

*The Resurgence of
the Latin American Left*

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Latin America's "Left Turn"

A Framework for Analysis

STEVEN LEVITSKY AND KENNETH M. ROBERTS

The beginning of the 21st century witnessed an unprecedented wave of electoral victories by leftist presidential candidates in Latin America. The wave began in 1998, when Hugo Chávez, a former paratrooper who had led a failed military uprising six years earlier, was elected president of Venezuela. Chávez was followed in quick succession by Socialist candidate Ricardo Lagos in Chile (2000); ex-metalworker and Workers' Party (PT) leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2002); left-of-center Peronist Néstor Kirchner in Argentina (2003); Tabaré Vázquez of the leftist Broad Front (FA) in Uruguay (2004); and coca growers' union leader Evo Morales of the Movement toward Socialism in Bolivia (2005), the first indigenous president in that country's history. In 2006, ex-revolutionary leader Daniel Ortega and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) returned to power in Nicaragua, while independent left-wing economist Rafael Correa won the Ecuadorian presidency.¹ By decade's end, leftist candidates had also scored improbable victories in Paraguay (ex-Catholic bishop Fernando Lugo) and El Salvador (Mauricio Funes of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front [FMLN], a former guerrilla movement). Incumbent leftist presidents or parties were subsequently reelected in Venezuela (2000, 2006), Chile (2006), Brazil (2006, 2010), Argentina (2007), Ecuador (2009), Bolivia (2009), and Uruguay (2009). By 2009, nearly two-thirds of Latin Americans lived under some form of left-leaning national government. The breadth of this "left turn" was unprecedented; never before had so many countries in the region entrusted the affairs of state to leaders associated with the political Left (see table I.1).

The political ascendance of the Left extended beyond these presidential victories. Leftist alternatives emerged or strengthened during the 2000s even in countries where they did not capture the presidency, such as Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Costa Rica. In Honduras, one of the few remaining countries in the region with no significant leftist party, Manuel Zelaya of the center-right Liberal Party veered left after winning the presidency, eventually provoking a military coup. And crucially, the rise of leftist

Table I.1.
Left governments in Latin America, 1998–2010

Country	Party	President	Year elected
Venezuela	Fifth Republic Movement/ United Socialist Party of Venezuela	Hugo Chávez	1998; reelected in 2000, 2006
Chile	Chilean Socialist Party (PSCh)	Ricardo Lagos Michelle Bachelet	2000 2006
Brazil	Workers' Party (PT)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva Dilma Rousseff	2002; reelected in 2006 2010
Argentina	Justicialista Party (PJ)	Néstor Kirchner, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	2003 2007
Uruguay	Broad Front (FA)	Tabaré Vázquez José Alberto (Pepe) Mujica	2004 2009
Bolivia	Movement toward Socialism (MAS)	Evo Morales	2005; reelected in 2009
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)	Daniel Ortega	2006
Ecuador	Country Alliance	Rafael Correa	2006; reelected in 2009
Paraguay	Patriotic Alliance for Change	Fernando Lugo	2008
El Salvador	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)	Mauricio Funes	2009

alternatives was associated with a broadening of social and economic policy options in the region. Unlike the 1980s and 1990s, when candidates often campaigned for office on vague leftist platforms but governed as promarket conservatives (Stokes 2001), the post-1998 wave of leftist victories ushered in a new era of policy experimentation in which governments expanded their developmental, redistributive, and social welfare roles. The “left turn,” therefore, changed not only who governed in Latin America, but also *how* they governed.

The rise of the Left was a stunning turn of events in a region where political and economic liberalism—buttressed by U.S. hegemony—appeared triumphant at the end of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the demise of statist and socialist development models, and the rise of the so-called Washington Consensus around free market or “neoliberal” economic policies (Williamson 1990; Edwards 1995), U.S.-style capitalist democracy appeared to be the only game in town in the 1990s. The debt and inflationary crises of the 1980s had discredited state-led development models, while neoliberal reforms deepened Latin America’s integration into global trade and financial circuits, thereby narrowing governments’ policy options. The reform process was directed by technocrats who claimed a mantle of scientific

expertise for free market policies that were backed by the U.S. government, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Stallings 1992; Domínguez 1997). With labor movements in retreat and revolutionary alternatives seemingly foreclosed, historical rivals to liberalism from both populist and leftist traditions accepted market reforms. In the eyes of many observers, then, the Left had “all but vanished” in post–Cold War Latin America (Colburn 2002, 72).

By the late 1990s, however, the neoliberal consensus had begun to unravel. Although the free market model succeeded in controlling inflation, in much of the region it was plagued by anemic growth, periodic financial crises, and deepening social and economic inequalities. These problems created new opportunities for the mobilization of opposition, some of it channeled into the electoral arena by parties of the Left and some stoking the mass protest movements that toppled promarket governments in Ecuador, Argentina, and Bolivia (Roberts 2008b; Silva 2009).

Latin America's left turn was far from a uniform experience, however. New left governments varied widely: in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, institutionalized leftist parties maintained the relatively orthodox macroeconomic policies and liberal democratic constitutions they had inherited from nonleftist predecessors; in Venezuela, however, a populist outsider used plebiscitary means to rewrite the constitutional rules of the game, and he launched a statist and redistributive project that broke sharply with the Washington Consensus. Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay fell in between these two poles, combining different types of policy and regime orientations in distinct ways.

The central purpose of this volume is to explain these diverse leftist experiments and assess their implications for democracy and development. We explore three main sets of questions. First, we seek to explain the sudden revival of leftist alternatives at the turn of the millennium. Our analysis highlights several common domestic and international factors that fostered the Left's ascendance—in particular, the institutionalization of democratic contestation under conditions of extreme social and economic inequalities and a relatively permissive international environment.

Second, we map and attempt to explain variation among leftist governments. The Left in Latin America is no longer defined by a commitment to a socialist model of development. Instead, its commitments to equality, social justice, and popular participation produce an open-ended struggle for social transformation that is subject to considerable experimentation and variation. As such, new left governments in the region have pursued diverse agendas. Although all of them are committed to a more equitable growth model, some are more willing than others to break with neoliberal orthodoxy by using state power to regulate markets, alter property relations, and redistribute income. Likewise, they vary in their willingness to work within preexisting liberal democratic institutions and in their commitments to popular participa-

tion. This volume thus seeks to identify and explain the variation in policy and regime orientations among left governments. Our analysis suggests that the different types of left government in contemporary Latin America are rooted in distinct historical experiences and pathways to political power. These historical paths shaped left parties' organizational characteristics, societal linkages, positions within party systems, and, ultimately, their approaches to policy reform and democratic governance.

Third, we evaluate the implications of the "left turn" for development and democracy in Latin America. The revival of the Left has placed the "big questions" back on the political agenda, belying the notion that the region had reached the "end of politics" (Colburn 2002) in the 1990s. Are new left governments crafting viable alternatives to the neoliberal model of capitalism that swept across the region in the wake of the Debt Crisis? What are the boundaries of policy experimentation in a global economy that is structured and disciplined by mobile capital? Has the revival of the Left enhanced the quality of democracy by incorporating previously excluded groups and creating opportunities for grassroots participation? Has it contributed to the consolidation of liberal democracy or generated potentially destabilizing forms of social polarization and power concentration that undermine institutional checks and balances? Since the answers to these questions vary across cases, a comparative perspective is essential for understanding the broader implications of Latin America's "left turn."

What's "Left" in Contemporary Latin America?

Before proceeding to these larger questions, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by "the Left." This is no easy task. Historically, the Latin American Left was conceived in ideological terms as movements of socialist, and particularly Marxist, inspiration. The Left was associated with a relatively well-defined alternative to capitalist models of development, one that emphasized public ownership of the means of production and central planning as opposed to market allocation of basic goods and services. Differences within the Left were largely strategic, related to the choice between revolutionary and democratic paths to socialism. By the 1980s, however, the crisis of Marxism as an ideological referent and of socialism as a development model compelled the Left to redefine itself (Castañeda 1993). Many leftists began to conceive of their project as an open-ended process of social transformation—one of "deepening" democracy—rather than a predetermined endpoint (see Garretón 1987; Roberts 1998). In terms of public policy, leftist platforms grew more moderate and ambiguous as historically left-of-center parties that won national power almost invariably watered down or abandoned their preexisting platforms.² Many, in fact, felt obliged to adopt neoliberal stabilization and adjustment policies. Those that remained in opposition, such as the PT in Brazil and FA in Uruguay, often maintained a more leftist profile, although this

tended to be based on little more than a rejection of neoliberalism. At the beginning of the 2000s, then, "What's Left?" remained an open question in Latin America, in terms of both programmatic content and the identity of political actors.

For the purposes of this study, the Left refers to political actors who seek, as a *central programmatic objective*, to reduce social and economic inequalities. Left parties seek to use public authority to redistribute wealth and/or income to lower-income groups, erode social hierarchies, and strengthen the voice of disadvantaged groups in the political process. In the socioeconomic arena, left policies aim to combat inequalities rooted in market competition and concentrated property ownership, enhance opportunities for the poor, and provide social protection against market insecurities. Although the contemporary Left does not necessarily oppose private property or market competition, it rejects the idea that unregulated market forces can be relied on to meet social needs (see Arnson 2007; French 2009). In the political realm, the Left seeks to enhance the participation of underprivileged groups and erode hierarchical forms of domination that marginalize popular sectors. Historically, the Left has focused on class differences, but many contemporary Left parties have broadened this focus to include inequalities rooted in gender, race, or ethnicity—although, as Deborah Yashar notes in chapter 8, the Latin American Left has been slow to address these non-class-based inequalities.

Given the shifting ideological terrain after the Cold War and the diversity of existing left projects, our definition is necessarily broad (see also Panizza 2005b, 729; and Cleary 2006, 36). Like the political reality it depicts, it does not produce neat boundaries. Because some of its attributes refer to gradations rather than categorical distinctions, partial or intermediate cases inevitably exist. Indeed, one finds considerable debate over whether politicians such as Néstor Kirchner (Argentina), Lucio Gutiérrez (Ecuador), Álvaro Colom (Guatemala), and Ollanta Humala (Peru) should be considered part of the Left. In general, we argue that what distinguishes left from nonleft forces is the programmatic centrality of redistributive policies. Although other political forces (e.g., many Christian Democratic parties) may support limited redistributive or social protection policies not unlike those championed by the Left, only left parties place redistribution and social equality (as opposed to simply "helping the poor") at the top of their programmatic agenda.

We treat as left governments only those parties and politicians that retain meaningful aspects of their platform while in office. Thus, historically left-of-center parties that largely abandon their redistributive commitments (e.g., the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance [APRA] in contemporary Peru) or politicians who campaign on the left but govern on the right after winning the presidency (e.g., Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador) are not considered leftist.

Populism and the Left

Our conceptualization should help to clarify the relationship between the Left and populism in Latin America. Populism is a notoriously elastic and contested concept (Roberts 1995; Weyland 2001). In contrast to those who define populism in terms of economic policy (Dornbusch and Edwards 1990, 1991), we treat it as a political phenomenon (see Weyland 2001). We define populism as the top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge established political or economic elites on behalf of an ill-defined *pueblo*, or “the people.” Although populists appeal to the poor against an established elite, often including the economic elite, these appeals need not be left of center. Indeed, the programmatic content of populist appeals has varied considerably across cases and over time. During the 1930s and 1940s, Latin American populism was associated with the nationalistic, state-led development model known as import substitution industrialization (ISI), as well as a variety of redistributive and social welfare measures. Advocates of a “third way” between capitalism and socialism, many of these classical populists constructed corporatist channels of interest intermediation that provided material benefits for labor (and sometimes peasant) movements in exchange for political loyalty (Collier and Collier 1991).

During the 1990s, Latin American populism often took a more right-wing—and even neoliberal—form, as outsiders appealed to the (often disorganized and urban informal) poor against a political and economic elite that was associated with the ISI state (Roberts 1995; Weyland 1996, 1999a). Presidents Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and, more recently, Álvaro Uribe in Colombia can hardly be described as leftist. Indeed, all of them carried out neoliberal economic policies. Yet they clearly had populist tendencies, in that they made unmediated mass appeals in opposition to the political establishment. Rather than attacking economic oligarchies, right-wing populists condemned what they characterized as a corrupt and exclusionary political class; and rather than promising to redistribute wealth, they offered economic stability and/or physical security.

Unlike the Left, then, populism should not be defined in programmatic or ideological terms. It is defined instead along a separate dimension related to patterns of political mobilization or modes of linkage between leaders and mass constituencies (see Ostiguy forthcoming). Leftist politics can be found at both the populist and the nonpopulist ends of this spectrum. Leftist leaders who subordinate or bypass partisan intermediaries to appeal directly to mass constituencies—for example, Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa—may be considered populist. However, leftist leaders who emerge from and remain accountable to autonomous social movements, such as Evo Morales,³ or institutionalized bases of partisan support, such as Lula, Ricardo Lagos,

or Tabaré Vázquez, are not. Similarly, populist leaders may be located on the left when they challenge the prerogatives of capital and redistribute income toward the poor, as in the case of Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s or Chávez in the 2000s. However, populists whose appeals center on nonredistributive issues such as nationalism, nativism, public order, or simply a rejection of the political establishment are often closer to the ideological Right. For this reason, populist figures such as Juan Perón (and, more recently, Ollanta Humala) are not easily located along the conventional left-right spectrum. Indeed, they frequently draw support from both ends of the ideological continuum (see Ostiguy forthcoming).

The revival of leftist and populist alternatives in Latin America may be rooted in similar kinds of social strains, but the two phenomena are not synonymous. Neither is the latter a subset of the former. They are analytically distinct phenomena that sometimes overlap but often exist in tension with each other. What must be asked, then, is why they returned to political prominence at the turn of the century after having been relegated by scholars to the dustbins of history in the early 1990s.

Explaining Latin America's "Left Turn"

Like the "Third Wave" of democratization (Huntington 1991), the resurgence of the Latin American Left has no single cause (see, e.g., Barrett, Chávez, and Rodríguez-Garavito 2008). Rather, it is rooted in multiple factors, some of which are long-term and structural, while others are short-term and contingent. Moreover, the relative weight of these factors shifted over the course of the 1998–2010 period. In this section, we break down the explanation into three parts: (1) long-term structural factors that facilitated but did not directly cause the left turn; (2) historically contingent factors, especially macroeconomic conditions, that triggered the initial wave of left victories; and (3) changing environmental conditions that helped deepen and extend the wave in the mid and late 2000s.

Long-Term Causes: Inequality and the Institutionalization of Electoral Competition

Two long-term factors underlie the Left's resurgence in Latin America. One is inequality: despite economic stabilization and the resumption of growth in the 1990s, Latin America remained plagued by severe poverty, inequality, and social exclusion at the dawn of the 21st century. In 2002, 221 million Latin Americans—44% of the regional population—lived in poverty (ECLAC 2004, 6), and income distribution in the region was the most unequal in the world. Poverty and inequality do not inevitably translate into left political success; conservative parties have often built political

loyalties among the poor through patron-clientelism, religious identities, and varied appeals to growth, order, and security. Nevertheless, poverty and inequality do create a potential constituency for the Left: a large pool of voters who are likely to be receptive to redistributive appeals (see also Cleary 2006, 37). The credibility of these appeals was undermined in the 1980s and 1990s, when the combination of inflationary pressures, fiscal crisis, weakened labor unions, and ideological disarray put the Left on the defensive. By the end of the 1990s, however, the failure of states under liberalized economies to respond to social needs allowed left parties and movements to “re-politicize” inequality (Roberts 2008b; Luna and Filgueira 2009) and place redistributive policies back on the political agenda.

A second condition that facilitated the Left’s ascendance was the institutionalization of electoral competition (Castañeda 2006; Cleary 2006). Throughout much of Latin American history, leftist movements were denied an opportunity to contest power legally, first via restricted suffrage and later through mechanisms such as military intervention, proscription, and repression. The emergence in the early 20th century of Marxist and other radical movements seeking to transform property relations led elites to perceive left parties, even moderate ones, as a threat to the socioeconomic order. Polarization deepened during the Cold War, as left movements’ real or perceived ties to the Soviet bloc led Washington to view them as a potential threat to U.S. security interests. In the name of anticommunism, left-of-center parties were often banned, repressed, or—when they made it into power—toppled by military coups, often with backing from the United States (e.g., Guatemala in 1954; the Dominican Republic, 1963; Brazil, 1964; Chile, 1973). During the 1970s and early 1980s, then, military repression inhibited leftist political participation in much of Latin America (O’Donnell 1973; Collier 1979), leaving a legacy of organizational weakness and fear on the Left that endured well after democratization.

The geopolitical environment had changed markedly by the 1990s, however, following the democratic transitions of the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Revolutionary alternatives largely disappeared, leaving much of the Latin American Left to embrace liberal democracy and accept the core features of capitalism, thus diminishing elite perceptions of the threat posed by leftist governments (Castañeda 1993). As left governments ceased to be perceived as a security threat, U.S. support for authoritarian alternatives waned, and military intervention sharply declined.⁴ Democratic regimes consolidated in the Southern Cone and Brazil, and even where they remained weak and crisis-ridden, as in much of Central America and the Andes, electoral politics persisted. For the first time in history, then, left parties could openly organize and compete for power throughout Latin America (paradoxically, except for Cuba).

Leftist parties took advantage of this opening throughout the region. Even at the

height of the Washington Consensus in the 1990s, new left-of-center parties made significant gains in Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela, and elsewhere. These advances were particularly striking at the local level—where, as Benjamin Goldfrank suggests in chapter 7, the “left turn” really began—as leftist mayors were elected in Brasília, São Paulo, San Salvador, Mexico City, Montevideo, and Caracas. Control of municipal governments gave left parties an opportunity to solidify their organizations and support bases, gain experience, and establish reputations for administrative competence (Chávez and Goldfrank 2004).

In sum, social inequality and the institutionalization of electoral competition were crucial “permissive” causes of the “left turn” (Cleary 2009, 7). Persistent inequality created a large potential constituency for the Left that could be mobilized around claims for redistribution and expanded social citizenship. Stable democracy, meanwhile, allowed left parties to articulate social grievances and compete for elected office on a platform calling for social and economic change. The intersection of these two long-term structural and institutional conditions allowed the Left to overcome its post–Cold War crisis and regain the political offensive by the end of the 1990s.

Neoliberalism and Economic Crisis

Inequality and democracy cannot explain the timing of the left turn, however. The initial wave of leftist victories at the turn of the century was rooted in two key economic developments: the market-oriented reforms of the 1980s and 1990s and the 1998–2002 economic crisis. The left turn is commonly viewed as a backlash against neoliberal reforms,⁵ as the unleashing of market forces exacerbated economic hardship and insecurity for many Latin Americans and the withdrawal of states from key areas of social protection eroded their ability to meet social demands. Indeed, levels of social inequality increased throughout much of Latin America during the 1990s (Huber and Solt 2004).

Yet it was not necessarily neoliberalism per se that drove voters to the Left.⁶ There is little evidence of widespread public opposition to market-oriented policies during the 1990s; although privatization policies faced significant opposition, other elements of the Washington Consensus, such as free trade and foreign investment, enjoyed broad public support (Armijo and Faucher 2002; Baker 2003, 2008). Moreover, where neoliberal reformers were deemed to perform well—in particular, where they stabilized hyperinflationary economies—they were often reelected.⁷

The 1998–2002 economic downturn is thus critical to explaining the initial wave of left victories in Latin America. After experiencing modest growth between 1990 and 1997, most Latin American economies stagnated or sank into recession in the late 1990s. As a whole, Latin America experienced negative per capita growth between

1998 and 2002, and poverty and unemployment rates increased throughout the region (ECLAC 2003). By 2002, 60% of families in the region reported that an adult member of their household had been unemployed in the previous year (Latinobarómetro 2004).

The economic crisis benefited the Left in two ways. First, as is often the case in democracies, it hurt incumbents across the region. Incumbent parties lost the presidency in 14 of 18 Latin American countries between 1998 and 2004.⁸ Since many of these parties were right of center, rotation in power could be expected to benefit the Left. Second, the downturn eroded public support for the economic status quo embodied in the Washington Consensus. Support for neoliberal policies like privatizations started to wane in the late 1990s (Panizza and Yañez 2005); by 2004, more than 70% of survey respondents across the region expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the market economy (Latinobarómetro 2004, 39–41).

The 1998–2002 crisis thus benefited the Left by both weakening incumbents and eroding public support for the promarket policies they pursued. After 1998, voters in much of Latin America were inclined not only to support opposition parties but also to vote for candidates who promised an alternative—however vaguely defined—to neoliberalism. This dynamic was clearly at work in Venezuela in 1998, Brazil and Ecuador in 2002, Argentina in 2003, Uruguay in 2004, and Bolivia in 2005. Although there is little evidence of a broader shift to the left in terms of political identities or ideological self-placement (see chapter 1), the 1998–2002 downturn clearly created an opening for left-of-center alternatives.

Extending (and Deepening) the Wave: The Commodities Boom and Diffusion Effects

If the 1998–2002 economic crisis helped trigger the wave of left-wing victories, two changes in the external environment helped extend it over the course of the decade. The first was the post-2002 global commodities boom. As a result of soaring commodity export prices, economic growth rates in Latin America averaged 5.5% a year between 2004 and 2007 (ECLAC 2007, 85), the highest in decades. The export boom contributed to the left turn in two ways. First, just as economic recession hurt right-of-center incumbents in the early 2000s, high growth benefited left-of-center incumbents in the mid and late 2000s. Left incumbents were reelected in Brazil (2006, 2010), Chile (2006), Venezuela (2006), Argentina (2007), Bolivia (2009), Ecuador (2009), and Uruguay (2009), thereby extending the left turn.

Second, the export boom allowed left parties to actually govern on the left (see chapters 2 and 4). Whereas balance-of-payments and fiscal constraints induced even left-of-center Latin American governments to adopt conservative policies during the

1990s, improved fiscal and trade balances after 2002 provided left governments with new resources and policy latitude. Current-account surpluses and increased revenue flows reduced governments' dependence on the United States and international financial institutions, allowed them to avoid the kinds of fiscal and foreign exchange crises that had plagued populist and leftist governments in the past, and provided resources to invest in the types of social welfare policies traditionally associated with the Left. For the first time in decades, left-of-center governments were able to offer material benefits to popular constituencies—and to do so, moreover, without challenging property rights or adopting highly polarizing redistributive measures. The commodities boom thus permitted the adoption of statist policies and new social programs by governments that, under different circumstances, might have opted for orthodoxy.

Finally, it is likely that regional diffusion or demonstration effects contributed to the left turn in the latter part of the decade. The political success of Chávez, Lagos, Lula, and Kirchner in the early years of the wave helped break down the 1990s-era belief that left government was not viable. By the second half of the decade—when it became clear that left governments could maintain economic stability, avoid regime breakdowns, and even gain reelection—the perception of increased viability may have encouraged other leftists (such as Correa and Lugo) to pursue the presidency and induced voters to take a chance on the Left in countries like El Salvador and Paraguay where conservative parties had traditionally governed.

The resurgence of the Left in the 1998–2010 period may thus be attributed to a variety of factors. Inequality and democracy generated favorable conditions for the growth of leftist parties, but the 1998–2002 economic crisis, which eroded public support for conservative incumbents and the neoliberal policies they had implemented, played a major role in the initial wave of left victories, and the post-2002 commodity boom provided left parties with the resources and the policy space needed to govern on the left.

Beyond Right and Wrong: A Typology of Left Governments

It is widely recognized that no single “Left” exists in contemporary Latin America (see Panizza 2005b; Petkoff 2005a; Castañeda 2006; Lanzaro 2006; Schamis 2006; Lynch 2007; Weyland 2008, 2009; Flores-Macías 2010; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010). Indeed, many recent analyses converge around the idea that there are “two Lefts” in the region: moderate versus radical (Weyland 2009); moderate versus contestatory (Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010); social democratic versus populist (Panizza 2005a; Lynch 2007); “right” versus “wrong” (Castañeda 2006); and even “vegetarian” versus “carnivorous” (Vargas Llosa 2007). Such dichotomies suffer from two short-

comings. First, they fail to capture the diversity of Latin American cases. Although the “two Lefts” model may characterize polar cases such as Venezuela and Chile, it has difficulty with cases—such as Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Paraguay—that fall somewhere in between (Leiras 2007, 399). For example, Bolivia is routinely classified, along with Venezuela, as “radical” or “populist”; however, the Movement toward Socialism (MAS) government differs from Chavismo in important ways, including its relative policy moderation and its deep roots in autonomous social movements (see chapter 10).

Second, these typologies pack together multiple dimensions, including organizational characteristics, economic policies, and regime orientations. Thus, the “radical” or “wrong” Left is said to be characterized by personalistic leadership, statist economic policies, and more autocratic rule, whereas the “moderate” or “right” Left is said to be institutionalized, market-oriented, and democratic. Although these features cluster together in some countries, such as Venezuela and Chile, this is neither always nor necessarily the case. Populist presidents may adopt market-oriented policies (e.g., Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador), and history suggests that institutionalized Lefts may sometimes adopt radical policy orientations (e.g., the Salvador Allende government in Chile).

We offer a more nuanced typology of governing Lefts, based on parties’ organizational characteristics. We later examine whether these different types of Left are associated with distinctive policy or regime orientations. The typology has two dimensions: (1) the level of institutionalization and (2) the locus of political authority. The first dimension distinguishes between established party organizations and new parties or movements. In the former case, parties’ organizational structures, support networks, and identities are longstanding; these parties have been competing in elections since well before the onset of the left turn. In the latter case, parties are recent creations; they were formed as electoral vehicles for leaders or popular movements that arose to challenge the political establishment during the crises of the late 1990s and the 2000s. The second dimension distinguishes between parties or movements that concentrate power in the hands of a dominant personality and those that disperse power more broadly within a party organization or social movement networks. Concentrated power tends to be exercised autocratically, and it directs or controls popular mobilization from above; dispersed power holds leaders accountable to the broader interests of parties or movements, and it allows popular mobilization to occur from below.

Combining these two dimensions generates four broad categories, as shown in figure I.1. The first category, which we label the *institutionalized partisan Left*, is located in the upper left quadrant. This category is characterized by institutionalized parties with relatively dispersed power. Within Latin American, it is this Left that most

	Established party organization	New political movement
Dispersed authority	<p>Institutionalized partisan Left</p> <p>Electoral-professional Left (PSCh in Chile; PT in Brazil)</p> <p>Mass-organic Left (Broad Front in Uruguay)</p>	<p>Movement Left</p> <p>(MAS in Bolivia)</p>
Concentrated authority	<p>Populist machine</p> <p>(Peronism under Kirchner; FSLN in Nicaragua)</p>	<p>Populist Left</p> <p>(Chávez in Venezuela; Correa in Ecuador)</p>

Fig. 1.1. A typology of governing left parties in Latin America

resembles European social democratic parties. Two subtypes may be distinguished within this category. The first subtype, which we label *mass-organic*, refers to parties that maintain strong local branches, an active grassroots membership, and close ties to labor unions and other organized social constituencies. Mass-organic parties are deeply embedded in social networks, as they penetrate and sometimes organize civil society. Their electoral campaigns are labor-intensive affairs, with widespread mobilization of grassroots partisan and social networks. The second subtype may be labeled the *electoral-professional Left* (Panebianco 1988). These parties are controlled by cadres with established careers in the business of politics and expertise in the management of electoral campaigns, legislative procedures, and policymaking processes. Although they may once have possessed mass organizations with deep roots in civil society, electoral-professional parties are characterized by an erosion of local branches and a deactivation of the party membership. They are largely detached from popular movements and de-emphasize social mobilization outside the electoral arena. Their programmatic stance is therefore relatively open to adaptation to the competitive demands of the electoral marketplace (see Hunter 2010).

The Chilean Socialist Party (PSCh), the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), and Uruguay's Broad Front (FA) are prototypical examples of the institutionalized partisan Left.⁹ With deep roots in Latin America's socialist tradition and historic ties to labor unions and other popular constituencies, all three parties approximated the mass-organic subtype at some stage of their development. Over time, however, all three parties became more professionalized. The PSCh shifted in an electoral-professional direction as Chile redemocratized in the late 1980s and 1990s, and the PT moved

in that direction as well during the 1990s.¹⁰ Both parties de-emphasized grassroots organization and loosened ties to popular movements in an effort to broaden their electoral appeal. In the process, they became more professionalized and less engaged in social mobilization outside the electoral arena. The Uruguayan FA has not been immune to these pressures (see chapter 15), but as chapters 5 and 6 show, it maintains a greater grassroots presence and stronger ties to popular organizations than do the PSCh and the PT. Hence, although no contemporary case unambiguously fits the mass-organic subtype, the FA most closely approximates it.

A second category of governing Left, located in the lower left quadrant of figure I.1, combines institutionalized parties with concentrated power in the hands of a dominant personality. We label these parties *populist machines*. Like the institutionalized partisan Left, populist machines are established organizations that have survived years (and even decades) in opposition, including, in some cases, periods of authoritarian rule. However, these organizations are harnessed to the political project of a dominant personality who stands at the apex of vertically structured authority relations. Although the origins of such authority relations may have been charismatic or populist (e.g., Peronism in Argentina, Aprismo in Peru), they tend to be institutionalized via patronage linkages. Patronage plays a central role in cementing the loyalties of secondary politicians, linking popular constituencies to local and regional party structures, and preserving centralized and personalistic leadership patterns. As a result, these parties tend to concentrate power in the hands of executive officeholders.

Populist machines are flexible and pragmatic in their policy orientation. As such, their location on the left is not fixed by ideology; they may tack to the left or the right, depending on the policy preferences of the party leadership and the social, economic, and political contexts in which they operate. Under the leadership of Néstor Kirchner, for example, Argentina's classic populist party, the Peronist Partido Justicialista (PJ), shifted programmatically to the left in 2003, following its sponsorship of neoliberal reforms under Carlos Menem in the 1990s (see chapter 12). We can thus locate the Kirchner government on the left even if the Peronist *party* cannot be categorized as such. Patron-client ties to popular constituencies provided continuity at the base of the party across these changes in leadership and programmatic orientation. In Peru, however, the stunning comeback of Alan García in 2006 affirmed his control over APRA's populist machine, even if he charted the party on a conservative trajectory that makes Peru an outlier, rather than a participant, in Latin America's left turn (see chapter 16). A less obvious populist machine case is the FSLN in Nicaragua. Although the FSLN was a revolutionary mass-organic party during its initial period in power (1979–90), it was increasingly transformed into a personal vehicle for Daniel Ortega during its 16 years in opposition. During the 1990s and the early 2000s, the

FSLN shed much of its revolutionary ideology and entered into a series of pacts with conservative forces, which triggered the defection of numerous Sandinista leaders and cadres. Thus, by the time Ortega returned to the presidency in 2006, the FSLN had evolved into something closer to a populist machine.

A third type of governing Left, found in the lower right quadrant of figure I.1, combines new political movements with concentrated or personalistic authority. We label this category the *populist Left*, a term that signifies the weakness of organized partisan intermediation as well as the top-down character of political mobilization. Leaders of the populist Left, such as Chávez in Venezuela, Correa in Ecuador, and, more ambiguously, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay,¹¹ are outsiders and opponents to established parties who capitalize on widespread disillusionment with the traditional political class. Their leadership is neither anchored in nor generated by autonomous social mobilization, but they may reap the political dividends of such mobilization or direct it from above after attaining public office. Chávez's charismatic authority, for example, gave political expression to diverse but disorganized forms of social protest, and it transformed the Venezuelan state into an instrument of popular mobilization around a plethora of redistributive reforms (see chapter 9). In Ecuador, a series of mass protests helped topple three successive elected presidents, without spawning a party or movement that was capable of effectively contesting state power in the electoral arena. Instead, it cleared the slate of partisan contenders and opened space for the election of Correa as an independent figure with little organized base of his own (see chapter 11).

The final category of governing left parties exists where autonomous social and political movements enter the electoral arena and create a partisan vehicle of their own to contest state power. This category, which we call the *movement Left*, is found in the upper right quadrant of figure I.1. Like the populist Left, the movement Left represents the emergence of a new political force that displaces traditional party organizations. Unlike the populist Left, however, its leadership is directly spawned by popular movements organized outside the electoral arena.

Movement Left parties are not uncommon in Latin America; the PT began as a labor-based movement Left before evolving into a more institutionalized and professionalized party (Keck 1992), and Ecuador's powerful indigenous movement spawned a party, Pachakutik, that competed in the electoral arena—with limited success—in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Van Cott 2005). Bolivia's Movement toward Socialism, however, under the leadership of Evo Morales, is a *sui generis* example of a movement left party winning national executive office by electoral means. Morales emerged as a leader of Bolivia's coca growers' union, which joined a fluid coalition of indigenous and popular movements in a series of mass protests after 2000 that forced two presi-

dents to resign. This social mobilization congealed around the newly reconfigured MAS, which finished second in the 2002 national elections and then captured an unprecedented majority of the presidential vote in 2005 (see chapter 10).¹²

Although Bolivia is routinely lumped together with Venezuela and Ecuador in conventional analyses of new left governments, the autonomous, bottom-up character of popular mobilization and the anchoring of Morales's leadership in organized social movements distinguished the Bolivian MAS during its formative years from those populist left cases. Whether these differences endure as the Left governs, however, is another question. Social movements do not easily translate into governing institutions, and the bottom-up dynamic of social mobilization out of which the MAS emerged proved difficult to sustain after it entered the electoral arena, and particularly after it won state power. Indeed, the growing dependence of the MAS on Morales's personalistic appeal and authority clearly pushed the movement in a more populist direction after 2005 (chapter 10). Even if the MAS's distinctive features become somewhat blurred over time, however, its very different formative experiences continue to shape the character of the party and its popular constituencies, and they require that it be placed in a different category.

Two caveats are in order regarding this typology. First, these categories are ideal types, and different cases approximate the categories in varying degrees. Indeed, some of the most interesting variation exists *within* our categories, as seen, for example, among the PSCh, the PT, and the FA in the institutionalized partisan Left. A second caveat is that cases evolve over time. During their formative periods, the PT and perhaps the FA in Uruguay and the FMLN in El Salvador could be characterized as movement left parties, but these parties shifted into the upper left quadrant as they institutionalized under the pressures of electoral competition. Likewise, movements such as Peronism and APRA shifted from the lower right (populist) quadrant to the lower left (machine) quadrant as they institutionalized over time; the same fate may yet await the populist movements led by Chávez and Correa in Venezuela and Ecuador, respectively. Finally, as noted, whereas the MAS belonged in the movement left category when it began its rapid ascent to power, the increasingly important role of Morales's leadership pushed it in a more populist direction during his presidency.

Historical Roots of Leftist Diversity

What explains this diversity in the governing parties and movements associated with Latin America's left turn? A major theme of this volume is that variation within the Latin American Left is rooted in distinct historical experiences and partisan trajectories. More specifically, different national experiences with authoritarianism, democratization, and economic liberalization during the waning decades of the 20th century

shaped and constrained the characteristics of leftist alternatives and the paths they took to power, with major implications for their policy orientations and approaches to democratic governance (see also Cameron 2009; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010).

The institutionalized partisan Lefts in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay were originally Marxist or socialist parties that sought a radical transformation of capitalist economies and class structures. All were mass-organic parties with extensive activist bases and strong ties to unions and other social movements. In all three cases, the experience of bureaucratic authoritarianism in the 1960s and 1970s—accentuated in Chile by the collapse of Allende's democratic socialist experiment—spawned a process of political learning that made an indelible imprint on the Left. The Chilean Socialists (PSCh) and the Uruguayan FA were severely repressed, and while the Brazilian PT was not formed until the latter years of military rule, many of its leaders and cadres were longtime leftist activists who had similarly suffered military repression. In each case, the Left backed away from revolutionary objectives and made a restoration of liberal democracy the centerpiece of its political project in the 1980s. All three parties thus became important players in the democratic transitions in their respective countries. Viewing liberal democracy as a guarantor of human rights and civil liberties upon which popular political alternatives could be constructed, they committed themselves to play by the rules of newly established democratic regimes (Garretón 1987; Walker 1991). Indeed, by the 1990s the PSCh and the PT had de-emphasized social mobilization in order to prioritize electoral contestation, and all three parties became increasingly professionalized members of the political establishment.

Likewise, the FA, the PSCh, and the PT all lived through the crisis of statist and socialist development models in the 1980s. Although all three were initially staunch critics of neoliberal policies, they eventually concluded that long-term economic growth and efficiency required market liberalization and a vibrant private sector. With conservative forces taking the lead in the adoption of neoliberal reforms in all three countries, left parties could mobilize popular support by advocating relatively moderate redistributive policies that did not violate the core tenets of market orthodoxy (see Madrid 2010). As such, they provided institutionalized channels for the articulation of societal opposition to the neoliberal model, while contributing to the stabilization and programmatic alignment of party competition in new democratic regimes. Importantly, these new democracies were not in crisis. Although the 1998–2002 economic slowdown helped bring the Left to power in Brazil and Uruguay, in none of these countries was a leftist victory associated with widespread social protest, party system collapse, or regime crisis. On the contrary, leftist victories and stable alternation in office provided strong evidence that democratic regimes had consolidated.

Populist machines in Argentina and Peru followed somewhat different historical trajectories. Both parties were populist in origin, with charismatic leaders and more ideologically ambiguous and flexible platforms than left parties in Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay. Like these left parties, Peronism and APRA experienced periods of repression and authoritarian rule, and both parties institutionalized over time, particularly after the death of their founding leaders and the restoration of democracy in the early 1980s. Both parties retained strong grassroots organizations and identities, secured in part through patronage linkages, and a new generation of party leaders became central—and relatively moderate—members of the political establishment. In a break with the past, both parties embraced liberal democratic rules of the game.

Given their programmatic flexibility, neither Peronism nor APRA has adopted a consistent stand on the process of market liberalization. APRA leaned to the left during Alan García's first presidency in the 1980s, paying a steep political price for the hyperinflation that ensued, then veered to the right in 2006 when García defeated the left populist Ollanta Humala for the presidency. Likewise, the PJ opposed market liberalization as an opposition party in the 1980s, embraced radical neoliberal reforms under Peronist president Carlos Menem in the 1990s, then turned to the left under Néstor Kirchner in the aftermath of Argentina's 2001 financial debacle. Neither party, then, is a fixed member of the Latin American Left; their policy and spatial locations are highly contingent on prevailing economic opportunities and constraints, along with competitive dynamics among party leaders or factions and within their larger party systems.

The parties and movements on the right side of figure I.1 emerged out of a very different historical path. None of these parties existed during the wave of military dictatorships in the 1960s and 1970s, and none experienced the type of systematic military repression inflicted on the Left in countries like Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. Military dictatorships in Bolivia and Ecuador in the 1970s supported redistributive reforms, while the new democratic regimes of the 1980s, including traditional parties of the Left, were saddled with the political costs of implementing austerity and structural adjustment policies. With party systems in disarray, and with no established party of the Left able to channel societal resistance to neoliberal policies (Madrid 2010), opposition was expressed by powerful social protest movements and personalistic, antisystem electoral candidates.

The leftist leaders and movements that eventually captured public office in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador were thus fundamentally new political actors that emerged *after* the regime transitions and the debt crisis of the 1980s. They were molded by the popular backlash against neoliberal reforms in the 1990s and the democratic regimes that implemented them—not military rule and the Debt Crisis (see Cameron 2009). As such, they did not go through the same process of political learning and program-

matic adaptation as the more historical parties discussed earlier. Neither did they institutionalize or professionalize their party organizations before arriving at power; their leaders and cadres were political outsiders rather than members of the political establishment, and relatively few had experience with electoral campaigns or governing responsibilities.

Chavismo, the MAS, and the political ascendance of Rafael Correa were all born in frontal opposition to the establishment, in contexts where neoliberal policies had triggered large-scale social protests and public disaffection with established parties had produced severe crises of political representation. In Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, party systems largely broke down in the 1990s and early 2000s, and democratic regimes fell into acute crisis. In Venezuela, the crisis was made manifest by the massive Caracazo protests and riots in 1989 and two failed military coups in 1992; in Bolivia, it was seen in the 2000 "water wars" and the 2003 "gas wars," which set the stage for popular uprisings that forced two presidents from office; in Ecuador, a series of mass protests toppled three consecutive elected presidents between 1997 and 2005. In these cases, new leftist parties based their electoral appeals on a radical promise to throw out what they characterized as a corrupt and exclusionary political elite and "re-found the republic"—that is, replace existing institutional arrangements with more authentically democratic ones.

In short, the new movement and populist Lefts in the Andean region emerged in contexts of acute crises, where democratic regimes, party systems, and development policies were heavily contested by social actors. Indeed, they could credibly claim to have captured public office with electoral mandates to carry out radical change in both political institutions and economic policies. These formative experiences stand in sharp contrast to those of the institutionalized partisan Left in Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay, which operated in consolidated democracies and received clear mandates to preserve institutional stability while attending to social needs.

The Left in Power: Policy Variation and Approaches to Democratic Governance

Given their diverse formative experiences, have these Lefts *governed* differently after coming into power? From a historical perspective, it is clear that the range of variation has narrowed, as the socialist and revolutionary alternatives of the 1960s and 1970s have disappeared. Whatever else it might be, the contemporary left turn is *not* a transition to socialism. Even in Venezuela, where the rejection of the neoliberal model has been most thorough (and where the rhetoric about "socialism for the 21st century" has been most prevalent), changes in property ownership and state-market relations after a decade of Chavismo remain far short of historical models of socialism.

Indeed, as Kurt Weyland suggests in chapter 3, Chávez's development policies bear a closer resemblance to the Venezuelan petro-state of the 1970s than to the socialist experiments of Allende or Castro. Although all the new left governments have supported redistributive policies, regulatory measures, or social citizenship rights that go beyond those prescribed by neoliberal orthodoxy, these initiatives have not placed any of them on the road to socialism. Instead, they reflect diverse efforts to construct post-adjustment "varieties of capitalism" (Hall and Soskice 2001; Huber 2002) that assign a larger role to the state in reducing social inequalities, controlling natural resources, and guarding against market insecurities.

In terms of political regimes, the range of variation is similarly truncated. Whereas revolutionary left governments in Cuba (1959) and Nicaragua (1979) came to power by force of arms, all of the new left governments in Latin America have been democratically elected. Moreover, all of them retained competitive electoral regimes with considerable political pluralism. Even in Venezuela, the most illiberal case, space for vigorous opposition remained open. Chávez submitted to regular electoral contestation even as he undermined institutional checks on executive authority, creating a hybrid regime that had more in common with that of Perón than the single-party regime of Castro.

Even within this truncated range of alternatives, however, one finds considerable variation in how the new Left has governed in Latin America. In the sections that follow, we lay out the range of variation in two principal arenas: (1) social and economic policy, or the degree to which governments break with the orthodox models associated with the Washington Consensus; and (2) approaches to democratic governance, or whether governments adhere to inherited constitutional rules of the game or seek to rewrite the rules in order to concentrate political authority and/or create new channels of popular participation.

Social and Economic Policy

As Murillo, Oliveros, and Vaishnav remind us in chapter 2, electoral victories by leftist parties do not guarantee that those parties will actually *govern* on the left. During the 1980s and 1990s, when statist development models were crippled by debt, balance of payments, and inflationary crises, several historically left or populist parties in the region won the presidency but implemented conservative stabilization and adjustment policies. Through capital flight and credit restrictions, global financial markets punished Latin American governments that lacked fiscal and monetary discipline, while international financial institutions conditioned debt relief on the adoption of orthodox market reforms. Opportunities for statist or redistributive policy experimentation were thus perceived as strictly limited, even by parties of the Left.

After 2000, however, the maneuvering space for left governments expanded. Not only did the orthodox policy consensus erode in the aftermath of the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis and its sequel in Argentina, but beginning in 2003, the region experienced a dramatic improvement in macroeconomic conditions, rooted in a classic commodity export boom. The commodities boom generated high growth rates, dramatically improved fiscal and trade balances, and reduced Latin American dependence on U.S. and international financial institutions, providing governments with greater policy latitude than they had enjoyed since the onset of the Debt Crisis. New left governments thus took office at a time when there existed at least some opportunity for social and economic policy experimentation.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Even with socialism off the agenda, left governments confronted a fairly broad range of alternatives with respect to fiscal and monetary policy, the state's role in regulating economic activity, and levels of openness to trade and foreign investment. To capture this variation, we organize left governments' economic policies into three basic categories: (1) orthodox; (2) statist; and (3) heterodox.

Orthodox policies largely conform to the inherited rules and principles of economic liberalism. Orthodox governments generally maintain strict fiscal and monetary discipline, as well as central bank independence. They may, for example, run budget surpluses, limit monetary emissions, and establish high positive interest rates, all indicating that economic stability and low inflation are prioritized over rapid growth. Similarly, they generally uphold (or expand) private ownership of productive sectors and let markets determine wages, prices, and labor relations. Finally, they maintain open trade and foreign investment regimes, with low tariffs and quotas, competitive exchange rates, and few restrictions on the movement of capital in or out of the country. Left governments in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, as well as the García government in Peru, may be characterized as orthodox in their core macroeconomic policies.

Statist policies, by contrast, redefine inherited economic rules of the game through a systematic expansion of state control over economic activity. Statist governments do not necessarily eliminate private property or competitive markets, but they subordinate each to nationalist and/or redistributive goals. To stimulate economic growth and popular consumption, for example, they may dramatically increase public spending and relax monetary policy, often at the expense of central bank independence. They may also expand state regulation of private economic activity through measures such as price controls, foreign exchange controls, and the (re)nationalization of strategic industries (especially natural resource export sectors and utilities that provide essential public services). Finally, statist governments may tighten state controls on

trade, foreign investment, and capital flows. Of the cases examined in this book, only the Chávez government in Venezuela clearly falls into the statist category.

Between these two poles lie a variety of *heterodox* economic strategies that involve a mix of orthodox and statist measures. Heterodoxy is characterized by selective, rather than comprehensive, forms of state intervention that challenge orthodox principles without fully abandoning the market-led model or making the state the primary engine of development. It may, for example, involve the takeover of a limited number of strategic industries; the imposition of selective controls over prices, foreign exchange, and investment; and the selective or temporary adoption of export duties or quotas. Left governments in Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador arguably fall into this category.

SOCIAL POLICY

Although not all new left governments in Latin America abandoned macroeconomic orthodoxy, all of them broke with neoliberalism and embraced redistributive social policies.¹³ Under the neoliberal model, social needs were to be met, wherever possible, through private activities in the marketplace, thus minimizing societal pressure for greater public spending or state intervention in the economy. Neoliberal policies thus supported the privatization of social security (Madrid 2003; Weyland 2007) and the expansion of private health care and education systems. The primary emphasis of public social policy was to provide targeted poverty relief for low-income communities or individuals who were unable to meet their needs in the marketplace. With narrow targeting and modest expenditure levels—preconditions for limiting the tax burden—neoliberal social policies were not designed to be redistributive.

Given this starting point, new left governments have used social policy to pursue redistributive goals in several ways. The first is *increased expenditure*. In its minimalist form, this entails increased expenditures on existing targeted programs, such as conditional cash transfer payments to poor families. The Lula government in Brazil relied heavily on this strategy through its expansion of the Bolsa Família program launched by its predecessor (see chapter 13). More ambitious variants of this strategy involve the creation of new targeted social programs to provide a broader range of public services and other benefits to disadvantaged groups, including housing, schools, health clinics, and subsidized food markets in low-income communities. The various *misiones* launched by the Chávez government in Venezuela are a prime example (see chapter 9). Targeted social programs, then, are not intrinsically neoliberal in inspiration, and neither are they incompatible with redistributive goals; their redistributive character depends on expenditure levels and the scope of benefits (and, we might add, their funding sources and tax structures).

A second approach is to *extend the coverage* of existing social programs so that a

larger percentage of the population has access to benefits. Programs that target the very poor can be expanded "upward" to include needy but nonindigent groups. Alternatively, pensions, health insurance, and other social programs that traditionally concentrated their benefits on relatively well-to-do workers and the middle class can increase their coverage "downward" to incorporate excluded groups. In particular, women, domestic workers, and informal-sector employees have historically fallen through the cracks in the social safety net; the incorporation of such groups into public benefit programs is a significant step toward the construction of universal rights of social citizenship. As chapter 5 shows, left governments in Chile and Uruguay have taken significant steps in this direction.

A third means of redistribution is through labor market policies. Left governments may raise the minimum wage, facilitate collective bargaining, create or expand public employment programs, and reform (or simply enforce) labor legislation to expand workers' rights and strengthen unions. As the case chapters (part 2) show, governments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay all oversaw substantial increases in the minimum wage, and the Kirchner and Vázquez governments actively strengthened labor's hand in collective bargaining.

Finally, although most contemporary left governments have taken pains to demonstrate a commitment to property rights, a few—most notably, those in Bolivia and Venezuela—have initiated bolder measures to redistribute assets and wealth, such as land reform. Left governments, therefore, are no longer synonymous with changes in property ownership, but neither do they necessarily leave property relations intact.

COMBINING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY

All of the left governments examined in this volume, including those that maintained orthodox macroeconomic policies, used state power to alter the distribution of income and economic opportunities in their societies. For this reason, none of them should be characterized as neoliberal. Indeed, as chapter 15 suggests, the combination of macroeconomic orthodoxy and redistributive social policy seen in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay could be labeled "social democratic" in a Latin American context. However, the Latin American cases remain far short of the classical European models of social democracy in the breadth of their redistributive policies, social citizenship rights, corporatist bargaining arrangements, and macroeconomic coordination and regulation. This is hardly surprising, given prevailing structural and organizational conditions: labor is less densely organized than under European social democracy, capital mobility is greater, structural inequalities and economic dependency are more profound, and levels of taxation are far lower. Given these differences, as well as the overall higher degree of economic liberalism in the Latin American cases, we believe it is premature to attach the social democratic label to them. To avoid stretching the

concept of social democracy, then, we use the term *social liberalism* to characterize the mix of orthodox fiscal, monetary, and trade policies with redistributive social policies found (to varying degrees) in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. We discuss social liberalism and the prospects for social democracy at greater length in the conclusion of this volume.

Adding the social policy dimension thus leaves us with three types of left government policy orientations in contemporary Latin America: *statism*, *heterodoxy*, and *social liberalism*. Of the cases examined in this volume, only Venezuela falls clearly into the statist category; Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador are characterized as heterodox; and Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are characterized as social liberal. The García government in Peru, which combined orthodox economic policies and nonredistributive social policies, falls into a fourth—nonleftist—category: *orthodoxy*.

The Left and Democracy

New left governments also vary in their orientations toward democratic institutions. Historically, the Left's relationship with democracy in Latin America has been marked by considerable tension. Although left parties routinely participated in elections (where they were not banned from doing so), they were often ambiguous in their commitments to liberal democratic institutions. They often viewed these institutions as mere instruments for the attainment of more fundamental socialist objectives. Following the Cuban Revolution, important groups on the left rejected liberal democracy altogether in favor of revolutionary armed struggle.

In the wake of widespread repression under military rule in the 1960s and 1970s, however, many leftists abandoned revolutionary strategies and embraced the norms and institutions of liberal democracy. Democracy provided a set of institutional safeguards to protect human rights and manage the conflicts intrinsic to political pluralism. It also provided institutional space for left parties to mobilize popular constituencies for social and economic reform, thus reconciling—at least in theory—their commitments to social change with the procedural norms of liberal democracy. For much of the Left, this reconciliation revolved around the notion of “deepening democracy” through expanded opportunities for grassroots participation and the strengthening of rights to social citizenship (Roberts 1998).

Nevertheless, this reconciliation was never complete, as rival conceptions of democracy continued to circulate within the regional Left. Whereas many leftists embraced a strict liberal conception of democracy as a form of institutionalized pluralism, others viewed it as an expression of popular sovereignty, one in which subaltern groups could construct and empower a new political majority with an agenda for fundamental social and institutional change. In line with these rival conceptions,

then, orientations toward democracy may be analyzed along two primary dimensions: (1) respect for liberal democratic norms and procedures, and (2) the promotion of popular participation in the political process.

When combined, these two dimensions yield three basic orientations toward democracy. First, a *liberal democratic* orientation exists where the Left embraces institutionalized pluralism, including institutional checks and balances and the political rights of opposition groups. Liberal democratic Lefts fully respect—or strengthen—electoral procedures and civil liberties, while limiting popular mobilization primarily to the electoral arena. A *radical democratic* orientation combines respect for institutionalized pluralism with the construction of new channels for popular participation and support for relatively autonomous mobilization of social groups outside the electoral arena. Finally, a *plebiscitarian* orientation exists where leftist presidents appeal directly to popular majorities through plebiscitary mechanisms such as referenda or mass mobilization to bypass or alter institutional rules, concentrate political authority, and weaken opponents. Although plebiscitarian leaders may encourage popular mobilization, they direct or control it from above.

To what extent are these different orientations found among the contemporary Latin American Left? With the partial exception of Bolivia, radical democratic alternatives grounded in popular, grassroots participation have made little headway beyond the municipal level. Rhetoric aside, popular mobilization has generally been too localized or weak to exert much leverage on national-level politics. In the Venezuelan case, popular mobilization has been widespread, but it is subject to forms of top-down control that undermine its political autonomy and pose potential threats to pluralist competition. As chapter 7 suggests, the challenge of translating grassroots participation into a more expansive, deeper democratic experience—one that is both popular and pluralistic—remains an alluring but elusive target.

Liberal and plebiscitary approaches to democracy, though, were both present in the 2000s, and they were often in tension with each other. The leftist governments examined in this study vary in their degrees of adherence to established rules of the democratic game, their commitments to institutional change, and their respect for the rights of political minorities. Not surprisingly, this variation within the Left tends to be associated with broader regime attributes. Where established left parties compete within democratic regimes and party systems that are relatively consolidated—namely, in Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay—liberal democratic approaches have predominated. Conversely, plebiscitarian tendencies have emerged where leftist movements or leaders were recently spawned by the crisis of democratic regimes and the breakdown of traditional party systems—that is, in the cases of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

In sum, left governments in Latin America varied considerably in the 1998–2010

period, both in their economic policies and in their orientations toward democratic institutions. A major question explored in this volume is how to explain this variation. Our central claim, which we develop further in the conclusion, is that the diversity among left governments in contemporary Latin America is rooted in the historical paths that brought left parties and movements to power. Established left parties that experienced repressive military rule and the Debt Crisis were far more likely to work within inherited (orthodox) macroeconomic models and (liberal democratic) constitutional arrangements; new parties and movements that emerged in contexts of crisis-ridden democracies and popular backlashes against neoliberalism were more likely to abandon economic orthodoxy for heterodoxy or statism and to use plebiscitary means to challenge the existing constitutional order.

Plan of the Volume

The case studies in this volume amply demonstrate how different leftist alternatives have been conditioned by their formative experiences and the political and economic contexts in which they ascended to state power. Before turning to the case studies, however, part 1 provides a series of thematic chapters on major theoretical questions related to the left turn. In chapter 1 Jason Arnold and David Samuels analyze the Left and public opinion, and in chapter 2 María Victoria Murillo, Virginia Oliveros, and Milan Vaishnav explore the conditions associated with the adoption of leftist policies. Kurt Weyland (chapter 3) and Robert Kaufman (chapter 4) explore variation in macroeconomic policy alternatives, while Jennifer Pribble and Evelyne Huber (chapter 5) do the same with social policy. Samuel Handlin and Ruth Berins Collier (chapter 6) provide a comparative study of left party organizations and their social networks; and Benjamin Goldfrank (chapter 7) and Deborah Yashar (chapter 8) examine the implications of the left turn for popular participation and citizenship, respectively.

Part 2 of the volume focuses on cases. Chapters 9–11 focus on the turbulent Andean region, with chapters on Venezuela (chapter 9, by Margarita López Maya), Bolivia (chapter 10, by Raúl Madrid), and Ecuador (chapter 11, by Catherine Conaghan). Chapters 12–15 focus attention on the cases in the Southern Cone and Brazil, including Argentina (chapter 12, by Sebastián Etchemendy and Candelaria Garay), Brazil (chapter 13, by Wendy Hunter), Chile (chapter 14, by Kenneth Roberts), and Uruguay (chapter 15, by Jorge Lanzaro). We also include a chapter on Peru (chapter 16, by Maxwell Cameron), which shares features in common with the other Andean cases but is nevertheless an outlier to the regional trend of leftist victories. The Peruvian case thus helps us identify the factors that have prevented other countries from joining the left turn. Taken together, these contributions shed new light on the condi-

tions that brought the Left to power, as well as those that have shaped what the Left does with that power. It is to these questions that we now turn.

NOTES

1. In Ecuador, Lucio Gutiérrez was also elected president in 2002 on a leftist platform and with the support of leftist political groups, but he subsequently governed on the right. Presidents such as Álvaro Colom in Guatemala and Hipólito Mejía in the Dominican Republic also claimed leftist credentials, but given the ambiguities of these cases, we do not treat them here as part of the left turn.

2. Examples include the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Bolivia, the Democratic Left (ID) in Ecuador, the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) in the Dominican Republic, Democratic Action (AD) in Venezuela, and the National Liberation Party (PLN) in Costa Rica. Each of these parties reversed course after winning the presidency and implemented policies that were considerably to the right of their campaign platforms (see Stokes 2001).

3. As discussed subsequently, however, the Morales government may adopt populist tendencies to the extent that it comes to control popular mobilization from above, thus stripping it of its autonomous character.

4. The U.S. government's embrace of the 2002 coup attempt against Hugo Chávez is an obvious exception.

5. See Castañeda 2006, 33, 28–30; Ramírez Gallegos 2006, 33; Mayorga 2007, 22; Rodríguez-Gavarito, Barrett, and Chávez 2008, 9–10; Baker and Greene 2011. Susan Stokes 2009 offers a somewhat distinct explanation of the link between neoliberalism and the left turn. Stokes argues that because economic openness brings greater insecurity, it generates public demands for greater social spending. In the 1990s, most Latin American governments opened their economies while simultaneously scaling back the public sector. This triggered increased public demands for social spending in the early 2000s, which translated into votes for the Left.

6. There is no clear-cut relationship between left success and either the depth or the effectiveness of market-oriented reforms. The Left won in Chile, where market reforms were consolidated and generated sustained economic growth; in Argentina and Bolivia, where radical reforms achieved some initial success but later plunged the economies back into crisis; and in Ecuador and Venezuela, where reforms were only haltingly implemented because of widespread political resistance.

7. This was the case in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Peru. See Stokes 2001; Weyland 2002.

8. Among the 14, we include the case of Chile, where the presidency passed—albeit within the governing coalition—from the Christian Democrats to the Socialists. Only in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay did governing parties retain the presidency between 1998 and 2004.

9. Although it has a different development trajectory, given its origins as a revolutionary movement, the FMLN in El Salvador could also be placed in this category.

10. Compare the PT described in Keck 1992 with that in Hunter 2010 and chapter 13 (by Hunter) in this volume.

11. A left-leaning former Catholic bishop, Lugo was a personalistic outsider whose candidacy was backed by a diverse coalition of parties and social movements opposed to the long-governing Colorado Party (Lambert 2008). His coalition included Paraguay's most established opposition party, the Authentic Radical Liberal Party.

12. The MAS was not an entirely new party. A predecessor organization, Asamblea Soberanía de los Pueblos (ASP), was created in 1995 but fared poorly in elections (chapter 10). Prior to the 2002 election, the major social actors within the ASP, led by Morales, took the mantle of the MAS, which had previously been a marginal political party.

13. Governments that did not adopt significant redistributive social policies, such as the García government in Peru, are not scored as left.