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The Resurgence of Populism in Latin America

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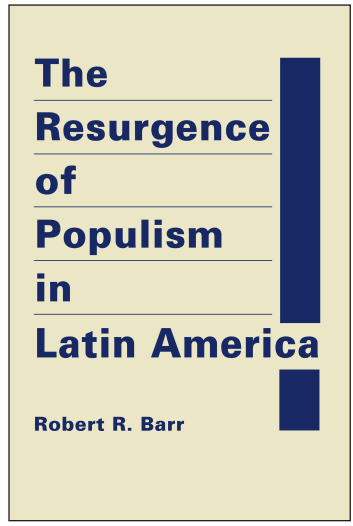

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Populism in Latin America

IN VENEZUELA'S 1998 ELECTIONS, HUGO CHÁVEZ CAPTURED 56 PERCENT of the vote and left the country's traditional parties for dead. His victory was a watershed moment. The firebrand antagonized the elite and stirred the masses, promising a revolution on their behalf. Adding an element of old-fashioned nationalism, he liked to reference the glory and great leaders of long ago, particularly Simón Bolívar, Latin America's liberator from Spanish rule. But for many observers, Chávez's rhetoric and style brought to mind different Latin American leaders: individuals like Argentina's Juan Perón or Mexico's Lázaro Cárdenas—the classical populists of the twentieth century. And Chávez was not alone. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, four populists won elections and another half dozen competed. Once again, populism was back.

Populism first appeared after the collapse of the export-led model of economic development, in the aftermath of the Great Depression. These leaders promised political inclusion and economic benefits for society's lower classes, or the *descamisados* (the shirtless ones) to use Juan and Eva Peróns' evocative term. The most successful of these populists were enormously powerful, drawing from the support of millions of the newly enfranchised. Though corporatist systems of representation kept the mobilized masses under control, many workers gained real economic benefits in part through the use of import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies. To what extent these policies helped or hurt the population overall is a matter for debate, but either way the classical populists—even some who never took office, like Peru's Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre—had profound and lasting effects on their countries.

Although many of the first populists came with the advent of mass democracy, those in the second era came soon after its return, in the context of the wrenching economic reforms of the 1990s. Alberto Fujimori, a true

political outsider and novice, surprised many with his 1990 victory in Peru and then with his about-face on economic policies. The year before, Carlos Menem took office in Argentina and pulled the same trick. These, like Carlos Salinas of Mexico and Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil, had a leadership style and oratory familiar to any student of Latin American history. But, unlike their predecessors in the first half of the twentieth century, these populists embraced neoliberal economic policies. Rather than promoting a kind of state-guided economy with broad benefits for the workers, they reduced the role of the state and its protections for the lower classes. By adhering to the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the US government, and other external actors, the neopopulists embodied a more conservative version of populism. As some demonstrated (e.g., Roberts 1995; Weyland 1996), the demise of ISI did not mean the same fate for populism in Latin America, despite assumptions to that effect (e.g., Malloy 1977).

Many within the region grew unhappy with the results of the economic reforms, and the next cycle of populism veered sharply to the left. Chávez was the first of this round, taking office even before neopopulism had run its course. When he claimed a ghost was haunting the region, he "was warning the world of the anger of the millions of *latinos* who are tired of their poverty and the corrupt governments of their countries" (Demmers, Fernández Jilberto, and Hogenboom 2001a, xi). Following him were candidates like Ecuador's Rafael Correa, Bolivia's Evo Morales, and Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador, all of whom promised to ease the impact of recent reforms, to restore the economic role of the state, to protect national resources, and to stop the elite from benefiting at the expense of the people. In many ways, the twenty-first-century populists are cut from the same cloth as all the others: they use the same kinds of appeals and the same kinds of personalistic, top-down connections with supporters. But their shift away from market orthodoxy distinguishes them from those of the 1990s and marks the region's third era of populism.[1]

With each iteration, the populists elected to office have had an outsized influence. Perón had such an overwhelming impact on Argentina that his legacy is still prevalent today. Fujimori and Menem pushed through constitutional changes, concentrated executive power, and altered their countries' party systems and economic landscapes. Likewise, Morales, Correa, and Chávez brought about changes in their countries' constitutions, political institutions, and economic orientations. Populists would seem to accrue greater power than most presidents, a power based not on stable partisan institutions or collaboration with the economic elite but on the backs of multitudes of supporters. In turn, they use this clout to dominate other political institutions and rearrange them to their benefit—often undermining the means of ensuring horizontal accountability that are so important to liberal

democracy. In so doing, they have deeply polarized their societies. Bolivia almost split in half, with the eastern departments—the *media luna*—struggling to reject the new political framework. Venezuela experienced massive protests in 2002–2003 against Chávez and again in 2014 against his successor, Nicolás Maduro. Perhaps not coincidentally, those who highlight setbacks in the third wave of democratization or the rise of hybrid regimes typically cite these same individuals (e.g., Coppedge 2005; Levistky and Loxton 2013). The influence of these individuals is not uniform nor always so profound, of course. But the fact that the results of their leadership can be so consequential highlights the importance of understanding Latin American populism.

Goals and Contributions

In this book, I strive to contribute to the understanding of Latin American populism. To do so, I need to deal with first things first: What is populism? That the term is controversial among social scientists has become axiomatic: despite its frequent usage, many meanings have been assigned to it. Over the years, populism has referred to individuals, movements, parties, regimes, ideologies, economic policies, charisma, and so on. More recently, the two most prominent schools of thought have defined populism in either political terms (e.g., Roberts 2006, 2007; Weyland 2001) or ideational terms as a worldview or ideology (e.g., Hawkins 2010; Mudde 2007). These disputes are not about mere semantics. Depending on specifics of the definition *and* its conceptual structure, the kinds and numbers of cases of populism included can vary dramatically—so, too, can our understanding of why it emerges and what legacy it leaves.

Through a comprehensive review of the variety of conceptualizations and defining characteristics, I hope to contribute to the debate over populism's very nature. In the exploration of ways concepts can be structured, I illustrate some of the costs and benefits of each option and provide a basis for choosing the one most suited for the present purpose, an empirical analysis of populism in contemporary Latin America. Additionally, I offer a critique of the ideational views of populism. Some in this school (e.g., Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013) call for consensus around a minimal definition. Though a unifying definition is certainly appealing, minimal is not always optimal. Usefulness depends on the accuracy and utility of the content, not the complexity. Specifically, the choice of definition should be grounded in conceptual and analytical terms, and should have some continuity of meaning over time.

In the case of those using ideational definitions, their concept structure and defining characteristics have much to offer. However, as is made clear

in this book, the request to have everyone use their minimal definition is to ask that we study a different phenomenon, for ideational populism is not the same thing as populism from a political perspective. In analytical terms, a gap exists between the ideational understanding of populism and the ability to study it. Scholars in this camp emphasize the role of ideas and at times even deny the importance of behavior, yet their analyses always reference actors and behavior. As such, there is a disconnect between the concept and the analysis, which raises questions about the utility of the former. This problem is unfortunate because some of the most sophisticated empirical studies of populism are found in the ideational school (see especially Hawkins 2010). Finally, to isolate discourse or ideology from all else that has been linked to populism, at least in the Latin American literature, is to cut it away from its historical roots. That said, ideational definitions still have much to offer and the emphasis on language is important. The definition I use in this book incorporates attributes found in both the ideational and political approaches but ultimately considers populism in behavioral and political terms.

A second issue I address is what populism is not. This question is not trivial. From the perspective of concept formation, a key goal is to structure concepts in a way that facilitates not only inclusion of examples but also exclusion (Goertz 2006b). In other words, a good concept should be able to tell us not only what something is but what it is not. Neglecting the latter is to invite imprecision. Indeed, in the case of populism, imprecision is a common occurrence. The evidence lies with the frequent casual linking of multiple ideas through the use of phrases like "populist outsiders" or "antisystem populists."

Three such ideas are commonly, if implicitly, tied together and tied to populism: lack of association with the established political parties, newness to politics, and the use of antiestablishment appeals. In some empirical instances these factors are linked together. Hugo Chávez is a good example: he came from outside the party system, had no prior political experience, and used an "anti" discourse targeting the establishment. Before him was Alberto Fujimori. However, counterexamples can be found in Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who was the mayor of Mexico City and a member of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de Revolución Democrática [PRD])—hardly an outsider party by 2006. Evo Morales served as a representative in the Bolivian legislature prior to running for president; Rafael Correa was Ecuador's minister of finance. Just as not all populists are newcomers or outsiders, not all outsiders or newcomers are populists. Few consider Bolivia's Felipe Quispe to be a populist, despite his newness and outsider status. The same goes for Colombia's Carlos Gaviria, who had no relationship with the established parties (though he did have political experience) and yet was no populist. So newness to politics and

outsider status are not necessarily linked to populism. Antiestablishment appeals, however, are; all populists use some version of appeals based on "the people" versus the establishment, and so they sound like outsiders even if they have had previous experience or ties to parties. Still, others offer the same message, so the use of the appeals alone—by the definition used here—does not necessarily equal populism. In short, although a relationship may be found among these various ideas, they remain conceptually and sometimes empirically distinct. The fact that the literature often links them and populism together does little to advance our understanding. I attempt to make both the distinctions and the relationships clear.

Armed with an understanding of what is and what is not populism, one can then attack the question of what causes it, another key theme of this book. Observers often comment on the perpetual nature of populism in this region. This view, however, is not quite accurate. In the first place, distinct waves or eras are identifiable, as suggested earlier. In the second place, within any given era not all countries experience populist episodes, and for those that do, their experiences are not consistent. Variation can be identified not only among countries but also within them from election to election. What can account for this variation? This question taps into discussions about the relationship of populism to democracy, with some considering the former to be the mirror of the latter (e.g., Panizza 2005), and discussions about populism's relationship with politics itself, with some considering them to be one in the same (e.g., Laclau 2005a). Although populism may be inherently political and even related to democracy in some way, these factors alone cannot explain variation and so there is far more to the story.

In this book, I address the sources of populism—specifically, the reasons for the electoral success of populist candidates—in the third era. This distinct period in the region's experience with populism is of great contemporary relevance. Though recent, from the late 1990s to the present, the third era contains a high level of variation within and among the Latin American countries, though most of them share the same macrolevel features, such as experience with electoral politics under market orthodoxy, and similar opportunities and constraints resulting from globalization. The focus on the third era also allows the use of certain data that were not available previously, an opportunity that is particularly, though not uniquely, true with respect to survey data. Prior to 1996, surveys were spotty and inconsistent. Since then, however, the number and quality of public surveys have increased, thanks in part to the Latinobarómetro series. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), additionally, began around the same time. The current era of populism happens to coincide with the accumulation of information that simply is not available in any systematic, comparative way for the prior eras.

A key protagonist in this story is party system institutionalization. Since Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully (1995) introduced the notions of institutionalized and inchoate party systems, a number of studies have addressed their implications, including their relationship with the rise of outsiders, personalistic leaders, and populists (e.g., Flores-Macías 2012; Jones 2005; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). In a parallel line of research, scholars have attempted to understand party system collapse, which in Latin America is typically associated with the rise of populist leaders (e.g., Dietz and Myers 2007; Morgan 2011; Seawright 2012). Among those studying populism directly, meanwhile, some assert a causal relationship between party system strength and populism (e.g., R. A. Mayorga 2006; Roberts 2006). By highlighting the role of party system institutionalization, a key theme in this book is in keeping with important strands in the literature. However, the book contains what may be the first empirical demonstration that weak party system institutionalization is a *necessary* condition for the emergence of populism. The same is not true for the rise of other kinds of political challengers.

Weak party system institutionalization is, in a sense, an opportunity. For those seeking to present themselves as some sort of alternative to the political status quo, party system weakness gives them room. This point is doubly true for populists. Populism is a political strategy involving certain kinds of appeals (antiestablishment appeals) and a way of interacting with followers (plebiscitarianism). Though unlikely, the successful use of one or the other of these, though not both, is possible in strong party systems. Where systems are weak, however, citizens do not have close ties or involvement with parties, they feel that parties lack credibility or legitimacy, they switch their votes frequently, and parties themselves are organizationally deficient. In such a context, ambitious politicians might not seek association with and support from the mainstream parties, John Aldrich's (1995) conclusions notwithstanding. Instead, they might see an opportunity to carve a new path set against those mainstream parties and linked to supporters through some direct and personalistic means. Having charisma is helpful, incidentally, but not essential.

But is it not inherently obvious that weak party systems lead to outsiders, populists, and the like? Weak party systems indeed may make it more likely that alternatives to the political status quo gain electoral support. However, a key attribute of this study is the search for both necessary and sufficient conditions, as opposed to identifying statistical likelihoods. The analysis here demonstrates the special role—the necessity—of weakly institutionalized party systems for populism. It also shows, by contrast, weak party systems are not necessary for political alternatives (i.e., outsiders, newcomers, etc.) in general.

Necessity, of course, is not the same as sufficiency. To account for populism's electoral success, one must go beyond mere opportunity. Citizens need to want it. They must be angry enough with the established parties to choose what might be considered the riskier option—the untested and unknown. Specifically, I argue that the combination of a perception of prevalent corruption *and* evidence of disadvantage, such as someone else benefiting from that corruption, can account for the public demand for populism. Whether corruption is seen as a societal ill, a norm to be tolerated, or even a good thing depends to some extent on the eye of the beholder. Research shows that the distribution of corruption's benefits has an influence on how individuals view corruption (e.g., Manzetti and Wilson 2007). Corrupt behavior like vote buying, for instance, can work (e.g., Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Stokes 2005), meaning that individuals will support the perpetrators of corruption when they benefit. On the other hand, perceptions of being victimized by corruption erodes political support for the system (Seligson 2006). Luigi Manzetti and Carol J. Wilson (2007) cite the telling case of Brazil's Adhemar de Barros, whose supporters said, "He steals, but delivers!" (956). When the politician steals but fails to deliver, however, that support quickly goes away. This consequence may be particularly true when the apparent beneficiaries of the corruption are members of some other group, in other words, not ordinary citizens but members of the elite or foreign interests.

The social and organizational psychology literatures explicate the linkages in this causal chain, in particular by highlighting the emotional and behavioral impact of perceived unfairness. The perception of widespread corruption is not sufficient by itself to generate this response; however, it becomes crucial when combined with the belief that someone else is benefiting. This belief is particularly potent when that someone else belongs to another group—a frame of reference that populist leaders provide. I reference psychology not to suggest that populism is about some irrational crowd psychology, with supporters mesmerized by a charismatic demagogue. Rather, I assume that vote choices reflect a level of intentionality and purposefulness. Nevertheless, I also recognize that subjective assessments, self and group identification, and emotional states can have an influence. I do not, therefore, assume that people act based strictly on instrumental considerations of material gain. In the right circumstances, populists can foster group identity, cultivate anger, and thus influence voter choice. Indeed, the aforementioned is the strategic element of populism.

In short, populism results when both the supply and the demand are present, which is the argument I seek to demonstrate. Articulating a new theory about its causes is the third contribution I hope to make, in addition

to the aforementioned discussion of its conceptual development and elaboration on its relationship with closely related ideas. As already mentioned, the role of party systems has been discussed before, and the same is true of corruption. Three elements differ here: (1) the specific combination of factors found to be sufficient conditions for the rise of populism, (2) the identification of necessary conditions, and (3) the methods used to study it. Most populism studies are qualitative analyses of single countries, or sometimes a handful. Only a few employ statistical analyses to determine its causes (e.g., Doyle 2011; Hawkins 2010; Weyland 2003). None, however, use the tools of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to investigate populism. In this book, I use two methodologies.

The first is a familiar qualitative method, namely, process tracing, that I use to explore the conditions leading to the rise of populism in a single country, Bolivia. The great advantage of this approach is the level of detail it affords. It permits the thorough investigation of complex processes without the sacrifices of subtleties and nuance that large-N studies often require. Within the given country, moreover, one can compare events across time with fewer of the confounding factors that can plague cross-national studies. This approach can provide substantial leverage to make causal inferences (Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright 2004). In this instance, Bolivia provides an opportunity to explore the changes of context that led to the rise of its contemporary populist leader.

To bolster confidence in this theory, I go beyond the single case and consider the region as a whole. This step is important for a few reasons. On the one hand, because research on populism is dominated by single-country studies, casual observers may get the false impression that populism is a virtual constant in Latin America; nearly all the studies, after all, discuss its presence but not its absence. As careful observers of the region know, however, populism is atypical. It may not be rare, but it is certainly not the norm. Furthermore, some countries seem to have numerous populist candidates whereas others have none. Is there something unique to, say, Bolivia that would pave the way for populism's rise? Why has Chile had no populist candidates in the modern era? Without comparing across countries and, specifically, including negative instances, one has no way to satisfactorily answer these questions. In studying only positive examples, one runs the risk that the conclusions about one instance are merely reaffirmed, but not actually challenged, by additional studies. Eliminating this risk is the more important reason to compare cases across the region.

To maximize leverage in making causal inferences, negative cases should be included alongside positive ones (Skocpol and Somers 1980). As long as the negative cases are considered carefully (Mahoney and Goertz 2004), including both should give greater confidence in the findings. The

possibility of disconfirming evidence is greater, so confirming the argument faces a higher hurdle. Also, the researcher has the opportunity to demonstrate reasons for the outcome's presence as well as its absence. Doing so allows for understanding what is different about those countries that experience the outcome compared to those that do not. In the case of populism, incorporating a large sample of the Latin American countries allows one to understand why Ecuador, for instance, has more experience with it in recent years than Uruguay.

Beyond those instances that clearly belong in the set of positive outcomes (i.e., countries where a populist is successful) and those that clearly belong in the set of negative outcomes, moreover, are those somewhere in between. In other words, gradations can be found in levels of support for populists: just because such a candidate runs in an election does not mean victory is overwhelming or loss is complete. In Bolivia's 2002 election, for instance, the one populist candidate received only 5.5 percent of the vote. Three populists competed that same year in Ecuador; together they won about 50 percent of the vote. Venezuela's Chávez brought in almost 63 percent of the vote by himself in 2006. The existence of partial or intermediate cases—specifically, elections in which populist candidates received some, but not much, support—may present a problem for probabilistic and statistical research but reflects an inherent attribute of case-oriented work (Ragin 2000, 53).

To accommodate a multicountry but intermediate-N study, allow for complex causation, and take into account degrees of success, I use QCA (see Ragin 2000, 2008; Rihoux and Ragin 2009). QCA is a case-oriented method used to evaluate relationships among sets in a systematic way using the logic of Boolean algebra. It can be used to assess complex causal processes in which different combinations of factors are capable of producing the same outcome. Like quantitative methods, its use facilitates the comparison of multiple observations in a replicable manner, but it does not require the treatment of causal factors as variables that can have only independent effects on some outcome. Rather than provide a focus on correlations, QCA is used to consider the relationships among sets of factors to determine causal necessity and sufficiency. (More details about QCA appear in Chapter 5 and the appendixes.) Using this method, I compare all of the elections in the presidential democracies of South America and Mexico from 1996 to 2010 (an *N* of 35 observations). Among these thirty-five elections, populist candidates competed in fourteen (counting those individuals who received at least 5 percent of the vote). By including a range of outcomes within countries and across the region, moreover, I avoid selecting on the dependent variable. In short, this analysis provides new and powerful leverage for understanding the rise of populism in contemporary Latin America.

The Three Eras

To get a sense of contemporary populism, one should consider its roots. The first era, arguably populism's heyday, was in the 1930s and 1940s. Following the collapse of the agro-export model of development, populist leaders emerged throughout the region, campaigning against rigged political systems that benefited the few. They focused their efforts in the cities, where they could reach mass audiences through stirring speeches. These speeches typically vilified the foreign-oriented elite and praised the inherent goodness of "the people." Such distinctions were not nuances hidden in the text; instead, the rhetoric was quite explicitly Manichaean. Populists equated the elite with evil and the ordinary with purity and morality. Frequently, too, classical populists adopted elements of popular culture and folkloric customs, such as performing traditional songs in campaign events and using colloquialisms. Political rallies often had spectacle-like qualities. These rhetorical and symbolic gestures conveyed the sense that the populist leader understood and could represent the people. These charismatic leaders claimed to embody the authentic values held by ordinary citizens.

In contrast to the extant oligarchic structure, classical populists offered instead a vision of an inclusive society, in which ordinary citizens—notably but not exclusively workers or peasants, depending on the context—would gain both a political voice and a share of the country's economic wealth. Many did benefit on both counts. Argentine women gained the right to vote under Juan Perón, for instance, and countless workers gained some voice through union membership. Mexico's Lázaro Cárdenas, by reconfiguring the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI]), enhanced representation for peasants, workers, and middle-class groups, who ostensibly gained greater, even if circumscribed, influence in government. These political projects were inclusive: whether simply promising reforms to benefit sectors previously ignored by the state or fully extending political rights, classical populists helped incorporate subaltern groups into the political and economic spheres of their countries.

Economic inclusion often entailed proindustrialization and nationalist policies, along with wealth redistribution and the expansion of social rights and benefits. For example, Perón built schools and clinics, made health care a human right, extended social security benefits, and nationalized the foreign-owned railroads. His policies were not atypical: most populists took steps to create jobs, raise wages, subsidize food staples, enhance labor standards, and support education. Cárdenas took on the landholding elite and redistributed millions of acres to peasants; as a result, over 800,000 individuals gained land, often through collective ownership. He also took on foreign interests: in 1938 he nationalized oil production and proclaimed the country's economic independence. With moves like these, the state took on

an interventionist role, the clearest example of which was the populists' typical embrace of ISI. Additionally, their measures benefited many groups beyond just industrial workers or rural peasants. The constituency for classical populism included multiple classes and social sectors.

Given the explicit and effective appeals to the people along with the reforms they implemented, these populist leaders developed large and loyal followings. In many cases, their support took on a cultlike or semireligious character. At the same time, however, their politics and policies represented a setback for those who had previously dominated. As such, they tended to be polarizing figures. Ecuador's José María Velasco Ibarra, for one, won five presidential elections yet finished but a single term because of coups. Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, a towering figure in twentieth-century Peru, created and led the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana [APRA]), which confronted entrenched interests. However, he was exiled and imprisoned, his party was outlawed, and, when he was finally allowed to run for office, the elections were nullified.

Similarly, whereas supporters viewed the classical populists as inherently democratic, detractors called them demagogues and autocrats. Despite their steps to incorporate the excluded, their expansion of political rights, and their embrace of electoral processes, the classical populists also disdained attributes of liberal democracy and frequently ruled in an authoritarian manner. In Cárdenas's state-controlled corporatist system, nonofficial organizations were repressed and official ones were under the thumb of the president through the PRI. In Argentina, Juan Perón, an admirer of Benito Mussolini, imprisoned his opponents, silenced opposition newspapers, and annoyed the clergy enough for them to call him a tyrant. Additionally, the mechanisms of horizontal accountability—the stuff of checks and balances—suffered under these presidents. They ignored inconvenient laws, manipulated compliant legislatures, and emasculated judicial systems. One legacy, then, of these leaders has been the debate over populism's relationship with democracy.

Marking a point of contrast with more recent populists, those of the first era also sometimes left lasting legacies in the form of stable party organizations. These parties often served as the institutional framework for corporatism and have survived well beyond their leaders. Cárdenas's PRI continues today, as does Perón's Justicialist Party (Partido Justicialista [PJ]) and Haya de la Torre's APRA. Still, not all classical populists left such a footprint. Velasco Ibarra relished his independence from parties, famously saying, "Give me a balcony and I will be president." Rather than build a lasting organization, he cobbled together various fleeting partisan coalitions for each election. Whether well-organized parties or loose electoral coalitions, populists led personalistic organizations. At the core of

these organizations was neither ideology nor programmatic goals but rather an individual, with the organizations existing to elevate populists' power by mobilizing the masses on their behalf.

This first era of populism, in sum, included charismatic leaders who espoused an antielite and pro-people appeal, used top-down forms of mobilization, enhanced political and economic incorporation, embraced state-led industrialization and nationalistic economic policies, used corporatist systems of representation, and had the support of a multiclass coalition. Each of these attributes has been considered an essential component of populism at one time or another. Similarly, the distributive aspect of populism appeared to link it inexorably to clientelism and even to fiscal irresponsibility. Additionally, though the correlation between the implementation of ISI and the rise of populism was inexact, it was close enough to lead many observers to conclude that the two went hand in hand. As such, many considered populism to be a reflection of deep structural conditions and to represent a stage of development and modernization. When the debt crisis swept the region in the 1980s and conditions became hostile for interventionist economic policies, conventional wisdom suggested that populism would be a thing of the past. Under the Washington Consensus and IMF-enforced austerity, how could any politician use ISI to create jobs, extend benefits, and build the same sort of mass-backed political power as the classical populists had done some decades earlier?

The neoliberal economic policies that swept the region did indeed limit the scope of government and the possibilities for intervention. Still, a few leaders adopted very similar kinds of appeals, connected with followers in familiar ways, behaved comparably in office, and even used economic policies to benefit those most clearly left behind by the economic transformations. These leaders were the neopopulists who constituted the second era of populism in Latin America.

Some observers saw similarities in the structural conditions of the 1980s and the 1930s: deep political and economic changes produced crises and created opportunities for ambitious politicians to build support among those losing out. Indeed, the lost decade led to severe unemployment, high inflation, crippled unions, and the growth of the economically precarious informal sector in which workers lacked political clout and organized representation. These growing ranks of the urban poor became the latest group available for incorporation. At the same time, the third wave of democratization reintroduced electoral processes and opened the door once again to political contestation.

The new populists appealed to ordinary citizens, contrasting their positive and authentic values against those who would keep them down, namely, the elite and the political parties that served their interests. They toned down the nationalistic rhetoric but ramped up the "politics of antipol-

itics." As such, the neopopulists were more consistently hostile to partisan organizations and representative institutions than their predecessors, something that was true with respect to not only their appeals but also their own parties. Peru's Alberto Fujimori, for instance, created a new electoral label for each election, intentionally forestalling the possibility that these organizations might develop independent bases of power. Those parties that lasted across electoral cycles, like Max Fernández's Solidarity Civic Union (Unidad Cívica Solidaridad [UCS]), were still little more than personalistic vehicles. And, when neopopulists emerged through established parties, like the PRI or PJ, they manipulated or circumvented them in ways that enhanced their own influence. Carlos Salinas, for instance, undercut the corporatist-based power of the PRI by enacting neoliberal reforms, and he simultaneously used his National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL), an umbrella social program, to develop new personalistic linkages with supporters, thus bypassing multiple levels of governmental institutions and partisan organizations.

These leaders had less room for maneuver with respect to distributing economic benefits, but they could carefully target programs toward specific groups. Antipoverty programs, for instance, endured overt manipulation that directed funds away from some groups and toward others. Some also ingeniously used the proceeds from privatization to fund programs designed to benefit key groups. After a US$2 billion windfall from the sale of Peru's telecommunications utilities, Fujimori vastly increased spending on a number of public works projects, which not only provided new housing, schools, and local infrastructure but also thousands of construction jobs. The decisions about resource allocations were manifestly political in nature. Though the classical populists worked through unions and encouraged unionization, the neopopulists made efforts to further weaken organized labor. Even though unions were already on the ropes because of neoliberalism, populists viewed them as potent sources of opposition because the conservative economic platforms were detrimental to labor's interests. At the same time, favoring unorganized subaltern groups provided these leaders with a large pool of supporters from whom they could and did amass political power. Lacking unionization, these groups were arguably even more vertically tied to the populist leaders than were the supporters of the classical populists.

In office, the neopopulists tended to concentrate power in their own hands. Through compliant legislatures and constitutional revisions, the executive branch gained powers at the expense of other branches of government. The concentration of political power made them subject to accusations of authoritarian behavior similar to their classical counterparts. Fujimori went so far as to close Peru's congress in his 1992 "self-coup," an unambiguously authoritarian move. Like the earlier populists, additionally,

these were polarizing figures who earned the wrath of important groups. As such, not all could gain such dominant positions. Carlos Menem of Argentina scrapped his attempt at a third term after it was ruled unconstitutional, Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil succumbed to corruption charges, and Ecuador's congress ousted Abdalá Bucaram on charges of mental incapacity. Along with their uneasy relationship with liberal democracy and polarizing influences, the neopopulists used antiestablishment appeals, related with followers in highly direct and unmediated ways, dismantled corporatist systems of representation, embraced market-oriented economic policies, used carefully targeted economic benefits for political ends, and had support in the informal sector and among nonunionized workers. Hence, in some respects, they differed notably from classical populists, but in other, more central ways they proved to be cut from the same cloth.

The third-era populists appeared soon after the neopopulists. In fact, some overlap could be found (Fujimori was still in office when Chávez was elected, for instance), and so not all would agree that the most recent group constitutes a distinct phase.[2] However, the neopopulists came to office around 1990 (Collor de Mello and Fujimori in 1990, Menem in 1989, and Salinas in 1988) whereas, with the exception of Chávez, the third-era populists all took office after the turn of the century. Evo Morales won Bolivia's 2005 election, and Rafael Correa won Ecuador's the following year, the same year in which Ollanta Humala narrowly lost in Peru and Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico. A perhaps more significant mark of distinction was the gap in their relative positions on the political spectrum. Because of their embrace of neoliberal economic reforms, the neopopulists were right of center. Given the economic conditions and international financial constraints, these presidents, like many nonpopulists during the 1990s, may have had little choice but to follow the prescriptions of international financial institutions. But then conditions changed. The impact of the economic reforms grew burdensome for many ordinary citizens, and, toward the end of the 1990s, protests became increasingly common. Benjamin Arditi (2008, 65) captures the situation well:

> Virtually everywhere—including Chile, the showcase of market-driven economic growth in the region—the excluded express their disaffection and real anger in the ballot box and in the streets. Protesters include the piqueteros [picketers] and middle-class victims of the corralito [bank deposit freeze] in Argentina, cocaleros [coca farmers] in Bolivia, sem terra [landless] in Brazil, students and Mapuches in Chile, and impoverished peasants in Paraguay. The fall of President Fernando de la Rúa in Argentina in December 2001 is the iconic moment of this backlash against politics and politicians associated with the failures of neoliberal adjustment policies, encapsulated in the chant,

> "Que se vayan todos, que no quede ni uno solo" ("All of them must go, not a single one can stay").

At the same time, some countries benefited from rising demand for petroleum and raw materials. Beginning with Chávez's 1998 election, the third-era populists capitalized on this environment and helped turn regional politics sharply to the left.

That said, these populists constituted but a part of the region's turn to the left. A number of other candidates and presidents belonged to the political left but were not populists. Indeed, though the region has recently experienced a resurgence of populism, one would be mistaken to conclude that it has been the dominant regional force in recent years. The eleven countries considered in this analysis held a total of thirty-five presidential elections from 1996 to 2010. Some 126 candidates won at least 5 percent of their respective contests. Of these, only eighteen used a populist strategy (see Table 5.1). They were victorious in eight presidential elections. As in the earlier periods, these atypical individuals have had a much greater impact on the region's politics than their numbers might suggest, which is of course why they warrant attention.

Like the classical populists, third-era populists have made nationalism a significant theme, linking foreign economic interests to greedy local elite as corrupt and detrimental influences. For instance, Correa campaigned against the domestic and international forces that, he said, were exploiting Ecuador in the name of neoliberalism. In his first inaugural address, he claimed recent economic policies constituted "barbarities" that had produced "disastrous" outcomes. Despite neoliberalism's "contradiction of corruption, the need to preserve economic subordination, and the demand for service of the foreign debt," these reforms "not only were imposed, but also actively applauded by our elites and technocrats." Furthermore, he continued, "These policies have been able to sustain themselves due to deceit and antidemocratic attitudes on the part of those who have benefited from them, with the full support of multilateral organizations, which disguised as science a simplistic ideology." In short, according to Correa, "inhumane and cruel," neoliberalism "tries to convert us into markets rather than nations [and] tries to make us merely consumers rather than citizens of the world" (Correa 2007).

Antineoliberal rhetoric like this, which Chávez, Morales, Humala, and López Obrador, along with Lucio Gutiérrez of Ecuador, have shared, demonstrates the gap between the third-era populists and their neoliberal predecessors and arguably makes these more similar to the classical populists. Still, most observers agree that economic policies or ideological positions, which are typically very vague, do not constitute defining attributes of

populism, in part because the classical populists included leaders with fascist leanings (e.g., Getúlio Vargas of Brazil) as well as others with socialist leanings (e.g., Cárdenas). Hence, the change from the right-of-center neopopulists to the left-wing third-era (or "radical") populists should not signal the emergence of a new or distinct political phenomenon. In fact, the recent populists share many of the same key traits with both sets of predecessors. (In this book, incidentally, I concern myself with the third-era populists, not the recent turn to the left, so I focus on the political strategy that is populism rather than populists' particular ideological positions.)

All populists, for instance, have used us-versus-them, antiestablishment appeals, and the third-era populists are no exception. They have been highly critical of their countries' elites, political parties, and legislatures. Chávez famously warned that he would make Venezuela's oligarchs squeal. Correa railed against the corrupt *partidocracia* (partyarchy) and the "sewer" that was Ecuador's congress. Humala proclaimed his pride in being "antisystem," since the system was defined by corruption. Morales said that Bolivia was divided between the "exploited" and the "charlatans" who exploited them. These criticisms went well beyond complaints of a given party or president and extended to the party system, the governing institutions, and whole sectors of society.

Although not actually revolutionaries, third-era populists have spoken of "citizens' revolutions" and "refounding" their countries in the name of the people who have been victimized by corrupt systems. As such, those who have taken office have made significant political reforms in part by rewriting their countries' constitutions. Chávez, Correa, and Morales have done so. Perhaps not surprisingly, these constitutional reforms and other changes have typically weakened institutions of horizontal accountability and enhanced the powers of the presidency. Observers often note the contrast between these populists' visions of democracy and what is characterized as liberal democracy. Indeed, the third-era populists themselves point out this contrast. Chávez claimed his participatory democracy was superior to representative democracy. Morales said he was building a new system that would supplant liberal democracy. Correa explained that in contrast to "formal" democracy, "real" democracy concerned not procedural rights but rights to substantive outcomes such as education and health. By downplaying and weakening representative institutions and formal procedures, these populists claimed to enhance the effectiveness of government: little would get in the way of the president's working on behalf of the people. Interestingly, surveys show that citizens' satisfaction with democracy has increased dramatically under populist presidents. Nevertheless, detractors accuse them of undermining democracy and crossing over to authoritarianism.

Third-era populists' relationships with supporters have followed a familiar pattern as well. Their institutional reforms, for example, suggest

highly top-down or vertical connections, in which intermediary institutions that are supposed to channel voters' interests and demands have been sidelined in favor of direct and unmediated linkages. Though some variation can be found among their partisan organizations, all nevertheless have retained elements of top-down structures. Morales's party, the Movement Toward Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo [MAS]), has been the partial exception in this regard. As is discussed in Chapter 4, his rise began on the backs of key social movements that had substantial autonomy. Over time, nevertheless, Morales carved out space with his party to connect directly with constituents. Though third-era populists still use the rallies and mass demonstrations characteristic of classical populists, both as means of communication and displays of power, they also use modern media and surveys. Polling data reflecting public support for, say, a constituent assembly or even presidential approval can signal political strength to opponents.

The third-era populists have used expansive economic policies alongside more targeted programs to help build support. Chávez, for instance, used oil revenues to fund a variety of social programs, including those channeled through the National Development Fund (Fondo Nacional del Desarrollo [FONDEN]), an entity he personally controlled with full discretion. By directing greater and greater portions of oil revenues to that fund, incidentally, he increasingly denied resources to state and municipal-level governments, which had been sources of political opposition (Rodríguez, Morales, and Monaldi 2012). Likewise, he created a series of "Bolivarian missions" to combat poverty, curb illiteracy, provide housing and food subsidies, and so on. Among these are universal, rather than targeted, programs, such as Barrio Adentro, which seeks to establish free public health care. Similarly, Correa has vastly expanded direct cash transfers to the poor and spending on a variety of programs: public expenditures more than tripled from 2006 to 2012. Such programs have been accompanied by nationalizations (or partial nationalizations) and threats thereof to gain greater shares of profits from natural resource production. These proceeds have helped fund the populists' programs. Still, their expenditures have generated familiar complaints of profligate spending and fiscal malfeasance.

In short, the third-era populists have included leaders who used anti-establishment, antineoliberal, and nationalistic appeals; mobilized followers in highly vertical ways; enhanced the powers of the presidency and weakened the mechanisms of horizontal accountability; pursued expansionary economic policies; and had a base of support centered on the underprivileged and poor. Many of these attributes are common to the populists of all three eras, but some attributes have varied. Such variation has contributed to the proliferation of definitions and lists of defining characteristics, and populism's impact on economic policy and governing institutions as well as

its use of mass mobilization and specific kinds of discourse has contributed to the confusion. That is, some observers focus on populism in government and consider it to be a kind of regime, whereas others use the term *populism* as an adjective describing irresponsible economic policies. Despite differences like these, the three eras of populism have much in common, especially their appeals and their means of relating to and mobilizing mass followings. Not all populists wield these tools well enough to win office; however, those who do, for better or worse, tend to be quite consequential.

The current wave of populism may be ebbing in the region. Chávez has died, and his heir, Maduro, is facing an intractable crisis. Morales lost a referendum that would have allowed him to run for a fourth term. Right-of-center politicians seem to be gaining advantage across the region. Time will tell, naturally, whether the third era has in fact run its course. Regardless, the fact that Latin America has experienced three such periods suggests populism will return. And, until that point, the present populist leaders most likely will leave enduring marks on their respective countries, as prior populists have done. Looking beyond the region, moreover, a European version of populism is surging, and antiestablishment politicians are gaining popularity in countries as diverse as the Philippines and the United States. As such, determining just what populism is and understanding the reasons for its electoral success remain as important as ever.

Outline of the Book

The goals of the book are to elucidate the nature of populism and to explain its emergence in recent years in Latin America. Each of the following chapters contributes to these goals in a specific way, addressing populism at the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical levels. In them, I detail the attributes and boundaries of the concept, use multiple methods to demonstrate its causes, and explore its conceptual and causal distinctiveness (and thus its utility) as well as its implications.

In Chapter 2, I examine the conceptualization of populism. I make the case that the evaluation and construction of concepts should involve consideration not only of the content (the defining characteristics) but also of the conceptual structure. One could conceive of populism as one conceives of games: both chess and football are games but they have little in common. Or one could treat it like one treats chairs: the object must have not only a seat but also a back to be a chair. Though none is inherently superior to the others, the three types of concept structure—classical, family resemblance, and radial—come with certain costs and benefits. In this chapter I provide an accounting of those concept types and

their applications to the study of populism. Considered as a whole, the literature leaves much to be desired in terms of clarity and empirical utility. To help remedy this condition, I advocate the use of a classical concept type. In Chapter 2, I also explore the major definitions of populism, paying particular attention to the two leading contemporary schools of thought, the political and the ideational understandings. As with concept type, the choice of defining characteristics comes with costs and benefits. Together, the concept type and defining characteristics determine what populism is, affect the utility of the concept for specific purposes, and influence the understanding of its causes. Careful consideration of each aspect is therefore of crucial importance.

These discussions lay the foundation for my definition of populism. In explaining the key defining characteristics of antiestablishment appeals and plebiscitarianism, I address the positive attributes: those features that would allow an empirical instance to be included in the set of cases considered to be populist. A thorough examination of concepts, however, should also address the negative end of the spectrum. Toward this end, I also discuss in Chapter 2 what populism is not, thus helping to separate it from closely related but still distinct concepts that are frequently linked with populism in the literature.

In the next set of chapters, I turn to the causes of populism, referring specifically to the explanations of its electoral fortunes in contemporary Latin America. In Chapter 3, I remain at a theoretical level but set the stage by examining the leading explanations in the literature. Interestingly, less disagreement can be found on this point than on the very nature of populism, but a healthy debate remains. A great number of these accounts provide rich and multifaceted arguments. Indeed, a prominent feature of this debate is not which one factor is central but which combination of factors. I continue the chapter by explaining the argument of this book in detail, drawing on several bodies of research. I share with other scholars of populism the use of a causal combination: party system institutionalization, corruption, and evidence of disadvantage. Importantly, and as with many extant accounts, the position taken here is not that each component of this combination makes an individual, unique contribution to the outcome, nor that the components combine in a linear or additive way. Instead, I point out an interactive effect among them. To put it one way, collectively these factors are greater than the sum of their parts.

The next two chapters are empirical in nature, and they include a single-country case study using process tracing as the primary methodology, and a comparative analysis that assesses causality using the QCA methodology. The hope is that by combining methodologies, I can uncover a clearer

understanding of populism. A historically grounded case study illustrates the shifting political tides behind an instance of populism, whereas the multicountry study adds analytical leverage and permits at least modest generalizations regarding populism's presence and absence.

In Chapter 4, I take a careful look at modern Bolivia using standard qualitative methods and a variety of sources of data. Basing my conclusions in part on field research conducted in 2009, I explore the evolving political, social, and economic conditions of the country from the 1980s through the election of Evo Morales, with an emphasis on the last decade. The period covers several elections and thus allows for a focused comparison and the control of a number of possible confounding variables. In addition, Morales presents something of a challenging case in that some observers do not consider him to be a populist. Riding to national prominence on the backs of organized social movements, his rise had a bottom-up quality to it. Nevertheless, over time that relationship became only one part of the broader political dynamic, important and constraining but not defining. This single-country study supports the argument presented in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 5, I peer across borders, offering a comparative perspective. Specifically, I address in a systematic way the possible causes of populism region-wide, which provides a harder test for my argument and gives greater confidence in its logic. In this chapter, I examine all of the presidential elections from 1996 to 2010 in Latin America, with the exception of the smaller countries of the Caribbean basin that had a somewhat different historical trajectory and different sets of contemporary challenges, including gang-based crime and less immunity to international pressures. As such, it is a medium-N study that covers thirty-five elections and includes positive and negative outcomes, thus avoiding selection on the dependent variable. The empirical analysis provides a test of my argument alongside other leading explanations. Collectively, these explanations involve various combinations of just a few factors.

To study the relationships among them, I use QCA. Given the state of the literature, the present argument, and the size of the study, standard statistical analysis is not an ideal method to use. QCA, on the other hand, is well suited in part because it embraces causal complexity and equifinality. With this methodology, moreover, the analysis can highlight not only sufficiency but also necessity. Among the causal factors considered is the level of party system institutionalization. To measure party system institutionalization, I use a new index that can demonstrate variation not only among countries but also within them and over time. The test provides support for the argument presented in Chapter 3 and highlights, in part, the necessity of weak party systems for the rise of populism.

In Chapter 6, I provide an empirical test of a different sort. In this case, I continue with the QCA methodology to assess the distinctiveness of populism in conceptual and causal terms. In so doing, I return to topics raised in Chapter 2—namely, the conceptual and thus empirical distinctions among categories like political outsider, newcomer, and maverick—and thereby connect the broad themes of the book. More specifically, in this chapter I explore the outer boundaries of the concept and make the case that populism should not be equated, though it often is, with other kinds of "challenge politics." I also make plain two important points about concept development: first, one's choices have an impact on the empirical examples that are included and excluded, and, second, they likewise have consequences for one's understanding of causality. In making these points, I identify all of the candidates who would be considered challenge politicians and all of the candidates who would be considered populist if one were to use an ideational definition. I then explore the causes of each of these phenomena.

A comparison of the results with those from the previous chapters reveals an important distinction. Unlike the conceptual alternatives, the version of populism as presented in this book has a single necessary cause: party system weakness. In Chapter 6, I thus hope to put to rest any doubts that these same causal factors might account for any sort of political alternative or political challenger, not just populists. I then explore the reasons for the special relationship between a political understanding of populism and party system institutionalization. Collectively, these discussions demonstrate the empirical utility of this conceptualization of populism.

In the concluding chapter, Chapter 7, I continue to make this broad case about concept importance, but I turn away from causes and instead consider effects. In particular, I explore the logical consequences of the concept's attributes. This discussion includes the tendency of populist leaders to concentrate political power at the expense of other democratic institutions. In turn, I touch on the relationship of populism to democracy. On the one hand, populism promises inclusion and more effective representation of citizens, where accountability is clearly placed on the shoulders of the leader. On the other hand, however, it rejects aspects of horizontal accountability and intermediary institutions that should channel societal interests to the halls of government. Those who have high regard for liberal democracy may therefore find populism troubling. They also may find party system weaknesses troubling: as I hope to demonstrate in this book, frailties of this sort are central to the rise of populism in Latin America. For all these reasons, understanding exactly what constitutes populism and making clear the conditions under which populists are likely to be elected are important tasks for any student of Latin American politics.

Notes

1. Observers have provided a variety of names for this group, such as third-wave populism (Gratius 2007), radical populism (de la Torre 2007, 2010; Robinson 2008), and left populism (March 2007).

2. However, even some who consider the most recent populists as an extension of neoliberal populism recognize the distinctions between these two groups (e.g., Roberts 2007).