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**Economic Shocks and Democratic Vulnerabilities:  
Evidence from the AmericasBarometer Survey**

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Abstract

*Will bad economic times also mean bad times for democracy? Historical evidence certainly suggests that they will, but prior research has given us little guidance as to how this process may work; what economic conditions are most threatening and how might they weaken consolidating democracies? We turn to the AmericasBarometer conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), a survey of the democratic values and behaviors of over 40,000 respondents in 24 countries in the Americas, to answer these questions by focusing on core attitudes for the consolidation of democracy: citizen support for democracy, political legitimacy and approval of violent political behavior. We use survey data at the level of the individual and economic data at the country level to help detect democratic vulnerabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean. We find that those vulnerabilities are increased substantially under conditions of low levels of economic development, low rates of economic growth and high levels of income inequality, but the effects are not uniform across individuals, with some groups, especially the young and the poor being particularly vulnerable to some anti-democratic appeals. We also explore citizen approval of violent political behavior and its links to protest participation.*

## **Economic Shocks and Democratic Vulnerabilities: Evidence from the AmericasBarometer Survey\***

The great economic downturn that began in 2008 has been accompanied by a wave of protests spreading around the globe. In some cases, such as Iceland, protests have brought down governments, but in the consolidated democracies, there is no real concern that democracy itself is under siege. In less well entrenched democracies, however, historical evidence suggests that economic shocks have been far less benign to the political regime. The reversal of democracy in the 1930's, for instance, has been attributed in part to the Great Depression. Indeed, at least since the publication over a half century ago of *Economics*, Paul A. Samuelson's classic text, social scientists have seen economic failure as a cause of democratic failure. As Samuelson stated in Chapter 1 of the 1948 (first) edition of his book: "...the political health of a democracy is tied up in a crucial way with the successful maintenance of stable high employment and living opportunities. It is not too much to say that the widespread creation of dictatorship and the resulting World War II stemmed in no small measure from the world's failure to meet this basic economic problem adequately."<sup>1</sup> Even a cursory look back at Europe in the 1920s and 1930s seems to provide powerful support for the Samuelson thesis. Nancy Bermeo has done just that, and finds: "In 1920, twenty-six out of twenty-eight European states were parliamentary democracies. By 1938, thirteen of these democracies had become dictatorships."<sup>2</sup>

In more recent times, economic downturns have also not been kind to democratic stability among emerging democracies. Bermeo's book details the breakdown of five of the seven South American democracies that existed in 1960 but had all collapsed by 1976.<sup>3</sup> A systematic worldwide perspective is provided by Converse and Kapstein's recent research, which finds that "nearly 38 percent of the democratizations that occurred between 1960 and 2003 eventually underwent reversals, ceasing to be democracies for some period of time...countries in which democracy is ultimately reversed show a trend of stagnant or falling growth."<sup>4</sup> This research notes even more boldly: "our analysis of the economic performance of new democracies strongly suggests that deteriorating or stagnant economic performance constitutes a red flag or warning signal that the country is at risk of political reversal."<sup>5</sup>

Certainly the current economic crisis is severe by any standard and is expected to be especially hard on developing nations, among which many have recently democratized. A 2009 World Bank study provides data supporting the view that this crisis is different from those that have preceded it since the end of World War II.<sup>6</sup> World trade is experiencing its largest drop in 80 years, and many developing countries that depend heavily on commodity exports were already confronted in the second half of 2008 with a 38% decline non-energy prices and a 69% decline in energy prices. The World Bank reports that global capital markets have dried up, foreign direct investment is declining in all world regions, capital flight is rampant, as investors abandon developing markets for "safe havens" in U.S. treasury securities. It is not at all unreasonable to project that GNPs in many nations will fall, in some cases sharply.

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The impact on the poor in developing countries seems to be especially grim since so many of them are located right at the poverty line and depend upon remittances and social safety nets to avoid disaster. Remittances, on which many poor families rely, are projected to drop sharply.<sup>7</sup> Countries that are remittance dependent, such as Honduras and Guyana, in which about one-quarter of their entire GDPs comes from such resource flows, will be especially affected. The World Bank projection is that 46 million people world-wide may be forced into poverty in 2009 alone as a result of lost employment, wages and remittances. Moreover, the Bank projects that poverty reduction strategies based on the movement of workers away from agriculture into secondary and tertiary sectors will now likely fail, as the unemployed move back to the countryside to reengage in subsistence agriculture. Fiscal pressures on many nations threaten to result in reduced support for services to the poor, reductions in public health and education, and reductions in food support that would almost certainly turn an economic crisis into a humanitarian crisis if accompanied by irreversible human damages such as the erosion of children's nutritional status.<sup>8</sup>

Alarming for the consolidating democracies, the global economic recession began after the onset of the sharpest "democracy recession" of the past two decades. According to Freedom House, between 2006 and 2008, *before* the onset of the economic crisis, worldwide losses in democracy outweighed gains in "freedom" for three consecutive years, the first time since Freedom House began collecting data. The Latin American region, the focus in this essay, has not been immune to the recent worldwide democracy recession. In 2008 declines in "freedom" were registered in four countries: Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Venezuela. Hence, the economic crisis exploded in a period when some consolidating democracies were already showing signs of stress. In light of this economic and political scenario, will the current global economic downturn create new vulnerabilities in Latin American countries, accelerating declines, or possibly sparking new declines in democratic progress that have thus far fared well? If it does, what role, if any, are ordinary citizens likely to play in that process? We try to answer these questions in this essay.

What we do here is to assess some of the channels through which the current economic crisis might shake an important pillar for the consolidation of democracy, namely a democratic political culture among the citizenry.<sup>9</sup> For democracy to consolidate, it needs to become "the only game in town,"<sup>10</sup> including, as Larry Diamond has put it, "a broad normative and behavioral consensus...on the legitimacy of the constitutional system" at the mass level.<sup>11</sup> Given the far-reaching likely consequences of the economic crisis, the legitimacy of democracy and its institutions might be eroded as citizens' perceive that the promises of democracy have not been fulfilled, and as a result the consolidation of democracy might be at risk.

### **Economic Conditions and Democratic Vulnerability: The Theory**

What might be the mechanisms through which a sharp economic downturn could weaken democracy in Latin America, halting or even reversing the consolidation process, or in an extreme case actually result in breakdown? Research on the impact of the economy on democracy has had two distinct foci. One school has looked at the role of individuals, while the other school has focused instead on national-level conditions. On the link between economic decline and citizens' political responses, Nancy Bermeo says, "As individuals, ordinary people can be democracy's fickle friends...rather than being democracy's salvation, ordinary people can be democracy's undoing."<sup>12</sup> In short, theories that focus on the individual predict that in times of economic turmoil ordinary citizens will turn their backs on democracy.

Research on individuals in democracies suggests that in times of economic distress some segments of the population are at greater risk of supporting non-democratic political alternatives than others. The poor, in particular, are thought by some, but certainly not all, to be more likely to become democracy's challengers. Accordingly, as the current economic crisis produces more poor people in developing countries, the number of democracy challengers is also predicted to soar. Indeed, as a recent study puts it, the notion that "poor people provide poor support for democracy" has constituted "the conventional wisdom" in the literature.<sup>13</sup>

For example, in his classic work, *Political Man*, Seymour Martin Lipset states that "the lower one goes on the socioeconomic ladder, the greater economic uncertainty one finds...such insecurity will of course affect the individual's politics and attitudes. High states of tension require immediate alleviation, and this is frequently found in the venting of hostility against a scapegoat and the search for a short-term solution by support of extremist groups."<sup>14</sup> In turn, as Lipset suggests, increased economic insecurity among low economic status individuals might translate into lower levels of support for democratic principles. Poverty may increase in Latin America by as much as 15 per cent in 2009, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as 2.4 million Latin Americans might lose their job as consequence of the global economic crisis.<sup>15</sup>

But not all research focuses on individuals. Country-centered theories of democracy suggest that there might be a bleak future in store for Latin American democracies. This, for three reasons. First, despite significant advances in living conditions in most Latin American countries in the past two decades, the region continues to be characterized by underdevelopment and high levels of poverty, two factors associated with democratic instability and ultimately democracy collapse. Przeworski et al., for example, decisively conclude that "above \$6,000 [per capita income, PPP, 1985 U.S. dollars], democracies are impregnable and can be expected to live forever: no democratic system has ever fallen in a country where per-capita income exceeds \$6,055 (Argentina's level in 1975)."<sup>16</sup> However, according to our estimates based on the same data source used by Przeworski et al., in the Latin American and Caribbean region only two countries, Chile and Argentina, are currently above the threshold of "breakdown inoculation." While Chile and Argentina's national wealth lie just above the threshold, and Uruguay and Costa Rica just below it, the majority of countries are substantially below, suggesting that most countries in Latin America are entering the economic crisis without the level of economic development that have historically inoculated countries from democracy breakdowns, making poorer countries in the region particularly vulnerable to democracy stagnation, reversals in democratic progress, and, although with lower chances, to democracy collapse.

Second, both the level of economic development and the rate of growth have been shown to affect democracy. Przeworski and his co-authors find that that underdevelopment combined with economic recession increases the risk of democratic failure in poor countries. They find that, "democracies never die in wealthy countries. But all the evidence we have examined also indicates that democracies in poorer countries are more likely to die when they experience economic crises than when their economies grow."<sup>17</sup> In the Latin American case, the economic crisis is expected to affect economic growth in medium term. According to the latest predictions, in the best case scenario, assuming that developed countries start recovering in 2009, economic growth in Latin America is expected to decline from its 2003-2007 average of 5.9 per cent to an average of 1.9 between 2009 and 2013.<sup>18</sup> However, if developed nations' recovery is delayed, an annual average growth close to zero or even negative is expected over the next five years.

Third, the democracy declines may be more severe in countries with high levels of income inequality, which should especially affect Latin America, a region that historically has been characterized as having the highest inequality in the world. Recent empirical evidence supports the hypothesized inverse relationship between democracy and economic inequality. In their study of young democracies in the period between 1960 and 2004, Kapstein and Converse theorize that “if large segments of the populace share only a sliver of the nation’s wealth, they may view the political order—even if ‘democratic’ in institutional form—as being unresponsive or even detrimental to their interests,” and find that “inequality was indeed significantly higher in democracies that eventually underwent a reversal” during this period.<sup>19</sup> In Latin American democracies, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), higher levels of unemployment, labor informality, and poverty, all likely products of the current economic crisis, may lead to higher income inequality, raising the question whether citizens’ levels of political dissatisfaction will in turn also increase; thus, although in some Latin American countries the distribution of income has improved in the past few years, the economic crisis might offset such progress and with it increase democratic vulnerability.<sup>20</sup>

This brief discussion of prior research suggests that there are multiple channels through which the economic crisis may increase the vulnerabilities of democracy in Latin America. We attempt in this paper to examine those mechanisms that might inform us as to how and why the economy at the national level and at the level of individuals affect democratic values, thereby democratic consolidation. Despite the growing widespread availability of multi-country survey data for most regions in the world, the majority of studies have relied on either individual or aggregate analyses, making it impossible to examine simultaneously the effect of individual economic traits and national economic conditions on citizens’ political culture. Individual and country level accounts have not “talked to each other” and therefore have largely remained as two distinct realms. Comparative analyses at the level of the individual can only speculate that poor macroeconomic performance in some countries might explain why citizens are unhappy with their political system, but cannot demonstrate that they do. In contrast, country-level analyses can show that economic contextual factors matter for democracy, but fail to account for the role that ordinary citizens play in democratization, and in particular cannot provide a satisfactory answer to the question of what kinds of individuals are more likely to become democracy’s friends or undertakers.

In this essay, by bridging levels of analysis using multilevel modeling techniques, we hope to broaden our understanding about how personal and national economic conditions shape citizens’ political beliefs and in turn affect democratic consolidation.<sup>21</sup> We mine the most recent wave of the AmericasBarometer to attempt to provide some help in determining possible impacts of the crisis on democratic values, and suggest policy implications of those impacts.<sup>22</sup> The AmericasBarometer is carried out every two years by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), a survey that covers all of the countries in North, Central and South America, and several countries in the Caribbean. In all, the survey covered 24 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean nations plus Canada and the United States and incorporated over 40,000 interviews. Given the far reaching coverage of the AmericasBarometer surveys, the data allow us to explore in a systematic manner the individual and national economic determinants of citizens’ political culture in Latin America and in this way envision some of the likely transmission channels of the current economic crisis on the consolidation of democracy.

## Analytical Framework

What are the likely transmission belts along which the current economic crisis might expose democratic vulnerabilities in the Latin American region? We begin with the almost certainly true assumption that the impact of the crisis will not be uniform within or across countries. For example, as already noted, low socioeconomic status individuals within any given country are likely to suffer more, and countries that are more dependent on remittances, exports, and flows of international capital will be more severely impacted than other countries.

We define two likely channels by which the economic crisis might influence democratic values. First, within countries, since “have nots” are theorized by many to be more likely to show negative attitudes for democracy and also predicted to suffer the most the consequences of the economic crisis, we hypothesize that they will be the ones more likely to be skeptical of what could be seen as the hollow promises of democracy than groups less severely affected by the economic crisis. Second, we expect that, regardless of individual economic characteristics, citizens in Latin America living in countries that are experiencing the most severe setbacks in national macroeconomic and social conditions will show the greatest erosion in support for democratic principles, especially if those countries entered the economic crisis with low levels of economic development, growth and economic equality. In effect, these national patterns suggest that when national economic conditions deteriorate, even relatively better off citizens might show a decline in support for democratic values. We hypothesize, therefore, that the economic crisis may undermine citizen’s values on which democracy rests, causing, perhaps, widespread disillusionment with its promises.

By hypothesizing that both individual and contextual economic conditions are likely to play a role in shaping citizens’ political attitudes, our analytical approach departs from conventional research in comparative politics that treats either individuals or countries as units of analysis. At the individual level, our focus is to compare political attitudes across economic groups in order to assess whether the poor are indeed more vulnerable to become, in Bermeo’s terms, “democracy’s fickle friends” under conditions of economic distress.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, we take into account the effect of individuals’ perceptions about their current and retrospective personal and national economic situation plus standard socio-demographic characteristics.

At the country level, we explore the impacts of the economic factors discussed above that are likely to be affected by the economic crisis, namely the levels of economic inequality, growth, and development.<sup>24</sup> Given that our focus is the Latin American region and consequently the number of “cases” we can analyze at the country level is relatively small (a total of 22), we evaluate the impact of each of these three variables one at the time. We examine how individual and national economic conditions relate to three core components of a healthy political culture supportive of democracy: the belief that democracy is the best form of government, political legitimacy, and disapproval of violent participation as a form of protest, including attempts to overthrow the government by violent means. Our expectations are that economic factors at the individual and country level will affect these three components differently as each of them taps into distinct dimensions of citizens’ political culture. In addition, we investigate whether political attitudes matter for democratic stability and consequently examine whether approval of violent participation is linked to a higher likelihood of participating in protests. Statistically significant results are discussed in the text; the full output of our statistical analysis can be found in the appendix. Finally, our analysis then goes on to use the survey data to help us suggest how the democracy consequences of the economic crisis might be ameliorated in Latin America.

## Support for Democracy

If citizens do not believe that democracy is the best form of government, then they might be lured by authoritarian choices, especially when democracy is associated with what may turn out to be the most severe economic crisis since democracy replaced dictatorship. The AmericasBarometer measures support for democracy using the widely used “Winston Churchill” question, popularized by Richard Rose and William Mishler in their assessment of democratic values in post-communist European countries.<sup>25</sup> This survey item was inspired by Winston Churchill’s famous quote in his speech before the House of Commons in 1947, “democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” In the surveys of the AmericasBarometer the Churchillian question reads, “Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. On a scale from 1 to 7, to what degree do you agree or disagree with this statement?” Although answers to this question are clearly contingent on what citizens’ understand by the word “democracy,” in our analysis of the LAPOP data we find that the Churchill item is correlated in the expected direction with other measures of democratic attitudes in the survey that do not include the word democracy, corroborating the internal validity of the Churchill question.

As in other recently democratized regions in the world, particularly Africa and the former Soviet Union, citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean appear highly committed to democracy when asked the Churchillian question. Support for democracy is widespread, with around 70% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean strongly agreeing with Churchill. At first glance, it would seem that support for democracy is high and this in turn would prevent the economic crisis from translating into a crisis of belief in democracy. However, the AmericasBarometer data also reveal that in a number of countries a large proportion of the adult population do not agree with Churchill. In Honduras and Guatemala, for example, more than 40 per cent of voting age citizens express low support for democracy, providing scores between 1 and 4 when the Churchillian question is asked; in Peru, Ecuador, and El Salvador a third of the population disagree with Churchill. Moreover, further statistical analysis indicates that support for democracy is not randomly distributed in Latin America and the Caribbean, but conditioned by specific individual and country characteristics.

Figure 1 shows the results of our statistical analysis, taking into account both individual and country level variables (see appendix 1 for full output). At the individual level we consider the effects of personal wealth, perceptions of the current and retrospective personal and national economic situation, education, the size of the town or city in which the respondent lives, and sex. In addition to these individual level characteristics, Figure 1 also shows graphically, in separate models, the results for the two national economic factors we find to matter the most for the Churchillian view of support for democracy. Model 1 shows the impact of economic development and model 2 the impact of economic inequality, holding constant individual level variables. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on support for democracy is represented by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical “0” line indicates a positive contribution, and if to the left of the “0” line a negative contribution. Statistically significant contributors are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot; only when the confidence intervals do not overlap the vertical “0” line is the factor significant.<sup>26</sup>

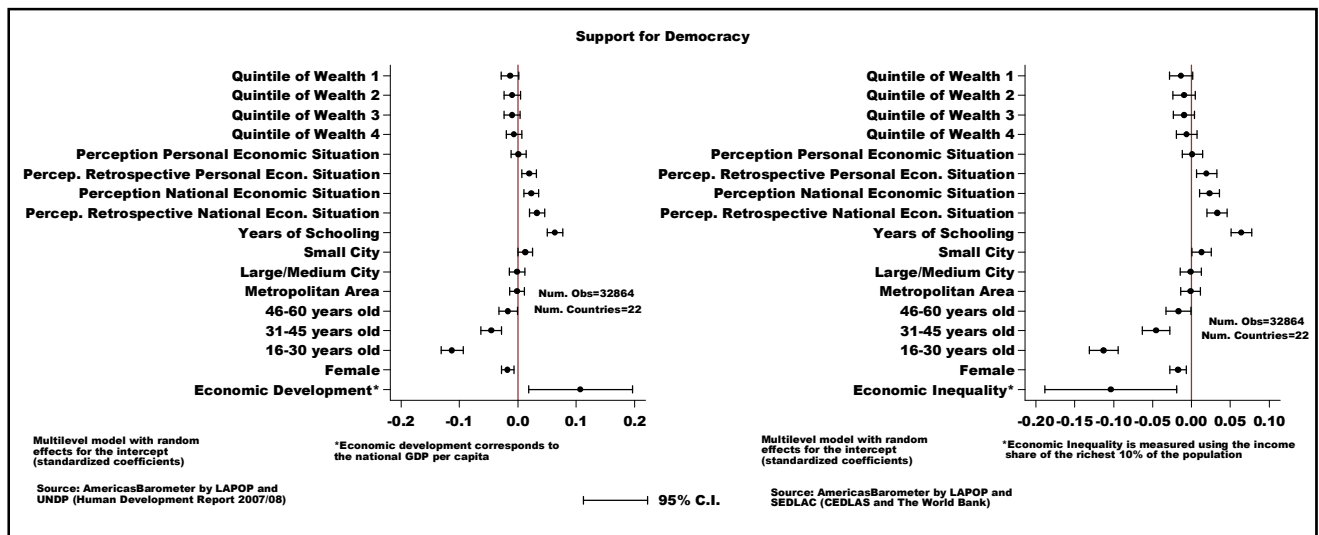


Figure 1. Predictors of Support for Democracy

What we find is that support for democracy from the Churchillian perspective is *not* a function of individual wealth or poverty, indicating that as poverty increases in the region it will not erode this generalized form of support for democracy. What our statistical analysis found is that, irrespective of one’s level of wealth, those who perceive that the national or their personal economic situation deteriorated over the year prior to the survey show lower levels of support for democracy, independently of individuals’ perceptions of the current economic situation. In addition, our results reveal that at the individual level the two socio-demographic variables that have the strongest effect on support for democracy are years of schooling and age, both characteristics of individuals not directly affected by the economic crisis. The young and the poorly educated express significantly lower support for democracy.

At the nation level, the performance of the economy also matters for support for democracy; figure 1 shows that economic development and distribution are powerful determinants. The regression results show that once individual factors are taken into account, variations in the level of national wealth and the degree of economic inequality best explain differences across countries in average support for democracy. This empirical result is consistent with the well-known theoretical contention that underdevelopment and economic inequality foster discontent and with it political conflict, creating an atmosphere less suitable for the emergence of democratic values.<sup>27</sup> In short, while economic decline will not produce growing armies of the poor who oppose democracy as a system of government, if the economic crisis shrinks the size of the “pie” and/or worsen its distribution in Latin American countries, then there is likely to be a reduction in support for democracy among both the poor and well-off.

### Legitimacy of the Political System

Beyond the economic crisis’ impact on belief in democracy per se, democratic stability rests, in Lipset’s words, on the ability of citizens to “maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society.”<sup>28</sup> Poor economic performance has been extensively cited as an important depressor of citizens’ belief in the legitimacy of political institutions, especially when economic declines are sharp.<sup>29</sup> In his analysis of the link between economic performance and political support in advanced industrial democracies, Dalton concludes that “for performance dissatisfaction to become generalized to distrust in democratic institutions and processes, it would require major and sustained drops in

the level of performance.<sup>30</sup> Given the scope of the current economic crisis, it is reasonable to predict that erosion of political support may take place in many democracies in the world, even if the bulk of the population continues to believe in democracy as a system of government. System support is measured by LAPOP using an index based on the following five questions in the survey:<sup>31</sup>

- 1) To what extent do you think the courts in the country guarantee a fair trial?
- 2) To what extent do you respect the political institutions of the country?
- 3) To what extent do you think citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of the country?
- 4) To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of the country?
- 5) To what extent do you think one should support the political system of the country?

In the analysis of this data, once again we find that poverty, measured by our index of personal economic wealth does not threaten democratic attitudes, but we do find that negative views about one's personal economic situation and one's view about the status of their nation's economy are associated with lower system support (see Figure 2). Both negative views about the current and retrospective economic situation are likely to lower the legitimacy of the political system, suggesting that irrespective of one's perceptions of the current national or personal economic situation, if citizens perceive that the national or their personal economy has declined, this would translate into greater dissatisfaction with the political system. As shown in figure 2, these results hold even after controlling for citizens' level of satisfaction with the performance of the incumbent chief executive, a variable suggested in the literature to strongly determine citizens' support for political institutions. . The full output of our regression results can be found in appendix 2.

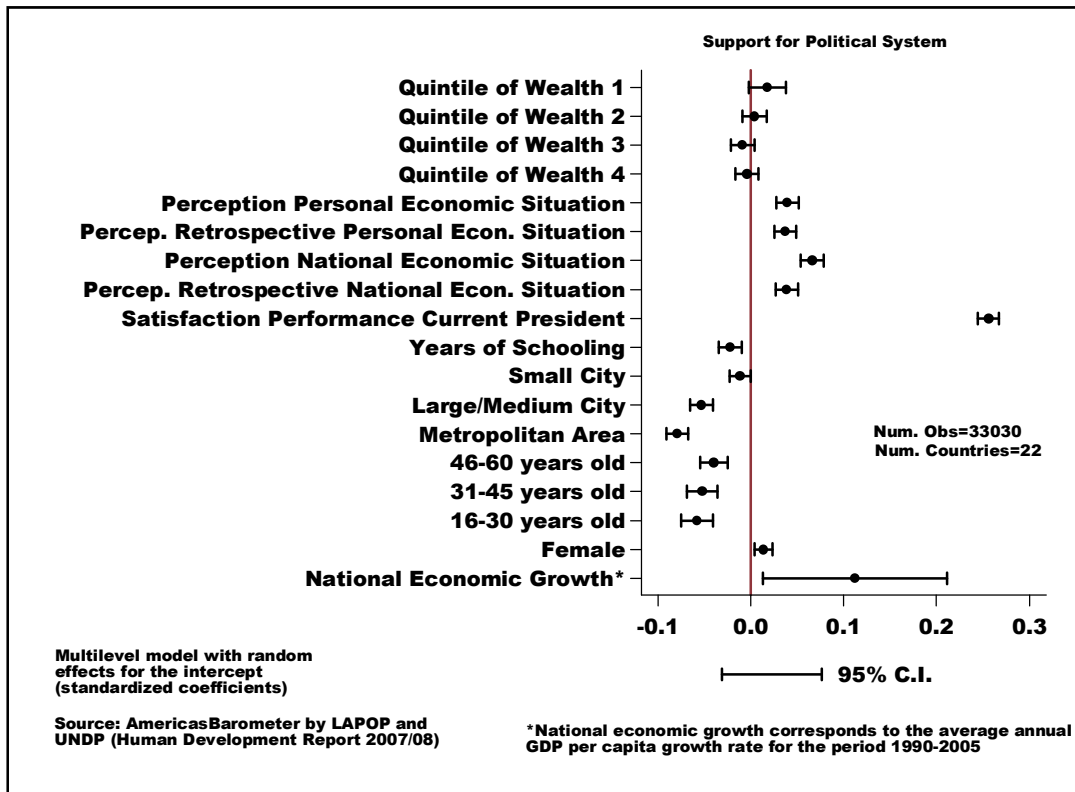


Figure 2. Predictors of Political Legitimacy

Once individual level factors are considered, our country-level regression results also show that individuals living in nations that have experienced poor macroeconomic performance, measured by the average annual growth of GDP per capita, in the period between 1990 and 2005, express significantly lower levels of system support. For instance, negative growth rates in Haiti seem to explain in part why this country shows one of the lowest levels of system support in the region, while the higher levels of system support in Chile and Dominican Republic can be at least in part attributed to these countries' better economic performance in past few years. Thus, if economic growth declines sharply in Latin America, system support is likely to wither.

### **Approval of Violent Participation**

Since setbacks in democracy in Latin America in the past have often been associated with mass protests that have provoked violent counter measures by the regime and its security forces, the AmericasBarometer asks citizens to what extent they approve or disapprove the use of violence as a form of protest, including the overthrow of an elected government. The AmericasBarometer survey asks individuals to what extent they approve or disapprove the following actions that people can take to achieve their political goals.<sup>32</sup>

- 1) Of people seizing factories, offices and other buildings
- 2) Of people seizing private property or land
- 3) Of people participating in the blocking of roads
- 4) Of people participating in a group working to violently overthrow an elected government

An index of "approval of violent participation" was generated from these four items in the survey.<sup>33</sup> Those who approve violent participation may not, of course, take part in violent acts themselves, but their approval creates a permissive atmosphere for those (including elites) who would do so, and can create an unstable political environment in which the normal functioning of democracy is difficult to maintain. On the positive side, we find that in 2008 most citizens in Latin America reject violent participation, but on the other hand, we find that only 29.8 percent of the population "strongly disapprove" participation in all four forms of violent acts. More worrisome is that approval of violent participation is primarily contingent on individuals' economic and demographic characteristics (see Figure 3), indicating some specific venues through which the economic crisis might increase approval of violent participation among the citizenry. Full statistical results are shown in appendix 3.

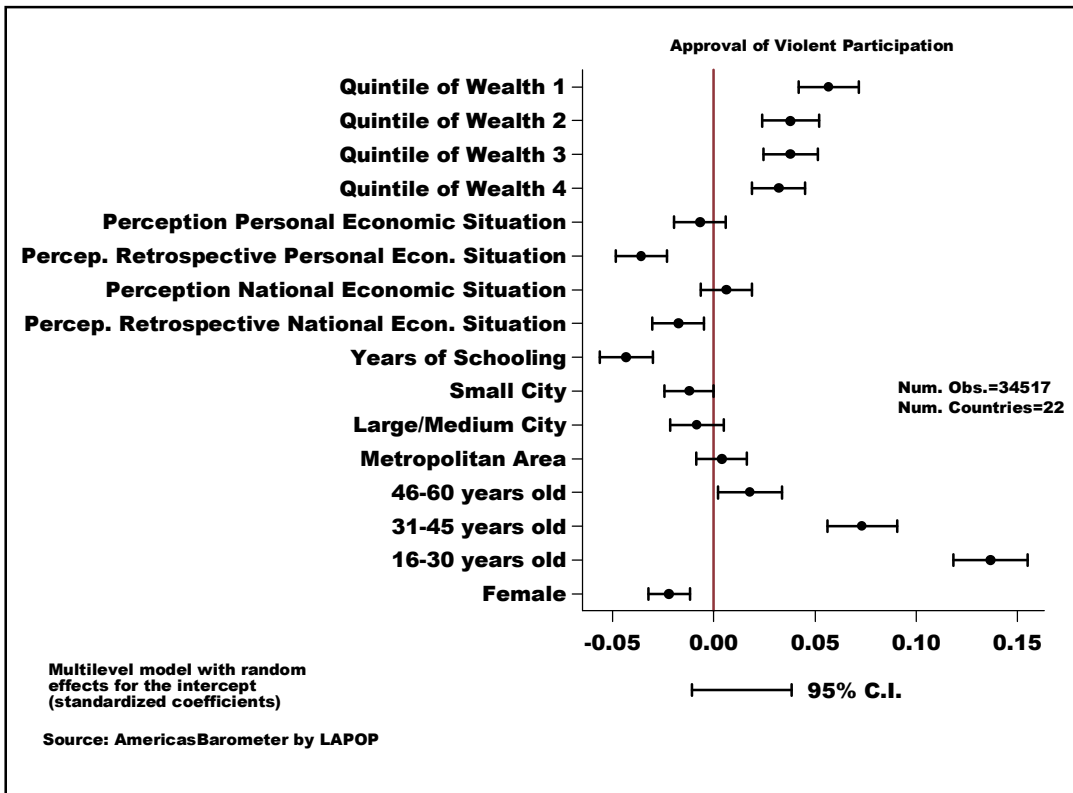


Figure 3. Predictors of Approval of Violent Participation

What we find, for the first time in our analysis, is an indication that poverty matters; increasing proportions of poor in the population could produce a challenge for democratic stability since approval of violent participation is higher among those in the bottom quintile of wealth, although the main effect is found between the richest 20 per cent and the rest of the population. Additionally, we find evidence of a strong age cohort effect. The young, especially individuals between 16 and 30 years of age, show significantly higher levels of approval of violent participation than older individuals, other things being equal. What is more troubling is that we find that in 13 out of the 22 countries analyzed here, among the young those who are also poor have the highest average levels of approval of violent participation, in many cases higher than the national average (see Figure 4).<sup>34</sup> See difference in means analysis in appendix 4. Thus, being young and poor in many Latin American countries constitutes a “perfect storm” for high approval of violent participation. These results suggest that the young poor are particularly vulnerable to turning their backs on democracy as the full impact of the economic crisis sinks in.

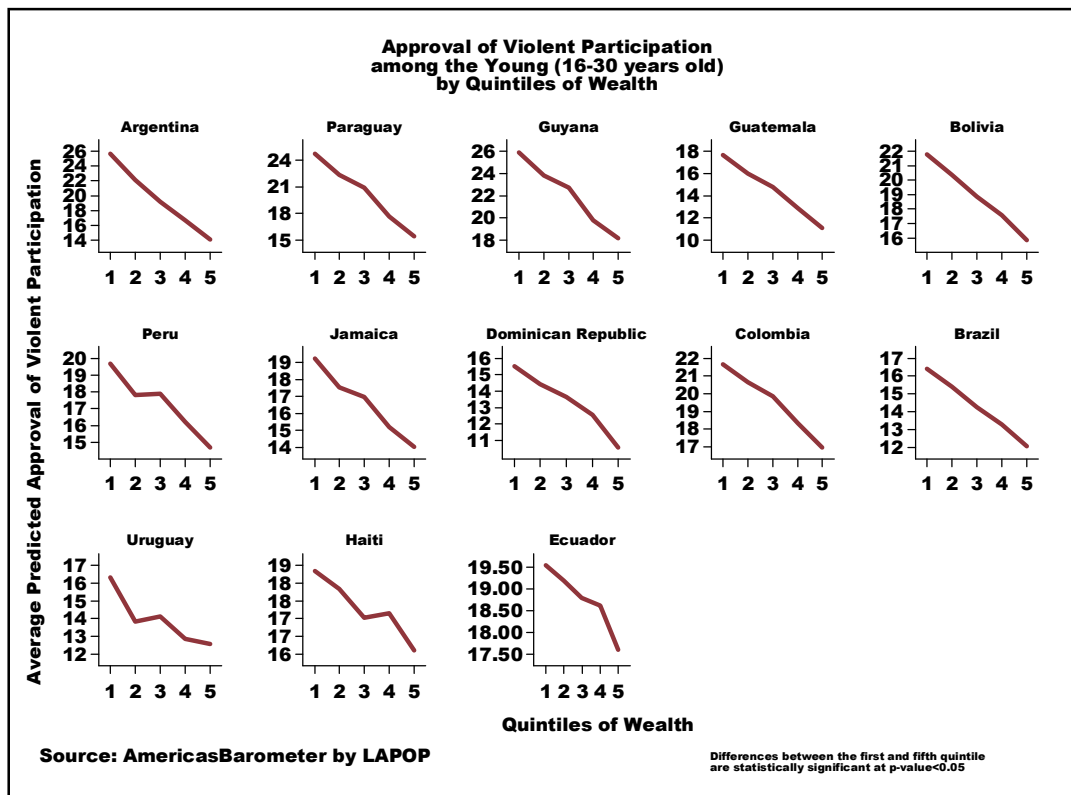


Figure 4. Average Approval of Violent Participation among the Young by Level of Wealth

The young, often thought of as the best hope for the future, as citizens who witnessed and perhaps encouraged the great wave of authoritarian regimes that rule in much of Latin America in the 1970s fade from the scene, ironically seem to be democracy’s main challengers in Latin America. The young are significantly less likely to support democracy as a system of government, significantly less likely to believe in the legitimacy of the political system, and significantly more likely to approve violent political participation. We suspect that this has a lot to do with how they believe democracy has treated them; a recent study finds that the young in Latin America have fewer opportunities in society, reflected by higher unemployment rates and lower quality jobs.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, the same study finds that among the young, poverty often goes together with violence and crime. Our findings reinforce those results, suggesting that the greater propensity of violence among the young who lack economic opportunities is being reflected in their democratic political culture.

We wanted to determine if these attitudes favorable toward violent participation were actually linked to political behavior, since the real “payoff” of such attitudes is the impact they might have on system stability. What we find is that individuals who express higher levels of approval of violent participation do indeed exhibit a higher probability of protest participation, suggesting that political attitudes do matter for political action and consequently for democratic stability.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, as figure 5 shows, in fifteen countries there is clear indication that those who approve the use of violence as a mean of political pressure are also more likely to have taken part in a protest march in the previous year, although we do not have any way of knowing if the individual herself engaged in violent protest. Regression results are shown graphically in appendix 5.

Taken together, evidence from the AmericasBarometer suggests that negative political attitudes are at the center of protest participation in Latin America, which if expressed in violent

ways, or if responded with state repression, could initiate a spiral of violence and repression that could threaten democratic stability. Considering the current economic crisis, policy makers face the challenge of how to mitigate its impact so that increased economic despair does not result in a society with growing levels of approval of violent participation and ultimately increased levels of protest participation.

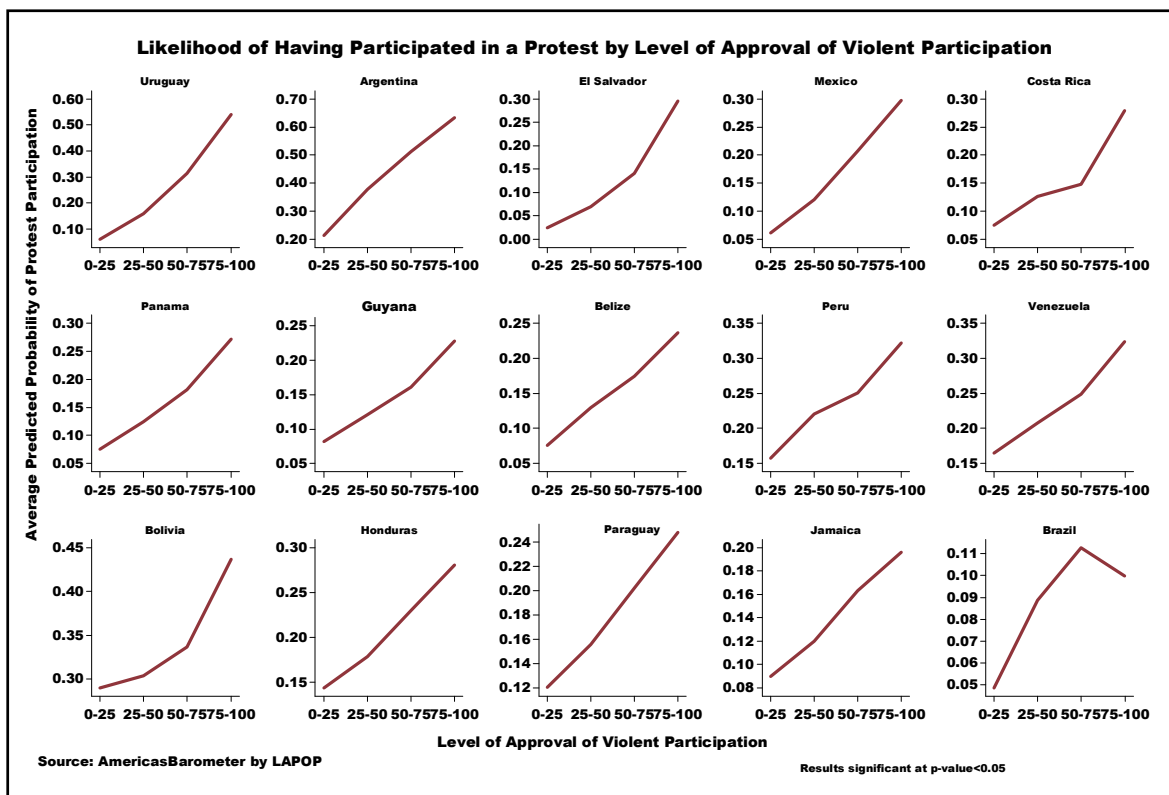


Figure 5. Probability of Protest Participation by Level of Approval of Violent Participation

### How can the democratic vulnerabilities be mitigated?

As a consequence of the current economic crisis, world-wide there is growing skepticism over the value of the neo-liberal economic model. Over the past two decades, the role of the state in the economy has been sharply reduced in countries throughout the world and in Latin America in particular. Today, in contrast, the political debate pivots on the question whether the state needs to be resuscitated in order to cope with the economic crisis and assure economic wellbeing and political stability in the future. Efforts to bring the state back in are more likely to succeed if citizens also endorse this policy shift. What do citizens think the role of the state in the economy should be? The AmericasBarometer data allow us to explore this question.

We assess citizens' support for an active government in the economy using an index that was constructed based on four items in the survey. The AmericasBarometer asks citizens to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statements:<sup>37</sup>

- 1) The (country name) government, instead of the private sector, **should own the most important enterprises and industries** of the country.
- 2) The (country name) government, more than individuals, is **the most responsible for ensuring the well-being of the people**.

- 3) The (country name) government, more than the private sector, is **primarily responsible for creating jobs**.
- 4) The (country name) government **should implement firm policies to reduce inequality in income between the rich and the poor**.

What we find is that in Latin America there is widespread support among the population for an active role of the state in the economy. As shown in Figure 6, on a scale from 0 to 100, in countries like Paraguay, Dominican Republic, and Argentina, support for an active state is the highest, with an average support above 75 points. Moreover, even in the countries with the lowest levels of support in Latin America (e.g. Venezuela, Haiti, and Honduras), the average level of support is above 50 points. In sharp contrast, in the United States, the average level of support is less than 40 points.

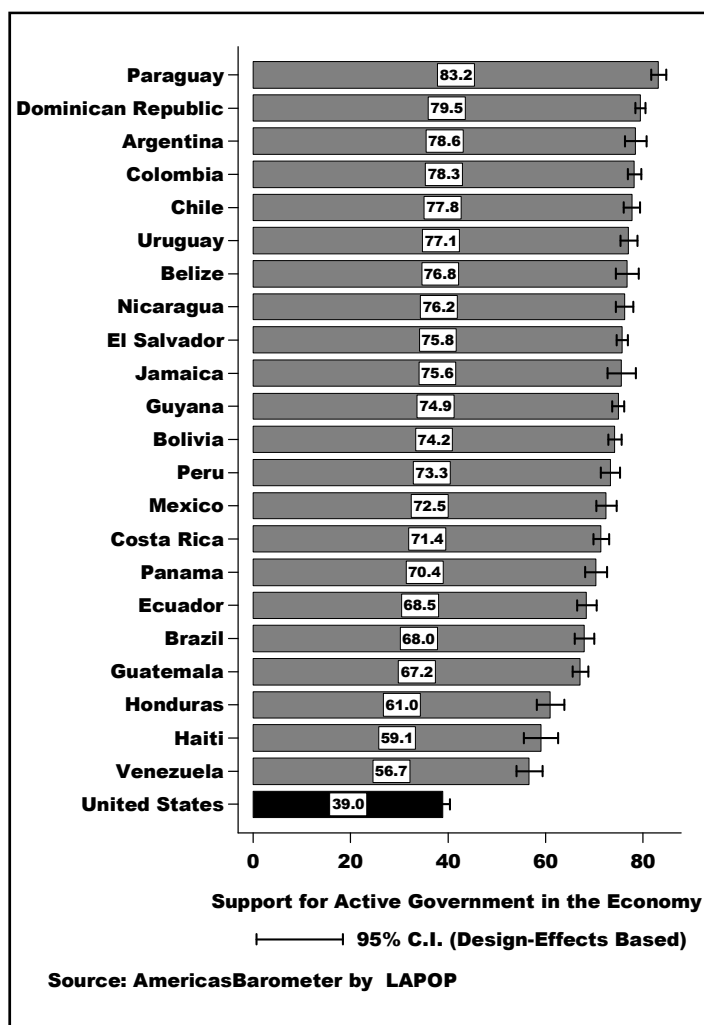


Figure 6. Average Support for an Active Government in the Economy by Country

## Conclusions

Evidence from the AmericasBarometer suggests that the current economic crisis may well create the conditions that could increase the vulnerability of democracy to setbacks, or at a minimum hinder its growth in Latin America, and do so through multiple channels, and that the

extent of its impact will be largely determined by the depth of the crisis and the way that it is handled in each country. We have found that low levels of national economic development and inequality produce sharply lower support for democracy. Our results at the level of individuals show that while the poor are not more likely to oppose democracy as a system of government, nor are they more likely to question the legitimacy of their institutions, an increase in the severity of poverty and in the number of poor people will likely mean increased support for violent political behavior, especially among the young, and consequently an upsurge in protest participation. Perceptions of negative changes in the personal or national economy are also likely to have an unfavorable effect on citizens' democratic values. Should the crisis produce substantial declines in national wealth and increases in income inequality, then we would anticipate a decline in support for democracy, and if economic growth slows down, as it is almost certain to do, legitimacy, already tenuous in many countries, will decline further, possibly provoking more challenges to the regime.

All in all, evidence from the AmericasBarometer suggests that if the countries that are impacted the most by the economic crisis are also the same ones that entered the crisis with the poorest economic records, then democracy will be especially vulnerable in these countries. Yet, the data also give us the pathway to a solution; the AmericasBarometer survey reveals is that the overwhelming majority of Latin American citizens favor a more active role of the state in the economy as a way of coping with the economic crisis. This strong support for government action provides an environment in which political leaders who democratically take bold measures to mitigate the crisis can expect to have strong support. It is impossible to predict, however, which direction those reforms might take, and if they would be accomplished within the bounds of liberal democracy or broaden the decline in democracy already evident in the world.

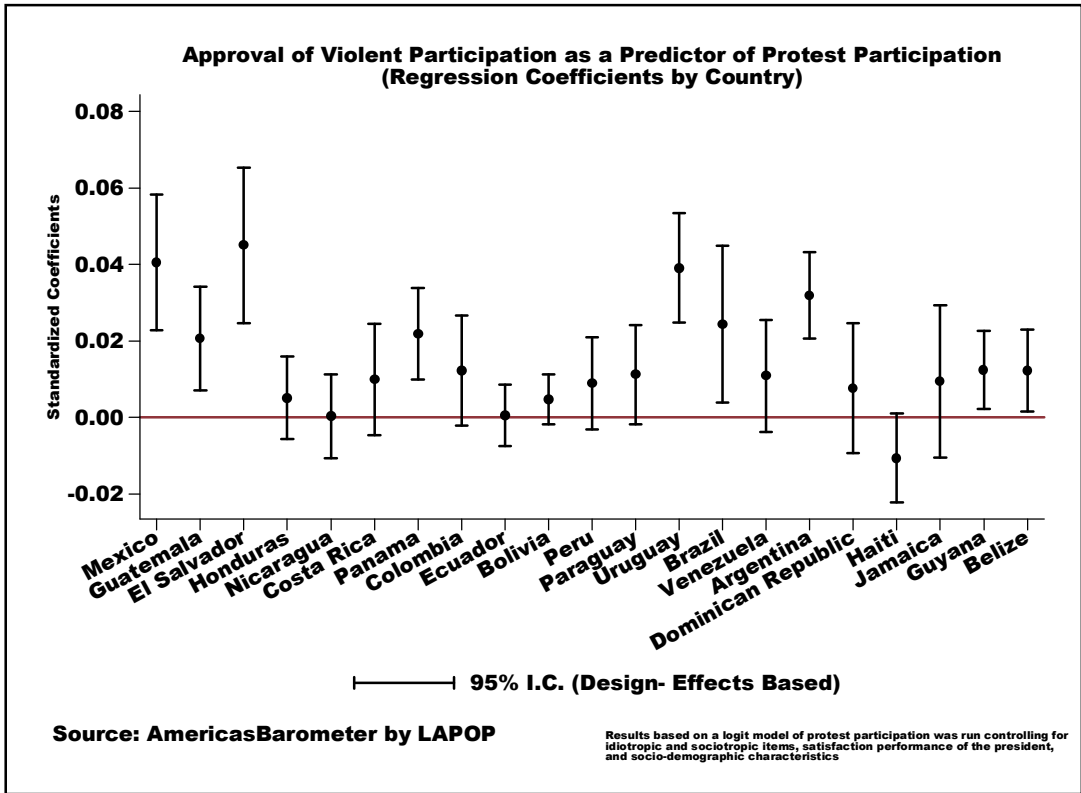
## Appendix

<b>Appendix 1. Individual and Country Level Determinants of Support for Democracy</b>			
<b>Multilevel model with random effects for the intercept</b>			
(Standardized coefficients; standard errors in parenthesis)			
	Coef./(se)	Coef./(se)	Coef./(se)
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>			
Quintile of Wealth 1	-0.013 (0.008)	-0.013 (0.008)	-0.013 (0.008)
Quintile of Wealth 2	-0.009 (0.007)	-0.009 (0.007)	-0.009 (0.007)
Quintile of Wealth 3	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.009 (0.007)
Quintile of Wealth 4	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)
Perception Personal Economic Situation	0.001 (0.007)	0.001 (0.007)	0.001 (0.007)
<b>Perception Retrospective Personal Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.020**</b> (0.007)	<b>0.020**</b> (0.007)	<b>0.020**</b> (0.007)
<b>Perception National Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.023***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.023***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.023***</b> (0.007)
<b>Perception Retrospective National Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.033***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.033***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.033***</b> (0.007)
<b>Years of Schooling</b>	<b>0.064***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.064***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.064***</b> (0.007)
<b>Small City (=1; rural=0)</b>	<b>0.013*</b> (0.006)	<b>0.013*</b> (0.006)	<b>0.013*</b> (0.006)
Large/Medium City (=1; rural=0)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)
Metropolitan Area (=1; rural=0)	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.006)
<b>46-60 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.017*</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.017*</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.017*</b> (0.008)
<b>31-45 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.045***</b> (0.009)	<b>-0.046***</b> (0.009)	<b>-0.046***</b> (0.009)
<b>16-30 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.113***</b> (0.010)	<b>-0.113***</b> (0.010)	<b>-0.113***</b> (0.010)
<b>Female (=1; Male=0)</b>	<b>-0.017**</b> (0.005)	<b>-0.017**</b> (0.005)	<b>-0.017**</b> (0.005)
<i>Contextual National Characteristics</i>			
<b>Economic Development (GDP per capita)</b>	<b>0.108*</b> (0.045)		
<b>Economic Inequality (Income share of richest 10%)</b>		<b>-0.103*</b> (0.043)	
Average Annual GDP per Capita Growth Rate (1990-2005)			-0.006 (0.049)
Constant	0.003 (0.045)	0.009 (0.045)	0.014 (0.051)
LR test versus linear regression (Chi-square)	1214.7***	1144.9***	1503.7***
N. of cases	32864	32864	32864
N. of Groups	22	22	22
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001			

<b>Appendix 2. Individual and Country Level Determinants of Political Legitimacy</b>			
<b>Multilevel model with random effects for the intercept</b>			
<b>(Standardized coefficients; standard errors in parenthesis)</b>			
	<b>Coef./<i>(se)</i></b>	<b>Coef./<i>(se)</i></b>	<b>Coef./<i>(se)</i></b>
<b><i>Individual Characteristics</i></b>			
Quintile of Wealth 1	0.018 (0.010)	0.018 (0.010)	0.018 (0.010)
Quintile of Wealth 2	0.004 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)
Quintile of Wealth 3	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
Quintile of Wealth 4	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)
<b>Perception Personal Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)
<b>Perception Retrospective Personal Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.037***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.037***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.037***</b> (0.006)
<b>Perception National Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.066***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.066***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.066***</b> (0.006)
<b>Perception Retrospective National Economic Situation</b>	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.039***</b> (0.006)
<b>Years of Schooling</b>	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.006)
<b>Satisfaction Performance Current President</b>	<b>0.256***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.256***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.256***</b> (0.006)
Small City (=1; rural=0)	-0.012 (0.006)	-0.011 (0.006)	-0.011 (0.006)
<b>Large/Medium City (=1; rural=0)</b>	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.006)
<b>Metropolitan Area (=1; rural=0)</b>	<b>-0.080***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.080***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.080***</b> (0.006)
<b>46-60 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.040***</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.040***</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.040***</b> (0.008)
<b>31-45 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.008)	<b>-0.053***</b> (0.008)
<b>16-30 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>-0.058***</b> (0.009)	<b>-0.058***</b> (0.009)	<b>-0.058***</b> (0.009)
<b>Female (=1; Male=0)</b>	<b>0.014**</b> (0.005)	<b>0.014**</b> (0.005)	<b>0.014**</b> (0.005)
<b><i>Contextual National Characteristics</i></b>			
Economic Development (GDP per capita)	0.075 (0.056)		
Economic Inequality (Income share of richest 10%)		-0.048 (0.055)	
<b>Average Annual GDP per Capita Growth Rate (1990-2005)</b>			<b>0.112*</b> (0.051)
Constant	0.003 (0.056)	0.008 (0.057)	0.015 (0.052)
LR test versus linear regression (Chi-square)	2105.3***	2179.6***	1888.6***
N. of cases	33030	33030	33030
N. of Groups	22	22	22
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001			

<b>Appendix 3. Individual and Country Level Determinants of Approval of Violent Participation</b>			
<b>Multilevel model with random effects for the intercept</b>			
(Standardized coefficients; standard errors in parenthesis)			
	Coef./(se)	Coef./(se)	Coef./(se)
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>			
Quintile of Wealth 1	<b>0.057***</b> (0.008)	<b>0.057***</b> (0.008)	<b>0.057***</b> (0.008)
Quintile of Wealth 2	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)
Quintile of Wealth 3	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.038***</b> (0.007)
Quintile of Wealth 4	<b>0.032***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.032***</b> (0.007)	<b>0.032***</b> (0.007)
Perception Personal Economic Situation	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.007 (0.007)
<b>Perception Retrospective Personal Economic Situation</b>	<b>-0.036***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.036***</b> (0.006)	<b>-0.036***</b> (0.006)
Perception National Economic Situation	0.006 (0.006)	0.006 (0.006)	0.006 (0.006)
<b>Perception Retrospective National Economic Situation</b>	<b>-0.018**</b> (0.007)	<b>-0.018**</b> (0.007)	<b>-0.018**</b> (0.007)
<b>Years of Schooling</b>	<b>-0.043***</b> (0.007)	<b>-0.043***</b> (0.007)	<b>-0.043***</b> (0.007)
Small City (=1; rural=0)	-0.012 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.006)
Large/Medium City (=1; rural=0)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.007)
Metropolitan Area (=1; rural=0)	0.004 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)
<b>46-60 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>0.018*</b> (0.008)	<b>0.018*</b> (0.008)	<b>0.018*</b> (0.008)
<b>31-45 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>0.073***</b> (0.009)	<b>0.073***</b> (0.009)	<b>0.073***</b> (0.009)
<b>16-30 years old (=1; over 60 years old=0)</b>	<b>0.137***</b> (0.009)	<b>0.136***</b> (0.009)	<b>0.137***</b> (0.009)
<b>Female (=1; Male=0)</b>	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.005)	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.005)	<b>-0.022***</b> (0.005)
<i>Contextual National Characteristics</i>			
Economic Development (GDP per capita)	-0.003 (0.042)		
Economic Inequality (Income share of richest 10%)		0.044 (0.039)	
Average Annual GDP per Capita Growth Rate (1990-2005)			0.015 (0.040)
Constant	-0.010 (0.042)	-0.008 (0.041)	-0.010 (0.042)
LR test versus linear regression (Chi-square)	991.1	915.1	986.0
N. of cases	34517	34517	34517
N. of Groups	22	22	22
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001			

Appendix 4. Difference in Means Analysis							
Average Predicted Approval of Violent Participation among the Young (16-30 years old) by Quintiles of Wealth (Results based on OLS regressions for each country; control variables included in each model)							
Country	Reference Group Quintile 5	Quintile	N	Mean	Diff Mean	95% Confidence Limits	
Argentina	5	1	135	26.966	-10.518	-11.666	-9.371
		2	98	25.094	-8.647	-9.882	-7.411
		3	130	21.055	-4.608	-5.765	-3.451
		4	96	19.319	-2.872	-4.114	-1.630
		---	98	16.447	---	---	---
Paraguay	5	1	100	25.081	-8.802	-9.491	-8.114
		2	144	22.725	-6.447	-7.083	-5.810
		3	60	21.130	-4.851	-5.642	-4.061
		4	92	18.221	-1.942	-2.645	-1.240
		---	91	16.279	---	---	---
Guyana	5	1	147	26.354	-6.958	-7.649	-6.265
		2	180	24.798	-5.401	-6.059	-4.742
		3	173	23.577	-4.181	-4.845	-3.516
		4	193	21.092	-1.695	-2.342	-1.047
		---	157	19.397	---	---	---
Guatemala	5	1	90	19.544	-6.598	-7.230	-5.965
		2	76	17.718	-4.771	-5.433	-4.110
		3	104	16.525	-3.578	-4.188	-2.969
		4	71	14.990	-2.044	-2.718	-1.369
		---	97	12.946	---	---	---
Bolivia	5	1	230	23.341	-5.509	-5.959	-5.059
		2	287	21.587	-3.756	-4.182	-3.329
		3	207	20.435	-2.604	-3.067	-2.141
		4	266	19.007	-1.176	-1.610	-0.742
		---	241	17.831	---	---	---
Peru	5	1	141	21.350	-3.889	-4.738	-3.040
		2	108	19.992	-2.531	-3.435	-1.628
		3	99	19.848	-2.388	-3.311	-1.464
		4	117	18.609	-1.148	-2.034	-0.262
		---	107	17.461	---	---	---
Jamaica	5	1	89	21.208	-4.845	-5.370	-4.320
		2	55	19.858	-3.495	-4.082	-2.908
		3	64	19.333	-2.971	-3.535	-2.406
		4	53	17.699	-1.336	-1.929	-0.743
		---	61	16.363	---	---	---
Dominican Republic	5	1	100	19.122	-4.868	-5.525	-4.212
		2	92	18.257	-4.004	-4.674	-3.334
		3	79	17.569	-3.315	-4.013	-2.618
		4	96	15.846	-1.593	-2.256	-0.930
		---	93	14.253	---	---	---
Colombia	5	1	99	23.929	-4.284	-5.037	-3.532
		2	155	22.796	-3.151	-3.823	-2.479
		3	138	22.103	-2.458	-3.149	-1.768
		4	96	20.647	-1.002	-1.761	-0.243
		---	126	19.645	---	---	---
Brazil	5	1	89	18.494	-4.189	-4.700	-3.677
		2	97	17.577	-3.271	-3.772	-2.770
		3	90	16.292	-1.987	-2.497	-1.476
		4	96	15.773	-1.467	-1.969	-0.965
		---	93	14.306	---	---	---
Uruguay	5	1	106	21.059	-2.164	-2.751	-1.577
		2	63	20.374	-1.480	-2.153	-0.806
		3	86	19.555	-0.661	-1.279	-0.043
		4	91	21.059	-2.164	-2.751	-1.577
		---	70	18.895	---	---	---
Haiti	5	1	79	19.766	-2.367	-2.847	-1.887
		2	188	19.172	-1.774	-2.163	-1.384
		3	46	18.331	-0.932	-1.505	-0.359
		4	116	18.538	-1.140	-1.572	-0.707
		---	114	17.399	---	---	---
Ecuador	5	1	229	21.089	-1.426	-1.929	-0.923
		2	214	20.504	-0.841	-1.352	-0.330
		3	241	20.142	-0.479	-0.977	0.018
		4	274	19.715	-0.052	-0.536	0.432
		---	189	19.663	---	---	---



Appendix 5

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Paul A. Samuelson, *Economics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Gina Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Economic factors, and their interplay with parties, institutions more generally, and international actors, also play an important role in the classic study by Linz and Stepan. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978). Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> Nathan Converse and Ethan B. Kapstein, "The Economics of Young Democracies: Policies and Performance," in *Center for Global Development Working Paper 84* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2006), 28, 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, "Swimming against the Tide: How Developing Countries Are Coping with the Global Crisis," in *Background Paper prepared by World Bank Staff for the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting, Horsham, United Kingdom on March 13-14, 2009* (Washington, D.C.: 2009).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 26.

<sup>11</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, 65.

<sup>12</sup> Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Anirudh Krishna, *Poverty, Participation, and Democracy: A Global Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, 1981 (expanded edition) ed. (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 161.

<sup>15</sup> "Latin America Poverty 'May Soar'," *BBC News* (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7876169.stm>), February 7 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Adam Przeworski et al., "What Makes Democracies Endure?," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 1 (1996): 41.

<sup>17</sup> ———, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 117.

<sup>18</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, "Crisis Harming Latin America and the Caribbean Long-Term Growth Prospects," *News Realeases* (<http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=5302>) March 31, 2009

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<sup>19</sup> Ethan B. Kapstein and Nathan Converse, *The Fate of Young Democracies* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 61.

<sup>20</sup> ECLAC, "Social Panorama of Latin America," (2008).

<sup>21</sup> Multilevel models take into account the nested nature of the data (i.e. individuals within countries), allowing us to simultaneously estimate the effect of contextual and individual characteristics on citizens' political attitudes. For a description of multilevel modeling see Stephen Raudenbush and Anthony Bryk, *Hierarchical Linear Models: Applications and Data Analysis Methods*, Advanced Quantitative Techniques in the Social Sciences (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002). All multilevel models presented in this paper were estimated using the `xtmixed` command in STATA/SE 10.1.

<sup>22</sup> For more information on the AmericasBarometer survey and country studies visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop). We appreciate the support provided by the United States Agency for International Development (UNDP) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as well as Vanderbilt University.

<sup>23</sup> In order to compare political attitudes across economic groups, we analyze differences across "quintiles of wealth." Our quintiles of wealth variable were derived from LAPOP's Relative Wealth Index (RWI) developed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and ten items in the LAPOP survey on household assets. For a detailed discussion on the validity and reliability of the RWI, see Abby B. Cordova, "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth Using Household Asset Indicators," *AmericasBarometer Insights Series* no. 6 (2009). This and previous issues in the AmericasBarometer Insights series can be found at [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications).

<sup>24</sup> The national level data on economic growth and development are from the Human Development Report 2007/2008 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Economic growth figures correspond to the average annual GDP per capita growth rate for the period 1990-2005, and economic development is measured using UNDP's GDP per capita index. This index is based on Gross Domestic Product per capita in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars. The index can take values between 0 and 1. The economic inequality data are from the "Socio-economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean" developed by The World Bank and the Centro de Estudios distributivos y laborales at the Universidad de la Plata. The level of economic inequality in each country is measured using the income share of the richest 10% of the population.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerper, *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> Coefficients that do not overlap the vertical line are statistically significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ . The relative strength of each variable is indicated by a dot, which corresponds to standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

<sup>27</sup> See Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Insurgency and Inequality," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987). Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). And Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, 64.

<sup>29</sup> John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, *The Legitimacy Puzzle in Latin America: Democracy and Political Support in Eight Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 127.

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<sup>31</sup> Respondents are asked to provide a number in a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means “not at all” and 7 “a lot.” Rotated factor loadings for these five items form a single factor with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  (alpha) of 0.82, suggesting that a single index can be constructed from these five items.

<sup>32</sup> Respondents are asked to provide a number between 1 and 10, where 1 means “strongly disapprove” and 10 “strongly approve.”

<sup>33</sup> Rotated factor loadings for these four items form a single factor with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  (alpha) of 0.79, suggesting that a single index can be constructed from these four items.

<sup>34</sup> In these 12 countries, the average level of approval of violent participation among the young is the highest for those in the first quintile of wealth relative to the fifth and this result is statistically significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ .

<sup>35</sup> Wendy V Cunningham, *Youth at Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean: Understanding the Causes, Realizing the Potential, Directions in Development.*, Directions in Development, Human Development (Washington, D. C.: World Bank, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> A logistic regression model was estimated for each country. The index of approval of violent participation was included in the model as a predictor of protest participation; socio-economic and demographic characteristics and idiosyncratic and sociotropic variables were also taken into account in the model.

<sup>37</sup> The original scale for these items goes from 1 to 7, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 “strongly agree.” The original scale was then recoded into a 0-100 scale.