The Success of the Left in Latin America

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To my mother and father,

and to Alvaro
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Acción Democrática</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Alianza Patriótica por el Cambio</td>
</tr>
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<td>APRA</td>
<td>Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana</td>
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<td>BNES</td>
<td>Brazil’s 2002 National Election Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>COPEI</td>
<td>Comité de Órganización Política Electoral Independiente</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP-FA</td>
<td>Encuentro Progresista–Frente Amplio</td>
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<td>FA</td>
<td>Frente Amplio</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDN</td>
<td>Frente Democrático Nacional</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMLN</td>
<td>Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional</td>
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<td>FSLN</td>
<td>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</td>
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<tr>
<td>IADB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>Import Substitution Industrialization</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>Movimiento al Socialismo</td>
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<td>MVR</td>
<td>Movimiento Quinta República</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Nuevo Espacio</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>Partido de Acción Nacional</td>
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x Abbreviations

PC  Partido Colorado
PFL  Partido do Frente Liberal
PGP  Partido por el Gobierno del Pueblo
PI  Partido Independiente
PLN  Partido Liberación Nacional
PMDB  Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
PMS  Partido Mexicano Socialista
PN  Partido Nacional
PRD  Partido Revolucionario Democrático
PRI  Partido Revolucionario Institucional
PRT  Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
PSDB  Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira
PT  Partido dos Trabalhadores
PUSC  Partido Unidad Social Cristiana
SRI  Structural Reform Index
UNE  Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza
VRL  Vote-Revealed Leftism
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Why, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, have so many Latin American countries elected governments that identify themselves with the ideological Left? This is a question for which journalists, political analysts, and political scientists have sought explanations. The most common ones suggest this shift is a backlash against the neoliberal economic model implemented in the 1980s and 1990s. Others have pointed out that the primary factor is a need for change. Popular discontent with traditional parties unable to solve the problems of poverty, corruption, and inequality, it is argued, has impelled Latin Americans to vote for political parties that are perceived as being more likely to deliver a better standard of living. But it may not be that simple. Alternative arguments question the very existence of a movement toward the Left. And the differences among left-wing governments may be more significant than their similarities.

The Success of the Left in Latin America is the first book that disentangles these arguments. It does so by answering three questions: (1) Is the success of leftist parties something new and general in the region? (2) What particular features of market-oriented economic reforms, and what economic and political conditions, have benefited left-leaning parties? (3) Why are Latin Americans voting for left-oriented parties? Is their vote expressing a policy mandate or an outcome mandate?

My central argument is that the recent rise of leftist parties in Latin America has come about as a result of voters punishing political parties
that were unable to improve the economic well-being of their electorates. Left-of-center parties took advantage of this popular discontent and capitalized on social and economic dissatisfaction because they were untainted, that is, outside the governing coalitions and in the opposition. Moreover, the electoral possibilities of success for leftist parties depend on the number of “untainted opposition” parties available in the political system. In countries like Brazil and Uruguay, where leftist parties embody the only untainted opposition, it was easier to capitalize on popular discontent than in Mexico, where a party on the Right also represented an untainted opposition.

This book demonstrates that greater levels of market reforms did not produce more votes for political parties on the Left. Rather than neoliberal economic reforms, the key macro variable is unemployment. Left-leaning parties in Latin America increase their electoral chances when unemployment is high. In other words, Latin Americans are less policy oriented than outcome oriented, and rather than ideologically concerned about neoliberal policies, they care about economic results.

In addition to explaining the recent electoral success of leftist parties, *The Success of the Left in Latin America* questions a predominant scholarly preconception that depicts Latin Americans as random and unpredictable voters. The results of recent elections indicate that Latin American electorates are capable of holding politicians accountable by voting against those parties that did not provide what was expected and rewarding those in which they still believe.

The idea for this book began in a graduate seminar taught by Mitchell Seligson at the University of Pittsburgh in 2002. The main purpose of that course was to teach students how to think, write, and develop good research ideas. At that moment, the movement of Latin America to the Left was a new phenomenon, and my idea to study it was severely criticized. However, history and the decisions of Latin Americans transformed that small ideological movement into a very large one, and I continued to refine my arguments and hypotheses, eventually transforming them into a dissertation proposal. At that stage, I was also very fortunate...
to have an excellent dissertation committee that helped me through the research process. So, first of all, I want to thank the four members of the committee: Barry Ames, John Markoff, Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, and Mitchell Seligson. They have been inspiring teachers, sage advisers, and incisive and constructive critics.

Several professors, colleagues, and friends provided insightful feedback at particular stages of this project and read specific chapters. In particular, I wish to thank María José Alvarez, Juan Ariel Bogliaccini, Fernanda Boidi, Luis E. González, Mark Hallerberg, Germán Lodola, Mary Malone, Juan Carlos Rodríguez-Raga, and Margit Tavits for their suggestions, criticisms, and encouragement. James McCann took on the task of reviewing the micro-level chapter and provided insightful comments. Matthew Daniels’s editorial assistance did much to make my English more readable. A large component of this book is based on public opinion data, and I owe a debt of gratitude to those who gave me access to the data and in some cases helped me to reconstruct codebooks: James McCann, Alejandro Poiré, Barry Ames, Lucio Renno, Michael Coppedge, Adriana Raga and Luis E. González of CIFRA, Agustín Canzani and Ignacio Zuasnábar of EquiposMori, and Rachel Meneguello and Simone Aranha of CESOP/Unicamp.

Part of the data analyzed in the book was collected thanks to a Graduate Student Field Research Grant provided by the Center of Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. The idea started in Pittsburgh, but the book was mainly written in Uruguay, while I was working at the Universidad de Montevideo and Eileen Hudson was chair of the department. I am deeply grateful to her for generating such an open and creative place to work in and for her inspiring friendship. Colleagues and students at the Instituto de Ciencia Política at Universidad de la República have listened to my ideas and provided me with insightful feedback.

At the University of Notre Dame Press, I thank Stephen Little and Rebecca R. DeBoer, who guided me through the publishing process; Sheila Berg, for her amazing editing of the text; and the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript, who offered invaluable comments and helped me to “punch the main story home.” All the aforementioned deserve my acknowledgment. Any remaining errors are my own.
Last, but not least, I want to thank Elsa Velasco and Luis Queirolo for trusting in me at all times and for pushing me to go further. They have been with me from the start and never tire of being loving parents. Álvaro Cristiani deserves special acknowledgment; his unconditional support and patience during the writing of this book was fundamental for me, and his generosity in taking care of our main common enterprises, Antonia, Felipe, Josefina, and Juan Pedro, during so many working weekends is something for which I will always be grateful.

Latin America is a region still searching for alternatives to improve the life of its people. The evidence presented in this book indicates that the “leftist tide” could be one strategy for doing so. Regardless of whether the Left has come to stay or whether its influence wanes, it is hoped that during its predominance in the region it will help consolidate democracy and improve living conditions for all Latin Americans.
INTRODUCTION

The Rise of Leftist Parties in Latin America

The Existence of a Leftist Trend

Since the final years of the twentieth century, many Latin American countries have elected governments that identified themselves with the ideological Left. In 1999 Hugo Chávez, a former participant in a plot to overthrow the government, was elected president of Venezuela after campaigning against market-oriented reforms and promising to upend the old social order and improve the lives of the poor. Brazil also veered toward the Left with the victory of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) candidate, Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, in the 2002 general elections. Lula was reelected in the second round of the 2006 election. The permanence of the PT was tested in the 2010 election: Lula was not allowed to compete for reelection again, but Brazilians voted for his political protégée, Dilma Rousseff, who became the first female president of the country. In Argentina a left-wing political faction of the Peronist Party headed by Néstor Kirchner won the 2003 election; and again in 2007 the party’s candidate, this time Kirchner’s wife, Cristina Fernández, won the presidency. In neighboring Uruguay, the Frente Amplio, a left-leaning coalition party that has steadily increased its electoral base since its founding in 1971, finally gained the presidency in 2004. The Frente Amplio was reelected in 2009, and José Mujica, a former member
of the Tupamaros urban guerrilla group, became president. Chile was governed by Concertación, a Center-Left coalition, from its return to democracy in 1989 until 2010, when a right-of-center coalition headed by Sebastián Piñera won the election. Prior to 2010, the Chilean government alternated between social democrats and socialists. The Concertación party’s candidate, Michelle Bachelet, a member of the Socialist Party who campaigned in favor of a more egalitarian income distribution, also won the 2005 presidential election. Also in 2005, Bolivians elected Evo Morales, the presidential candidate of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and an important leader of the coca producers’ union, giving him the reins of one of the poorest and most unequal countries in Latin America. In Mexico, Manuel López Obrador, the presidential candidate for the Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD), lost the election held in July 2006 by less than 1 percent of the votes in a very controversial contest. At the end of 2006, Nicaragua and Ecuador chose leftist political parties to lead their governments. Daniel Ortega, president of Nicaragua from 1985 to 1990 and leader of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), was reelected in November 2006. In Ecuador, Rafael Correa won the presidency in the second round of the election with the support of leftist political parties and indigenous movements. More recently, Alvaro Colom and his Center-Left party, Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (UNE), won the 2007 election in Guatemala; and in the 2008 presidential election in Paraguay, Fernando Lugo, candidate of Alianza Patriótica por el Cambio (APC), a coalition that includes leftist parties and social organizations, defeated the Colorado Party, which had governed for sixty-one years. The last country that elected a left-of-center government is El Salvador. After several years during which the right-wing Alianza Republicana Nacional, known as Arena, had been in charge of the government, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) won the 2009 election, bringing to the presidency Mauricio Funes, the first FMLN candidate who is not a former guerrilla commander.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was possible to question the very existence of a movement toward the Left, as countries such as Colombia and Mexico had elected governments that positioned
themselves closer to the ideological Right. After a decade, however, almost two-thirds of the region is under the “pink tide” (fig. 0.1), a term used by *New York Times* reporter Larry Rohter in 2005 to express the idea that a diluted trend leftward is sweeping the continent. Rohter, describing the success of the leftist Frente Amplio in Uruguay, refers to ideological changes in the region as “not so much a red tide as a pink one” (Rohter 2005). There is no doubt that, pink or red, most of the governments elected during the first ten years of the century are located on the left of the ideological spectrum.

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The movement of Latin America toward the Left led journalists, political analysts, and political scientists to look for explanations. The most widespread of these explanations suggests that Latin Americans’ vote for leftist political parties is a backlash against the neoliberal model implemented in the region during the 1980s and 1990s. The Economist stated this argument as follows: “Rightly or wrongly, voters blamed the slowdown on the free-market reforms known as the Washington Consensus. As happens in democracies, they started to vote for the opposition—which tended to be on the left” (Economist, May 20, 2006). BBC News explained that “another common element of the ‘pink tide’ is a clean break with what was known at the outset of the 1990s as the ‘Washington consensus,’ the mixture of open markets and privatization pushed by the United States that failed to narrow the gap between the rich and millions of poor” (BBC News, March 2, 2005). The media usually make this claim in the aftermath of an election won by a leftist candidate. After the 2009 election in El Salvador, the New York Times reported that “El Salvador joined a growing number of Latin American countries that have elected leftist governments. In part, the left-wing victories reflect broad disappointment with the failure of free-market policies to bring significant economic growth and reduce the region’s yawning inequality” (New York Times, March 16, 2009). The neoliberal response argument was popular not only among journalists and political analysts but also within academia (Arnson and Perales 2007; Baker and Greene 2011; Castañeda 2006; Hershberg and Rosen 2006; Lora, Panizza, and Quispe-Agnoli 2004; Roberts 2008; Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez 2005).

However, this is not the only answer. Others have pointed out that the primary factor behind this shift to the Left is a need for change. Popular discontent with traditional parties unable to solve the problems of poverty, corruption, and inequality led Latin Americans to vote for political parties perceived as being more likely to deliver a better standard of living (Arnold and Samuels 2011; Bruhn 2006; Castañeda and Navia 2007; Cleary 2006; Levitsky and Roberts 2011; Murillo, Oliveros, and Vaishnav 2011). To put it simply, Latin America’s shift to the Left is rooted less in ideology than in a desire to punish incumbents for poor economic performance.
This book disentangles truth from falsehood in each of the former two arguments. It examines the following questions: What is the real impact that market-oriented economic reforms have had on the vote for leftist parties in Latin America? Are Latin Americans voting against the Washington Consensus and in favor of the Left depending on their ideological stances? Or, on the contrary, is the current preference for leftist parties the result of voters' discontent with traditional parties and poor economic performance? The two arguments can be summarized as follows: Are Latin Americans policy oriented or outcome oriented? Is the so-called pink tide the result of a “policy mandate” or a “performance mandate” (Baker and Greene 2011)?

Not all countries in the region moved to the Left after the implementation of economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. The Dominican Republic is an example of a country that greatly liberalized its economy but does not see leftist parties in an ascending phase. In contrast, Uruguay is one of the least reformed countries in Latin America, yet the Left won the 2004 presidential election and was reelected in 2009. Taking into consideration that most Latin American countries implemented neoliberal reforms, a central question is which particular features of these reforms, and which economic and political conditions, have benefited left-leaning parties’ electoral performance. Are purely economic outcomes, such as inflation or unemployment, more important than market-oriented reforms in understanding the vote for leftist parties? If so, the election of leftist governments in the region would respond to a “performance mandate,” and it is interesting to explore under what political conditions economic factors are relevant in the movement of some countries to the Left.

Macro factors, however, tell only part of the story; the increase in votes for the Left may be better explained by analyzing the micro foundations of voting behavior. The perception of economic reforms, or opinions about them, may not be related to the actual level of reforms. It is possible that, contrary to conventional wisdom, in countries where fewer reforms have been implemented inhabitants are more tired of them and consequently change their voting behavior in favor of political parties that traditionally oppose efficiency-oriented policies. In the view of many
scholars of voting behavior and public opinion (e.g., Yeric and Todd 1989), citizens’ perceptions are what really matter. Individuals make political decisions based on the way they perceive reality rather than on any objective reality. Or to put it differently, voters usually interpret reality depending on how politicians frame it. As a consequence, economic assessments can by no means be considered objective. Citizens can judge the country’s economic performance negatively even though macro indicators show that the economy is doing fine. The same may happen with Latin Americans’ perceptions of neoliberal economic reforms. In order to test whether perceptions about reforms are more important for understanding the vote for the Left than the actual level of reforms, it is necessary to run an analysis at a micro rather than a macro level.

Latin Americans may vote Left because they want more state intervention in the economy, a more egalitarian economic distribution, or more investment in social policies. After a decade of neoliberal economic reforms, they may be claiming that it’s time for a change and consequently may behave in a policy-oriented way. Alternatively, it is possible to argue that voters are not policy oriented but care only about outcomes and are voting Left because the neoliberal model failed to deliver sustainable economic development and overcome the endemic problems of unemployment, inequality, and poverty. These two explanations are not incompatible; both can be true. Latin Americans may be voting Left because they do not want more market-friendly economic policies and also because they are punishing incumbent parties for poor economic performance.

Granted, not all countries in the region (or all citizens in every country) are voting for parties on the Left. It is also correct to say that not all the governments usually identified as “leftist” are the same. Some are closer to the center or could be considered social democratic, while others tend to the radical Left. Some have a more populist style, while others represent an institutional Left. Taking into account the favorable evidence for the existence of the “pink tide,” several scholars have focused on trying to understand if the differences between left-wing governments are more significant than the similarities. It is common to read that Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay belong to a moderate left or “right left,” which is “modern, open-minded, reformist, and internationalist, . . . springs, paradoxically, from the hard-core left of the past,” and is close to a social
democracy; while Bolivia, Ecuador, and especially Venezuela, are regarded as a “radical,” “populist,” or “wrong left,” born of “the great tradition of Latin American populism,” and “nationalist, strident and close-minded” (Castañeda 2006: 28). Recent classifications have become more sophisticated and have sorted leftist governments into four categories: “electoral professional left,” “populist machines,” “populist left,” and “movement left,” depending on the institutionalization of political parties and how political authority is managed (Levitsky and Roberts 2011).

I argue, however, that despite their differences, the countries in the region share certain characteristics that make the analysis of all the cases as a group conceptually relevant. In particular, left-leaning parties, or “left-of-center” parties, as Panizza (2005) called them, in Latin America can be described by their emphasis on economic redistribution, poverty reduction, and social policies in general. Rather than get into a discussion that compares leftist parties in Latin America, I discuss below the current meaning of the Left-Right ideological dimension in the region and define what a left-leaning political party is for this study.

The Left-Right Ideological Dimension in Latin America

There is debate over the validity of a Left-Right ideological dimension after the fall of the Soviet bloc. Those who argue that the ideological dimension is no longer relevant point to the crisis of ideologies, the lack of a true antagonism in the way problems can be stated, the possibility of a Third Way, and the loss of descriptive value that the dimension has undergone. Because the existence of the Left depends on the existence of the Right, and vice versa, the breakup of the Soviet bloc undermined the Left and consequently endangered the whole dimension (Bobbio 1995).

If the validity of the ideological dimension has been disputed around the world, the sense of unease is even greater in Latin America where scholars have argued that voters make limited use of ideological labels (Echegaray 2005; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Since Converse’s 1964 article, there has been a great deal of debate about the extent to which citizens rely on ideology when voting and organize their political opinions around the ideological dimension. The same doubts are cast regarding
the importance of ideology in predicting Latin Americans' voting behavior. Echegaray (2005) considers ideological clues an irrelevant source of guidance for Latin American voters, but he does not empirically test this contention.

Contrary to Echegaray, I argue that the ideological dimension is meaningful in Latin America; it represents an important methodological and analytical tool for examining politics in the region. Around eight in ten Latin Americans were able to place themselves on the ideological spectrum in 2010 (AmericasBarometer Dataset 2010). This number varies depending on the country; the labels “Left” and “Right” mean more to Uruguayans and Venezuelans than to Argentineans. But, as a first appraisal, ideological thinking is part of Latin Americans' political behavior, and there is empirical research pointing to ideology as a relevant voting clue (Cameron 1994; Carreirão 2002b; Singer 2002; Torcal and Mainwaring 2003). Electorates use the Left-Right, or Liberal-Conservative in the United States, continuum as a shortcut to processing political information and making their electoral decisions.

Voters might be highly ideological (Colomer 2005), but this does not mean that they are refined or consistent in their understanding of ideology (Zechmeister 2006; Arnold and Samuels 2011). It is not necessary to have a high level of political sophistication to vote ideologically. On the contrary, ideology can be understood in its weak meaning as a heuristic tool used by citizens to simplify information, evaluate political alternatives, and make political decisions more efficiently and precisely (Downs 1957; Sartori 1976). In Latin America, ideology, mainly understood in its weak meaning, is a relevant determinant of voting behavior (Singer 2002; Zechmeister 2006).

Moreover, previous research has shown that elite groups and citizens are linked by ideological commitments (Luna and Zechmeister 2005b). Country differences are also relevant in this respect. Chile and Uruguay present higher levels of ideological congruency between voters and parties, while Ecuador ranks very low. Regardless of these differences, this research indicates that ideology is indeed a relevant factor for understanding political representation in Latin America.

The research on the meaning of the Left-Right ideological dimension is more extensive in Western Europe and the United States (Fuchs
and Klingemann 1990; Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Kitschelt and Hellemans 1990) than in Latin America. However, recent studies have made substantive progress in determining what Left and Right means in the region (Castañeda and Morales 2008; Luna 2004a; Luna and Zechmeister 2005a, 2005b; Zechmeister 2006; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010). For example, Luna and Zechmeister (2005a) have found that what defines the placement of parties and electorates on the Left is a strong emphasis on deepening democracy, the defense of state intervention in the economy, a secular profile on religious and moral topics, and a profound concern for social issues.

Apart from these common characteristics, there is no doubt that the meaning of being a left-leaning political party varies among countries and even within the same country. For example, Castañeda (1993) classifies the Latin American Left into four categories: the traditional communist parties, the populist left, political and militaristic organizations, and reformers. Levitsky and Roberts (2011) use a categorization similar to that already mentioned: electoral professional left, populist machines, populist left, and movement left. Each of them has a particular set of defining features.

Leftist parties also differ over time. The breakdown of the Soviet bloc had an enormous impact on the way in which leftist parties positioned themselves in the ideological dimension in Latin American and elsewhere. In Latin America, scholars have distinguished two moments of the Left. The first one covers the period from the end of World War II to 1990; it is highly influenced by the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the Allende government in Chile from 1970 to 1973, and the revolutionary victory in Nicaragua in 1979. The second moment starts with the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990 and the collapse of the communist world (Castañeda 1993; Roberts 1998; Rodríguez Garavito, Barret, and Chavez 2005). Regardless of the difficulty of finding the main characteristics of left-leaning parties in Latin America, the task is necessary for the conceptual clarity of this study.

Starting from their most general feature, leftist parties emphasize equality. Bobbio (1995) argues that equality is the only principle capable of differentiating Left from Right regardless of time. The distinction between Right and Left originated in the National Assembly of the French
Republic, where those representatives who were more egalitarian and radical placed themselves on the left and those who were more conservative, supporters of the aristocratic order, sat on the right. The defense of policies that improve equality among citizens is a trait that leftist parties share.

A second characteristic is the emphasis placed on deepening democracy. Leftist parties want to increase the accountability of elected representatives, control political corruption, strengthen popular participation, augment popular control over collective decision making, and enhance the use of direct democracy mechanisms (Castañeda 1993; Roberts 1998; Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez 2005). This position vis-à-vis democracy represents a change in Latin American leftist parties before and after 1990. Before 1990, most of them dismissed democracy in favor of revolution. As Roberts points out, “Two responses to formal democratic institutions predominated in the Latin American left: outright rejection because democracy was an instrument of bourgeois class domination, or rationalized participation on instrumental grounds” (1998: 18). Today leftist parties in the region have reclaimed democracy as an integral component of their project. This change came about partly because of the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the failure of revolutionary means and partly because of the traumatic experience of dictatorships (Castañeda 1993; Roberts 1998; Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez 2005).

The debt crisis that the region suffered in the early 1980s and the way in which the neoliberal revolution undermined state-led models of economic development (Roberts 1998; Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez 2005) have led Latin American leftist parties to agree that the state, by itself, cannot manage the economy and that it is also necessary to respect the rules of the market. There are no recipes indicating the proportion of state to market intervention the combination should have, but it is clear that both components, income redistribution and correct market operations, are necessary to reduce inequalities and to improve competitiveness, social spending, and the control of inflation (Castañeda 1993). Leftist parties tend to favor state intervention in order to provide public services, redistribute income, and articulate social policies for equalizing social opportunities while keeping fiscal accounts under
control (Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez 2005; Luna and Zechmeister 2005a).

In conclusion, there are some commonalities that make leftist parties substantially different from parties on the Right, or even from centrist parties. In this study Latin American political parties are classified as Left or Right following Coppedge (1997). Right parties are “1) Parties that target heirs of the traditional elite of the nineteenth century without moderating their discourse to appeal to middle- or lower-class voters; 2) Parties that employ a fascist or neofascist discourse; and 3) Parties sponsored by a present or former military government, as long as they have a conservative (organicist, authoritarian, elitist, looking to the past) message and are not primarily personalist vehicles for particular authoritarian leaders” (7–8). Center-Right parties are “parties that target middle- or lower-class voters in addition to elite voters by stressing cooperation with the private sector, public order, clean government, morality, or the priority of growth over distribution” (8). Center parties are “1) Parties that stress classic political liberalism—broad political participation, civic virtue, the rule of law, human rights, or democracy—without a salient social or economic agenda; and 2) Governing parties whose policies are so divided between positions both to the left and to the right of center that no orientation that is mostly consistent between elections is discernible” (8).

Center-Left parties are “parties that stress justice, equality, social mobility, or the complementary distribution and accumulation in a way intended not to alienate middle- or upper-class voters.” Left parties are “parties that employ Marxist ideology or rhetoric and stress the priority of distribution over accumulation and/or the exploitation of the working class by capitalists and imperialists and advocate a strong role for the state to correct social and economic injustices. They may consider violence an appropriate form of struggle but not necessarily. They do not worry about alienating middle- and upper-class voters who are not already socialist intellectuals” (8).

In addition to these categories, Coppedge classifies parties that do not fit in the Left-Right spectrum as “personalist” or “other bloc.” Other bloc parties are “any parties that represent an identifiable ideology, program, principle, region, interest, or social group that cannot be classified
in the left-right or Christian-secular terms.” *Personalist* parties are those that “1) base their primary appeal on the charisma, authority, or efficacy of their leader rather than on any principles or platforms, which are too vague or inconsistent to permit a plausible classification of the party in any other way, or they are 2) Independents; or are 3) unusually heterogeneous electoral fronts formed to back a candidate” (8–9).

Two remarks should be made. First, one of Coppedge’s criteria for defining a Left party is that “they do not worry about alienating middle- and upper-class voters who are not already socialist intellectuals.” This criterion was relaxed during the 1990s and 2000s because the implementation of the neoliberal model had weakened the organized labor movement and other traditional social bases of leftist parties and led them to appeal to broader electorates in order to increase their chances to govern. Second, although Coppedge’s classification is far from perfect and can be easily criticized, it is by far the most complete, systematic, and exhaustive ideological classification of Latin American parties available. Moreover, a classification of this type should be broad enough to encompass changes in ideologies over time but also needs enough precision to be relevant. Coppedge’s classification fulfills both criteria.

As a result, in this study a leftist party is understood according to Coppedge’s definition of a Left and a Center-Left party: it stresses justice, equality, social mobility or complementary distribution and accumulation in a way intended not to alienate middle- or upper-class voters; or it employs Marxist ideology or rhetoric and stresses the priority of distribution over accumulation and/or the exploitation of the working class by capitalists and imperialists and advocates a strong role for the state to correct social and economic injustices. This definition matches the characteristics stated previously as the defining features of the Left in Latin America.

Macro and Micro Explanations of Voting Left

This book combines macro and micro perspectives to explain the recent rise of leftist parties in Latin America. By looking at these two levels of analysis, it is possible to discuss the theoretical connections between them.