Globalization and the Left in Latin America

Ziad Eyadat *

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the hypothesis that the contradiction between democratization and globalization strengthens the revolutionary left in Latin America. Relying heavily on a critical analysis of the literature on globalization, democratization, and the left in Latin America, the study employs illustrative historical examples to provide preliminary support for the hypothesis. This paper discusses whether or not globalization leads to cross-national convergence of macroeconomic policies, it also manifests the impact of globalization on the cleavage structure of domestic politics. Therefore, the paper contributes to better understand the complexities of globalization and the matrix of opportunities and constrains within which the left operates in Latin America. The paper concludes that these concomitant processes of globalization and democratization have polarized the left, weakened the reformers and strengthened the radicals.

Keywords: Globalization, Democratization, Latin America, The Left, International Relations, Comparative Politics.

INTRODUCTION

The classic nexus between politics and economics is discussed today in terms of democratization and globalization. The diverse conceptualizations of these terms make the debate between their interactions lively while the breadth of their impact intensifies the solemnity which are discussed.

In regard to Latin America, the study of democratization and globalization has particular salient for historical and political reasons. While much has been made of the so-called Third Waves of democratization that took place in the 1980s, democracy is not entirely new in Latin America. At least, ten Latin American nations experienced some form of democracy before 1950 (Przeworski et al., 2000:104). Nonetheless, since that time, democracy in the region has been particularly unstable. But for all their ups and downs, by 1990 Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela were all democracies (Przeworski et al., 2000:62-65). The integration between globalization and Latin America was done primarily through the establishment of a macroeconomic cadre that opened the economies to the global markets and investment and limited the economic role of the state. Such policies basically known as Washington Consensus structural adjustment policies were enacted as part of a policy package pushed by international economic institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and more recently by the World Trade Organizations and the FTA trade negotiations (Chiriboga, 2000). As a result, Latin America states, in the final quarter of the twentieth century began an accelerated move toward liberal economic policies in a stark contrast to the protectionist policies typical of the region earlier in the century. Among other changes, these market friendly policies reduced subsidies for domestic goods, devalued national currencies, and privatized state-run firms. The temporal juxtaposition of these two phenomena begs an explanation of their interaction. Specifically, because their interaction seems contradictory to an entire spectrum of ideas that perceives democracy to be rooted in self-governance and economics at the same time, one asks how democracy evolves alongside globalization and what does that mean for the politics of the left in Latin America?

Globalization in Latin America has had negative consequences for the majority of the people there,
especially in the eighties, which came to be known as the lost decade. This was particularly true for countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru, where stagnation and inflation, had deep impacts on the income of the poor, the working and middle classes and external debt had isolated them from the international finance system (Chiriboga, 2000). At the same time, after years of repression, democratization has allowed the partial expression of public reaction to their circumstances. As a result, a new wave of “leftist” leaders have been elected, such as Lucio Gutierrez in Ecuador, Lula da Silva in Brazil, Néstor Kirchner of Argentina, Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay, and Michele Bachelet of Chile and Evo Morales of Bolivia, elected in 2005. In Susan Stokes view, the rise of the electoral left is a signal shift toward a re-equilibration of government spending and economic openness (Stokes, 2009). Once in office, despite their election promises, these leaders are constrained both by the effects of the neoliberal reforms of their predecessors and the conditions resulting from increased exposure to world markets. Because these constraints limit the ability of these elected leaders to pursue the traditional redistribution policy reforms of the left, many scholars have concluded that the Left is doomed if not already dead. As Garrett puts it, it is almost a cliché to claim that economic internationalization has undermined the traditional redistributive agenda of the left (Garrett, 1995).

However, several trends point to an alternative view. First, perhaps the most significant finding in the globalization field recently, that democratic cleavage in the wake of increased capital mobility are sector rather than class based, which is largely limited to the short term. Second, the inability of democracy as it exists in Latin America today to translate people’s political preferences into policies that serve their interests intensifies the contradiction between democracy and contemporary capitalism. Finally, the internationalization of capital has brought with it the unintended social consequences of broadening the left’s repertoire of contention and has thus laid the foundations for the revolutionary expression of people’s desire for a more truly democratic society (Tarrow, 1998).

Inspired primarily by the question of globalization’s impact on the left in Latin America especially after their recent electoral victories, this paper explores the hypothesis that the contradiction between democratization and contemporary capitalist globalization strengthens the revolutionary left in Latin America. The definition of the left used here is adapted from Edward McCaughan’s Reinventing Revolution (1997) and refers broadly to those groups and individuals whose ideology emphasizes social justice and social equality and includes, but is not limited to, socialists, communists, Marxists, social democrats, revolutionary nationalists, and populists. Relying heavily on a critical analysis of the literature on globalization, democratization, and the left in Latin America, the present study will use illustrative historical examples to provide preliminary support for the hypothesis. This analysis begins with a critical review of the relevant literature and debates surrounding globalization. From there, it moves to a discussion of democracy and democratization as it is referred to in the dominant literature. Finally, it situates the role of the left in this political economy of Latin America with a look toward prospects for the future. In conclusion, it will recommend a program for further study.

**Globalization: Theoretical Debates**

With new words such as “globaloney (Petras, 1999)” and “glocalization” the discourse surrounding the changing economic atmosphere is changing the lexicon of popular culture and academia alike. Thomas Friedman’s (1999) characterization of globalization typifies the popular commentary, “… if globalization were a sport, it would be the 100-meter dash, over and over. And no matter how many times you win, you have to race again the next day. And if you lose by just one-hundred of a second it can be as if you lost by an hour.” Fortunately, the academia treatment is much more detailed though not necessarily less desperate. The following analysis proceeds in three phases. First, it discusses the various ways in which globalization has been conceptualized. This debate centers on arguments that challenge the global reach of “globalization” and question the newness of the concept. Second, it will discuss whether or not globalization leads to cross-national convergence of macroeconomic policies. Finally, it discusses the impact of globalization on the cleavage structure of domestic politics. Reviewing these important debates contributes to an understanding of the complexities of globalization and the matrix of opportunities and constrains within which the left operates in Latin America.

**Is Globalization Real? Competing Conceptualizations**

Globalization has its skeptics and its true believers. The three schools of thought surrounding globalization
delineated by Held et al. (1999) provide a useful starting point for understanding this debate. According to their analysis, there are three main theses regarding globalization: the hyperglobalist thesis, the skeptical thesis, and the transformationalist thesis. The hyperglobalist focuses on the replacement of the state by market forces and the new social forms or organizations that the market creates. They see a fading away of the traditional patterns of winners and losers based on the division between North and South being replaced by an increasingly unequal and vastly more complex division of labor that has no respect for national boundaries. They also see the formation of a global civilization marked by homogenized forms of organization. Martell (2007) adds, “the global economy is seen to have opened up, integrated, and include more parts of the world, at the same time nation-states have lost power and influence— even sovereignty—because they have to tailor their policies to the needs of mobile capital, which in turn, has consequences for the viability of social democracy and the welfare state as these are curtailed to fit the wishes of business interests. Such behavior has led to the decline of national cultures and more hybridized global culture”.

Politically, nation-states in the hyperglobalist perspective are seen as being superseded by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), by social movements that are global in nature, and even by global civil society (Keane, 2003). The skeptics contend that what is being called globalization is actually an increase in the level of economic interaction between groups of states. They tend to use the terms internationalization and regionalization to describe these interactions which they perceive as dependent on regulation by national governments. In addition, their view of internationalization entails the reinforcement and intensification of the inequalities between North and South. For instance, North American and European States, continue to be very powerful with strong national identities that have a history and a hold on the popular imagination which global identities cannot replace (Kennedy and Danks, 2001). The transformationalist, conceive globalization as, “an essentially contingent historical process which is inscribed with contradictions and which is significantly shaped by conjunctural factors.” It is one of those contradictions, between economic liberalization and bourgeois democracy that this paper examines. While the transformationalists do not perceive convergence of policies or a unified global society, they do see globalization as a new phenomenon, albeit one with very deep roots. In their view, rather than disappearing altogether, the state is restructured in order to account for the changing dynamic of international relations in an increasingly globalized world (1999:2-10).

Globalization is associated with an evolving dynamic of global structure of enablement and constraint. But it is also a highly stratified structure since globalization is profoundly uneven: it both reflects existing patterns of inequality and hierarchy while also generating new patterns of inclusion and exclusion, new winners and losers. Globalization, thus, can be understood as embodying process of structuration and stratification (Held, 1997: 27).

The usefulness of the categories developed by Held et al. (1999) lies in that they do not simply subsume traditional political ideologies. In other words, the full range of ideas presented by theorists of the left does not simply fall into one of these categories. So, while Petras (1999) and Hirst (2000) are clearly skeptics, Gwynne (2000) and Boron (1995) appear to be more transformationalists than anything else. Of course, the categories are not perfect, but they do account for much of the variation in the literature, particularly in respect to the assertion that globalization does not exist.1

**Domestic Politics and International Constrains: New Growth Theory**

An important point of contention in this debate concerns the impact of globalization on state policy. Perhaps the most influential theory to spring from this debate has been Garrett’s new growth theory (Garrett, 1995). New growth theory purports that the government can efficiently provide goods and services, otherwise undersupplied by the market in a way that increases productivity and state competitiveness. In the face of internationalization, the state is made more competitive by expansionary and interventionist policies which are responsible for both the redistribution of wealth and social risk. As such, Garrett proposes two competing hypotheses regarding the impact of left—labor power on the state. The first hypothesis contends that

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1 See Menno Vellinga’s edited volume for a demonstration of blurriness in the lines between these three categories. It deals primarily with regionalization and highlights the great variation in interpretation of the major questions surrounding globalization.
internationalization leads to a decline in the importance of the state and convergence of policies across states. Known as the “efficiency hypotheses”, it further contends that compensatory policies are always inefficient and that increased integration into global markets constrains the ability of the left to pursue them.

Alternatively, Garrett (1998) hypothesizes that the state has not been compromised by internationalization and that policy variation across states persists. This hypothesis, which he calls the “compensation hypothesis”, posits that the dislocation caused by internationalization will forge a stronger relationship between left-labor power and intervention economic policies.

Garrett (1998) conceptualizes globalization as characterized by increased capital mobility and increased trade. He comes up with varied results which have broad significance for the left that warrants a lengthy discussion here. In that, he finds that left-labor power and high levels of internationalization result in more government spending, his results support the compensation hypothesis. However, insofar as he finds that higher levels of internationalization lead to decreased taxes on capital, his results support the efficiency hypothesis. More importantly, Garrett (1998) found that in countries with high levels of left-labor power, increased trade did not affect interests’ rates. However, he did find that increased capital mobility lowered interests’ rates. That is to say, the market charges nations a premium for their high level of left-labor power. This finding runs contrary to the logic of sector passed politics that will be discussed later, but supports the notion of class conflict by suggesting that as a whole, investors have a bias against left-labor power (and the interests it claims to represent).

Perhaps Garrett’s (1998) most profound findings grow out of his counterfactual tests of the way in which the interaction between left-labor power and economic policy has changed over time by showing that at the highest level of trade and capital mobility, increasing left-labor power is tied to higher government spending and larger deficits (support for the compensation thesis) but also with lower capital taxation and higher interest rates (efficiency thesis). Garrett (1998) shows that left-labor was more in 1990 than it was in 1967. In addition, higher left-labor power in 1967 cut spending, deficits, and only slightly increased taxes. In 1990, increased left-labor power led to higher spending, increased deficits, and increased interest rates. These findings spur a number of important questions regarding the left and its role within a globalization world of politics and economics.

Why has the left-labor power become more expensive and thus more difficult to sustain? Has there been a change in the left itself or in the matrix of opportunities and constrains within which it operates? While these questions cannot be thoroughly dealt with here, may it suffice to propose that in order to better understand the complexities that Garrett’s (1998) findings imply, we must forge an analysis of the left that captures its dynamics beyond the balance of power politics and the strength of its labor confederations. That Garrett (1998) uses these two indicators to measure left-labor power discounts, the impact that globalization has had on the traditional sources of left power, especially in Latin America where much of the working class is concentrated in the informal economy (Portes and Hoffman, 2003)². In the same vein, because Garrett (1998) focuses on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states, it cannot be determined whether his findings hold up in states where supranational actors may have stronger influence on domestic policymaking process or where the left takes on a different character in terms of its relationship with the state. Indeed, subsequent studies that have tested Garrett’s hypothesis have had mixed results.

Kaufman and Segura (2001) make important methodological improvements on Garrett’s (1998) study, taking into account the weakness of Latin American labor unions and the importance of democratization in the region. They accomplish this by using a codification of the political orientation of the party base for heads of state instead of left-labor power and employing a dichotomous classification of democracies. While they find that increased openness to capital and increased trade have an adverse impact on social spending, they do not find that any of their political variables matter. Social spending decreases under popular and conservative government, democratic and autocratic alike. These findings, implying that in Latin America economic factors place greater constrains on governments than

Fred Kaufman and Carlos Segura (2001) have really done a service to the field with this new article analyzing the class structure in Latin America. In their words, “the fact remains that the social classes such as the proletariat can be defined as relatively homogenous in the advanced societies while, in the periphery, they are segmented by their limited incorporation into the fully monetized, legally regulated economy.”p.44
political ones, suggest some support for the convergence theory.

Karen Remmer (2002: 40) undertakes a similar endeavor and finds drastically different results. According to her analysis, policy choice can best be explained by the interactions between partisan control of the government, labor strength, and electoral competition. She finds that partisanship and labor power have a highly significant impact on macroeconomic policy, though not in the manner that Garrett (1998) suggests. Because labor pays a higher price for inflation at the ballot box, labor governments are more likely to adopt austere macroeconomic measures to prevent it. She arrives at that conclusion through the following logic, “governments pursue policies favorable to their core clienteles [but]… if policies generate or threaten to generate macroeconomic results jeopardize the government’s chances of political survival, political leaders anticipate voter’s responses by switching policy strategies”. Remmer (2002: 41) also posits that, “labor governments that adopt the restrictive policies are also likely to reap greater political rewards, enjoy more political security, and make their policies stick more effectively over time than their business-oriented counterparts”. Thus, left governments implement neoliberal policies despite their constituencies and despite their electoral platform because they can get away with it (and get re-elected, too). Remmer’s (2002) work carries weight because it considers the importance of politics in the democracies of Latin America. The contradiction her work reveals between what left leaders say and what left leaders do has implication for the study of democratization and globalization in Latin America beyond mere policy choice.

Taken together, these recent works stemming from Garrett’s (1998) new growth theory and commenting the wider debate over the role of the state in a globalizing world prove somewhat dizzying. Nonetheless, two important points can be gleaned from their analyses. First, meaningful theory building cannot simply be developed in the OECD countries and transplanted to other regions such as Latin America. While later adjustment can be made to fit class structure and political culture of particular regions to the theory. The theory building process can be improved by taking into account those variations in the initial stages of development. Second, Garrett’s (1998) growth theory and the work that it has inspired reflect the contradictions inherent between democracy and globalization.

The Politics of Globalization: Sector and Classes

The primary challenge to the hypothesis set forth by this paper declares that globalization redefines politics such that domestic cleavages are sector rather than class based. This specific factor model, developed by Jeffrey Frieden (1991), depicts a world in which the effects of capital mobility are so great that the period of time before it becomes known as Before Capital Mobility (BCM) and the period of time since then becomes known as After Capital Mobility (ACM). Increased capital mobility shifts the effects of macroeconomic policymaking from interest rates to exchange rates. This shift precipitates a parallel shift in policy maneuvering via exchange rates along sectoral lines. In the world of increased capital mobility, producers of import-oriented tradable goods, international traders, and international investors will support expansionary monetary policies while producers of import-competing goods and non-tradable will support expansionary fiscal policy. Thus, the most important aspect of this model is that worker’s immobility initially (ACM) ties their interests to the managers and owners of the sectors in which they work. If increased capital mobility makes it easier for firms to enter and exit many different sectors, then it would be possible for more political action to take place based on class interests rather than sectoral interest. However, according to Frieden (1991), that is not likely in the short term.

This sectoral emphasis resounds throughout the literature. Garrett (1995: 663) comments that, “in the increasingly international division of labor, the workers, managers, and owners in the same firms, sectors, or regions may have more interests in common with each other than those they share with their ‘class allies’.” Meanwhile, Sylvia Maxfield (2000:101) notes that investors are privy to the subtleties of the specific factor model and invest accordingly because, “the return on an investment in stock depends on the success of the company invested in and on the growth of the sector of the economy in which it operates.” The recognition of this tendency demonstrates the profound ability of globalization to rearrange the domestic political atmosphere.

Indeed, Frieden’s (1999) argument is quite convincing historically and logically. However, two important shortcomings should be discussed. First, he fails to specify zero time. When precisely did the world shift from BCM to ACM? At that time of his writing eighteen years ago, he referred to the world as ACM. As such, one
wonders for how long he imagined the “initial” period of ACM political economy would last. Following his logic, one might assume that the initial phase is over when the entrance costs of moving into a specific sector are substantially lowered. Regrettably, it cannot be determined within these pages, the extent to which those costs have been lowered. Nonetheless, the project awaits undertaking.

Second, his model assumes that the managers and owners in one sector are different from the managers and owners in another sector. In her study of Ecuadorian industrialists, Catherine Conaghan (1988: 46) found that 16% of Ecuadorian industrialists also have business interests in commerce, 30% have interests in finance, and 19% have interests in agriculture. Thus, the conflict that these interests portend may not turn out to be sector based as Frieden (1999) envisions-it may be intrapersonal. While the costs of moving from sector to sector may still be high, portfolio diversification may have a similar effect, thereby creating the conditions that Frieden (1999) claims are necessary to initiate a shift from sector to class based politics.

As evidenced from the above discussion, politics, particularly the issue of democracy, cannot be separated from the discussion of globalization in Latin America. The greatest shortcoming of the skeptical camp of globalization theorists is their preoccupation with demonstrating what is not happening. The balance of transformationalist thesis recognizes the historical roots of the impact of the global economy on domestic policy and does not carry with it the illusion that convergence will be complete or that people have become powerless. Of course, there is no full cross-national convergence of macroeconomic policies. More importantly, the tension between these conflicting visions point to a much greater question-that of democracy. How long will people support the discourse of democracy while their elected leaders simply switch policies to maintain their power? How long before the disconnect between sector based politics and class based politics becomes too profound to ignore?

Democracy and the Left in Latin America

“In fact, one cannot seriously speak of democracy without also discussing socialism; neither can one think about socialism while ignoring the centrality of democratic question” (Boron 1995:139). Atilio Boron’s (1995) observation certainly fits the philosophical evolution of the left in Latin America. Indeed, no other question has been more debated. And with good reason. In the words of Marx, “the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy (Tucker 1978:490).” Thus, in order to better understand how globalization has impacted the left in Latin America, it is necessary to examine the historical development of the left in the context of the conflictual interplay between democratization and globalization. The discussion that follows considers first the successes and failures of democratization in Latin America. It then situates those developments in the ongoing debate over democracy within the Latin American left.

Democratization: Success and Failure

As mentioned earlier, most Latin American countries are now democratic. Although volumes have been written about democratization, it can be somewhat difficult to get an accurate idea of what this democratization has meant for people. In fact, for all that has been published, it’s amazing how much is still not known. As Barbara Geddes (1999: 119) puts it in her article, “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” “we can be reasonably certain that a positive relationship between development and democracy exists, though we do not know why.” Despite this confusion, some significant observations can be made in respect to the Latin American case.

First, democracy did not generally come about through the mobilized will of the people. To draw from Geddes (1999: 120) again.

Most observers of Latin American transitions assign little importance to popular mobilization as a cause of democratization. Popular mobilization took place in many countries, but they usually occurred relatively late in the process, when democratization was well underway and the risks of opposition had diminished. Popular protest may have pushed democratization farther and faster than regime elites initially intended, but in most Latin American cases it did not cause the initiation of liberalization.

On one hand, the establishment of democracy in Latin America has not been the initiative of the people but a political system was placed on them. Ecuador provides an example of this top-down approach to democratization. In 1975, when the military government began to limit imports and raise tariffs on luxury goods, the industrialist
and commercial interests, representing a very small proportion of the population, came together to push for representation, oil policy reform, and cuts in social spending. In the Ecuadorian case, these interests came together on the basis of class in response to the uncertainty that military leadership created by eliminating their traditional vehicles of influence (Congress and the party system). From its outset, democracy in Latin America has not belonged to the people.

Second, despite the efforts of most leftist movements to work within the electoral framework, the left has had limited success working within Latin American democracies. For example, when the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) sponsored the Unión Patriótica (UP Patriotic Union) in the 1986 elections, they won fourteen congressional seats. However, they paid the price for choosing the electoral path when their presidential candidate, Jaime Pardo Leal, was assassinated the following year (Chernick and Jiménez, 1993). In Perú, the Izquierda Unida (IU United Left) succeeded in electing Alfonso Barrantes as mayor of Lima in 1983. While in office, he was able to push through a number of local initiatives, but their implementation was constrained by an inability to find adequate funding. As Haworth (1993: 52) comments:

In the Lima experience of local democratic government may be found all the contradictions of leftist access to power under capitalism... Those faced with the problem of governing Lima were convinced that under the circumstances there was little choice but to use the channels of funding available, whatever they might be. For them, such measures were not inappropriate because access to power in no way constituted a move toward socialist local government; it was, rather, a move within a particular limited space to prepare for a future transition.

The Colombian and Peruvian cases elucidate the contradiction that confronts left parties as they attempt to work within Latin American democracies.

Finally, democratization in Latin America has not been responsive to the will of the people. Having disproportionately borne the aftermath of the debt crisis via their economic and social well-being, Latin America’s lower classes have been unable to realize their policy preferences democratically. Comparing the efficacy of labor movements in democratic and authoritarian regimes, Geddes (2000:242) concludes, “...labor has not been able to translate its oppositions to adjustment policies into credible threats to punish the initiators of adjustment... such opposition has actually proved more destabilizing in less democratic settings.”

This inability to influence policy may be a contributing factor to ambivalence toward democracy. In 1996, Linz and Stepan (1996:221-230) asked respondents questions regarding the efficacy and legitimacy of democracy in four Latin American countries. While eighty and seventy-six percent of Uruguayan and Argentinean respondents believed democracy is preferable to any other system, respectively, only 52.2 and forty-one percent of Chileans and Brazilians believed the same. Between one-third and one-half of the respondents in each of those four countries believed that democracy does not solve the problems they have in their countries. With such indifference toward the democratic system, it can hardly be concluded that people see government as an instrument of their will.

Democracy and the Latin American Left

According to Harris (1992:195), “the differences among the leftists in Latin America and Caribbean have more to do with their positions vis-à-vis the question of democracy than they do with almost anything else.” The debate surrounding democracy amongst the left in Latin America has generally centered on diverging conceptualizations of democracy. On one hand, democracy has been seen as the seizure of the state by the working class, a proletarian revolution. This orthodox conception of democracy does not differentiate nor does it separate political, economic, and social democracy. In the literature, this type of democracy is usually called socialist, substantive, or participatory. Because proponents of this view do not accept the validity of the prevalent form of liberal democracy found in Latin America today, they have generally advocated a revolutionary anti-capitalist strategy as the most effective route to democracy. On the other hand, democracy has been defined more loosely as increased class representation and influence in government. This view emphasizes the importance of civil society rather than economic and social power. This type of democracy has been informed by the outcomes of the leftist attempts to achieve both types of democracy in Latin America (McCaughan 1997).

Indeed, the introduction of democracy moderated the Left democratic competition in Brazil, forced the new left in Chile to rethink its strategies for political inclusion, as well as its transformative demand on state and society. The new left in both countries repackaged their political
and economic goals in similar ways that fit the context of the new democratic game, while the different modes of democratic transition led to different patterns of new left development across individual cases (Wong, 2004). At the same time, the contemporary left has embraced the electoral process, and its leading figures. Leftist candidates have won presidential elections in Chile (2000 and 2006), Brazil (2002), Argentina (2003), Uruguay (2005), Bolivia (2006), and Peru (2006) (Cleary, 2006).

The strategy of the contemporary left can best be explained as occurring in three general waves as outlined by Petras (1999). The first wave occurred throughout the sixties and the early seventies and was marked by mass social movement, guerrilla armies and electoral parties. The antioligarchical ELN in 1960s, Colombia exemplifies the guerrilla movements while the electoral strategy of the left was typified in the Chilean democracy where left parties experienced significant electoral success.

The second wave of the left rose in response to the dictatorial regimes and has adapted a primarily electoral strategy. Implementation of this strategy and its support for democratization has become a point of great contention amongst the writers of the left. The shift is bemoaned by Harris (1992:196) who states, “they have turned their backs on Marxism and have adapted a new political vocabulary that excludes ‘class’ and ‘class struggle’…..” Above all, as demonstrated above, the electoral strategy has been, for the most part, a failure. McCaughan (1997:59) reemphasizes the inability of today’s Latin America’s democracies to translate voter preferences into policy. He observed that, “in some cases, this approach has led to left forces being elected to government only to find themselves administrating the economic crisis and implementing neoliberal restructuring schemes.” This assertion certainly agrees with Remmer’s (2002) assessment regarding the disconnect between election platform and policy preference.

Finally, the third wave of the left that is emerging today. Its composition represents a changing of guard increasingly polarized between radicals and reformers and its tactics are directly reflected of the globalized economy in which they struggle (Stokes, 2009).

The Latin America Left Today: Resistance and Renovation

In a widely spread, greatly influential and relatively recent article, Jorge Castañeda (2006) classifies types of the Left. One type has first sprung from communism and the Bolshevik Revolution, later identifying itself with Fidel Castro’s Cuban Revolution. This left has turned toward pragmatism and moderation in recent years, stick firmly to democratic institution. The other types of the left have arisen from a populist, nationalist past with few ideological underpinnings. For this type, rhetoric is more important than substance, and the fact of power is more important than its responsible exercise. The despair of poor constituencies is a tool rather than a challenge. Castañeda (2006) concluded that “this populist left has traditionally been disastrous for Latin America, and there is no reason to suppose it will stop being so in the future. As in the past, its rule will lead to inflation, greater poverty and inequality, and confrontation with Washington. It also threatens to roll back the region’s most important achievement of recent years: the establishment of democratic rule and respect for human rights”.

While much has been said about the negative impact of globalization on the left, these accounts have not considered the resiliency or diversity of the left. Nor have they considered the unintended aperture inevitable in globalization’s development. This error derives primarily from the hegemonic logic which has equated liberal capitalism with freedom and democracy while equating socialism and nationalism with statism and authoritarianism. As McCaughan (1997:43) articulates, “one of the defining characteristics of world hegemony, of course, is that the hegemon’s ideology appears not as ideology but as common sense.” The widespread acceptance of such common sense has effectively kept eyes averted from the inherent contradictions between globalization and democracy. However, truth is persistent. As Przeworski et al. (2000: 209, 211) find, “Democracy in the political realm exacerbates the threat to property from the propertyless by equalizing the right to influence the allocation of recourses… [so] investors seem to know what they are doing. It is not ‘instability’ they fear, but democracy.” In this context, two points should be reemphasized regarding globalization’s impact on the Latin American left.

First, globalization has created the opportunity for the expansion of the left’s repertoire of contention, to further innovation in resistance. By repertoire of contention, I mean those methods deliberately used by the left in struggling for their common goals (Tarrow, 1998). Increased regional cooperation has created an
infrastructure that can be used by the Left as well as by the elite. In this regard, the internet has been especially important in spreading information across transnational networks in a process that has come to be known as “grassroots globalization.” In Mexico, the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) has been a frontrunner in innovation in many respects from its use of transnational networks to coordinate an international meeting in Chiapas in 1996 to its revolutionary democratic leadership style. Another innovative group has been the MST (Landless Workers Movement) in Brazil with its tactic of land occupation (Petrkas, 1999). The propensity of the left to learn and to create new methods of resistance is a great testament to their resiliency.

Second, the left is going through a process of renovation. The temporary polarization of the left is compatible with the left’s historical development. From the revolutionary guerrilla movements of the 60s, through the years of repression, and the confusion of democratization, the left has consistently found a way to struggle against imperialism, at times more effectively than others. Today’s result is an increasingly polarized left, carefully coming out and courageously asserting its agenda. While it has learned the pitfalls of liberal democracy, it bears the scars of repression.

Conclusion

The logic of this paper’s argument has been the following. Due to the profound effects that globalization has on the lower classes in Latin America, this phenomenon is setting the stage for class based politics. While democratization has been highly celebrated, it has failed to provide the people of Latin America with a vehicle for the expression of their political attitudes. These concomitant processes have polarized the left, weakening the reformers and strengthening the radicals. These ideas should benefit from a more thorough analysis in which the variables affecting the Left in Latin America can be more accurately quantified.

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اللاتينية في اليسار وعلمها

زراء

القصة الفرضية

تتفحص أن الدارسة هذه تتناول في العلم والديمقراطي في النحو الرائع من إلزام الدينامية، لأنه يعزز الالاتينية أقطاراتها أمريكية في وري.

اللاتينية، أمريكية دول في اليسار وعلم الديمقراطي بالتحول الملائم للأدبيات والمراكز النقدي بتحليل فمن إلى تؤدي إلى العلم كأنها إذا في تأكيد إلى الدارسة تسعى الفرضية، لإختبار الأمثلة على التعرف خلال ومنتخبات سياسات في تبيين الأمثلة سياسية بنية في العلم تؤثر بكمامة، الاقتصاد.

تستهدف وهاذا الالاتينية أمريكية في اليسار بوجبها يعمل التي والمعيقات الفص والقامة في التوثيق الحادث إلى أنهه الديمقراطي في التحول الراديكي اليسار مركزة وإصلاح اليساري أضعف مما عام، بأشكال الالاتينية.

.2009/12/13

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