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A New socialist world in Latin America?

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A NEW SOCIALIST WORLD IN LATIN AMERICA?

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Latin American Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2007

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

A New Socialist World in Latin America?

by

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During the last decade, the left-turn, or pink tide, in Latin America has caused many scholars to seek to explain what has fueled the political gains of leftist parties in this region. One of the main challenges is to try and define what constitutes a leftist party or a left agenda. There is a wide spectrum when it comes to classifying left-right placement ideologies and the distinction may be based on both economic and social values' differences. This study will examine a number of competing theories concerning left-right placement of three case studies: Bolivia, Venezuela, and Colombia. These three case studies were chosen based on their current left-right ideological placement. My original intent was to have five countries that varied on the left-right spectrum but in the essence of time, three case studies were ultimately chosen. Brazil would have been a case study to analyze but the indigenous movement in Bolivia has made significant progress and I felt this case study was worth analyzing at a deeper level. Drawing upon data provided by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and the case study literature, I examine the influence of socioeconomic and ethnic cleavages, economic ideology, and evaluations of economic performance.

I found all of the theories were supported by some of the statistical models; however, not all of the variables were applicable in each country case study. In the

Bolivian model, most of the variables were significant in explaining left-right placement. The two key theories that were applicable in this case study was social structural cleavage theory, pertaining to the indigenous variable and social values theory (worker, church attendance, education, and income). For the Venezuelan model there were two variables that reflected to be significant (church attendance and age). Again, the social cleavage and values theory was pertinent to this case study. Lastly for the Colombian model, the four variables that were significant were public ownership, worker, secondary education, and age. The Social values theory was also pertinent in this case study. In addition, the case studies of Bolivia and Venezuela supported the economic voting theory and institutional decay by demonstrating when the right failed to produce economic benefits with the neoliberal agenda, the citizens were more in favor of voting in a left party regime.

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CHAPTER 1

WHY STUDY THE RISE OF THE LEFT?

After the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many scholars assumed that communist and socialist regimes would decline. The expectation was that democracy and free market societies would flourish in many regions, including Latin America. Realization soon set in that this would not be an easy task to accomplish. During the 1990s in Latin America, there was constant instability which included economic crises, corruption scandals, attempted coups, and guerilla warfare. Subsequently, toward the end of the 1990s, policy failures and general discontent led some leaders to quickly seize on this momentum to “turn left”. Drawing on the framework of James Petras (1997), Lievesley and Ludlam (2009:10) identified three left-wing political waves¹. In the 1990s, the third wave stemmed from new social movements that emerged on the scene. Some scholars agree and suggest that a new wave of left-wing regimes began around the year 2000.

The new ‘pink tide’, as many have pointed out, had been slowly emerging in Latin America but quickly gained momentum within the last five years. As of 2008, 11 out of 18 major Latin American countries were governed by leftist presidents (Stokes 2009). In other words, as Cameron and Hersgberg (2010) note, approximately 60 percent of Latin Americans are being governed by the left.

¹The first wave occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, the ‘new left’ of *fidelistas* (named after Cuba’s Fidel Castro) and Moscow’s communist parties; the second wave occurred during an era of authoritarian regimes.

Some scholars discuss this as a new ‘red tide’, while others classify this era as a ‘pink tide’ since the regimes in power are not completely socialist. The new leftist parties became better skilled at broadening their appeal to the masses, which leads one to wonder: what would explain the recent electoral success of leftist parties in Latin America? A related question is: who votes for leftist parties? Castañeda and Morales (2008) provided some insight to these questions. They stated the appeal to voters beyond the left proved decisive to the left attaining power in many countries. By 2005 the principal constituent base that made up a majority of the leftist governments was voters from the center. A more detailed breakdown of specific voter traits will be analyzed and discussed further in chapter three.

There does appear to be a common thread amongst the countries that now have a left regime in power and how they came to power. The first commonality was the mobilization of political and economic discontent during the 1998-2002 regional economic crises. The second commonality was how the left was able to bring together “a broad, socially heterogeneous electoral constituency in the context of fragmented civil societies, usually drawing on highly segmented mobilization and electoral strategies to attract different types of (disenchanted) voters” (Cameron and Hershberg: 24). This included ethnic appeals in some cases (such as Bolivia). Lastly, we find the commonality in the leader himself. Being charismatic and having the ability to bring together a vast array of constituencies was a key factor to the electoral success of the left (Cameron and Hershberg 2010). This allowed the left to unseat the current “right-wing” or centrist party and bring about some major policy changes in some countries. However, many

scholars do point out that there is no one clear cut reason why the left has fared so well in the last several years.

What is even more striking about the left coming into power is that left parties have assumed power constitutionally and not via military coups or other unlawful manners. Since these leftist governments were “democratically” voted in, many countries, especially the United States, have difficulty questioning the legitimacy of leftist government. In the absence of strong opposition from the U.S., leftist governments have increased dramatically in Latin America. This has reduced the level of influence of the United States in the region. Since the nineteenth century, the United States has been considered “big brother” to Latin America ever since the Monroe Doctrine has come into play. The Monroe Doctrine was presented to Congress by President James Monroe in 1823 and essentially stated to the European nations that the U.S was in charge of the Western Hemisphere and would not allow further colonization by the Europeans. The United States government has used the Monroe Doctrine, and other policies (e.g. Alliance for Progress), to its benefit whenever it felt threatened or its investments were vulnerable within a specific country.

Significance of Thesis

Studying the rise of the left may improve our understanding of policy and diplomacy within this region. Furthermore, on a more international scale, how will the rise of the left affect diplomacy of the United States in other regions? The United States has been the hegemonic power for many years, but with its attention being focused on other parts of the world (e.g. Middle East and Central Asia), the left has been able to

make political progress, or as many scholars suggest, a contemporary pink tide is occurring. The control the U.S. had over Latin America has broken down over the years and has allowed new agendas to take hold within the different Latin American countries. Robert Cox calls this “a shift in the constellation of ideas, institutions, and material capabilities within the region” (1996). The electoral success of the left, and the reduced capability of the U.S. to counter those governments will also aid in implementing “...policies [that] require a new balancing act that can address popular dissatisfaction and social equity as fully integrated issues, and in that light, economic and trade policies are central to the very identity of governments in current discussions in the region” (Castañeda and Morales: 45).

In other words, leftist governments might change policies on trade and foreign direct investment. Leftist governments generally impose more restrictions on trade and investment. However, many governments of the left understand the necessity of not isolating their country but integrating themselves more into the world economy. Whether it is aligning with a certain trade bloc or with individual countries, the left is not looking for complete isolation. Two principal trading blocs are Mercosur (Free Trade Association of the Americas) and ALBA (the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas). The purpose of these types of trading blocs is to provide a platform for collective negotiation on a global scale. The left might seek to strengthen these blocs in order to improve its position with the rest of the world. Additionally, the different policies pursued by leftist governments are more socially driven which encompass poverty alleviation, education, and social welfare. The ALBA trading bloc, which is highly publicized by Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez, also seeks redistribution.

“Participation in ALBA involves exchange of goods and services according to pricing schemes that are socially determined rather than set by market mechanisms....this provides significant opportunities for reducing poverty and inequality in relatively underdeveloped countries that form part of the pink tide” (Cameron and Hershberg:239).

The business community has been interested in understanding the electoral success of the left in Latin America. Currently there is a push for development of emerging markets in the region. For instance, some credit card companies are heavily marketing to customers in this region and trying to expand their branches in key cities. The threat to the U.S. could be worrisome if multiple players are engaged simultaneously in an anti-west agenda. If multiple countries in this region, along with countries in the Middle East (e.g. Iran), and (possibly) China, were to establish a united front against the United States, this could bring about a punctuated equilibrium. For many years the United States has benefited from its own personal agenda and dominant stance in Latin America, but a “punctuation” or rapid change could occur if there is a paradigm shift between key countries. With the rise of the left, new alliances have formed, which cause concern to the United States and the business community. Venezuela and Bolivia are a good example of this alliance and have been in talks with Iran to build upon additional alliances. “...Key features of an evolving international context shape the character of progressive forces throughout the region as well as the opportunities and constraints that they encounter” (Cameron and Hershberg: 235). In addition, the threat to businesses could cost them millions of invested dollars if a socialist government decided to expropriate or drive them out of their country. I anticipate my findings will help address

some of the gaps in the literature by providing significant insight regarding the cause and effects of the rising left.

Organization of Chapters

The organization of this thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter pertains to the introduction and the core research questions I seek to answer. My research questions revolve around what would explain the recent electoral success of leftist parties in Latin America and who votes for these leftist parties? Additionally, I will discuss the scholarly significance of these questions and the possible ramifications the left might initiate in Latin America. Some of these consequences could include policy and diplomacy transformations to many governments that are ruled by the left. The second chapter will provide detailed information regarding the various definitions of the left and how scholars are trying to create more precise and specific definitions in order to correctly categorize the spectrum of left governments. I will also provide an in-depth analysis of the various theories that have explained the rise of the left in Latin America. The four theories that have provided possible explanations are: economic voting, institutional decay, social structural cleavages (economic and ethnicity), and social values. The common threads among these theories will be analyzed as well as the variations among the four theories.

In chapter three, I will examine two cases, Venezuela and Bolivia, to analyze the variation in the electoral success in leftist regimes. As an alternative example of a non-leftist country, I chose Colombia, which varies on the value of the dependent and independent variables. Venezuela is classified as the 'radical left' due to the radical

agenda of President Hugo Chávez. In his own country, some consider him a dictator while others praise him for challenging U.S dominance of the Western Hemisphere and more importantly the social programs created for the poor citizens. Bolivia is classified as the ‘pragmatic left’ case, although some scholars suggest President Evo Morales teeters to a more ‘radical left’ on certain occasions. Since Morales is a close ally with Chávez, they tend to support each others’ agenda and policies which can have some very similar undertones.

In the Colombian case, I have sought to explain what reasons have occurred that have allowed Colombia to maintain a center-right government. Although Colombia has had internal issues with guerilla movements and drug trafficking, President Uribe remains focused on improving its national image and working closely with the United States. Studying left-right placement will allow me to strengthen my hypothesis by providing comprehensible causes why the left has made great strides since 2000 and indicate voter profiles that have favored the left. For these cases I am using individual left-right placement as my dependent variable and numerous measures for the independent variables. The chosen independent variables are: support for government ownership, education, gender, race (including the classification of indigenous), ideology, occupation, income, and church attendance. I will also further discuss the estimation technique and why I used ordered logistic regression for my analysis.

In chapter four I will present the quantitative analysis and model for left-right placement in each country. This will also include a voting model for presidential elections in each of the three cases. The case study comparison will present an in-depth qualitative analysis of the factors that explain the success (or failure) of left-wing parties

in elections. In addition, I will identify and discuss the common threads between the two left cases and the social dimension that affect the left-right placement. Furthermore, I will analyze why Colombia has maintained a center- right government amongst all the Latin American countries turning to the left. Finally, in chapter five I will summarize my findings and recommendations for further studies. I anticipate my research findings will provide significant insight on two levels. First, why has the left achieved electoral fortunes over the last decade? Secondly, who is the voting block that is keeping the left in office? Self-placement on the left is strongly associated with voting for a left-wing party. From my quantitative analysis I expect to verify if the consensus for the rise of the left is determined by economic performance. Additionally, I expect to find that support for the left is concentrated among voters who are young, less educated, and have low income.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLAINING LEFT-RIGHT SELF PLACEMENT AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE LEFT

Indicators of Left-Right Governments and Parties

As of 2009, 11 out of the 18 countries in Latin America were considered “left” (Stokes 2009), but how does one classify a “left” or “right” government? This has been a very complex question which in many respects can depend on personal interpretation. The historical understanding of a left or socialist government was highly associated with “socialism (for Lenin) or the lower stage of communism (for Marx) which called for revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state and class domination by the formerly exploited class” (Raby 2006, 63). At present, there are new definitions for a left or socialist government. However, current scholars have tried to come to a consensus on defining when a government is considered left or right and providing a base line of indicators. A very general and broad definition for a “left” classification is: the part of the spectrum that subscribes to ideas associated with socialism, social democracy and some forms of liberalism (O’Toole 2007, 346).

A second, more meticulous definition, comes from Castañeda (2006) who states “that current of thought, politics, and policy that stresses social improvements over macroeconomic orthodoxy, egalitarian distribution of wealth over its creation, sovereignty over international cooperation, democracy (at least when in opposition, if not necessarily once in power) over governmental effectiveness”. In other words, the parties that are considered more left tend to publicize their main goals as redistribution and reduction of inequalities (Lomnitz 2006, Wiesehomeier 2010, Cleary 2006).

The populist variant has not been a rising issue within Latin America since many left governments have been pragmatic, with the exception of a few countries (e.g. Venezuela). “Socialism, or at least an anti-capitalist political and social order, may be able to exist in one country or a group of countries for a significant period of time, but it will always be unstable and in constant tension with both external and internal capitalist pressures, and will require permanent popular initiative from below and a leadership in intimate contact with popular sentiments and initiatives” (Raby: 64). However, Schamis (2006) points out in his article that Castaneda’s distinctions between both lefts is a good foundation but further differentiation is needed to account for the various lefts that have emerged in Latin America. Since there are many variables to consider, one cannot classify the left into just one category. Nonetheless, it has not been an easy task to come up with a consensus for classification. Arditì (2008) also discusses the need for distinction of the various lefts for certain countries like the United States and its allies.

Referring to political intent, these two versions of the left can provide some type of guideline when it comes to foreign policy by providing some incentives to those who choose the pragmatic left and trying to isolate the countries who choose the populist left. However, this also becomes a dialogue as to what is considered “pragmatic” or “populist” when countries all over the world have different views. When considering what is populist, the United States and its allies have a similar view on what behavior is considered “populist”. Since the populist left is not looking to play by the rules with the United States, they are not greatly concerned with isolation but are more concerned with gaining power, controlling any natural resources in their country, and rejecting neoliberalism. “In this line of reasoning the shift to the left is viewed as a consequence of

failures of the neoliberal/liberal-democratic paradigm. Voters turned to the left out of their growing frustration and disappointment with representative democracy”

(Wiesehomeier:1).

What could have been some key events that allowed the left to thrive and flourish in a relatively short amount of time? Let me first discuss the economic instability most of Latin American had in the 1990s. During these times we saw such things occur as the peso crisis in Mexico (1994-1995), the East Asian crisis (1997), and the Russian crisis (1998). Economic hardships were felt throughout Latin America yet during these times the “right” continued to remain in control and the thought of the left taking over was nowhere in sight. There was also political instability resulting from attempted coups, corruption scandals, guerilla insurgencies, etc. During moments of instability and crises, some scholars have claimed people have a tendency of being very conservative and strongly supportive of the right². Since the 1990s were filled with economic, social, and political crises, this would explain the strong command of the right. However, by the early 2000s the economic, social and political aspects in many Latin American countries had improved and the citizens were more at ease and starting their trend to becoming less conservative (Castañeda and Morales 2008).

This opportunity became the left’s entrance onto the political scene and was thus able to build and broaden their constituencies. Not only did they broaden their

² An outlier country to this belief would be Venezuela-Chavez came to power during a period of crises. This will be further analyzed in the case study.

constituencies but they also broadened their message with similar rhetoric across Latin America. Some of the similar rhetoric for the left was a common platform referring to the rejection of neoliberalism and anti-imperialist rhetoric. The neoliberalist agenda was first introduced in Chile in the 1970s and subsequently in the rest of Latin America during most of the 1980s. Neoliberalism, also referred to as the “Washington Consensus”, entailed certain policy reforms the United States wanted other countries to follow. Ameringer (2009) provides a specific list to the neoliberal agenda as:

1. fiscal discipline (balanced budgets)
2. public expenditure priorities (controlled spending)
3. tax reform (broad-based, with enforcement)
4. financial liberalization (market-driven interest rates)
5. exchange rates (competitive)
6. trade liberalization (tariff reduction)
7. foreign direct investment (positive treatment)
8. privatization (dispose of state-owned enterprises)
9. deregulation (remove excess controls)
10. property rights (protected)

These specifications were all imposed on Latin America but in due time proved disastrous and an economic failure to many countries. These policies produced deep cleavages amongst the classes by the rich achieving more wealth and subjecting the ever growing poor society to conditions of exploitation, extreme poverty and social segregation.

This is why the left has not only tried to present alternatives to a neoliberal agenda but has also built a growing following of voters by using nationalist rhetoric. Additionally, the left’s constant anti-imperialist rhetoric has also encouraged more political participation by local organizations and political groups. The Latinobarómetro (2007) states that “in virtually all eighteen countries covered by the study, people are

increasingly disenchanted with the market and believe that only the state can provide lasting solutions to their problems”(Arditi: 71). This is why the study states that “the only consensus in the region is the consensus about the Washington Consensus—it did not solve the problems and we need to find an alternative to it” (Latinobarómetro: 8-9).

Other more publicized anti-imperialist rhetoric comes from several leaders that commend Cuba’s resistance against the United States and its achievements in health and education (Lomnitz, 2006). President Chávez of Venezuela is probably the most vocal supporter of Cuba and does not miss a beat criticizing the U.S. or name calling (e.g. in a speech at the UN, he claimed that President George W. Bush was the devil, an assassin, and that the U.S. is imperialistic). Lastly, the rise of the left has also “fostered a creative attempt to reshuffle Latin America’s position in the international economy...Brazil has attempted to consolidate its old aspirations as a regional hegemon by building trade agreements in the south, and Argentina and Brazil are increasing their exports of soy beans to China. In this context, anti-imperialism is not anti-capitalism so much as a politics of reconfiguration of regional blocks” (Lomnitz, 2006). It is worth noting these particular countries are considered more center-left and have been more willing to use market-based economics and globalization to their advantage.

Two additional factors that have had important consequences in distinguishing left-right placement are the economic and social aspects of the lefts’ agenda. As previously mentioned the left has favored redistribution and reducing inequality which combines into the left’s main goal of incorporating a social program that would benefit the masses and economic welfare for their citizens, especially for the poor and destitute. Direct cash transfers have been a common practice to alleviate some poverty but the left

should also be concerned with how long a government can sustain these types of programs. Women are also an important factor to the left remaining in office. Not only is it important for the left to have women in high government positions, but having and showing overall treatment and respect for women from all classes is vital. The left has been able to make significant progress with women because of the social programs that have been created. Lievesley and Ludlam (2009) discuss how women are still mainly responsible for family survival and these social programs have brought such things as land reform (e.g. 2005 in Bolivia), education, employment, and health benefits to many poor families. Thus a woman will vote in a left government if they promise social programs and women's rights becomes secondary in most cases since it becomes a matter of family survival before anything else. To briefly summarize this section, it is important to have a general consensus of what makes a country left or right but more importantly "how the different lefts govern and, eventually, how that knowledge will help predict which types of policymaking will occur under each leadership type" (Cameron & Hershberg 2010: 26). There are new leftist players in Latin America wanting to break away from the neoliberal agenda. An interesting case study is Bolivia which I will further analyze in the section to follow.

Theories

There are a variety of competing theories which seek to explain why the left has done well, why voters support the left, and why some people consider themselves "leftist". These theories will be analyzed and further discussed in detail in order to identify common patterns and test the various theoretical propositions in my thesis. A

brief recap of each theory is as follows: the first theory identified was the Economic Voting theory (Seligson and Queirolo 2007, Benton 2005). This theory states that voters punish or reward incumbent parties for their prior economic record. A second refers to institutional explanations and eventual decay (Wiesehomeier 2010, Cameron and Hershberg 2010, Seligson and Queirolo 2007); this theory is twofold. The theory discusses how voters' evaluations of institutional rules, procedures, and constraints influence electoral volatility and the effect of ideological polarization within the party system. The third theory discusses the social structural cleavages pertaining to economic and ethnic cleavages (Castañeda and Morales 2008, Arditi 2008, Madrid 2008). Lastly, the fourth theory discusses the social values aspect (Castañeda and Morales 2008) such as attitudes towards religion in politics and preferences for social policy.

Economic Voting Theory

The first theory is Economic Voting theory (Seligson and Queirolo 2007, Benton 2005). This theory hypothesizes that voters will punish or reward incumbent parties for their economic record and promises. In other words, if the economy is doing well then voters will reelect the incumbent party; but during bad economic times, voters will punish the incumbent party at the polls. In the case of the “right” who were in power during the 1990s and were following the “neoliberal agenda”, voters ultimately punished them by rescinding their support due to the dire economic situations many citizens faced.

Seligson and Queirolo (2007) theorize Latin Americans are not voting leftist parties because they were against neoliberal policies but were more of a result of popular discontent with their economic situation than anything else. There has also been a

general consensus among scholars that the neoliberal reforms did not produce the economic growth that was expected to flourish in the region. Even international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, who were strong supporters of such reforms, were highly disappointed. Part of the failure occurred due to reforms not being fully implemented or as effectively as should have been done.

As a result “there is a widespread loss of confidence in the benefits of pro-market reforms among opinion leaders, and a less proactive stance toward reforms is the current mainstream among Latin American policies...thus the vote for the left is a consequence of “reform fatigue”. This occurs when voters become tired of market-oriented economic reforms and vote in parties that allow more state intervention in the economy” (Seligson and Queirolo: 122). Research compiled by Benton (2005) shows that voters tend to have long-term economic memories and not only punish the incumbent party for their economic hardship; they also blame and criticize the party that governed before the incumbent came into power. Benton (2005) further tests her hypothesis on economic voting and electoral support by using panel data from 13 Latin American countries. Her two dependent variables consisted of: change in support for incumbent parties and change in support for former incumbents currently out of power. The principal independent variable: economic performance was measured as the percentage change in GDP per capita during the last two years in office. In order to analyze the data she used ordinary least square (OLS) regression with panel-corrected standard errors (PCSEs).

Benton’s results were as expected; the model reflected how incumbent parties’ support decreased with economic downturns without regard to institutional setting. The

analysis reflected that for every 1% decline in GDP per capita, incumbents lost 1.7% of the national votes. Benton also discussed when there have been good economic times there are additional resources available to national governments and allow politicians to spend more on cultivating personal votes. However, these good economic times were not present for the right and they ended up suffering major loses at the polls. We have seen this theory having merit since the year 2000 when elections were taking place and the left was coming into power, not by coups or military takeovers, but by the power of the vote. These leftist governments were not only winning presidential races but all levels of government races.³

Seligson and Queirolo (2007) went into a more detailed discussion regarding this theory by explaining how four major forms have evolved from this theory: pocketbook vote, sociotropic vote, retrospective vote, and prospective vote. “These distinctions lead to four possible combinations in which citizens can appraise the economic situation: evaluating how good or bad the economic situation of the country has been during the past (retrospective sociotropic), taking into account voters’ expectations of how the country’s economic situation is going to be in the future (prospective sociotropic), thinking how good or bad their family’s economic situation has been in the recent past (restrospective pocketbook), or considering their expectations for their family’s economic future (prospective pocketbook)” (Seligson and Queirolo: 124). These possible combinations can vary from country to country and time frame. For example, Seligson and Queirolo cited a study by Kurt Weyland (1998) where he discussed how Venezuelans

³ When a voting model is considered, the economic factor has a strong effect on which party will receive the most votes since voters tend to favor which party will benefit them economically.

were considered Pocketbook voters from 1989 to 1993. In order to test this economic voting theory, Seligson and Queirolo created a model using three countries: Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay. Their main goal was to study the increase of leftist party votes as a result of voters' punishing the incumbent parties because they could not improve the economic well-being of their citizens.

In order to choose the dependent and independent factors for the three case studies, they first studied ideology since they consider that to be one of the most influential voting clues. The AmericasBarometer for 2006-2007 reflects that seven out of ten Latin Americans are able to place themselves in an ideological dimension. Ideological thinking or left/right placement is part of most Latin Americans' political behavior. Seligson and Queirolo use the universal understanding that voters who support the left are associated with support for government involvement and regulation of the economy, income redistribution, and an increase in social spending. They also created an ideological spectrum based on a range from "0" meaning Left, to "10" meaning Right. The chosen independent variables to measure ideology were: support for privatization, support for agrarian reform, support for nationalization, opinion towards redistribution, opinion about state regulations and state interventions (126). In regards to the case studies, they used survey data collected in the three country cases during the time of a pivotal election.

The dependent variable used was a dummy variable that measured the intention to vote for a left party, giving a value of 1 if the citizen intended to vote for the left, while 0 represented the intention to vote for other parties. The independent variables were: sociotropic vote (measured the evaluation of the country's economic situation, where the

higher the value, the worse the evaluation) and pocketbook vote (measured the evaluation of the family's economic situation). Additional control variables were: age, education, family income, household level, and urban voter (residence). So what were the results Seligson and Queirolo came up with? Their results reflected that economic voting increased the likelihood of voting for the left in Brazil and Uruguay but not in Mexico. When economic conditions deteriorated in Brazil and Uruguay, the left received more votes than the right. This was what they hypothesized when a country faced long term economic deteriorations. However what was the outlier for Mexico? For the 2000 presidential election, economic conditions neither favored nor hurt the left's chances of winning. On the contrary, President Zedillo's economic accomplishments were actually acknowledged by most Mexicans.

Mexico was an outlier due to the length of time the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) had been in power; citizens were more fed up with tactics such as corruption and bribery. They were not as concerned with economic conditions as they were more concerned with toppling the PRI "dynasty" and wanted a change with a presidency that would be more transparent to their people. This became the outlier country that would choose a new president based on the overall desire of party system change. To sum up this theory, scholars have proven models that reflect incumbent governments will suffer the voting consequences if the economy is in bad shape. Their constituents will vote for the opposing party in hope for a better economic future. This is how the left has managed to build their voting bloc since the economy deteriorated in the 1990s throughout Latin America.

Institutional Decay Theory

The second theory refers to institutional explanations and eventual decay of a government (Wiesehomeier 2010, Cameron and Hershberg 2010, Seligson and Queirolo 2007); this theory is twofold. The theory discusses how changes in institutional rules, procedures, and constraints influence volatility and the effect of ideological polarization within the party system. Wiesehomeier (2010) discusses the need to take policy positions on particular policy dimensions into account in order to compare left-right positioning of presidents throughout the region. She used original expert survey data of policy positions of political parties and presidents in 18 countries conducted by Wiesehomeier and Benoit (2009). The results showed that combined deregulation/privatization dimension emerges as a major predictor of positioning on the left and right for a president. The deregulation/privatization dimension is a strong predictor of what type of agenda a president will gear towards and voters would have a clear indication of left-right self placement. Additionally, the procedures and constraints have a certain effect on volatility of ideological polarization with the (left) party system; Wiesehomeier states there was considerable dispersion among the so-called left-wing presidents even when split into clusters of moderates and radicals.

Cameron and Hershberg (2010) further discuss the constraints that could influence volatility of the governments who take control. One of the major constraints comes from building the left's constituency base. In Latin America today there is socioeconomic and interest group fragmentation which makes it difficult for a political party to create a large base. Cameron and Hershberg (2010:127) discuss how "leftist parties have won elections by putting together a diverse electorate, sharing relatively high

levels of discontent with the status quo as a minimum common denominator”. As a result, the electoral base can be very diverse and can have opposing ideas among themselves. “In those cases, distributive conflicts are stark and governing leftist parties face the challenge to reconcile divergent and frequently competing interests, while simultaneously seeking to implement reforms and maintain their electoral appeal...The diversity of leftist party social bases and the potential distributive conflicts that might run within each party’s electorate should then be consequential for analyzing government action and cannot be completely grasped by only looking at the institutionalization and concentration of power present in different cases.” (27).

An additional theory worth mentioning comes from Mainwaring (2006) who hypothesized that individuals who have lost confidence in political institutions (due to decay) are more likely to vote for the left. When citizens perceive a breakdown of democratic representation, Mainwaring states certain behavioral indicators occur, such as: “...citizens rejecting existing mechanisms of democratic representation – for example, withdrawing from electoral participation, voting for new parties (especially antiestablishment ones), voting for political outsiders, turning to antisystem popular mobilization efforts, or joining revolutionary struggles” (Mainwaring 2006: 15). Thus, when there is high electoral volatility, there are shifts in electoral preferences for established parties causing the decline of longstanding ones and the rapid rise of new parties. Mainwaring further adds that citizens prefer to risk the unknown rather than to stick with the existing options. This is why we have seen the trend since 2000 to move to a more leftist agenda than continue with the democratic right agenda that caused economic turmoil in Latin America throughout the 1990s.

Social Structural Cleavage Theory – Economic and Ethnicity

The third theory discusses the social structural cleavages pertaining to economic and ethnic cleavages (Castañeda and Morales 2008, Madrid 2008, Postero & Zamosc 2004, Van Cott 2005). These social structural cleavages involve education, occupation, and income. All these factors come into play when the left sets forth its agenda. In order to understand what makes up a large base of the left's constituencies, scholars have analyzed some of these values in order to create a voter profile. The "typical" left voter profile is poor, uneducated, a farmer or worker, and in certain countries he or she may be indigenous. When discussing ethnic cleavages, the most profound cleavage is associated with people who have an indigenous identity. The indigenous⁴ population as a whole has known oppression, poverty, and inequality for many decades now. Since colonial times they were living virtually as slaves and in extreme poverty. Not until the 1980s and 1990s did this time frame become the tipping point for the indigenous to become involved in politics and the general society. They organized, mobilized, and participated in national and international political processes to demand cultural recognition and political rights (Postero & Zamosc 2004:1).

In addition, there were political parties formed or "ethnic parties" that made huge contributions during this timeframe as well.

⁴ Van Cott (2005) uses the definition *indigenous peoples* from the U.N. Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (United Nations 1986:para. 379): "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, considered themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present nondominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as a basis of their continued existences as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems" (Van Cott: 2).

In order to provide a definition for ethnic party, I will use Van Cott's (2005) definition: "an organization authorized to compete in elections, the majority of whose leaders and members identify themselves as belonging to a nondominant ethnic group, and whose electoral platform includes among its central demands programs of an ethnic or cultural nature" (3).

An important factor to analyze is how did this oppressed population manage to make such an impact and become a large constituency base for some left parties? Postero and Zamosc (2004) discuss several factors: first, there were more opportunities to organize due to democratic liberalization. With the end of many authoritarian regimes in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, this allowed for more political movement among the minor and less significant organizations and political parties, including the indigenous. The second factor was that democracy also allowed the capacity to organize by transnational community and transnational networks of support. The indigenous groups soon realized there was power in numbers and building a vast coalition was an important step. Lastly, the rejection of neoliberal reforms became a common platform for the indigenous since they had not seen any economic benefit materialize for them from neoliberalism. Postero and Zamosc (2004) also discuss various factors that occurred; such as political restructuring between the indigenous and the state, there were certain resource contracts that threatened their lands, and economic restructuring caused economic crisis throughout the indigenous communities. Van Cott (2005) further states "Neoliberal reforms...threatened collective property rights, reduced access to markets, and cut state subsidies to small farmers" (10), and thus this allowed for more poverty to occur throughout the indigenous communities.

Another stepping stone for some indigenous groups occurred when their particular country was going through constitutional reform. During this window of opportunity, the indigenous were able to mobilize around this event and provide some input regarding key issues that were of importance to their community. Due to the rise of indigenous movements important political and cultural changes have occurred, for example, redistribution, cultural recognition, and reforms to existing state structures (ie. individual and collective rights). “The demands of indigenous peoples may appear to be revolutionary, yet at another level they are both deeply conservative (in the sense of conserving tradition) and in some ways surprisingly liberal”(Cameron and Hershberg: 13). Van Cott (2000) cites that prior to these movements the obstacles the indigenous population faced were significant. She pointed out that the indigenous peoples’ geographic isolation and linguistic and cultural distinctiveness provided elites with more effective tools of exclusion – language barriers, racial discrimination and socially sanctioned violence – than could be used against the rural poor or urban working class. (158). The indigenous for the most part live in very rural areas, some high in the mountains (e.g., the Andes), and some may not even have proper public services to their communities. These barriers and racial discrimination have led to a vicious cycle and over time this continues to perpetuate poverty and extreme levels of inequality.

Bolivia has one of the largest indigenous populations and this will be a case study that will be further discussed in chapter four. Other scholars also discuss the ethnic cleavage. Madrid (2008) further adds that ethnic conflicts have been relatively low compared to other regions of the world and people tend to identify themselves with multiple ethnic groups. There is also the theory that relates to the economic cleavages.

This not only is closely associated with ethnic division (since majority of the ethnic parties are poor), but socioeconomic cleavages have been a major “selling” factor for the left. Since the left blames the neoliberalist agenda of the 1990s caused deep economic divisions within the classes of society, their stance is for redistributing income, land, and developing social programs for the poor. The creation of the economic cleavages, as previously mentioned, is heavily associated with the neoliberalist agenda but what role did partisan cleavages play in shaping the various preferences for market-oriented policies? Were there specific differences between the left and right voters that distinguished economic reforms thus lead to certain economic cleavages?

Magaloni and Romero (2008) discuss the clear differences of how the left was not in favor of certain reforms such as free trade and state retrenchment while the right was. However, the biggest political battle in the 1990s was around privatization (electricity, oil, pensions, and health) (109). The authors also mention an important voting model that contributes to the rise of the left; the normal economic vote model predicts that voters will turn against economic reforms if they have failed to generate economic growth. The failure of economic growth in the 1990s was a major catalyst for the economic cleavages to deepen throughout Latin America but was also a stepping stone for the left to obtain more political power. Castañeda and Morales (2008) discussed how the left was only able to gain local government positions in the 1990s, like states and provinces. However, this became a learning experience for them because their experiences eventually provided lessons on what an effective agenda for social policy could be. The left was able to take what they learned and apply it to a new platform they would stand on in order to win elections in the year 2000 and beyond.

Castañeda and Morales (2008) mention some examples the left took away from their prior experiences, such as: the need to set up public investment in health and education, to bring the state back in to coordinate the provision of physical infrastructure and energy, and other measures assisting the overall competitiveness of the economy. On the flip side they saw various consequences derived from the neoliberal agenda and would want to have: a moratorium of privatizations, stricter regulation of private monopolies, and a halt to further unilateral trade liberalization. These consequences were lessons learned and the left did not want to follow the same footsteps of the right. We therefore see a similar footprint as the left tries to assimilate in the region. The political goals of the left have been to mobilize support with labor unions, lower and middle-class groups, small business owners, and at the same time alienate foreign enterprises and large businesses. With these goals in mind the left has tried to diminish the economic cleavages within society but something to think about is how long social programs can be sustained if the economy does not grow at a considerable rate or suffers setbacks due to a globalized economic crisis.

Social Values Theory

Lastly, there is the theory based on social values. The social values I will discuss pertain to such things as attitudes towards religion in politics and preferences for social policy. On a more narrow focus of the social values theory, we can place certain attitudes, such as, views on abortion, divorce, religion in politics, sexuality, and living together out of wedlock in this context. Left voters are expected to be more secular and pro-choice which is what the left's agenda tries to incorporate. In addition to trying to

classify a certain voter profile for the left there is also the discussion on how the right and the left manage the social expenditures in relation to their GDP. Castañeda and Morales (2008) measured social expenditure for 18 Latin American countries, as a percentage of GDP between 1990 and 2003, classifying countries by ideology and populism. Delving into a deeper classification of populism, they separated the left into two categories: the populist left (more state control and less democratic freedoms) versus the non-populist left (more in favor of market integration and maintaining democratic freedoms). In addition, they looked at certain social policies in relation to poverty, inequality, education, health, and housing conditions.

As Castañeda and Morales (2008) note: “The two areas which were analyzed related to social policy (expenditure and well-being) and they concluded that the performance of countries with left versus right governments was unexpectedly similar. The only exceptions were population undernourishment, maternal mortality, and education inequality (ages seven to nineteen), where the left showed a patently better performance than the right, and the indicators related to child health, where the opposite occurred, with right cases outperforming left cases. A constant finding was the superior performance of non-populist left cases versus populist left cases. This was particularly true in the Venezuelan case, which steadily performed poorly in all measures. The finding comes to confirm what was already suspected: in Latin America there is a well-behaved non-populist left and an utterly misbehaved populist left” (86). In other words, the more ‘pragmatic left’ is not significantly improving their citizens overall well-being. We have seen voter preference diminish for Venezuela’s president due to the fact that promises have been big but Chávez has not been able to maintain some programs due to

volatility in oil prices. There is also concern that President Chávez wants to modify the constitution but not in favor of the people but to provide him with more state control. Venezuela will be further discussed in a case study below.

Hypothesis

I will analyze several factors to test explanations about the electoral success of the left: education, ethnic diversity, institutional characteristics, poverty, inequality, and economic reforms (Cleary 2006, Stokes 2009). Expanding on why voters support the left, we can also delve into who votes for the left? Some scholars have argued the social structural characteristics of the typical voter are young and less educated. To further develop the cleavage structure and understand where the divisions might be positioned in left-right placement, I will analyze education, race (including the indigenous factor), occupation, support for government ownership, church attendance, gender, and income; which correlates with the fourth theory. Since it is not apparent why the left has clearly had electoral fortunes over the past decade, I will focus primary on the economic hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. The rise of the left varies inversely with economic performance.

Hypothesis 2. The voting bloc who votes for the left are young and less educated.

Hypothesis 3. Ethnic identity is associated with self-placement on the left.

Hypothesis 4. Workers and farmers are strong supporters of the left.

Hypothesis 5. Individuals who believe that the government should own the major industries in the country are associated with the left.

Hypothesis 6. The higher the frequency of church attendance, the less likely one is to support the left (proxy for conservative social values).

Hypothesis 7. The poor are more likely to vote for the left.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

My research design is a focused comparison of cases drawn from three South American countries. The analysis will consist of three qualitative case studies and a quantitative analysis of left-right placement and understanding the factors on why the left has fared so well in the last decade. For the qualitative section, my objective is to fully examine the left in Latin America by selecting a couple of case studies which will be analyzed by their position on the leftist spectrum. Bolivia and Venezuela are the case studies which will represent the left, but I also included a center-right case study (Colombia) which will serve as the opposing “rightist” country based on the left-right continuum.⁵ Since there are two extremes in this leftist spectrum, I would like to briefly distinguish each of them. The first one may be classified as pragmatic. Its fundamentals are based on a solid party platform, of not being afraid of the market, and a responsible approach to social policy. This pragmatic left will be represented by the Bolivian case study but there certain scenarios that have occurred where some scholars would classify Bolivia as leaning towards the radical-populist.

The second faction may be classified as radical-populist. Its fundamentals are based on leaders who are more authoritarian, strongly support radical redistribution of income, and against the market and free trade (Arditi 2008). This radical-populist left will be represented by Venezuela.

⁵ My original intent was to analyze five countries that varied on the left-right spectrum but due to limited time, three case studies were ultimately chosen. Brazil would have been a case study to analyze but the indigenous movement in Bolivia has made significant progress and I felt this case study was worth analyzing further.

To avoid selection bias, these cases were chosen based on their value on the dependent variable, which is whether they are governed by a pragmatic or radical left party and the different policy choices they each have adopted as well as their values on the independent variables. In addition, I selected a case (Colombia) which varies the value of the dependent and independent variables. Colombia has maintained a right democratic agenda in the midst of many Latin American countries “turning left”. I do not foresee any bias caused by the selection of these countries since the political trend has remained constant in each particular country for at least five years or more. Venezuela and Bolivia have maintained controversial agendas and strongly voiced their anti-west sentiment but Venezuela has also pursued trade blocs that exclude the United States. However, Chavez has yet to attain acceptance from most U.S. allies.

For the quantitative portion, as previously mentioned, I will be studying left-right placement and factors that explain why the left has fared so well in recent years. Additionally, in order to analyze who votes for the left, I analyze items such as social expenditures and nationalism. Some regression analysis was researched in order to understand how the dependent variable (left-right placement) is affected by the independent variables (e.g. education, occupation, income, religion). The following chapter will provide a more in-depth discussion and analysis in the differences and any similarities of left-right placement among the countries selected for the qualitative analysis.

Data and Methods

The data used to identify left-right placement and other variables in Bolivia, Venezuela, and Columbia was the 2008 Political Culture survey, which was compiled by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. The LAPOP survey sampled adults who were 18 years of age or older. The sampling method employed is a complex national probability sample. In the Bolivian case, given that a relatively high share of the countries' population speak only Aymara or Quechua, in-person interviews were completed in Aymara or Quechua for non-Spanish speakers, while the remainder of the interviews were conducted in Spanish (AmericasBarometer 2008); this included Spanish interviews for Colombia and Venezuela as well . I employ ordered logistical regression to estimate the effects of the independent variables. I will further discuss the purpose for this method below.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a left-right placement based on a scale from 1-10 (question L1).⁶ This left-right placement indicates where a voter would place himself or herself on this ideology scale. I have recoded the original variable so that "1" represents extreme right through "10" to represent the extreme left. Although the item used for the dependent variable measures left-right self placement, this measure is strongly associated with party support voting for the left in a hypothetical election (Tuman and Ramos 2010).

⁶ "En esta tabla hay una escala que va de izquierda a derecha, donde 1 es de extrema izquierda y 10 de extrema derecha...Ud. mismo cuando califica a una persona dice ese es de izquierda y ese es de derecha ¿En esta escala, políticamente Ud. Dónde se ubicaría.? (Based on a scale of 1-10 where 1 represents extreme right and 10 extreme left, where would you place yourself?)

The dependent variable was equally measured in all three case studies but there were variations on the independent variables for each country. The differences will be further discussed for each case study.

Independent Variables

The models are designed to test complementary and competing hypotheses concerning left-right placement and analyzing why the left has fared so well within the last ten years in certain countries. For the independent factors, I used the following variables (see footnote for survey questions): *publicownership*⁷, *indigenous*⁸, *worker*⁹, *farmer*¹⁰, *income*¹¹, *church attendance*¹², *education*¹³, and *gender*. In addition, some recoding was necessary for a number of independent variables. However, some variables were not pertinent to all three countries and I did have some variations which will be addressed. The *publicownership* variable measures the effects of attitudes toward neoliberalism on support for the left.

⁷ El Estado, en lugar del sector privado, debería ser el dueño de las empresas e industrias más importantes del país. ¿Hasta qué punto está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con esta frase? (Should the state or the private sector own the most important industries of the state..do you agree or disagree with this statement?)

⁸ ¿Usted se considera una persona blanca, mestiza, indígena u originaria, negra o Afro-Boliviana, mulata, u otra? (Do you consider yourself white, mixed, indigenous, African, mulato or other?).

⁹ ¿Cuál es la ocupación o tipo de trabajo que realiza? (What is your occupation?)

¹⁰ Variable farmer, for occupation,

¹¹ ¿En cuál de los siguientes rangos se encuentran los ingresos familiares mensuales de este hogar, incluyendo las remesas del exterior y el ingreso de todos los adultos e hijos que trabajan?(choose your range of income, including remittances from all the adults and children who work)

¹² ¿Con qué frecuencia asiste usted a servicios religiosos? (How frequently do you attend religious services?)

¹³ ¿Cuál fue el último año de enseñanza (educación, o escuela) que usted completó o aprobó? (What grade did you complete last?)

This variable also captures the level of agreement with the statement that government, in place of private investors, should own leading firms in the country. This item has a seven point, ordinal scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree. For the *indigenous* variable, as many scholars have noted, indigenous groups have tended to be affected negatively by neoliberal reforms.

As such, I include a covariate for indigenous identity (coded as “1” for all respondents who self-identify as “indígena/originaria”, zero for all others). This variable is only adapted for Bolivia due to the large indigenous population. There was not a large sample of respondents from the indigenous population in Venezuela and Colombia data sets to measure this variable. For this reason, I used the variable *minority*, which grouped together all minority groups versus white (recoded as “1” for respondents who self-identify as minority, “0” for white race). For the *worker* variable, I used the survey’s item on occupation and created a dichotomous covariate coded “1” for respondents who self-reported into the category of “worker”, zero for all others. Since the MAS in Bolivia enjoys support among the rural population (e.g. coca farmers) and were opposed to crop eradication and crop substitution, I used the occupational data to create a dichotomous covariate for *farmers* (1=“campesino, agricultor, o productor agropecuario y pesquero – propietario de la tierra”¹⁴, 0 for all others). This variable was not measured in Venezuela and Colombia due to the very small sample of respondents in this category.

¹⁴Unfortunately, there were not enough observations for landless workers (“Peón agrícola, trabaja la tierra para otros”) to include them as a separate category in the analysis. However, I considered an alternative coding where farmers and landless laborers are pooled together into a single category.

The next variable is *income* which addresses respondents' self-reported income (family) per month in the national currency. Based on a breakdown of varied income scales, the respondent will advise which category they fall under based on their monthly family income. Another variable chosen was *church attendance*. To capture the effects of social values, I use frequency of church attendance as a proxy. I assume that religion is a factor in supporting certain agendas (e.g. conservative, liberal or in between), and church attendance should have some influence over adult values, socialization, and left-right placement.

Another variable was *education*. Scholars generally perceive the lower the education, the more likely it is for someone to vote for the left because those with less education make less in the labor market. Although respondents in each country's survey were asked to report years of completed formal education, the instrument provides researchers with guidelines for the equivalencies in Latin American education between years completed education and primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Using these guidelines, three dichotomous covariates were created: no education; some, or completed primary education; some, or completed secondary education. No education is excluded as the baseline category for comparison. Lastly we take a look at *gender* and if there is any difference if a male or female will place himself or herself on the left.

Estimation Technique

In order to test my three models, I used ordered logistic regression. This method is used when the dependent variable is ordinal x and each value (0, 1, 2, 3) has a clear meaning in relation to other variables. In other words, the traditional ordered logit model applies

the proportional odds assumption to every independent variable (Row 1) and is based on the cumulative approach (Column 1). Left-right placement thus becomes my dependent variable and the various independent variables will measure the level of significance in relation to my dependent variable.

CHAPTER 4

QUANTATATIVE ANALYSIS

In the following chapter, I will analyze the effects of the independent variables are on left-right placement in the three case studies. In addition, I will provide the results in the models to reflect which variables were more significant for someone to place themselves more left on the ideological spectrum. I will also analyze whether the theories discussed in chapter two are supported by the empirical analysis of left-right placement. Following the discussion and summary of statistical findings of the models, I will proceed to the three case studies and examine the trajectory of left-wing parties over the past 20 years.

Left-Right Placement Model

A theory that was first discussed in chapter 2 was the Social Structural Cleavage theory – economic and ethnicity, which emphasized being poor and indigenous. The independent variables that relate to this theory is indigenous and minority. The data in Table 1 show that the coefficient for the indigenous variable is both positive and statistically significant. In other words, the model shows how being indigenous is a strong indicator of someone who would place himself or herself on the left. Since the left's platform is redistribution and creation of social programs, the poor and the indigenous will favor this party due to their basic needs not being met. The indigenous variable was not measured in Table 2, Venezuela, and Table 3, Colombia, due to the small sample size of indigenous people in the data sets. Instead, I used a measure for

minority which grouped together all minority groups in each country. The models for Colombia and Venezuela show that this variable was not significant in either country.

The Social Cleavage Theory also emphasizes the social make-up of someone who would be more in favor of a leftist agenda. As an additional measure to represent this theory, I examined education. In Table 1 for Bolivia, the effects for the education variables were positive and significant. However, this result was unexpected. The results show that in comparison to someone with no formal education, the more educated a person is in Bolivia, the more she or he tend to place herself or himself on the left. Thus, although a general consensus in the literature is that the more educated one is, the more one tends to favor the right, the model shows an opposite effect. What would explain the education factor in Bolivia? One explanation may be the education reforms that took place in the mid 1990s influenced levels of educational attainment for the indigenous population. For the first time, Aymara, Quechua, and Guarani children were being taught in their native language, and teachers were trained in bilingual and intercultural education (Contreras & Simoni, 13). The indigenous are becoming more educated but the cycle of poverty has continued which translates to continued support for the left and the redistribution programs the party offers.

Seligson (2007), notes that younger people population tends to support the left. He hypothesizes that the “older citizens of the region, having lived through the military dictatorships of the 1970s are “immunized” against populist-authoritarian appeals in ways that younger citizens simply are not...the youth know only the disappointments of the current democratic period” (92). This hypothesis may be proven accurate in certain Latin American countries but the statistical finding on education in Bolivia shows otherwise.

The coefficient for education was not significant. So even though the younger generation is becoming more educated, the political and social agenda of the left is what continues to bring in support from a large portion of Bolivians. More time needs to pass in order to assess the validity of education progression in Bolivia. However, this is beyond the scope of this paper and continued investigation is needed to understand what factors contribute to this anomaly in Bolivia.

In Table 2, Venezuela, the coefficients for education were not significant. The data in Table 3, Colombia, show that in trials with different categories for education, secondary education was positive and significant (90% confidence level). Education is a factor in Colombia that influences left-right placement, but its effect is only of moderate importance. Regarding the effects of income, Table 1, Bolivia, shows that the coefficient for income is negative and highly significant. In other words, the less income you make, the more likely you are to favor the left. For both the Venezuela and Colombian models, the coefficient for income was not significant. Likewise, age has an inconsistent effect. In Table 1, Bolivia, age was not significant. In the model for Venezuela, the coefficient for age was positive and significant (90% confidence level), which indicates older people are more leftist. In Table 3, age was negative and significant (90% confidence level). This indicates that younger Colombians are more likely to be leftist. Gender, however, was not significant in any of the three models.

The effects of occupation, and specifically being a worker, were not consistent. In the model for Bolivia, this was positive and significant (90% confidence level). This indicates that workers are more likely to consider themselves leftist. However, the coefficient for worker was not significant in Venezuela. An explanation for this finding

could be that many workers belong to unions that are affiliated with the AD party (Democratic Action) and this party has been in conflict with Chávez. In other words, this may explain the non-finding for “worker” in Venezuela. For the Colombian model, the worker coefficient was negative and significant, which indicates that workers are more on the right of the spectrum. The occupational variable for farmer was not significant in the Bolivian model. The farmer variable was not measured in the models for Venezuela and Colombia due to the small sample size of farmers in the data sets.

Lastly, we consider church attendance; in two of the models, Bolivia and Venezuela, the coefficient for church attendance was negative and significant. This indicates left-right placement involves a social dimension and one is more likely to place themselves on the right if one attends church more frequently. A possible explanation to this finding could be that most people in Latin America are Catholics, and the Catholic Church does not support many of the social issues leftist parties endorse; such as, divorce, abortion, and living together out of wedlock.

Finally, as a proxy of preferences for economic policy, I examine the effects of attitudes toward public ownership is positive and significant in the models for Colombia and Bolivia. The most likely reason is that government ownership allows the left to reap the benefits of public industries while having the opportunity to create social programs with the additional income to pass along to the poor. In addition, when the state owns the utilities sector, a subsidy may be given to the poor. However, the coefficient for public ownership was not significant in the model for Venezuela.

Statistical Findings Summary

The results of the statistical analysis provide modest empirical support for the claim that ethnic cleavages predict left-right placement in Bolivia. Based on the indicators used, my results for Bolivia reflect what many scholars agree with, namely that poverty, ethnicity, and the desire for redistribution is a strong base for the left. Castañeda (2006) discusses how the combination of inequality and democracy tends to cause a movement to the left everywhere. In addition, Madrid (2008) confirms in his voting model for Bolivia that older voters, people with lower incomes, and people who participated in trade associations (that is, organizations of professionals, merchants, peasants, or producers) were significantly more likely to support the left. Therefore these results are consistent with scholarly findings. In the Bolivian model, consistent with the expectations of social cleavage and social values, I found many of the independent variables to be positive and significant (public ownership, indigenous, worker, and education which was broken out into three levels); with church attendance and income reflecting negative and significant.

Not only was the Bolivian model unique in this analysis because of the many coefficients for social structure were significant, but as previously noted, the education variable had an unexpected effect. The variable outcome reflected the more educated a person is, the more likely they will consider themselves on the left spectrum, but the common scholarly indications are, the less educated tend to be more left. Confirming the significance of ethnic cleavages, the coefficient for indigenous identity was positive and significant. This coefficient was also unique to Bolivia due to its very large indigenous population. This is a primary reason why the left has fared so well in this country.

Morales having indigenous roots makes it much easier to bond and unite this large population. The indigenous variable was not measured in Colombia and Venezuela due to the limited sample of indigenous respondents.

In the Venezuelan model, however, only church attendance and age were the only coefficients to reflect any significance providing only limited support for social values. Lastly, in the Colombian case, public ownership, worker, secondary education, and age were of significance, although the sign for work was unexpectedly negative. The model for Colombia only provides modest support for social structural cleavages and social values.

In the next section, I provide the models for the three referenced countries and I go into further detail with three separate case studies. Each case study will provide historic detail and how the country has progressed into their current political agenda.

Table 1 – Bolivia
 Determinants of Left-Right Placement
 Ordered Logistic Regression (OLR)

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error
Public Ownership	0.09***	0.03
Indigenous	0.35**	0.15
Worker	0.22*	0.12
Farmer	0.17	0.17
Church Attendance	-0.11**	0.05
Primary Education	1.23***	0.45
Secondary Education	1.53***	0.46
Higher Education	1.57***	0.47
<i>Controls</i>		
Income	-0.21***	0.04
Gender (Female=1)	0.051	0.11
Age	-0.0009	0.004
Log Likelihood = - 2471.02		
Wald Chi-square = 84.19***		
N=1,220		

***p<.01; **p<.05; *p<.10

Table 2 - Venezuela
 Determinants of Left-Right Placement
 Ordered Logistic Regression (OLR)

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error
Public Ownership	0.05	0.05
Minority	-0.02	0.2
Worker	0.11	0.22
Church Attendance	-0.15*	0.08
Primary Education	0.35	0.33
Secondary Education	-0.13	0.27
<i>Controls</i>		
Income	-0.06	0.06
Gender (Female=1)	-0.22	0.21
Age	0.02*	0.009

Log likelihood = - 717.25

Wald Chi-square = 20.09

N=339

Note: Higher education was eliminated because of collinearity

*p<.10

Table 3 - Colombia
 Determinants of Left-Right
 Placement
 Ordered Logistic Regression (OLR)

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error
Publicown	0.06*	0.04
Minority	0.1	0.15
Worker	-0.29*	0.16
Church att	-0.09	0.06
Primary education	-0.22	0.25
Secondary education	0.36*	0.21
<i>Controls</i>		
Income	0.04	0.04
Gender (Female=1)	0.17	0.15
Age	-0.01*	0.006
Log likelihood = - 1289.04		
Wald Chi-square = 36.27		
N=616		

Note: Higher education eliminated because of collinearity
 *p<.10

Case Studies – Bolivia (Pragmatic Left)

When research is done on the history of Bolivia, there is one sector of the population that is very relevant to its history and political trends—the indigenous. The indigenous population as a whole has known oppression, poverty, and inequality for many centuries now. Since colonial times they have been living as slaves and in extreme poverty. As Sieder and Van Cott (2002) note over the course of Bolivia’s history, “the inadequacy of formal political institutions was attributable largely to their exclusion of the majority indigenous population and their lack of connection with Bolivia’s predominant forms of political and social organization”(52). In 1825 when Bolivia achieved independence, the indigenous population was approximately 73 percent and there were already deep ethnic and social cleavages. Elites abolished the Crown’s protection of indigenous communal land rights and by the end of the 19th century had seized the majority of arable land, forcing landless Indians to barter their labor to the growing *hacienda* class (Van Cott: 2000).

The next event of significance in Bolivia’s history and subsequently for the indigenous was the Chaco War. This huge arid low-lying plain is between Bolivia and Paraguay and had no definition of border between these countries. This eventually caused a major conflict of land and the Chaco War ensued from 1932-1935. In the end Paraguay won most of the disputed land but the indigenous people started making small imprints in being recognized for their aid in this war. In due time, emerging political actors saw the indigenous and miners as allies for political change and this allowed continued positive movement for these groups (Postero 2007). Kohl and Farthing (2006) note several social movements that arose from this war. First, sons of the elites generally

abandoned the politics of their parents to form what became known as the Chaco generation. They later constituted the core of the National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario-MNR) that eventually spearheaded the 1952 overthrow of the mining oligarchy.

On April 9, 1952 the MNR brought together the fragmented segments-labor, the miners, the middle class, and the Indian peasants in an uprising against the ruling government. After three days of fighting the MNR, along with their fragmented segments won a great victory and this led to a new president. Victor Paz Estenssoro was given the presidential powers and would make drastic political changes in Bolivia. “As his first major act as president, Paz Estenssoro nationalized the lucrative mines of the western highlands of the country, the majority of which were held by three so-called Tin Barons...and in August of 1953, the government passed a sweeping agrarian reform law, distributing hundreds of thousands of acres of hacienda landholdings to the indigenous peasants who had worked the land for generations” (Shultz and Draper 2008: 258).

As a result, the MNR was especially critical to the indigenous population since this was the first political party ever to have their interest on its agenda. The MNR’s platform had three prongs: “(1) nationalization of the mines to reorganize the process of capitalist accumulation, (2) agrarian reform to eliminate the servile relationship in agriculture and to promote a domestic market, and (3) universal suffrage” (Postero 2007: 37-38). Second, the labor unions, based in the mines, the railroads and urban printshops, mushroomed with strong influences from left-wing political parties. Lastly, was the inception of joining up two of the largest highland indigenous population, the Quechua and the Aymara.

The evolution of Bolivia has been slow but one cannot ignore how the indigenous are embedded in Bolivian history because they have always represented the largest percentage of Bolivia's population. Due to the very large population of poor indigenous people, this not only makes Bolivia a unique country but also tends to produce deep ethnic and social cleavages within the country. There are approximately 37 various ethnic groups in Bolivia today who make up 62% of the population. The largest groups are the Aymara (1,549,320) and Quechua (2,298,980), who are mostly concentrated in the western highlands and the remaining Indians live mainly in the eastern lowland departments of Santa Cruz and Beni. (Van Cott 2005). Furthermore, the indigenous have made important political strides in Bolivia, most importantly electing the first indigenous president, Morales, in 2006. In what follows, I will provide a brief background of how that progress came to be and why they are an important constituent base for the left.

Not until the 1980s and 1990s did this time frame become the tipping point for the indigenous people to become more involved on the political side in the country. They organized, mobilized, and participated in national and international political processes to demand cultural recognition and political rights (Postero & Zamosc 2004). An important event that took place occurred in 1992 when the indigenous mobilized throughout Latin America in opposition to the 500th anniversary of Columbus, and due to the international impact of the Zapatistas in Mexico. In addition, there were political parties or "ethnic parties" that made huge contributions during this timeframe as well. In order to provide a definition for ethnic party, I will use Van Cott's (2005) definition: "an organization authorized to compete in elections, the majority of whose leaders and members identify

themselves as belonging to a nondominant ethnic group, and whose electoral platform includes among its central demands programs of an ethnic or cultural nature” (3).

Within the past five years, Bolivia has been on a fast track to an evolving left agenda which sometimes could be classified by some scholars as a more populist left. An important factor to analyze is how did this oppressed population manage to make such an impact? Postero and Zamosc (2004) discuss several factors: first, there were more opportunities to organize due to democratic liberalization. With the end of many authoritarian regimes in Latin America in the 1990s, this allowed for more political movement among the minor and less significant organizations and political parties, including the indigenous. The second factor was that democracy also allowed the capacity to organize by trans-community and transnational networks of support. The indigenous soon realized there was power in numbers and building a vast coalition was an important step. Lastly, the rejection of neoliberal reforms became a common platform for the indigenous since they had not seen any economic benefit materialize for them. Postero and Zamosc (2004) also discuss various factors that occurred; such as political restructuring between the indigenous and the state, there were certain resource contracts that threatened their lands, and economic restructuring caused economic crisis throughout the indigenous communities. Van Cott (2005) further states “Neoliberal reforms...threatened collective property rights, reduced access to markets, and cut state subsidies to small farmers” (10), thus this allowed for more poverty to occur throughout the indigenous communities.

Another stepping stone for some indigenous groups occurred when their particular country was going through stages of constitutional reform starting in the 1990s. During

this window of opportunity, the indigenous were able to mobilize around this event and provide some input regarding key issues that were of importance to their community. Due to the rise of indigenous movements, there was important political and cultural change, including, redistribution, cultural recognition, and reforms to existing state structures (ie. individual & collective rights). “The demands of indigenous peoples may appear to be revolutionary, yet at another level they are both deeply conservative (in the sense of conserving tradition) and in some ways surprisingly liberal”(Cameron and Hershberg: 13). Prior to these movements the obstacles the indigenous population faced in the various countries. Van Cott (2000) pointed out that the indigenous peoples’ geographic isolation and linguistic and cultural distinctiveness provided elites with more effective tools of exclusion – language barriers, racial discrimination and socially sanctioned violence – than could be used against the rural poor or urban working class. (158). The indigenous for the most part live in very rural areas, some high in the mountains, and may not even have proper public services to their communities. These barriers and racial discrimination have been a vicious cycle since over time this continues to perpetuate poverty and extreme levels of inequality.

Moving forward to the mid 1960s, there was still plenty of inequality and poverty amongst the indigenous but something was happening within this community. With improved access to education, indigenous leaders started to emerge during this time frame. Many changes did not occur right away and not until the 1990s, was there considerable political and social strides made by the indigenous. As more indigenous organizations started forming and mobilizing, a major protest was organized in 1990 where the indigenous demanded Territorio y Dignidad (territory and dignity). They

wanted the world to recognize their plight for land, territory, and dignity. Additionally, more indigenous people were not as isolated since urban migration also occurred during this time. Thereafter, political elites recognized the indigenous population and its independent organizations as part of the political system but this was a small win since there was not a complete consensus within the parties on how to represent an indigenous agenda.

Catalysts of Change

The tipping point for impending changes to come started in 2000. To provide a brief summary of the circumstances which led to the current status of the country, scholars such as Prashad and Ballve (2006), and Postero and Zamosc (2004) noted the significance of the Cochabamba water war. In October of 1999, Bolivia passed a law allowing privatization of water supplies. Shortly after the city of Cochabamba granted a contract to the *Aguas de Tunari* to develop much needed water projects for the city. Many indigenous farmers and communities had dug their own wells and established local water cooperatives but with this new contract in place, this became illegal and their water rates went up significantly. By April 2000, discontent over this privatization of the city's water supply erupted into massive popular demonstrations (Postero 2007: 194). The city of Cochabamba was able to protest and reverse privatization of the water company. Magaloni and Romero (2008) analyzed how privatization policies motivated the indigenous to oppose these policies and state retrenchment because privatization tends to have a disproportionate and negative impact on indigenous groups. "Oscar Olivera, union activist and spokesperson for the Coordinadora, argues that the Cochabamba

struggle was much more than a local conflict over water. Rather it was the direct result of neoliberal restructuring in Bolivia” (Postero 2007: 294). By challenging the neoliberal agenda the movement provided an expansion for a traditional support base for the left.

The water war was a response of the people who felt the purpose of neoliberalism was for corporations to exploit the natural resources and increase their profits. A second event occurred in 2003 when the government of Bolivia was setting the stage for privatization of its natural gas resources. Following the example of the water war, a National Coordinator for the Defence and Recovery of Gas (NCDRG), formed in July 2002 to organize protest marches to ‘recover gas for Bolivians’. “Twenty-one organizations joined the group headed by the ousted Congressman Evo Morales (set to re-enter Congress in August) and Filemón Escobar, Senator-elect of the MAS. The unlikely coalition included military leaders, local anti-globalization activists, veterans, union representatives, highland *campesinos* and coca growers” (Kohl and Farthing 2006: 174). This resulted in once again sparked massive opposition and President Sánchez de Lozada was eventually ousted.

A major milestone achieved by the indigenous population was the day the first indigenous president was sworn into office on January 22, 2006. Evo Morales, who during his inauguration speech proclaimed how the indigenous population had been exploited and humiliated for centuries, pledged to work towards ‘resolving this historical problem’... 500 years of resistance had come to an end’, and that they, the indigenous peoples of the Americas, should be ready to ‘take power for the next 500 ...but without enmity’, his insisted, ‘Because we indigenous people are not rancorous’ (Prashad and Ballvé, 141). With these words Morales was out to prove the changes he promised

during his campaign. Morales nationalized the country's gas reserves, reversed market-friendly policies, and eventually worked on a new Constitution. "This radical turn to the left put a definitive end to Bolivia's fifteen year stint as a "model [democratic] country"...Between 2003 and 2008, the Bolivian political system fell from the 31st to the 74th slot on the Bertelsmann Management Index, a composite measure of the success of 116 political systems to advance an agreed-upon set of development goals within a stable democratic framework"(Lehoucq, 111).

So how did the first ever indigenous president win? Before coming into office, Morales was the coca growers' leader and this alone provided him a good base start. Van Cott (2005:58) noted Morales declared, 'coca constitutes the flag of unity and struggle of the Aymara and Quechua peoples'. Félix Santos (who represents the MAS party in Congress) further noted that coca is part of Bolivia's philosophy and culture, and is the essence of our indigenous identity. As a cultural struggle, the defense of coca resonates with the majority of indigenous Bolivians who don't grow coca leaf. The coca growers' discourse of a struggle for cultural and religious freedom, combined with a nationalist discourse that defends coca consumption as a Bolivian tradition, earned them the support of nonindigenous social sectors. As a result, Morales continued to create a larger base with classic left issues such as the rights of the indigenous, the end of restrictions on coca growing, and full state control over the hydrocarbon sector (Schamis 2006 , Castañeda 2006).

This brings me to discuss several factors which contributed to Morales' rise to power. First and foremost, Morales had a direct connection to coca farmers and former tin miners, many of whom were indigenous. Morales' political party, the Movimiento al

Socialismo (MAS), was specifically tailoring its agenda to the indigenous. The MAS ultimately became the driving force for Morales winning the presidency. The roots of the MAS were groups of coca farmers which soon took the form of networked local agrarian workers. During the 1980s leaders of the coca-growing unions also reached out for support to left political parties such as the Izquierda Unida (United Left or IU). Subsequently the strengthening of a left party was crucial to the MAS. Neoliberal reforms paved the way for closure of most state-owned and operated tin mines but the increase in demand for coca (booming cocaine economy) made miners and peasants relocate near the *cocales* (coca fields) of Chapare region.

Interestingly, this allowed a merger of two different movements: miners and *cocaleros* (coca workers), to come together and create a force for the MAS. Miners who were laid off from the tin mines became *cocaleros*. Cameron and Hershberg (2010) state that miners had always had a strong class consciousness and history of militant struggle and solidarity and they brought this approach to the *cocales*. “These workers influenced the coca growers’ discourse by introducing elements of nationalism and Marxism that they had learned in the mines. The move of miners to coca production contributed to the emergence of a powerful movement that opposed neoliberalism and the US-sponsored War on Drugs. This movement formed a political instrument, advanced gradually through elections, and now controls the state” (106). The *cocaleros* ultimately supported the MAS since the party was in favor of policies that resisted crop substitution and that raised the price of coca, and because the MAS has reduced price (via export restrictions and tariff reduction) of food staples, upon which many smallholders and urban workers depend for

subsistence. This raised the possibility of an alliance between rural smallholders and the urban working class in support of the MAS.

Second, Morales and the MAS continued to build alliances. In the 1999 municipal elections, the MAS made its mark in the political arena. Morales proclaimed the MAS represented many social movements and was a political instrument of liberation. Born from a congress of peasants, the MAS would “draw its strength from the struggles of the indigenous peoples [pueblos indígenas], for the defense of our identity, which is the coca leaf, for the defense of our land, who is our mother, for the defense of our natural resources, which are our hope and our patrimony” (Albro: 447). As a result the MAS is very outspoken when it comes to economic independence and nationalization. Breaking away from the neoliberal agenda and taking ownership of key economic sectors, such as natural resources, was a goal to quickly accomplish, and was important in addressing a wide range of grievances among many different social movements.

In addition, one of the main factors behind the success of the MAS was the party’s inclusive ethnopopulist appeal. As Madrid (2008) notes, the MAS considered many strategies, “such as strengthening of indigenous consciousness and organization and growing disenchantment with the traditional parties and their record of governance...but the MAS’s ethnopopulist rhetoric and platform helped the party take advantage of these developments”(Madrid, 484). Because almost half of the population of Bolivia spoke an indigenous language, most of the MAS’ leadership and candidates were indigenous. The MAS was able to create an indigenous symbol that could be related to by the masses. The leadership not only tried to dress the part but they purposely used

indigenous phrases in their speech. As Cameron and Hershberg (2010) note: “Recent studies have shown that due to its peasant origins, MAS operates with decentralized and bottom-up schemes of participation; however, ...this occurs predominately in rural areas, where MAS adopts collective decisionmaking processes which are characteristic of the syndical peasant union organizational traditions” (122).

A fourth factor is the maturity of democracy. With the growth of democracy in Latin America over the years, voters sensed more stability and did not fear military coups for voting for a leftist candidate. An alternate route was also demonstrated when “...uninterrupted democratic rule gave left-leaning parties the opportunity to hold power at local and regional levels; in the process, the left gained credibility in the eyes of the citizens” (Stokes 2009:17). Not only was this a stepping stone for the left but they were able to continue “planting the seed” of promised social programs to the poor if they continued in office. As in the case of Bolivia, 60% of the population lives below the poverty line, (July 2010 est) making Bolivia the poorest country in this region. In this context, redistribution and economic welfare could not come soon enough. As previously stated, the neoliberal agenda had not improved their situation so this was an alternative worth trying. In a relatively short amount of time, the left has been advancing their agenda and only time will tell how Morales will sustain his agenda in Bolivia.

Lastly, it is important enough to note the effect of support from President Hugo Chávez. Although this factor was not directly responsible for Morales’ rise to power, the relationship Morales immediately built with Venezuela soon after he became president has had ramifications in Bolivia. Chávez has provided Bolivia with generous assistance, including, \$10 million in aid to assist in aftermath of flooding. He has also established

military agreements with Bolivia, indicating if the United States were to intervene in Bolivia at any point in time, he would not only provide Venezuelan soldiers but what carry out any means possible to assist Bolivia (Rochlin, 2007). As Rochlin (2007) notes: “Venezuela’s interest in Bolivia is complex. Bolivia is not only a loyal ideological and strategic ally for Chávez, but Venezuela also plays the role of ‘big brother’ or benefactor to ultra-poor and politically divided Bolivia. In that sense Bolivia is a protégé of the Venezuelan socialist experiment. It is in the interests of Chávez to help Bolivia develop economically and to achieve political stability so that Venezuela can showcase regionally and globally such positive developments in the country” (1337).

The close relationship between Morales and Chávez has caused a discord between the United States and Bolivia. Going back to 2006, the United States was still the largest provider of assistance to Bolivia, but since then the U.S. has criticized Morales for a lack of anti-narcotics cooperation. The U.S. government claimed that coca crops were not being eradicated but actually had increased, so by December of 2006, the U.S. reduced the anti-narcotics assistance by 25% (Rochlin, 2007). Since a large number of Latin American countries are leaning towards some type of leftist agenda, the United States has not been able to do much to limit the success of Morales’ agenda. Additionally, the U.S. is trying to juggle multiple wars in the Middle East, and the rise of new global powers, such as China and India, have been slowly minimizing the dominance of the United States.

The country’s future is in the present hands of Morales and his desired leftist political agenda. Certain factors are needed if Morales wants to claim success in his country. First, he needs sustained natural resources to fund his social programs and

economic building of his country. Second, he needs to keep delivering on the promise of providing economic and social welfare to the vast amount of poor citizens. Lastly, trying to prevent divisions within his own party and the major groups around his country, such as the *cocaleros* (coca growers) and landless peasants are critical to his continued success in Bolivia.

In conclusion, when evaluating the case studies and theories, there is one theory that is very prominent in the case of Bolivia. Due to the large indigenous population, the social structural cleavages pertaining to economic and ethnic cleavages are evident. The indigenous population has made great strides throughout the course of Bolivian history and has proven a strong constituency base for the left. The political changes that have occurred in Bolivia have allowed the indigenous population to not only organize and create networks of support but become more politically involved. The election of the first ever indigenous president was a historic moment for the indigenous population but there is still much room for continued progress. Their economic situation is something that will take some time to turn around since they are the poorest population of Bolivia. Morales has been creating social programs to alleviate some of the poverty; however, breaking the cycle of poverty is not an easy or quick task. They are at least moving in the right direction.

Venezuela (Radical Left)

History has shown a volatile political system in Venezuela throughout the years. Cameron and Hershberg (2010) provide a good depiction of the political trajectory of this country. There was a brief democratic experience from 1945 to 1948 but for the next ten

years there were insurgencies and military uprisings. Following democratization in 1958, two political parties dominated Venezuelan politics for forty years, the Acción Democrática (AD, Democratic Action) and the Partido Social Cristiano de Venezuela (COPEI, the Venezuelan Social Christian Party). “The two-party system was highly illiberal and unrepresentative. It operated like a single-party regime, a convergence of the two political parties that was facilitated by their ideological stance and agreement through the founding Pact of *Punto Fijo* (1957) to share control of state institutions. AD and COPEI worked together to exclude party political competitors and to control access to the oil export revenues that flowed to the national treasury from the national oil company PDVSA” (Lievesley and Ludlam 2009: 58). These two political parties were then able to divide the oil rents and distribute to their constituencies.

Lievesley and Ludlam (2009) note that this *Punto Fijo* ‘democracy’ was accepted and legitimate for decades, especially since the oil rents were being distributed to their constituencies and a portion of the population was benefiting from this. There was some economic stability during this decade with steady economic growth and rising incomes through the petroleum boom of the 1970s. However, the outlook in the 1980s took a dramatic turn and things were starting to unravel all around the country. Issues soon rose from dependence on petroleum revenues, lenient regulatory power, and bad political decision making which caused the state to suffer from falling oil prices, plunging incomes, and visible corruption in the 1990s. The *Punto Fijo* was showing signs of cracks within the parties and in 1989, in a radical attempt to save political power by the incoming AD government; they sought to restructure the economy.

The AD chose to turn away from oil dependence and towards diversification and global integration. This political agenda did not bring the results many were hoping for and the country spiraled out of control. Social unrest was about to begin again, starting with the 1989 riots known as the Caracazo which the citizens were protesting the neoliberal agenda. Social unrest continued for the next couple of years and there were even two coup attempts in 1992. Interestingly, one of the coup attempts was led by Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez who was jailed but eventually pardoned by the next president. With the continuation of dropping oil prices, this caused the poverty rates to nearly triple, from about 25 percent in the mid 1970s to approximately 65 percent in the mid 1990s. In addition, real per capita income in 1998 had dropped to 1963 levels. This severe economic crisis led to a mass rejection of the traditional political parties which started in the 1993 elections and concluded in the 1998 elections, when all of the major candidates ran on the independent platform. (Cameron and Hershberg 2010).

There was so much discontent from the Venezuelans that this ultimately proved a great opportunity for Chávez. He ran on the platform of change and promised radical changes both politically and economically but was not specific about his ideological stance. The theories of institutional decay and economic voting became apparent. The two political power house parties had crumbled and the economy had taken a serious plummet. “It was in this context, and against a background of deepening poverty and inequality, that Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1998” (Lievesley and Ludlam 2009: 59). Chávez was elected president with 56 percent of the vote in 1998 as the candidate of the party (MVR) Movimiento Quinta República (Venezuela’s Fifth Republic Movement). Originally, Chávez was part of the MBR 200 party (The Bolivarian

Revolutionary Movement) in the early 1990s which consisted of a group of nationalistic military officers who were opposed to neoliberal reforms and the IMF.

However, in 1997 MBR 200's national assembly decided to participate in the elections and to create a formal political party. Several months later the MVR party was formed. With the election of Chávez, his era is referred by some as the beginning of "*Chavismo*". Some individuals consider Chávez a type of dictator, while others praise him for challenging U.S. dominance of the Western Hemisphere. Noam Lupu (2010) has researched class voting patterns in Venezuela and notes that a multi class voting base supports Chávez, but he has been increasing his base among the middle class. His voting base consists of a coalition of poor, middle class and even some wealthy classes but Lupu adds the very rich have opposed him disproportionately. Since being re-elected in 2006 he is seeking to further radicalize his agenda by altering the constitution to abolish presidential term limits thus allowing him to remain in power for many more years to come. In addition, Chávez is looking into modifying the protection of private property. His close ties with Cuba and constant public anti-American tirades have caused concerns since his agenda seeks to emulate certain communist models (from Cuba) such as reducing basic freedoms. The substantial increase in oil reserves has allowed him to focus on acquiring support for his agenda (e.g. Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador) and looks to further strengthen his relationships with China, Russia, and Iran.

So what are the characteristics of the voters who have voted him into office and how long will he remain in power with the support of such a base? Chávez' voting base came from approximately 55 percent of voters who were poor and 45 percent from middle and some upper class sectors. "This was not a vote for a leftist ideology, but a

vote of frustration and anger and a tossing out of the old political class that was perceived to be corrupt and incompetent” (Cameron and Hershberg 2010: 83). Hugo Chávez blamed corrupt and inefficient political leaders for the dire situation Venezuela was in but promised to alleviate poverty and inequality and once again build on oil revenues. ‘He named his Bolivarian Revolution after Simón Bolívar, the South American independence leader of the early 1800s, and referred to the new constitutional order as the “Fifth Republic”, replacing the Fourth Republic of the forty-year representative democracy known as the Punto Fijo political system and based on the 1961 constitution’ (84). Subsequently after his win, in due time, his ideological stance became more and more evident. The characteristics of *Chavismo* developed during the early years of his presidency. His government was personalistic and heavily relied on having a direct connection with large sectors of the population, especially the poor (although he also had a fair amount of followers from the middle class). He not only claimed to be a champion for the poor and would stand up against those who wanted to take advantage of Venezuela but also developed an anti-West rhetoric.

The poor in Venezuela is also comprised of an indigenous population. Venezuela’s indigenous population is approximately 1.5 percent of the total population, which make-up thirty-eight distinct groups. Although this group is much smaller than Bolivia’s indigenous population, but Chávez has made it a point to not disregard this population and make concessions to ensure they are involved politically. An example was when Chávez ensured there would be three seats reserved at the Venezuelan National Assembly for an indigenous person to occupy that seat. Van Cott (2005) notes, even though the population is miniscule, concentrations of indigenous voters in particular state

and municipal districts present opportunities for local and regional parties. However, there have obstacles (both internal and external) the indigenous have faced in order to build a strong movement. The indigenous' regional and national organizations have had less institutional continuity and have also demonstrated relatively greater timidity with respect to alliances with nonindigenous actors. In addition, they also suffer from internal divisions, derived from differences surrounding ethnic identity and political party affiliation (Van Cott 2005).

Progress has been made and continues to be made. The ethnic party PUAMA (Pueblo Unido Multiétnico de Amazonas-United Multiethnic People of Amazonas) and the national indigenous organization CONVIE (Consejo Nacional Indio de Venezuela-National Council of Venezuela) have close relations with President Chávez which also benefits Chávez since they place themselves on the left spectrum and run in conjunction with Chávez's electoral coalition. This has also allowed Chávez to keep building his constituency and attain his own personal agenda over the course of his presidency.

Castañeda and Morales (2008) discuss four stages that can be distinguished in the evolution of the "leftist" character of Hugo Chávez: moderate-transitional (1999-2001), confrontational (2001-2003), consolidation (2003-2006), and onset of Twenty-First-Century Socialism (2006-present) (182-190).

The Moderate-Transitional Period (1999-2001)

During the moderate-transitional (1999-2001) period there was still significant political power held by opposition parties, at the sub-national levels. There was also a deep recession that occurred between 1999 and early 2000. During this period there was

also a new Constitution which, for the most part, contained a similar framework of the 1961 Constitution. Some of these similar elements were powers granted to the regional and local levels, a strong executive branch, incorporation of private sectors in key areas such as the exploitation and commercialization of natural resources, and an established set of fundamental rights. His actions also reflected someone who wanted to work together with those who could help his country become more stable. He worked with OPEC and non-OPEC countries to work on a common strategy regarding oil production.

This period was short lived because Chávez had a more radical approach in mind but felt he needed to be strategic and patient for the changes he wanted to see in Venezuela. The opposition parties continued to struggle for political power and prevented Chávez from enacting some radical changes; this was soon to change.

The Confrontational Period (2001-2003)

This confrontational period involved threats from Chávez and the opposition parties. Through mobilizations, violent occurrences, and chaos, Chávez governed by decree using emergency power legislation. Chávez wanted to paint his image as defender of the underprivileged while the opposition portrayed him as authoritarian by attempting to reduce basic freedoms like his close Cuban ally Fidel Castro. There were also episodes of violence, human rights violations, and repression was evident. However, the repression was not severe compared to other recent examples of authoritarian regimes. What was evident was Chávez' goal of consolidation of power. He increased his anti-West rhetoric by criticizing the Bush administration while pressing the Congress for consolidation of power. Congress was not able to reach a consensus during this period

and what did emerge were two factions: those who were pro-Chávez and those who were against him and his ideas.

The pro-Chávez sentiment was stronger and Chávez began consolidating his power. He not only drew on his popularity but created social programs known as *misiones* (missions) which brought social and economic aid to a large portion of the population. One specific purpose for the *misiones* was aimed at providing health care to some of the poorest neighborhoods in the country. The national oil company, PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima), played a central role in financing these “missions”. Chávez also funneled oil revenues to the poor; this increased his popularity and many citizens described his policies as good policies. However, the conflicts between Chávez and the PDVSA management and union caused serious issues during this time. Chávez appointed Alí Rodríguez Araque, a former guerrilla commander, as Minister of Oil and Mines. One of the Chávez goals was to reassert government control over PDVSA. “Although PDVSA was nationalized in 1976, it had become a ‘state within a state’ run as a private fiefdom by a corrupt and Americanized management elite with no regard to the national interest” (Raby 2006: 161).

Raby (2006) notes that by December 2002 the situation with PDVSA was critical, and the government sent in the military to take over the oil installations due to PDVSA shutting down most of the production. With the aid of loyal employees they were able to restart production and some 18,000 disloyal management and technicians were let go. PDVSA was renationalized and this became a crucial victory to Chávez and his agenda.

The Consolidation Period (mid-2003 – mid-2006)

During this period, Venezuela was in a good economic period and Chávez reaped the benefits. There was less social disorder and oil revenue was coming in at an unexpected rate. Chávez also wasted no opportunity reminding the people about his *misiones* programs which brought aid to the poor. Castañeda and Morales (2008) point out these programs represented the core of social services provided by the government, and their success was a key element in how the citizens evaluated the president. As a result of his popularity, Chávez was able to overcome a recall referendum in 2005 and was re-elected in 2006. His popularity also increased due to the constant anti-west rhetoric he “preached” to the people and created ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of the Americas, which was in response to the U.S. sponsored FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas. ALBA was a regional trade agreement that allowed the participatory countries to align together and create a free trade area that would benefit all of its members. Their main goal was to provide aid to the poor but Chávez had a second agenda. The other countries involved in ALBA would not be as willing to confront Chávez with his radical ideas and this provided a cover for him.

Additionally, Chávez was able to increase his connections with other countries by providing oil at a subsidized price. He was especially interested in aiding the Latin American countries that have similar ideologies as he such as Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Cuba. In addition, he strengthened relationships with “controversial” international countries such as Iran, China, and Russia. This time frame allowed Chávez to build a government that could not be easily contested and the opposition was greatly diminished.

The Onset of Twenty-First-Century Socialism (2006-present)

This time frame is dubbed by Chávez as Venezuela's Twenty-First-Century Socialist government. This form of government is a top-down approach and provides Chávez with more centralized power. The main aspects of Twenty-First-Century Socialism in Venezuela was sketched out in the Plan for Social and Economic Development for the 2007-2013 presidential term – presented by Chavez himself- that provides the road map for years to come. Castañeda and Morales (2008) note the main guidelines of this project are as followed:

1. The creation of a “new socialist ethos” (implies new ethical principles based on social justice, equity, and solidarity).
2. “Supreme social happiness” (seeks the creation of a social structure based on equality and inclusiveness)
3. The creation of a protagonist and revolutionary democracy (implies social inclusion, majority rule, and direct democracy)
4. The development of a socialist economic model (emphasizes production rather than “reproduction of wealth”, with the state controlling all areas of strategic importance)
5. A new national geopolitical scheme (implies promotion of development of areas with higher poverty levels, recovery of urban areas, and achieve sustainable growth)
6. Venezuela as a global energy power (oil)
7. A new international geopolitical scheme (emphasizes nationalist and regionalist orientations, with continued anti-west rhetoric)

This agenda is no surprise to many, based on the political trajectory Chávez has been on over the years. Even though some might not take Chávez too seriously, some of his actions have prompted notice about his seriousness of completely changing the political dynamics of Venezuela.

The telephone company CANTV was re-nationalized and RCTV was refused a public broadcasting license which was later replaced by TVES (a communal TV station) so that Chávez could have more control on what is shown over the airwaves. In addition, Chávez is setting the place to rewrite legislation in the name of the Bolivarian Revolution. For example, one change would be taking away powers from states and municipalities and transfer most of that power to the central government or to the communal councils. This would in a sense provide very minimal power to regional and local levels of government. More importantly, Chávez seeks to eliminate presidential term limits which is in a true sense anti-democratic. These examples, along with trying to create a new party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (USPV) and combine MVR factions and small political parties into one powerful political power; poise him to have an abundant amount of executive power which would make it difficult to vote him out of office.

Another point worth mentioning is the natural resource that has provided Chávez with more regional clout than any other Latin American country which is oil. The oil leverage Venezuela has allows the political and economic dynamics of that country to be manipulated by the President. Schamis (2006) calls Venezuela the “petro-left” and discusses how democracy does not fare well in oil-producing countries, at least not in the long term. He further discusses how oil creates a clientelistic network which seeks control of the resource in order to share the wealth among those in the “circle”. This eventually became of the factors for the breakdown of the Pact of *Punto Fijo* for the two main political parties of Venezuela, AD and COPEI. When oil prices fell so did the charade begin to unravel pertaining to the uses of oil money. This caused the political

scene to spiral out of control and ended with Chávez winning the presidency in the 1998 elections.

Through his ups and downs as president, Chávez has been able to leverage his political influence due to soaring oil prices. “These include not only his comprehensive fiscal stimuli and far reaching social programs, but also his new international persona-projecting himself as a regional leader, meddling in the domestic politics of Peru and Mexico, destabilizing the Andean Pact, entering Mercosur while challenging Brazil, and ratcheting up his rhetoric against the United States.... Chávez’s rule represents an oil-funded, twenty-first century version of patrimonial domination” (Schamis 2006: 31). This comes as no surprise because of the world’s reliance on oil. Even though some U.S. business firms have oil contracts with Venezuela the oil dependency is prevalent with many countries around the world and Chávez is taking full advantage of this.

Thus, from Chávez’ actions, it is evident that the Bolivarian Revolution having the same footprint as Punto Fijo politics: dependence on oil revenues, highly centralized decision-making structures (in other words, Chávez himself), reliance on the distribution of oil rents, and failure to restore the regulative and administrative capacities of the state. In addition, Chávez has made changes that have raised eyebrows from citizens within and certain governments around the world. These changes include emphasis on class divisions rather than cross-class alliance, emphasis on confrontation and elimination of opponents to achieve change rather than consensus seeking to achieve stability, dismantling of traditional representative institutions and erosion of the separation of powers in favor of new forms of participatory democracy and accountability, change in petroleum policy from one of increasing market share to one of controlling production in

order to raise prices, and most importantly, a shift from market capitalism to twenty-first century socialism (Cameron and Hershberg 2010).

To summarize this case study and bridge together the relevant theories, the case of Venezuela provides support for two theories. In particular, the theories of institutional decay and economic voting are strongly relevant to this case study. Chávez made great political strides due to the institutional decay Venezuela was facing. The deteriorating economy, deepening poverty cleavages, and the breakdown of the two major political parties allowed Chávez to run under a banner of change and subsequently win the presidency. However, once in power and over time, Chávez has pushed for some radical changes and has sought a similar agenda the *Punto Fijo* pact previously endorsed. Since the poor and middle class constitute the majority of his constituency base, it would be in his best interest to not allow institutional and economic decay to occur or he could face the same demise as the previous government.

Colombia (Center Right)

In spite of many countries in Latin America turning “left” politically, Colombia has maintained a center-right government and is a constant ally to the United States. Even though Colombia has had a history of widespread violence, political corruption, deep class cleavages, and fragmented political parties, democracy has struggled to remain alive in this country. Some of the hurdles Colombia has had over history are very significant. One I will briefly discuss was *La Violencia* (the violence). The start of this incident occurred when the conservative party won control in 1946 after sixteen years of liberal control. There was a growing sense of partisan violence and this set off a chain of

events that ended with a period of extreme violence in Colombia. The liberals were grooming Jorge Eliécer Gaitán for the next presidential election in 1950, and he had a fair chance of winning, but in April of 1948 he was assassinated in the streets of Bogotá. Liberals engaged in intense rioting and blamed the conservatives for his death and escalated into a nation-wide civil conflict known as *La Violencia*.

The conservative president Mariano Ospina Perez would eventually use the police to carry out selective killings on key liberals but the liberals would counterattack by forming guerrilla armies. This violence continued and in the 1950 presidential election, yet another extreme-right conservative; Laureano Gómez. The violence did not stop with his presidency but continued to mount. “By the early 1950s, the army was terrorizing the countryside through a “scorched earth” campaign against regions suspected of supporting the Liberal guerrillas, employing bombings, massacres, and arson in their attack” (Avilés 2006: 30). This eventually contributed to the coup of Gómez in 1953. Avilés (2006) notes throughout this period, it would eventually take over two hundred thousand lives and result in the institutional transformation of Colombia’s political system. In order to try and save the country from more extreme violence the conservatives and liberals agreed to form a two party shared system in 1958 by the name of the National Front (NF). This arrangement between both parties consisted of alternating presidential power and equally dividing all seats in the legislative bodies over a sixteen year period (1958-1974).

However, during this agreement period, there was an understanding from both sides to oppose left or radical left parties from participating politically. Between 1958 and 1986, the political monopoly by the National Front pacts worked to exclude and

eliminate the opposition on the left. As a result, this left the country without an active, legitimate, and solid political opposition for the left; hence the persistence, growth, and radicalization of the guerrilla groups. The country has lacked a tradition of political opposition and some scholars point out a democratic regime needs to allow both sides of the spectrum to be politically represented. A possible explanation for the disregard of the left was the common perception of some left parties being associated to authoritarian regimes. Colombia has tried to establish a minimum legal framework that would allow some type of political opposition but has yet to allow the left to fully develop into a strong opposition. A main reason for this is the erratic cycles of political violence that has occurred in the country. Colombian politicians did not want yet another variable to be added to the mix and increase the potential for anymore political violence.

Even though guerilla and paramilitary movements would have a presence in Colombia over the years with some intense fighting with the government, today Colombia has one of the longest-running democracies in this region. Many scholars try to analyze the factors that have contributed to this democratic duration in the midst of chaos. A major focal point in Colombia's democratic history was the revamping of their Constitution in 1991. The previous constitution was dated from 1886 and times had certainly changed since then. During the reform of the Constitution, even the guerilla groups were asked for their input in order to create a more solid change. The end result was a completely new Constitution that changed the political dynamics in Colombia.

The new goal of Constitutional reform was to introduce participatory democracy in this country. Posada-Carbó (1998) provides a brief synopsis of these changes. First, direct democracy would affect all levels of government: local, regional, and national.

Referenda could be used to veto legislation that has been already adopted (even to constitutional amendments), and the recall of mayors, governors, congresspeople is defined as a political right on the basis that they violated something from the Constitution. Second, some constitutional clauses required political parties, labor unions, professional colleges, and universities to belong and adhere to democratic principles. Third, a comprehensive Bill of Rights was introduced. It included civil, political, social, economic, cultural and collective rights. New institutions like the Ombudsman (*Defensor del Pueblo*), and the Constitutional Court were created to oversee these rights were carried out. Including expedient and special procedures to protect rights; the most important one was *acción de tutela* which stated that citizens whose rights have been abused could seek a writ of protection against the offending party. Fourth, in order to allow more political contenders into the arena and have equal resources and fairness, several reforms were introduced, for instance, a special constituency for ethnic minorities, and free access to television for the candidates. (73).

A fifth change, which was controversial to many, was the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church by dropping any reference to Roman Catholicism as the religion of the nation, as an effort to not discriminate against the various denominations and creating them to be equal to each other. This was controversial because Latin America as a whole has a very strong sense of Roman Catholicism as the core religion. This however did please a portion of the population who wanted more freedom of religion and considered this a strengthening of center-right politics. As a result, these constitutional changes were considered extreme to what Colombia originally had. So what were some effects from these constitution changes? A major effect was the accessibility of new

political parties joining the political arena. The goal was to move from a traditional two-party system to a multiparty one. In order for this to occur, three phases were created which allowed more participation.

Increase in Political Participation

Welna and Gallón (2007) describe the three phases in the recent history of Colombia's politics. First, "was the establishment of mechanisms of affirmative action intended to guarantee the representation of ethnic minorities and insurgent groups in the legislation" (170). As a result, special districts were created, one for indigenous communities in the Senate and another in the House for Afro-Colombian communities. In addition, the government was willing to work with any guerilla or paramilitary group that wanted would consider putting their arms down. If any group would the government wanted to bring them into the political fold. The second phase involved a set of vague guidelines which encouraged all social actors to form political parties and become involved in the politics of the country. This applied to not only political parties, but political and social movements, and significant groups of citizens. All of these groups could present any candidate in elections which would be entitled to government funding and have access to state-run media (e.g. television), at all times. This involved allowing a limitless number of candidates. Lastly, a nationwide senatorial district was created to increase minority representation in Congress. The "open door" policy for more political parties was a great goal but some consequences were inevitable. (170-171).

A major effect of this "open door" policy was the increased fragmentation of political parties. This has not only led to a splintering of the left vote but has also been a

factor the left has not flourished over time. No party represents a significant portion of the population and this has created the perception of the “lost vote”- the number of lists and votes that obtain no representation. Since this obviously has grown to be a significant problem, the government has discussed possible solutions for this dilemma. On the one hand, the push for more groups to be politically involved was an important outreach, but on the other hand the very lax regulations allowed almost any small group to be placed on the ticket thus creating increased fragmentation and conflicts for a citizen’s vote. In other words, what was needed was “a limited number of parties of national scope, better structured and also more democratic in their inner workings, would combine the demand for wider political representation with the need to create an environment favorable to democratic governability”(Welna and Gallón: 176).

Political Reform (1994-2002)

In order for a reform to occur a series of proposals were discussed during 1994 to 2002 that would allow for a stronger multiparty system in Colombia. In addition, the Commission on Political Reform was created in 1995 to oversee this process. Welna and Gallón (2007) discuss these measures in more detail. The first pertained to electoral reforms, which recommended that parties and movements limit their number of lists for elections and make them accountable to their constituencies once in office. This subsequently led to a more well rounded model for political-electoral reform which sought to strengthen parties and ensure minority representation. The model called for limiting the number of voter lists allowed to each political party or movement in each electoral district; changing the formula for seat distribution; and establishing a minimum

voting threshold to ensure access to representative bodies. It was very important to not shut out the groups that represented the minority groups of the country since this would not allow the democratic process to flourish and would be more elite driven than anything else.

Second, new procedures controlled internal democratization of parties. This involved parties maintaining control over their party's name, not allowing a person to join two or more competing parties, and prohibiting a candidate from campaigning under any other label but his/her own. These controls were necessary in order to bring more unification to the parties. The third change was related to the opposition's rights and obligations. More concessions are needed in order to allow the left to be fully involved politically. A fourth factor relates to the Congress. The 1991 Constitutional reforms, called for restoring some of Congress' powers and diminishing presidential powers. This was also a factor to balance out the executive powers and help maintain a more center right regime in case the president wanted to go beyond his powers without approval. However, the increased fragmentation of parties has hampered the development of Congress which has also hindered the quality of laws that are debated and passed. In addition, the constant turnover of Congress members also impedes development and growth. Further progress is needed to strengthen this political body in Colombia. Fifth, is the campaign and party financing of the various political parties. This area is susceptible to corruption and bribery not just in Colombia but in many other countries around the world. With large sums of money going to political parties with relatively few controls or restrictions on these parties this could become a perfect storm for corruption.

The additional factor in Colombia (which is not easy to overcome) is the drug-trafficking pressure which many politicians have to face. In recent years some political campaigns have been heavily funded with drug money at the presidential and congressional levels. For many years Colombia has been associated with drugs and infamous cartels which began to have more prominence starting in the 1970s. This was an era where marijuana was the main source of drug money but this was soon replaced by a different drug: cocaine. Colombia became the leading supplier of cocaine in the 1980s and beyond. In order for the center right to maintain its legitimacy they need to stay away from this “easy” money campaign financing.

Lastly is the affirmative action regulation which is intended to provide rights to the minorities. Not only based on gender but cultural differences between the different groups in this country. This has allowed minority groups such as the indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups to have a special district which has greatly benefited this community. Additionally, Colombia is making an effort to involve women in more executive positions in the government. (176-193).

During this era of political reform, Colombia was trying to make strides in improving their multiparty system. Since the left did not have a strong presence for over thirty years in the country, certain political reforms were needed. In 1998, the “Pact to Transform Political Parties” was signed which involved anticorruption and more involvement from opposition parties. Unfortunately, this did not create the progress the left hoped for. As a result, a new political left party emerged. “Unlike previous attempts , the Polo Democrático was not born out of an insurgency; rather, it reflects the growing autonomy and independence of social organizations, intellectuals, and progressive

political movements and their distancing from the rebel groups” (Welna and Gallón 2007: 119). Welna and Gallón (2007) further note that if this new left party continues to show itself as a strong, modern, and viable political alternative, not only can it possibly attract guerrillas toward the political process but other disenchanting voters as well. The growing left was involved more politically and would go through some surges in congressional elections but there was still resistance to allow the left to continue to flourish.

There was also the need to have a qualified president to continue the vast reforms the country was heading for. Although Andres Pastrana, who was president between 1998-2002 was dedicated to continue the neoliberal agenda and work on reducing the civil strife, the following president, Álvaro Uribe made some significant changes in Colombia. He was he a prime example of a center-right president due to his commitment to a strong neoliberal agenda which included privatizing, a strong supporter of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and actively pursued negotiations with the U.S. for a bilateral trade agreement.

The Presidency of Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006)

Álvaro Uribe was sworn into the presidency on August 7, 2002 during a period of increased guerilla insurgencies and violence in Colombia. Violence had been steadily increasing over the years but previous presidents had not been able to fully squash the opposition. Uribe ran under a “law and order” platform which involved him only negotiating with insurgents who had entered cease-fires; he proposed a major expansion of security forces to fight widespread crime and loosen the hold of two rebel groups and paramilitary squads in rural areas. Kline (2009) provides a brief overview of Uribe’s first

term as president: “the state took the offensive against insurgent groups. The armed forces became stronger and gave clear support to the president. Plan Colombia continued furnishing weapons...airplanes, and training. Different social groups supported the government”(1). Uribe’s main constituency base came from cattle ranchers, large landowners, and narco-traffickers. “Uribe also represents a figure with connections in both sectors of Colombia’s business community-its transnational, modernizing sector as well as in its more traditional, nationalist sector” (Avilés 2006: 135). Even foreign policy was closely tied to the United States, with Colombia being one of the countries that supported the U.S. in the invasion of Iraq. So how did Uribe start turning his country around?

One of the main catalysts was the ability to negotiate with the guerrillas and paramilitary groups. Not only was Uribe the sixth president to attempt negotiations with these groups but this initial problem had a span of over twenty years. However, not all negotiations were considered a success. Uribe made attempts with three major groups and the most successful one was the paramilitary group, the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia-United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia). In this group alone, approximately thirty-thousand individuals demobilized and Uribe was able to negotiate three agreements with the AUC. First, after making a deal with the United States, no leaders would be extradited to the U.S if they “behaved” after demobilization; as soon as they made problems they would be extradited. Second, the International Criminal Court had been ratified in Colombia in 2002. In other words, Uribe would have to hand over the guerrillas in order to be tried but if they demobilized this significantly reduced their chances of being tried in this court. Lastly, if they demobilized before certain laws were

passed regarding guerrilla groups, their incentive was to add their own terms into law. (Kline 2009: 154)

The government had less success with the other two guerilla groups, the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional - Army of National Liberation) and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The government was able to sit down with the ELN and discuss possible negotiations (even though no agreements were finalized) but the FARC was unwilling to negotiate. Unfortunately, Colombia still remains embroiled in violence because of the FARC; although the levels of conflict between the government and the FARC have been volatile and can change from month to month. The negotiations between Uribe and the FARC have remained stagnant and either side does not want to make any concessions. However, the journalists inside Colombia have pointed out that with the increase of the armed forces the FARC has less power than before. There were constant headlines regarding their attacks almost every day but now they are infrequent. (Kline 2009). Overall, these were huge leaps made by Uribe and the guerilla issue. Although progress was not made with the three main groups, there was significant progress made with paramilitaries. In addition to making an effort to working with the guerilla and paramilitary groups, President Uribe also tried to build the state in three different ways.

The first was plans to strengthen and build the military. This included creating “Soldiers from My Town” which was to assist the military by creating a system of informers to report on suspicious people, and to begin giving rewards for information on those individuals. Additionally, this program encourages desertion of members in illegal groups and the creation of “rehabilitation zones” in two areas of guerilla influence. This

also included an increase in military training in order for soldiers to become more offensive and better protect the country's infrastructure. The army also had better tactical leadership and had significantly improved their warfare in counterterrorism. Since the military was very concerned not to violate human rights, this allowed them to gain legitimacy and strengthen their relationship with the community and the media.

Second, he wanted to make the government more visible and accessible to citizens of his country. Uribe organized a kind of townhall meeting called community councils (*consejos comunitarios*) where he would go to different parts of the country and listen to peoples concerns. During the first four years of his presidency there were approximately 150 townhall meetings. The government reported they had identified 1,794 tasks from these meetings that could assist communities for overall improvements and would work on such measures. The third way was to make the state more efficient; aimed at reforming the political system and strengthening the judicial system. However, this was not an easy task since Uribe wanted some constitutional changes in order for his changes to take place. Unfortunately most of his amendments did not receive the 25 percent minimum approval votes and they were not passed (Kline 2009: 39-44). The left also continued to make some progress but they were not the main focus for Uribe. The guerrilla and paramilitary groups were very high on his agenda in order to bring some stability on that front. Kline (2009) discussed how Uribe had not made much effort in his first term to strengthen the party system and had a lack of structure.

However, as an overall the Uribe administration managed to create important changes in the country which has had brought significant progress to this country once filled with continuous chaos. Between 2002 and 2008, Colombia saw a decrease in

homicides by 44%, kidnappings by 88%, terrorist attacks by 79%, and attacks on the infrastructure by 60%. His presidency set the stage for continued democratic strengthening and unification of the state. The new president, Juan Miguel Santos was sworn into office on August 7, 2010 (he had served as Uribe's Minister of National Defense). The task for Santos will be to continue the work Uribe had started and maintain the accomplishments of the previous administration. This should include allowing the left to further develop in order to maintain a democratic agenda that allows the opposition to build their constituencies and have a more even political role in the country.

In conclusion, the model for this country indicated most coefficients were centered on right wing parties, and when analyzing the theories we can consider that Economic Voting and Institutional Decay can be applied to this case. However, we can examine these theories as have the opposite effect in Colombia. Let me further elaborate; since the center right has not allowed the economy to deteriorate or have an institutional breakdown the right has been able to maintain its power. As a side vein, there is the notion of the left being hampered politically over many years but the right has been able to maintain some consistency in the country. The theories state when there is economic crisis or institutional decay, there is more opportunity for the opposition to take over but Columbia has not had serious enough decay to allow this to occur.

This chapter examines how each country has progressed historically and how the current government has either come to power or maintained their political agenda. The cause and effects that have allowed each country to plan their political trajectory will continue to have ramifications within their country and regionally. As a result, the left

was able to make great strides in Bolivia and Venezuela due mostly to the breakdown of neoliberalism. The difference in Colombia was that the left was intentionally thwarted from participating politically for several decades and now has to make up for that lost time by trying to enforce their political agenda in the country and eventually create a strong constituency.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper I have sought to contribute to the scholarship on the rise of the left in Latin America. Current scholars have found it difficult to not only differentiate between what is a true left or right agenda in Latin America, specifically when it comes to defining a left agenda but what factors can be associated with left party placement. A more general consensus on differentiating left-right placement has been analyzing a country's economic and social agenda. Wiesehomeir (2010) states "...the combined deregulation/privatization dimension emerges as a major predictor of positioning on the left and right, together with the globalization dimension, which more than emphasizing interventionist government economic policy focuses on consequences of globalization" (23). Another difference between the two parties is the economic factor. The left is more state-centered and attempts to limit foreign investment while nationalizing any natural resources and/or major utilities in the country. The right will attempt to build their country's income by opening up foreign investment to their infrastructure. The second factor was the social agenda. There is also a big variation between the left and right. The left seeks redistribution of land, reducing inequalities and providing social welfare programs to the country's poor.

So what can predict left-right placement and support for the left? Let me first discuss the theories that were analyzed in this thesis. A brief recapitulation of each theory is as follows: the first theory identified was the Economic Voting theory (Seligson and Queirolo 2007, Benton 2005). This theory states that voters punish or reward incumbent parties for their prior economic record. A second refers to institutional explanations and

eventual decay (Wiesehomeier 2010, Cameron and Hershberg 2010, Seligson and Queirolo 2007); this theory is twofold. The theory discusses how voters' evaluations of institutional rules, procedures, and constraints influence electoral volatility and the effect of ideological polarization within the party system. The third theory discusses the social structural cleavages pertaining to economic and ethnic cleavages (Castañeda and Morales 2008, Arditi 2008, Madrid 2008). Lastly, the fourth theory discusses the social values aspect (Castañeda and Morales 2008) such as occupation, level of education, and income. When the theories were analyzed in conjunction with the models and case studies, all four theories were very pertinent to left-right placement.

All of the theories were supported by some of the statistical models; however, not all of the variables were applicable in each country case study. In the Bolivian model, most of the variables were significant in explaining left-right placement. The two key theories that were applicable in this case study was social structural cleavage theory , pertaining to the indigenous variable and social values theory (worker, church attendance, education, and income). For the Venezuelan model there were two variables that reflected to be significant (church attendance and age). Again, the social cleavage and values theory was pertinent to this case study. Lastly for the Colombian model, the four variables that were significant were public ownership, worker, secondary education, and age. The Social values theory was also pertinent in this case study. In addition, the case studies of Bolivia and Venezuela supported the economic voting theory and institutional decay by demonstrating when the right failed to produce economic benefits with the neoliberal agenda, the citizens were more in favor of voting in a left party regime.

In the case study of Bolivia, Morales has been considered the more pragmatic left. He has tried to make immediate perceptions to the outside world of vast changes to occur in Bolivia. A major occurrence was when Morales nationalized the gas company. Investors became suspicious of his actions and were apprehensive of which additional infrastructures the state would take ownership of. This led the United States to scrutinize more his agenda and subsequently his political ties since he was quite friendly with Cuba and Venezuela. However, in comparison to most other Latin American countries, Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in that hemisphere; Bolivia has an unprecedented amount of an indigenous population. Due to the large number, the MAS political party was able to provide significant appeal to the indigenous with an ethnopopulist appeal. Not only was the person running for President indigenous but many leaders within this organization were also indigenous. Indigenous people were not typically in a leadership role and this became a major variable for Morales to win the presidency. The oppressed indigenous voted for Morales to provide them with a social welfare that could finally bring them some type of benefit after being exploited for decades. Redistribution and social justice are main priorities for Morales and he has promised the indigenous he would make right for their long time suffering.

An important aspect in Bolivia is the need to reduce the strong ethnic and social cleavages in this country. This is going to be a big task since these cleavages have been in place for many decades and Morales having been raised in the indigenous community knows far too well how deep these cleavages are within his country. Additionally, Morales needs to work together with the major organizations and unions within his country in order to diminish the divisions found within. Nonetheless, his connection with

Venezuela has provided him with some type of buffer from the outside democratic world. Only time will tell how this relationship continues to build and how far left will Morales take Bolivia into. If Morales can significantly improve the welfare of the poor and indigenous in his country without appearing too oppressive or authoritarian this left “pink-tide” agenda could become even more appealing to other Latin American countries.

In the Venezuelan case, Chávez has proven his agenda is set for a dramatic left turn. He has progressed over the years to have more presidential powers which will ultimately make it harder to vote him out of office. In addition, he seeks to have more regional influence. Chávez has been able to leverage his political influence due to soaring oil prices. This is an important resource for Chávez to maintain in order to achieve his political agenda. We can see the common thread for Bolivia and Venezuela is the poor worker who supports the left agenda due to their stance on redistribution and creation of social programs. As for the Colombian case, a factor I wanted to analyze is why has this country remained a democratic center-right and not be influenced by other left regimes in this region? The scholarly literature states between 1958 and 1986, the political monopoly by the National Front pacts worked to exclude and eliminate the opposition on the Left. As a result, this left the country without an active, legitimate, and solid political opposition for the Left.

This would explain why in the midst of many countries turning left, Colombia has not changed their political agenda even though their internal politics have not remained stable. Colombia has tried to establish a minimum legal framework that would allow some type of political opposition but has yet to allow the left to fully develop into a

strong opposition. This is a key variation between the three case studies. In Bolivia and Venezuela, the breakdown of neoliberalism allowed the left to become greatly involved politically and thrive in order to take control.

Recommendations for Further Study

The findings suggest some possible directions for future research. First, the results suggest that future scholarship would benefit by a more thorough and refined examination of socioeconomic cleavages. As noted, the indigenous factor is clearly evident in Bolivia (and is likely to have an effect in other countries in the region) and unionized workers. Second, although prior scholarship (Magaloni and Romero 2008) asserts that left voters are less likely to be influenced by economic evaluations, this thesis provides unambiguous evidence that economic ideology and judgments about economic performance are both important. The probability of Morales and Chávez voted into office would have been slim if the neoliberalism agenda would have produced the great economic benefits it was intended to have in Latin America. Third, analyzing the education factor in Bolivia in regards to why the more educated are placing themselves on a left spectrum. Lastly, are there any particular dynamics within Colombia that holds the democratic right constant in that country? Nonetheless, the one crucial follow-through the left must do in order to remain in power is delivering on their promises of economic improvements. Citizens are more aware their voices equate to votes and they will go to the ballots for the party that promises them hope and change.

APPENDIX

DISCRIPTORS FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Bolivia

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Public Ownership	2825	4.820885	1.793852	1	7
Indigenous	3003	0.1718282	0.3772939	0	1
Worker	1776	0.3738739	0.483967	0	1
Farmer	1776	0.1661036	0.3722784	0	1
Church Attendance	2961	3.29821	1.156603	1	5
Primary Education	2987	0.328758	0.4698405	0	1
Secondary Education	2987	0.3548711	0.4785544	0	1
Higher Education	2987	0.2825578	0.4503185	0	1
Income	2608	3.961656	1.6864	0	10
Gender	3003	0.4968365	0.5000733	0	1
Age	2999	36.89663	15.19776	18	93

Venezuela

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Public Ownership	1425	3.237193	2.063907	1	7
Minority	1478	0.6251691	0.4842431	0	1
Worker	693	0.5367965	0.4990043	0	1
Church Attendance	1283	2.560405	1.290814	1	5
Primary Education	1456	0.3166209	0.4653180	0	1
Secondary Education	1456	0.4635989	0.4988445	0	1
Income	961	3.709677	1.732051	0	10
Gender	1500	0.546	0.4980455	0	1
Age	1488	38.6586	15.17388	18	89

Colombia

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Public Ownership	1417	4.863797	1.983461	1	7
Minority	1451	0.6381806	0.4806926	0	1
Worker	887	0.6437430	0.4791626	0	1
Church Attendance	1494	3.196787	1.280527	1	5
Primary Education	1466	0.4181446	0.4934225	0	1
Secondary Education	1466	0.404502	0.4909629	0	1
Income	1276	3.88558	1.869318	0	10
Gender	1503	0.500998	0.5001654	0	1
Age	1502	36.86951	14.7916100	18	99

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