leftwing governments, on the presumption that liberal, and thus volatile, economies lead voters to favor leftwing candidates that promise thicker state-sponsored cushions. In contrast, other scholars argue that where the state remains comparatively large, a constituency to defend against the market’s advance might propel voters to choose leftwing candidates (Sader 2008). Furthermore, where the state is deeply involved in economic activities, leftist leaders might have the cash flow to lock-in their early victories by extending economic benefits to favored constituencies (Benton 2006). We test these opposing claims about the *Size of the state* using a composite measure of the government’s involvement in economic activity developed by Economic Freedom in the World (EFW).⁸

Third, some scholars cite Latin America’s notorious income inequality as the reason for the left’s rise (Cleary 2006). Although largely a region of middle-income countries, the median Latin American voter remains relatively poor and may thus favor the left with the expectation that it will implement redistributive measures. We use the *Gini coefficient* to test whether VRL_{pres} rises with inequality.

Finally, we consider two supply-side factors that could potentially confound the

⁸ Data available at <http://www.freetheworld.com/>.

relationship between the demand-side variables detailed above and the left's shifting fortunes. First, although new parties should rationally enter competition only when there is sufficient voter demand for them to win, we know empirically that party entry relies on elites' decisions that may respond to other calculations (Greene 2007). Thus, VRL_{pres} could have shifted over time or varied across countries simply because the menu of available party options differed. In particular, if left-of-center parties entered competition or right-of-center parties disappeared between the mid-1990s and the late 2000s, then VRL_{pres} might rise without an underlying ideological shift in voters' preferences. We consider these possibilities by testing the effects of *Left-of-center party availability* and *Right-of-center party availability*, each of which measure the mean ideology of their party families. (We use the W-B midpoint of 10.5 to divide left from right.) Although all elections in the dataset featured right-of-center parties, six lacked left-of-center parties. In these cases, we added a dummy variable, *No left-of-center party*. A second supply-side argument suggests that voters found left parties more attractive as they became more firmly established (Cleary 2006; Murillo et al. 2008). We test this argument both with the *Age of democracy* and with *Party system institutionalization* scores.⁹

Determining the Latin American Left's Mandate

Descriptive Results

Latin Americans' collective electoral preferences have moved leftward since 1995, as indicated by the increasing trend in VRL_{pres} in Figure 1 above. At a minimum, we would thus expect any independent variables that could plausibly explain this trend to also trend upward or downward after 1995. As a preliminary assessment, we graphically depict summaries of our measures of policy preferences and performance evaluations through time. This exercise also shows some region-wide trends in public opinion and voting behavior that have heretofore gone

⁹ Since party system institutionalization scores are not available across time, we use data from Jones (2007) to test this argument cross-nationally.

undocumented.

Figure 3 plots the central tendencies of our two policy mandate variables over time and shows that both are plausible causes of the increase in VRL_{pres} . Mass support for the market (mean of $-.09$, standard deviation of $.91$, range from -2.54 to 1.90) declined monotonically after 1997 from $+.40$ in the mid-1990s to $-.77$ by the late 2000s, falling by almost 1.5 standard deviations (equal to 27% of the range). This decline is the mirror image of the rise in VRL_{pres} , and the simple correlation between the two central tendencies is a whopping $-.91$. At the very least, there is a strong temporal coincidence between Latin Americans' declining enthusiasm for the market and their increasing propensity to vote for leftist candidates. Mass anti-Americanism (mean of 2.10 and standard deviation of $.31$ on a $1 \leftrightarrow 4$ -point scale) increased over the observed period, although it declined in the late 1990s before increasing rapidly throughout the 2000s. The correlation between its central tendency and that of VRL_{pres} is also quite strong at $+.78$, making anti-Americanism an initially plausible impetus for the rise of the left.

[Figure 3 here]

Figure 4 summarizes the four main performance measures – evaluations of economic welfare, corruption perceptions, crime victimization, and support for democracy – and shows little to suggest performance is a predictor of VRL_{pres} . We offer a full test of the performance interactive hypothesis below and limit our exploration here to one necessary condition underlying it—that optimism about the economy, crime, corruption, and democracy declined under right-of-center incumbents. Figure 4 thus limits the sample to elections with right-of-center incumbents (i.e., those scoring less than 10.5 on the $1 \leftrightarrow 20$ -point W-B ideological scale). If performance evaluations explain the region's leftward shift, then these indices should show steadily worsening evaluations through time.

[Figure 4 here]

None of the plots, however, shows a sufficiently sharp monotonic pattern. Economic performance evaluations (mean of $.10$, standard deviation of $.92$, range from -2.49 to 2.47)

follow a non-linear pattern with good evaluations from 1995 to 1998, a downturn from 1999 to 2003, and a rapid recovery from 2003 to 2007, when average evaluations improved by more than one standard deviation. These periods correspond, of course, to objective economic trends: average GDP per capita annual growth in the region was 1.9% in the first period, -0.20% in the second, and 4.2% in the third. This non-linear pattern, however, does not follow the increase in VRL_{pres} that occurred at the same time. Particularly damning to the economic performance hypothesis is that voters' evaluations rebounded sharply after 2003, precisely when VRL_{pres} increased most quickly. Thus, it is unlikely that voters turned left solely to dismiss poorly performing centrist and rightist incumbents.

The other three performance measures do not hold much promise as predictors of the left's rise either. Corruption perceptions (mean of 3.55, standard deviation of 1.38, and range from 1.5 to 7.9) held rather steady, but declined slightly after 2002 when the left wave gathered steam. Crime victimization (mean of .38, standard deviation of .10, and range from .15 to .79) also follows a non-linear path that does not track the monotonic increase in VRL_{pres} . Voters' reported experiencing rising crime from 1995 to 1999, a high but stable level between 1999 and 2002, and a decline thereafter. Again, the decrease in crime reports after 2002 sits especially awkwardly with the fact that VRL_{pres} grew significantly during this period. Finally, mass support for democracy (mean of .00, standard deviation of .82, and range from -2.17 to 2.01) shows more promise as a determinant of the left's rising fortunes because it fell monotonically after 1997, but this decrease was relatively mild at just one-third of a standard deviation.

Regression Results

The graphical depictions indicate strong initial support for an economic policy mandate, some support for a foreign policy mandate, and very limited support for any version of the performance mandate argument. Nevertheless, region-wide time trends are a crude instrument for testing hypotheses, as there is large cross-national variation around these central tendencies. Parsing the causal effects of policy and performance criteria thus requires statistical

techniques that use rather than discard cross-national variation.

We first estimate pooled time-series regression models to pinpoint the causes of cross-national and cross-temporal differences in electorates' VRL_{pres} across 48 elections. For two reasons, we lag by one year the public opinion independent variables. First, since Latinbarometer interviews often occurred in the months following elections, using a lag ensures that our public opinion criteria were measured prior to the election outcomes they might explain. Second, using lags creates explanatory variables that are not endogenous to election campaigns and events. Such endogeneity may occur simply because elites make rhetorical appeals about issues such as economic performance and policies during campaigns that are designed to persuade voters (Zaller 1992). For example, a new but popular anti-market party may convince many voters during the campaign to turn anti-market, thus increasing both anti-market sentiment and VRL_{pres} in the data. This would incline the statistical results to show that the party enjoys an anti-market mandate even if anti-market voters chose the new party not because of its anti-market stance but because they liked it for other reasons. Lagging our public opinion measures to a time before each campaign deals with this potential endogeneity..

Our preferred estimation technique is the Generalized Estimation Equation (GEE) approach, which fits a population-averaged panel-data model. Like random effects models, GEE employs variation across countries and through time but makes more efficient use of unbalanced and unevenly spaced data, both of which occur in our dataset because elections happen at different times and with different frequency across countries (Zorn 2001). For the most part, we do not include a lagged dependent variable because we wish to explain the level of VRL_{pres} rather than the degree of change from the preceding election. However, to test a variety of implications generated by the performance mandate hypothesis we do estimate some models of change in VRL_{pres} and even consider longer lags to the performance mandate independent variables.

We first ran a series of simple models, shown in the first column of Table 1, in which we

tested each hypothesis without any control variables. For most hypotheses, these were simple bivariate models, but for the performance hypotheses we included three variables to account for the interaction effects. In this first round of statistical tests, the policy mandate variables reached statistical significance. As in the descriptive findings above, mass support for the market has a negative impact on VRL_{pres} and mass anti-Americanism has a positive impact on VRL_{pres} . None of the performance mandate variables or variables associated with alternative hypotheses reach statistical significance, with the exception of party availability.¹⁰ Thus, the menu of available parties across countries and over time may affect the ideology of voters' choices; however, if the party options simply reflect voters' policy preferences, then these variables should wash out when we control for such preferences.

Table 1 also shows more fully specified GEE models to assess the robustness of these bivariate findings. We still limit our models to four predictors due to the relatively small number of cases. Mass support for the market is the only variable that survives the statistical controls. The substantive effect of anti-market opinions is so strong that a one standard deviation change in the opinion index yields two-thirds of a point change in VRL_{pres} . Considering that the region-wide shift in VRL_{pres} was only 2 points between 1995 and 2008, the impact of this variable is massive. More importantly, mass preferences about the market have the same large impact when controlling for subjective performance evaluations. This indicates that market policy attitudes are not simply a tally of retrospective economic evaluations, but rather capture citizens' deeper beliefs about the best policy direction for their governments to pursue. It is these orientations that have been the prime contributor to the left's electoral success.

[Table 1 here]

In contrast, performance criteria had little to no impact on Latin America's left turn. The

¹⁰ GDP per capita and inflation seem to exert some impact; however, the coefficients are wrongly signed.

performance mandate variables fail in the simple models without controls and when controlling for mass support for the market. Even when citizens perceived rising levels of corruption, downturns in the economy, increased threats to their security, and faltering democratic performance under center and right-of-center incumbents, they were no more likely to vote for the left. Surprisingly, the objective economic indicators in fact suggest the opposite. When non-leftists were in office, gains in GDP and falling inflation actually increased VRL_{pres} .¹¹

The results in Table 1 show clear evidence that the performance of center and right-of-center incumbents did not affect VRL_{pres} . Nevertheless, we further test the performance argument by considering (1) whether performance might have influenced change in VRL_{pres} , rather than its level, and (2) whether a longer lag structure might yield more favorable results for the performance hypothesis. Yet even with these adjustments, the performance hypothesis fails. A straightforward way to show these results is to analyze just the 39 elections that occurred under right-of-center incumbents ($Ideology < 10.5$) and report bivariate correlations. First, the correlation between $Change\ in\ GDP_{(t-1)}$ and $Change\ in\ VRL_{pres}$ (from the previous election) is a wrongly signed $+0.22$, and the correlation between $Inflation_{(t-1)}$ and $Change\ in\ VRL_{pres}$ is a meager $+0.04$ ($p = .40$). Second, we incorporated a longer lag structure by calculating the mean of GDP change and inflation during the incumbent president's entire term, rather than just in the preceding year. The correlation between *Average change in GDP during incumbent's term* and

¹¹ Table 1 shows these results when center-right parties are incumbents. Calculations (not shown) for the effects and standard errors when center and right parties were incumbents also did not reach statistical significance. The one exception is crime victimization for the farthest right incumbent (ARENA in El Salvador, $Ideology = 2.5$), which has a coefficient of 5.91 and is significant at the $p = .051$ level. We also tested whether crime victimization alone increased support for the law-and-order right (i.e., without the interaction term), but this variable was not close to statistical significance.

change in VRL_{pres} is also wrongly signed at +.30, and the correlation between *Average change in inflation during incumbent's term* and the change in VRL_{pres} is +.11 ($p=.27$). Overall, these results convincingly show that the Latin American left did not rise on the backs of the right's failures.

We also find virtually no support for the alternative hypotheses. Stokes's (2008) argument that voters choose leftwing parties as a response to market-induced exposure to economic risk and volatility did not bear out as both trade and the size of the state failed to reach statistical significance. The related argument that levels of inequality encourage support for the left to propel redistribution also failed. Our analyses also found no support for the argument that the left prospers where democracy has endured longer or where the party system is more institutionalized. Finally, we found some support for the notion that the ideology of the available parties conditions the ideology of vote choices; however, the effect is only due to variation in the availability of right-of-center parties and, according to analyses not shown, only comes from cross-national differences, not change within party systems over time. Moreover, the rise in VRL_{pres} is not due to change in the availability of left-of-center parties. Most importantly, Table 1 also shows that the mild cross-national effect on VRL_{pres} of right-of-center party availability does not detract from the impact of market beliefs, as this variable remains the same size as in the bivariate specification. Indeed, the weakness of these supply-side variables primarily suggests that the party options reflect citizens' policy preferences.

The results presented so far show the extent to which public opinion about the market explains the varied fortunes of the left through time and across countries, but they conceal whether that explanatory power comes more from one effect or the other. A satisfying account would accomplish both, explaining, for example, (1) why Uruguay turned left in 2004, not in 1999, *and* (2) why Uruguay turned left while Honduras has stayed decidedly right. To determine the explanatory power of the policy mandate in accounting for over-time and cross-country effects, we show fixed-effects and between-effects models in Table 2.

[Table 2 here]

The fixed effects model isolates temporal variation by using each country's deviation from its own VRL_{pres} mean as the dependent variable. The results in Table 2 show that the coefficients for mass support for the market are nearly identical in substantive and statistical size to the GEE coefficients. This indicates that changes in aggregate anti-market attitudes within countries have a large effect on the left's increasing vote share within countries over time. In short, we can safely conclude that the decline through time in support for market policies explains the rising support for the left.

Can these policy beliefs also explain why some countries have turned left and others have not? A between-effects model takes each country's mean VRL_{pres} score across all observed elections as the dependent variable, and similarly converts each independent variable to a country mean. There is thus just one observation per country, so we only conduct a bivariate analysis. When all 18 countries are included, mass support for the market cannot explain why some countries have been more prone to vote for leftists than others. However, when we exclude Venezuela, the substantive significance of the market beliefs index jumps significantly, and the p value falls to .056, just beyond the conventional threshold of statistical significance.

A simple scatterplot of mass support for the market against each country's mean VRL_{pres} in Figure 5 shows that all countries except Venezuela cluster tightly around a downward sloping regression line. When Venezuela is excluded, the correlation among these 17 cases is a robust -.58. When Venezuela is included, the correlation falls to -.25. In public opinion surveys, Venezuelans are far more enthusiastic about the market than their voting behavior in presidential contests would lead us to expect. There are a number of plausible explanations for the mismatch between voters' issue preferences and voting behavior in Venezuela, including voter coercion, vote buying fueled by windfall oil profits over the last several years, and what some see as Chávez's charismatic leadership (Weyland 2009). Given the many reasons why

issue voting may not obtain in any country, we think it is more relevant to focus on the impressive predictive power of market beliefs for 17 of 18 countries in the region.

[Figure 5 here]

Overall, the findings clearly show that mass support for the market, not performance evaluations, explain *why, where, and when* many Latin American electorates turned leftward after 1998. This public opinion variable remained a robust predictor of support for the left in presidential elections when facing any combination of control variables. It offers substantial power in explaining the rise of the left within countries over time and it does an impressive job in explaining why some electorates have turned left while others have not.

Our findings also suggest why voters have elected leftist presidents but have scarcely increased their support for leftwing parties in legislative elections. Presidents and not legislators in Latin America have been at the forefront of economic policymaking and, in particular, the implementation of market reforms. More than in other countries, executives across the Latin America region hold substantial powers and have instituted sweeping market reforms by decree (O'Donnell 1994). In contrast, legislatures have been less involved in economic policymaking, so voters have been less likely to choose their representatives based on positional policy issues.

Conclusion

The rise of the left in many countries is the most striking political outcome in Latin America in the last decade. The trend has potentially far-reaching implications about voting behavior, political representation, policy outputs, and relationships between Latin American governments and the United States as well as foreign capital holders. As a result, journalists and scholars were quick to offer explanations that ranged from a thoroughgoing rejection of the market to the more mundane sense that voters sought to punish poorly performing rightwing incumbents.

Our evidence suggests a strong indictment of both arguments. Latin American voters

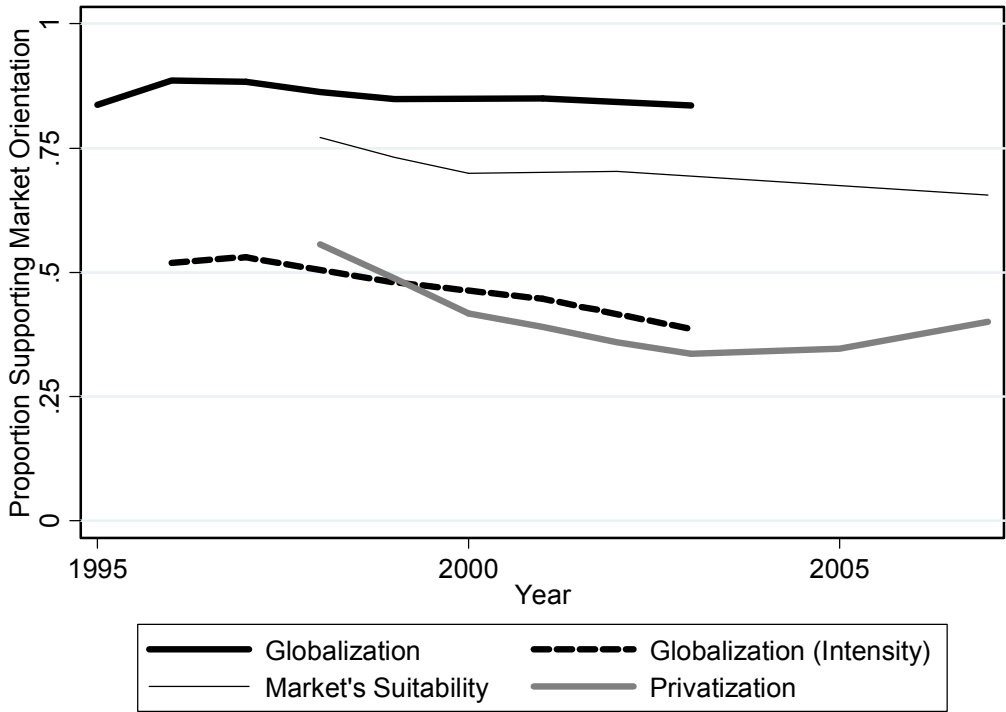
have not turned to the left simply to oust governments that presided over episodes of economic contraction and rising inflation; rather, their voting behavior had definite ideological content, as citizens intentionally chose the left for its policy proposals. This does not mean, however, that the left can claim a mandate for the wholesale reversal of Washington Consensus policies. Latin American voters are clearly not socialists or protectionists. Instead, they have given the left a moderate mandate to oppose certain aspects of the market's advance while leaving others in place. In particular, voters want their governments to maintain free trade while, at most, partially reversing the privatization process. The vote choices we document thus imply a desire for a shift *toward* the left but not *to* the left.

For the most part, leftist leaders in Latin America have followed through on this moderate mandate. Regarding privatization – the least popular of the market reforms – leftist governments have taken action. In addition to the high-profile renationalizations in Bolivia and Venezuela, left-leaning leaders in Argentina and Ecuador have nationalized selected industries, several pending privatizations in other countries governed by leftists have been blocked, and few new privatizations have occurred over the last several years (Lora et al. 2004). In contrast, globalization – the more popular policy – has been left largely intact even if it has scarcely expanded (Stokes 2008). Average tariffs in most Latin American countries are in the low teens, and have not increased in recent years, even where leftists occupy the presidential palace. Leftists in Chile, Guatemala, and Nicaragua have left formal free trade agreements with the United States in place. Even Chávez is described as having a “de facto free trade agreement with the United States,” as imports to Venezuela from the United States have doubled under his tenure (Naím 2006). At the same time, the failure of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the lack of formal free trade agreements between seven Latin American countries and the United States, almost all of which are governed by the left, plausibly responds to voters' desire to put the brakes on further economic liberalization. In sum, voters' overall moderate preferences about the market and their clearly parsed attitudes about globalization versus

privatization are reflected in the policies pursued by new left governments across the region.

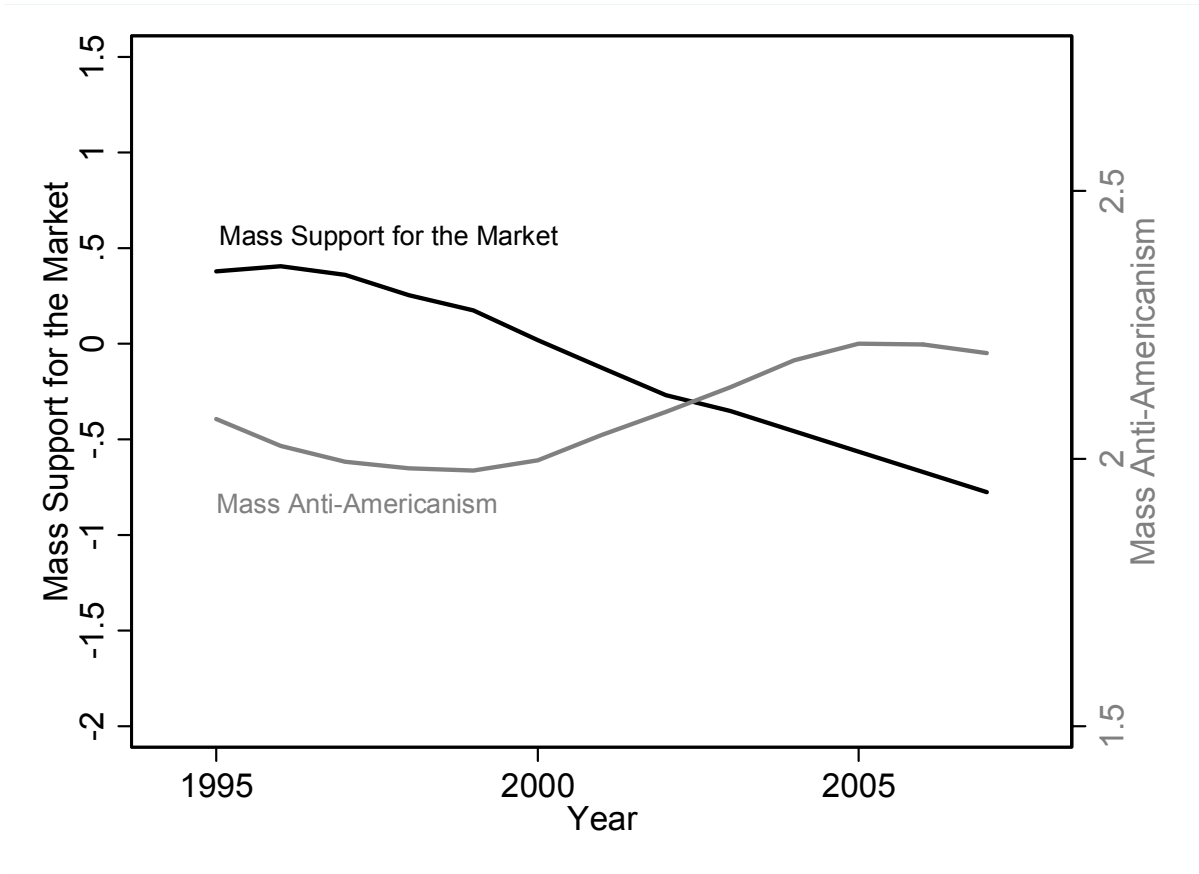
The importance of voters' economic attitudes in determining their vote choices and the policies of new left governments is striking for two reasons. First, Latin American voters are often characterized as relatively passive participants in democratic politics who make their choices based not on issue debates but on clientelist relationships or the appeal of populist and perhaps even charismatic candidates. Our findings show that presidential vote choices are strongly influenced by well-reasoned attitudes regarding issues and, in particular, the economic impact of policy choices. Second, Latin American governments are also often characterized as somewhat passive players in making their own economic policies. Scholars typically explain economic policy moderation in the region with international or structural variables, including the demands of international financial institutions, budgetary constraints, and the need to attract foreign capital, all of which are said to put developing country governments in an economic policy "straitjacket" (Friedman 2000). These potential constraints notwithstanding, our findings point to a more positive reason for the left's actions in office. Most new left leaders have pursued moderate policies not (only) because it may be economically rational to do so but because voters have given them a mandate for moderation. Our findings thus characterize voters as active participants in orchestrating the policy content of Latin American governments and those governments as relatively more representative of voters' policy preferences.

Figure 2: Proportion of Citizens Supporting Three Aspects of the Market



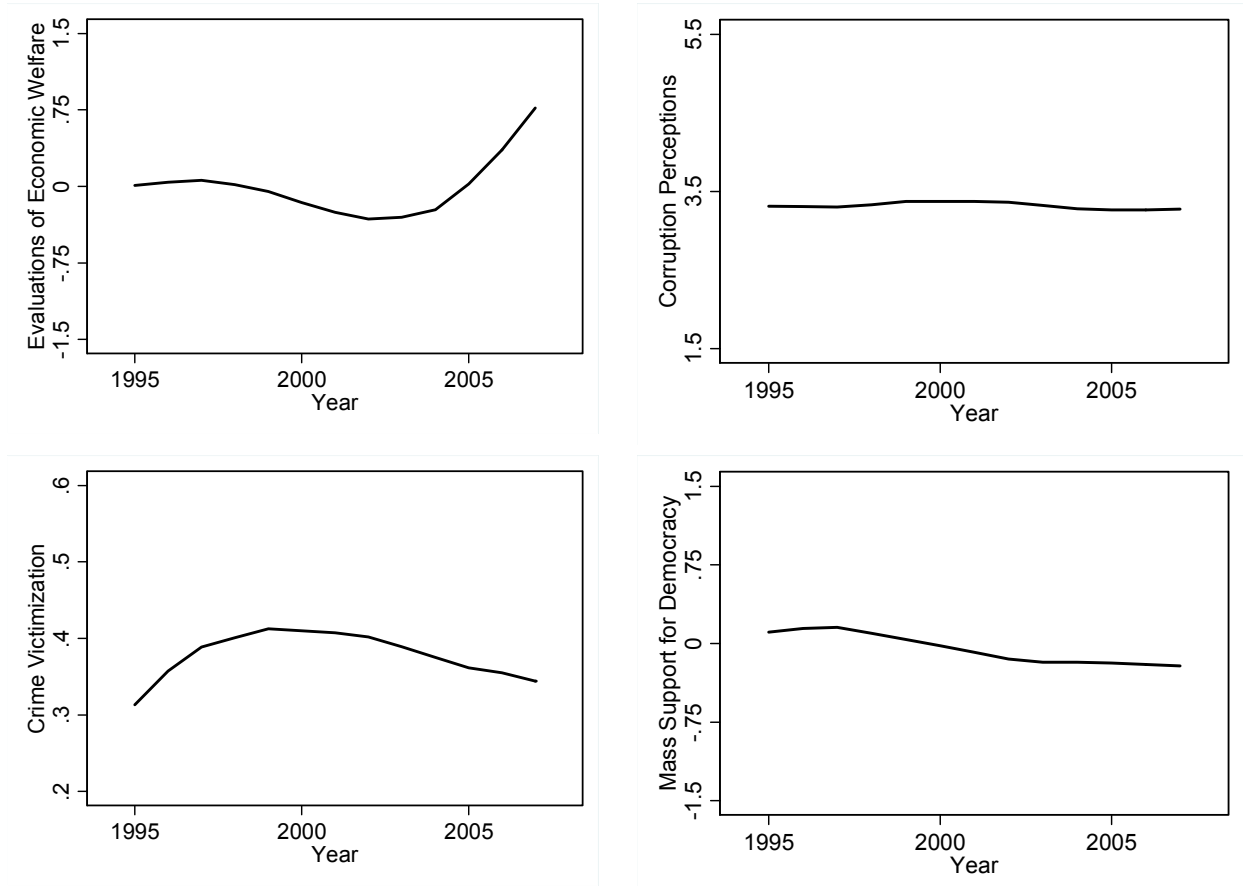
Note: Lines are central tendency estimates using lowess smoothing. See reviewers appendix for details on index construction.

Figure 3: Trends in Mass Support for the Market and Mass Anti-Americanism across 18 Latin American Countries, 1995-2007



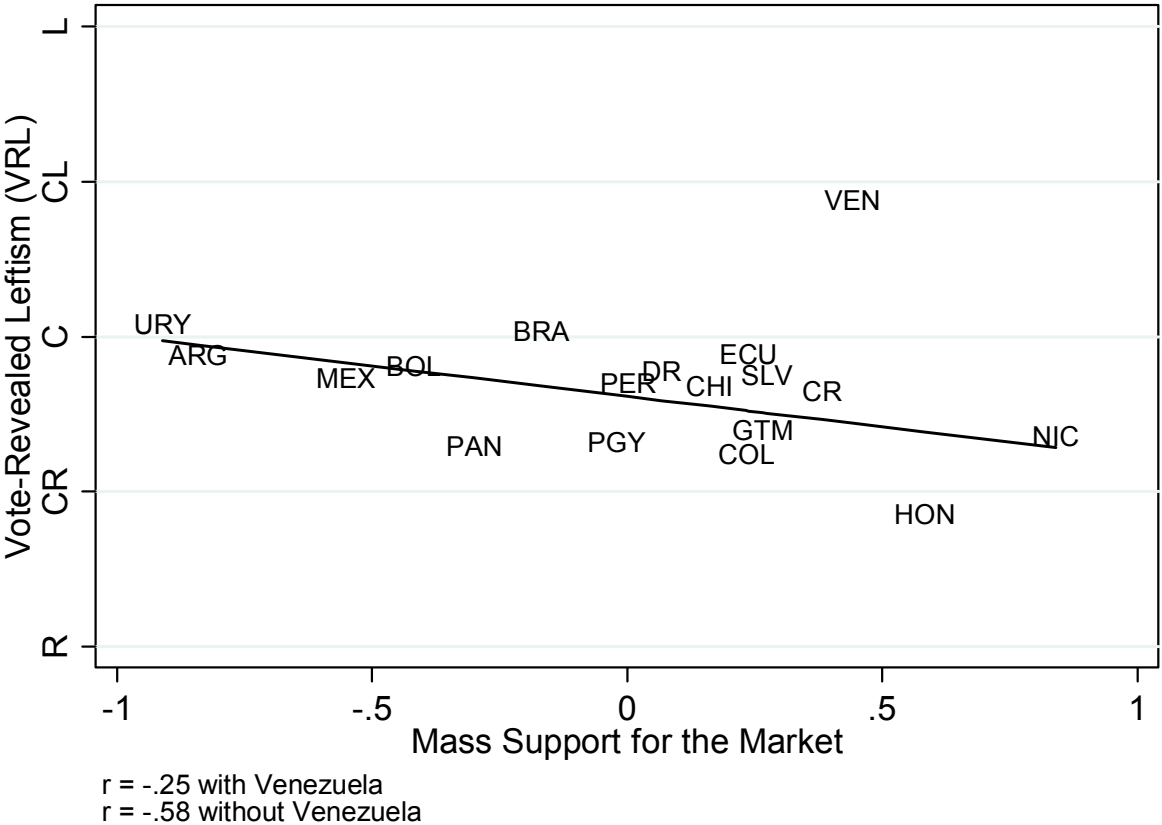
Note: Lines are central tendency estimates using lowess smoothing. The y-axes span roughly ± 2 standard deviations above and below the mean. The number of country years used in calculating the black line – mass support for the market – is 163. (We use all available years, not just election years.) The number used to calculate the grey line – mass anti-Americanism – is 180.

Figure 4: Trends in Performance Evaluations across Latin American Countries for Years when Left-of-Center Parties Do Not Hold the Presidency, 1995-2007



Note: Lines are central tendency estimates using lowess smoothing. The y-axes span roughly ± 2 standard deviations above and below the mean. The number of country years used in calculating the evaluations of economic welfare line is 145, 132 for the corruption perceptions line, 130 for the crime victimization line, and 155 for the democracy line.

Figure 5: Cross-National Relationship between VRL_{pres} and Mass Support for the Market



Note: Points are country averages over entire period (1995-2008). Line is calculated from a regression estimated *without* Venezuela.

Table 1: GEE Models of VRL_{pres} in 18 Latin American Countries, 1996-2008

Variable	Simple Models (see note)		Full Specifications				
<i>Policy Mandate Variables</i>							
Mass support for the market _(t-1)	-.637* (.255)	-.584* (.338)	-.662* (.259)	-.704* (.293)	-.609* (.254)	-.663* (.254)	-.797* (.292)
Mass anti-Americanism _(t-1)	1.464* (.855)	.365 (.895)					
<i>Performance Mandate Variables</i>							
Evaluations of economic welfare _(t-1) (CR)	.044 (.222)		.085 (.222)				
Evaluations of economic welfare _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	.044 (.064)		.047 (.061)				
Crime victimization _(t-1) (CR)	3.526 (2.500)			3.237 (2.643)			
Crime victimization _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	-.406 (.737)			-.824 (.757)			
Corruption perceptions _(t-1) (CR)	.348 (.298)				.234 (.261)		
Corruption perceptions _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	-.050 (.042)				-.021 (.031)		
Mass support for democracy _(t-1) (CR)	-.283 (.419)					.006 (.458)	
Mass support for democracy _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	.051 (.065)					.045 (.075)	
Change in GDP _(t-1) (CR)	.165 (.066)						
Change in GDP _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	-.020 (.006)						
Inflation _(t-1) (CR)	-.027 (.018)						
Inflation _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology	.004 (.004)						
Incumbent's ideology	See note		.014 (.080)	.401 (.309)	.125 (.135)	.036 (.072)	
<i>Other variables</i>							
Right-of-center party availability	.295* (.199)						.350* (.178)
Left-of-center party availability	.331* (.153)						.211 (.162)
No left-of-center party	-1.247 (.989)						-1.083 (.826)
Trade as a percent of GDP	-.006 (.013)						
Size of the state	.030 (.226)						
Gini coefficient	-.028 (.123)						
Age of democracy	.051 (.041)						
Party system institutionalization	-.051 (.067)						
Constant	See note	8.215* (1.919)	8.891* (.459)	7.514* (1.143)	8.104* (1.024)	8.865* (.442)	3.866 (2.617)

Note: The "Simple Models" column reports results of different models that test each hypothesis with no controls and separates each model with a horizontal line. The simple models of policy mandate and "other" indicators contain just one predictor. Those for performance mandate predictors contain three: the performance indicator, incumbent ideology, and their interaction. "CR" denotes center-right, reminding readers that these main effects coefficients express the impact of the performance indicator when the incumbent is center-right (Ideology=5.75).

Entries are GEE coefficients and robust standard errors in parentheses except where noted below. We use exchangeable country-specific error structures and White's heteroskedastic standard errors that are robust to misspecification of the error structure. * = p < .05, one-tailed (we thus do not count as statistically significant coefficients that are wrongly signed). N = 48. Results are average estimates over ten multiply imputed datasets (Royston, 2005). Models for the age of democracy and party system institutionalization use the between effects GLS estimator.

Table 2: Fixed and Between Effects Models of VRL_{pres} in 18 Latin American Countries, 1996-2008

Variable	Fixed Effects: Temporal Variation Only						Between Effects: Country Variation Only	
	<i>Policy Only</i>	<i>Full Specifications</i>					<i>With Ven.</i>	<i>No Ven.</i>
<i>Policy Mandate Variables</i>								
Mass support for the market _(t-1)	-.651* (.246)	-.634* (.292)	-.687* (.263)	-.744* (.304)	-.651* (.260)	-.667* (.281)	-.470 (.722)	-.822# (.478)
Mass anti-Americanism _(t-1)		.146 (1.128)						
<i>Performance Mandate Variables</i>								
Evaluations of economic welfare _(t-1) (CR)			.093 (.290)					
Evaluations of economic welfare _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology			.048 (.071)					
Crime victimization _(t-1) (CR)				2.895 (3.567)				
Crime victimization _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology				-.897 (.805)				
Corruption perceptions _(t-1) (CR)					.184 (.432)			
Corruption perceptions _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology					-.002 (.061)			
Mass support for democracy _(t-1) (CR)						-.086 (.519)		
Mass support for democracy _(t-1) × Incumbent's ideology						.043 (.092)		
Incumbent's ideology			-.012 (.076)	.408 (.350)	.039 (.196)	.013 (.076)		
Constant	8.993* (.162)	8.688* (2.310)	8.960 (.205)	7.729* (1.461)	8.341* (1.421)	8.927* (.218)	8.973* (.494)	8.594* (.356)

Note: Entries are fixed effects or between effects coefficients and standard errors in parentheses. * = p < .05, # = p = .056, one-tailed. N = 48 for the fixed effects models, N=18 for the between effects model with Venezuela and N=17 without. Results are average estimates over ten multiply imputed datasets (Royston, 2005).

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Reviewers Appendix for “The Latin American Left’s Mandate: Free-Market Policies, Economic Performance, and Voting Behavior in 18 Countries”¹²

In this appendix, we discuss our data sources, construction of variables, and survey sampling issues.

Dependent Variable: Assigning Party Ideology Scores

We generated ideology scores for nearly all vote-receiving parties and candidates in Latin America from 1995 to 2008 using a four-step algorithm. First, we assigned each party or president their score on the 1↔20 Wiesehomeier-Benoit (W-B) scale, when available (Wiesehomeier and Benoit 2007a, 2007b).¹³ The W-B scores are the mean placement by experts on a simple left-to-right scale. Using W-B scores, we were able to code 92% of the presidential vote and 81% of the legislative vote. Second, we used the ideology scores developed by Pop-Eleches (2009) to partially fill in remaining gaps (Lodola and Queirolo N.D.). Pop-Eleches updated through 2003 the five-point party ideology scores (left, center-left, center, center-right, right) developed by Coppedge (1998). We converted this five-point scale to its numerical W-B equivalent by assigning each category its observed mean in the W-B dataset. (The correlation between the Pop-Eleches and W-B scores is +.85 among parties available in both datasets). This second step enabled us to code another 5% of the presidential vote and 6% of the legislative vote. Third, we consulted Coppedge (1998) to help us code some of the missing small parties, again converting his scores to their W-B equivalency. After these three steps, we had coded 97% of the presidential vote and 87% of the legislative vote. Fourth and

¹² If published, this appendix and ideology data will be available at our websites.

¹³ The original W-B scale runs from extreme left (1) to extreme right (20). We flipped the W-B scale so that higher scores on our dependent variable reflect greater leftism. For presidential elections, we assigned each candidate her or his party’s score unless the candidate was the incumbent as of 2006, in which case we used the W-B ideology score of the president.

finally, for parties that did not appear in any of these three expert surveys, we conducted our own research and assigned them one of Coppedge's five labels, again converting them to W-B equivalencies. After completing this final step, we had coded 99.7% of the presidential vote and 93.8% of the legislative vote. Parties with no codes, which by this point were all miniscule, were treated as missing in calculating VRL.

Existing measures of the left's electoral success use a binary approach that scores parties as part of the left or not. As we discuss in the main text, this approach leads to debatable coding decisions and ignores potentially important changes in vote allocations among center and rightist parties. Our approach gets around these problems by relying on fine-grained ideological distinctions between parties from across the left-right spectrum. Our approach also does a better job than Stokes's (2008) concept of the "relative left," which she defines as the party "that a voter would support if she wished to help elect a left-leaning party and to avoid 'wasting' her vote on a sure loser." Not only is this a binary classification that excludes all but one "left" party, but since the relative left party is identified as one of the top two vote-getters (except when the first and second losers are nearly tied), it also may inadvertently classify a centrist or even a rightist party as the relative left. For instance, Stokes classifies the then-dominant and neoliberal PRI as the relative left in Mexico's 2000 presidential election, rather than the leftwing PRD. In contrast, our ideology measure scores the PAN on the right at Ideology=3.65, the PRI in the center at Ideology=9.45, and the PRD on the left at Ideology=16.45. It also scores the 10 other small parties that have competed in Mexico's presidential elections and 16 that have competed in Mexico's congressional elections since 1994.

Dependent Variable: The Effect of Using Static Ideology Scores

Our use of a fine-grained and updated ideology scale to measure parties' positions comes at a potential cost. The W-B scores were collected during recent electoral contests between 2003 and 2006, and thus are static rather than time-series data. As a result, we could

have incorrectly estimated VRL. Since some observers believe that Latin America's leftist parties have moved toward the center over time, the primary concern would be the possibility that our measure overestimates the leftward shift in VRL_{pres} . Such an overestimate could only result if parties that were to the left of center in the mid-1990s moved toward the center *and* won more votes by the late 2000s, or if parties to the right of center moved further to the right *and* won fewer votes by 2008. All other shifts would underestimate the change in VRL_{pres} . We employed two checks.

First, we consulted Pop-Eleches's (2008) dataset that sorts parties into ideological families by year. Only three parties (Argentina's Alianza, the Dominican Republic's PRD, and Brazil's PSDB) shifted from more to less leftist positions after 1995. We believe that other shifts involving large leftist parties did occur, but while Brazil's PT moved toward the center, Chávez's MVR in Venezuela and Kirchner's FpL in Argentina moved leftward.

Second, we consulted Alcántara's (2005) time-series data on legislator's economic policy preferences from 1995 to 2004. Among left-of-center parties, support for privatization fell, indicating that these parties may have moved further to left. Indeed, the peak of elite support for neoliberal economic policies in the region was in 1998, very early in our dataset (Baker 2009; Roberts 2008). Thus, we conclude that shifts to the center by previously left parties or rightward drift among conservative parties does not drive the quite modest observed change in VRL_{pres} over time.

Independent Variables: Creating Public Opinion Indexes

Our public opinion variables, except where indicated, are indexes constructed from the variation shared by the aggregate results of two or more survey questions from the Latinbarometer series. (We used principal components analysis and extracted one component each time). The constituent survey items were not asked in every year, so the scores for any year in which at least one survey item was asked were calculated from the available items using Stata's "impute" command.

Mass support for the market (Cronbach's alpha=.90 and the mean correlation is +.54). We selected seven items from a larger menu of survey questions on market issues, choosing only items that significantly loaded on the first principal component.

Elements of "Globalization" and "Globalization (Intensity)" Indexes in Figure 2:

A. "Would you say that your country benefits (4) a lot, (3) quite a bit, (2) a little or (1) not at all for being part of your regional trade agreement?" (1996, 1997, 1998/9, 2001, 2003).

B. "Thinking about trade between your country and the United States, how important do you think it is for the economic development of your country? (4) Very important, (3) somewhat important, (2) not very important, (1) not important at all." (1997, 1998/9, 2003).

C. "Foreign investment should be encouraged. Do you (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with this statement?" (1998/9, 2001).

D. "In general, do you consider foreign investment to be (1) beneficial or (0) harmful for the development of the country?" (1995 and 1998/9). (Not part of "Globalization (Intensity)" Index.)

"Globalization (Intensity)" tracks the proportion of respondents answering that (A) their country benefits "a lot" or "quite a bit" from their country's regional trade agreement, (B) trade with the United States is "very important" for their country's economic development, and (C) they "strongly agree" that foreign investment should be encouraged.

Elements of "Privatization" Index in Figure 2:

E. "The privatization of state-owned enterprises has been beneficial to the country. Do you (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with this statement?" (1998/9, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005).

F. "The state should leave productive activity to the private sector. Do you (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with this statement?" (1998/9, 2001, 2002)

Sole item of "Market's Suitability" in Figure 2:

G. "The market economy is the most suitable system (*más conveniente*) for the country. Do you (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with this statement?" (1998/9,

2000, 2002, 2007).

Mass Anti-Americanism (not an index because only a single item was available): “I’d like to know your opinion about the United States. Do you have a (1) very good, (2) good, (3) bad, or (4) very bad opinion of the United States?” (Prior to 2000, LB offered “normal” as an explicit response. To maintain consistency with the response set from subsequent years, we recoded “normal” to missing.)

Evaluations of economic welfare (Cronbach’s alpha=.75 and the mean correlation is +.46).

A. “Do the salary or wages that you receive and your family income allow you to satisfactorily cover your necessities? In which of the following situations do you find yourself? (0) They don’t cover necessities, we have great difficulties. (1) They don’t cover necessities, we have difficulties. (2) They just cover necessities without great difficulties. (3) They cover necessities well, we can save.”

B. “How worried are you about being without work or becoming unemployed during the next twelve months? (1) Not worried, (2) a little worried, (3) worried, (4) very worried.”

C. “How would you evaluate the current general economic situation of the country? Would you say that it is (5) very good, (4) good, (3) normal, (2) bad, or (1) very bad?”

D. “How would you evaluate the current economic situation of you and your family? Would you say that it is (5) very good, (4) good, (3) normal, (2) bad, or (1) very bad?”

Crime victimization (not an index): “Have you, or someone in your family, been assaulted, been attacked, or been the victim of a crime in the last 12 months? (1) Yes, (0) No”. We did not use Latinbarometer’s measures of assessments of national crime levels because they were discontinued in 2003 and scarcely correlate with personal victimization (+.13).

Mass support for democracy. (Correlation is +.67.)

A. “In general, would you say that you are (4) very satisfied, (3) fairly satisfied, (2) not very satisfied, or (1) not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in your country?”

B. “With which of the following statements do you agree most? (3) Democracy is preferable to

any other kind of government. (1) Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one. (2) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic regime.”

Sampling Issues in the Latinbarometer Surveys

Some observers have criticized Latinbarometer’s sampling techniques and in particular changes in the national representativeness of their samples over time. In its early years, Latinbarometer tended to exclude rural residents from its sampling frame, including them only in latter years. As a result, our estimates of the public opinion trends could be biased. For instance, rural residents may be less pro-market than urban ones, thus producing the appearance of a downward trend in support for the market over time simply because rural residents were excluded in early cross-sections and included in later ones. The actual gap, however, between rural and urban attitudes toward market policies is non-existent to very small, depending on the indicator and time. Moreover, the decline in support for market policies is confirmed in surveys that do not suffer from this sampling bias (Baker 2009), and our own analyses (not shown) of urban-only residents confirms the decline in support for market policies through time.