

Introduction

The Recasting of the Latin American Right

André Borges, Gabriel Vommaro, and Ryan Lloyd

These are propitious times for right-wing ideas and political forces in the Western world. Latin America is no exception. After years of leftist dominance throughout the “pink tide,” we are witnessing a resurgence of the right in Latin America.

In Argentina, the Peronist candidate was defeated by a center-right coalition led by the Republican Proposal (PRO) in the 2015 presidential election. In Brazil, the impeachment of president Dilma Rousseff in 2016 put an end to thirteen years of PT government. The caretaker Temer government (2016–2018) was followed by the election of radical-right populist Jair Bolsonaro in 2018. The political right also obtained victories in presidential elections in Peru (2016), Uruguay (2019), and Ecuador (2021), defeating leftist incumbents. In Chile, the traditional right has been gradually losing ground to the emerging far right, a trend that culminated with the surprising performance of radical populist José Antonio Kast in the 2021 presidential elections. Although these recent electoral shifts do not seem to indicate a generalized rightward turn in Latin America’s party systems, the political right can now offer a more diverse supply of options.

New right-wing alternatives include moderate, neoliberal center-right parties (e.g., PRO in Argentina), personalist electoral vehicles led by radical populists (Bolsonaro’s Liberal Party), and conservative parties created by charismatic leaders that have gradually developed an identity of their own (e.g., the *Centro Democrático* in Colombia). In sum, right-wing forces have become competitive once again, and their discourses and programs have gained strength and visibility in the public sphere.

On the demand side, there has recently been an increase in voters who identify with the right (Lupu et al., 2021). In a context of accelerating secularization, resilient conservative nuclei are mobilizing against normative changes in gender, as well as sexual and reproductive rights and are offering their support to

right-wing leaders (Biroli and Caminotti, 2020). Political polarization provides a favorable context for the growth of radical right-wing discourses. Seminal books on the right in Latin America have explained the right's historical difficulties with creating stable organizations (Gibson, 1996; Middlebrook, 2000) and coming to power through electoral means (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014b). Nowadays, however, the landscape seems to have changed.

This book seeks to analyze the resurgence of the political right in Latin American countries, mapping the distinct strategies utilized by right-wing actors and the eventual outcomes of these strategies. While Latin America's post-2000 left has been widely studied (Levitsky and Roberts, 2011b; Weyland et al., 2010), we still know little about right-wing political actors and organizations during and after that time period.

Historically, right-wing elites in many Latin American countries have preferred to invest in nonpartisan forms of political action, including state corporatism, nonpartisan clientelistic networks, and even support for military coups (Cannon, 2016; Gibson, 1996). This general trend of conservative party underdevelopment has persisted and even deepened after democratic transitions (Cannon, 2016; Eaton, 2014; Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014a; Roberts, 2014). Successful cases of conservative party-building are rare (Levitsky et al., 2016a). Most of the right-wing parties that have successfully become consolidated were created by dictatorships and benefited from important resources – party brands, clientelistic networks, and sources of funding – that were inherited from the authoritarian era (Loxton, 2021). Even so, some of the conservative parties born in authoritarian contexts have collapsed, such as the Alianza Democrática Nacionalista (ADN) in Bolivia. A few conservative parties without authoritarian roots have also been able to gain footholds, including the PRO in Argentina and *Centro Democrático* in Colombia.¹

Despite the substantial variation in the relative strength and predominant mode of organization among the political right, social and economic changes implemented by leftist presidents throughout the region have posed similar challenges for right-wing political actors. Although voters in unequal societies do not always demand redistributive policies, both radical and center-left governments in Latin America have deliberately mobilized voters around the issue of redistribution. Because these strategies succeeded in many countries in the region – at least in the short term – the political right found itself in a position of relative electoral weakness. Right-wing actors and parties have traditionally supported the preservation of existing social hierarchies (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019; Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014a), but redistributive social policies have allowed left-wing parties to establish stronger roots in society by building and/or solidifying programmatic (or clientelistic) linkages with poor voters. In some instances, large-scale redistribution was associated with the politicization of class and/or ethnic cleavages, thereby allowing leftist

¹ These two parties are analyzed in Chapters 2 and 8, respectively.

leaders to consistently mobilize substantial electoral majorities (Faguet, 2019; Handlin, 2013; Heath, 2009).

In cases where leftist-populist presidents succeeded in gradually eroding institutional constraints on executive authority and using state power to intimidate and weaken opposition actors, the political right faced even greater hurdles if they were to pose a feasible governing alternative to leftist incumbents (Gamboa, 2017; Levitsky and Loxton, 2013). In these settings, the need to fight against competitive authoritarian (or overtly dictatorial) regimes added to the challenge of adapting to social and political changes brought about by leftist governments.

However, even as the left turn posed substantial challenges for right-wing forces, it also created opportunities. In countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, economic stagnation, corruption scandals, and rising levels of crime have eroded support for incumbent leftist governments and fostered anti-incumbent sentiments in the region (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021). The post-2000 generation of right-wing parties and leaders has taken advantage of these trends by mobilizing voters' discontent with the left's performance in government. Progressive changes made by the political left (or at least associated with it) have also been used by new right-wing actors as they seek to politicize previously dormant cultural issues (Corrales, 2020; Zanotti and Roberts, 2021). This book analyzes the renovation of the political right during and after the left turn in case-study chapters focusing on Argentina (Chapter 2), Chile (Chapters 5 and 8), and Brazil (Chapter 10).

In other instances, left-wing parties remained weak as right-wing parties faced rather different challenges. For instance, in Colombia, where there was no left turn prior to the election of Gustavo Petro in 2022, traditional conservative parties experienced a gradual decline as party fragmentation substantially increased during the 1990s and 2000s (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011). In the case of Peru, the election of a leftist outsider in 2011 did not substantially change the political landscape. The main challenge faced by right-wing forces was not the strengthening of the left, but rather the fluidity of Peru's postcollapse party system (Levitsky, 2018). We discuss the emergence of new right-wing parties in Peru and Colombia in Chapters 3 and 4. Finally, we discuss the peculiar challenges faced by the political right in the context of autocratization by looking at the case of Venezuela in Chapter 6.

What strategies did the political right use in the post-2000 period? This book seeks to understand the processes and outcomes of right-wing resurgence, focusing on both the supply and the demand of conservative alternatives. Looking at the supply side, the first part of the book investigates the nature and outcomes of the processes of conservative party-building, adaptation, and rebranding in recent years. In particular, given the historical weakness of the partisan right and the obstacles to party-building in Latin America (Levitsky et al., 2016a), how can one explain the electoral strength and resilience of new conservative forces in the region?

The second part of the book looks at the interaction between the supply and demand of conservative alternatives by focusing on the impact of the left turn on the adaptation and renovation of the political right. Specifically, we assess how socioeconomic and cultural changes associated with the left turn fostered concomitant shifts in the attitudes and political identities of mass electorates, and/or facilitated the politicization of new issues, thereby creating opportunities for the renovation of the political right.

A more general question pervading the entire volume concerns the variation in the programmatic and organizational profiles of the new right-wing alternatives that have emerged in the last decades. In particular, we seek to analyze and compare the development of distinct types of right-wing political alternatives in the post-2000 period.

We first argue that successful right-wing parties have compensated for weak organizational structures by mobilizing voters along salient political cleavages and crafting distinctive party platforms and political identities. To obtain electoral success and political relevance, the political right has accrued ideational resources by either making a place for itself in existing conflicts, or by producing new cleavages. In Chapter 1 of this volume, Borges and Lloyd focus on the older generations of right-wing parties created before the left turn of the 2000s in order to explain the variation in the electoral fates of the partisan right. They find that conservative parties that have organized themselves along two major noneconomic cleavages in Latin America – the authoritarian–democratic and secular–religious divides – have systematically performed better in national legislative elections and shown greater resilience against the challenges of the left turn.

As for the right-wing parties that were created more recently during the post-2000 period, the comparative evidence presented throughout the book suggests that they have remained underdeveloped in organization and routinization (Randall and Svåsand, 2002), thereby maintaining the historical pattern of organizational weakness among the Latin American right. However, while these new right-wing parties have often depended on the charisma and personal attributes of party leaders, they have also been surprisingly successful on the ideational dimension. In other words, the weakness of formal organizations and decision-making rules has not always prevented the right from successfully developing distinctive programmatic identities and cultivating mass partisan attachments (Kestler et al., 2019; Randall and Svåsand, 2002). The development of the *Fuerza Popular* party around the legacies of *Fujimorismo* in Peru, as discussed by Meléndez in Chapter 4, exemplifies the uneven institutionalization of the political right in recent years. Although the party organization has remained feeble, *Fuerza Popular* succeeded in developing a mass partisan following and a strong party brand.

Different generations of parties have employed different strategies to build distinct programmatic identities and institutionalize right-wing parties along the ideational dimension. Conservative parties born during the third wave of

democratization tended to moderate their positions on the cultural agenda – in line with the secularization process underway in the region – and hit upon certain other issues as bases for attracting voters and followers (e.g., security and anticorruption). Recently, however, following the left turn of the early 2000s, the partisan right has pivoted to use a cultural agenda to mobilize conservative groups and sectors that are resistant to changes in family structures and sexual and gender rights. In this sense, they resemble the traditional right-wing parties born before the third wave of democratization.

Throughout the book, we argue that policy and value shifts in Latin American societies, which are often (but not necessarily) associated with left-wing agendas, have fostered cultural backlash. Cultural changes in contemporary Western societies have displaced the traditional values of some voters, particularly those who are older, male, or less educated, thus generating resentment and a polarization of attitudes (Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Ignazi, 1992; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). While Latin America did not experience the post-materialist turn that triggered cultural backlash in Western Europe, there is evidence that progressive cultural changes in issues such as LGBT rights have indeed polarized mass publics. The politicization of religious identities, following the rapid expansion of evangelical churches all over the region, is a major determinant of cultural backlash in Latin America. On average, evangelicals attend religious services more often than Catholics and hold substantially more conservative views on issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and gender roles as compared to both Catholic and secular voters (Corrales, 2020; McAdams and Lance, 2013; Villazón, 2014).

Rather than simply adapting to changes in the attitudes of mass electorates, conservative political actors have actively sought to politicize cultural issues. As Borges and Vidigal show in Chapter 6, the expansion of LGBT rights in many Latin American countries has created a major opportunity for emerging conservative forces. When policy changes like the legalization of same-sex marriage have occurred while a leftist president was in office, party-system polarization has increased and right-wing parties have become more ideologically extreme. In contrast, where progressive policy changes occurred under a centrist or a right-wing government, polarization among parties did not increase. These results suggest that right-wing challengers behave strategically: When the expansion of LGBT rights is associated with a left-wing government, they can more easily appeal to conservative voters by building a polarizing Manichean narrative that depicts the left as atheistic and immoral, and themselves as defenders of traditional and religious values. In such a context, it becomes electorally rewarding to adopt more ideologically extreme platforms instead of targeting moderate voters.

While gender, reproductive, and LGBT rights have been at the center of the conservative reaction against progressive change in Latin America, there are also instances in which race has become increasingly politicized. Some countries in Latin America – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and

Uruguay – have taken several steps in promoting social policies based on race. These policy changes have been met with resistance from conservative forces that oppose a more inclusive, less discriminatory society. These voters tend to perceive public policies that promote racial equality as a threat to the status quo and a challenge to social cohesion (Vidigal 2022). Although we are aware of these trends, have had limited electoral appeal, by and large playing a less relevant role in the emergence of new conservative alternatives in Latin America compared to other, noneconomic issues addressed by several of the book chapters.

It is also worth mentioning that nativist discourses and the related anti-immigration agendas that constitute the cornerstone of the electoral strategies of the radical right in Western Europe have been less relevant for emerging far-right alternatives in Latin America. While radical populists have succeeded in politicizing immigration in specific circumstances (e.g., J. A. Kast during Chile's 2021 presidential race), this seems to be the exception rather than the rule.²

Overall, successful right-wing parties in the post-2000 period tended to adopt more conservative positions on LGBT rights, abortion, and traditional gender roles than their predecessors. In some instances, this conservative wave has involved the emergence of radical right candidates and parties that have sought to mobilize voters who resent progressive change.

In the following section, we explain how we will define the political right throughout the book. We also present a typology of right-wing parties and movements that is intended to capture the diversity of the post-2000 Latin American right, both in ideological and organizational terms. The second section looks at the demand side, analyzing changes and continuities in the attitudes of Latin American electorates. The third section analyzes the supply side, mapping the programmatic features that distinguish the post-2000 political right from right-wing parties created in previous eras. Finally, we present the plan of the book and summarize the main findings of the project.

DEFINING LEFT AND RIGHT AND ACCOUNTING FOR VARIATION IN THE SUPPLY OF RIGHT-WING ALTERNATIVES

In his seminal work on social class and conservative parties in Argentina, Gibson (1996) proposed a sociological definition of the political right. He argued that conservative parties are by definition elite parties because their core constituencies – the groups that play a key role in shaping the party's policy profile and funding its activities – come from the upper strata of society. Since the economic elite usually represents a small minority of the population, these parties need to obtain the support of voters outside of their core constituency to become electorally competitive.

² See, for instance, Kestler (2022) and Zanotti's Chapter 7 in this volume.

This sociological definition of the political right has been criticized because conservative parties may at times draw their core constituencies from the middle class, making it problematic to assume that the upper classes necessarily form the core constituency of the right (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014a: 8). Despite these limitations, Gibson's (1996) framework remains useful because it accounts for the organizational challenges faced by the political right, especially in highly unequal societies in which the median voter is typically poorer and less educated than the average middle-class citizen.

The conception and ideal of equality are the central issues separating left from right. Building on this central assumption, taken from Bobbio (1996), Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser (2014b) define the right as a political position characterized by the belief that social inequalities are natural and outside the purview of the state. In contrast, they define the left as a political position distinguished by the idea that the main inequalities between people are socially constructed and should therefore be counteracted by active state involvement.

One potential drawback of Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser's definition is that it may lead one to infer that the political right is synonymous with a blanket rejection of social policy. There are nevertheless examples of conservative parties that have responded more ambivalently to major increases in the social role of the state, with the Tories in the postwar UK being the most well-known case.

Given these limitations, we advocate for an alternative definition that, while maintaining a focus on redistribution, emphasizes the differences between left and right on the notion of social justice. As Kerstenetzky (2006) argues, neoliberal thinking adopts a "thin," market-based conception of social justice, according to which social policies are justified when they are designed to address market failures and/or when they provide individuals with insurance for maintaining their living standards in the face of aging, sickness, or any other condition negatively affecting one's ability to earn income in the market. This conception of social policy rejects inequality as a major justification for state intervention. Moreover, the "thin" approach to social justice gives priority to economic efficiency and economic freedom to the detriment of the goal of creating a less unequal society. Based on the classification of social policy regimes proposed by Kerstenetzky (2006), it is possible to argue that the political left, by contrast, is strongly associated with a "thick" conception of justice. In this latter case, justice is based primarily on the goals of promoting political liberty and economic equality.

The above definition lays bare the core of the left–right divide. Even when the right and the left agree on the need for a strong role for the state in the provision of social policies, they will diverge regarding the ultimate goal of state intervention. Thus, this definition undoubtedly provides a "last instance" of differentiation. The right will always "ultimately" advocate for the defense market freedoms against redistribution. Conversely, the left will "ultimately" seek redistribution even if it implies restricting economic rights or sacrificing economic efficiency.

While we claim that the conception of social justice is the key difference between left and right, the sociological and ideological definitions are complementary rather than mutually exclusive in our view. That is, ideological differences between left and right often reflect the fundamental dilemma faced by conservative political forces. Although moderating economic appeals might allow right-wing parties to obtain substantial electoral gains, doing so also entails a risk of losing support from influential upper-class groups. As Giraudy (2015) demonstrates in her comparative analysis of conservative parties in Chile and Argentina, the strong ties of the partisan right to business groups seriously constrain economic moderation strategies. As a general rule, right-wing parties in Latin America have been much more likely to defend the status quo and existing social hierarchies than left-of-center parties because of the strong connections that exist between the political right and prominent members of the upper classes, such as large landowners, bankers, finance capitalists, and descendants of aristocratic families (Bowen, 2014; Cannon, 2016; Roberts, 2014).

In sum, the political right differs from other political positions mainly due to its adoption of a thin, market-based conception of social justice. In terms of the social bases of the right, while we agree with Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser (2014) that not all right-wing parties draw their core constituencies from the upper class, we contend that this is a trait shared by these parties more often than not and that this likely reinforces their adherence to a limited conception of social justice.

While right-wing parties in Latin America (as elsewhere) share commonalities with their adoption of a thin conception of social justice, there is substantial variation in terms of the programmatic strategies and types of organizations utilized by right-wing actors. Moreover, as we argue throughout the book, the post-2000 Latin American right has emphasized cultural, not economic issues. Finally, the renovation of the right in the region has witnessed the emergence of radical leaders and parties, as opposed to the previously existing mainstream right-wing parties. Right-wing radicals accept the basic tenets of procedural democracy, but, unlike mainstream conservatives, they oppose some fundamental values of liberal democracy, especially political pluralism and the protection of minority rights. Radical right-wing parties are also characterized by ideological rigidity and extremism. For instance, while conservatives could be considered, right-wing radicals are nationalist (Mudde, 2007).

In view of the diversity of the supply of conservative alternatives, we propose a typology that looks at the dimensions of moderation (versus radicalism) and organizational investment. Regarding the first dimension, there are instances in which emerging conservative forces have adopted radical discourses and agendas; in other cases, however, the political right sought moderation. The rise of populist radical right (PRR) alternatives in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay exemplifies the former trend, whereas the PRO in Argentina, as analyzed by Gabriel Vommaro in Chapter 2, clearly represents the latter. There has also been

substantial variation in terms of right-wing actors' capacity and willingness to build party organizations and cultivate partisan loyalties. While in some cases, the resurgence of the right was based on a partisan strategy that eventually led to party-building, in other cases, charismatic leaders have relied on personalistic electoral vehicles, being either unable or unwilling to build distinctive party brands or cultivate mass partisan attachments.

By combining these two dimensions, we propose four distinct categories for analyzing the Latin American right. The partisan moderate right includes instances in which right-wing actors have succeeded in building strong party organizations and/or brands while simultaneously adopting a more flexible and centrist ideological profile in an attempt to attract the median voter. The case of PRO in Argentina, analyzed in Chapter 2, fits this category very well. Radical right alternatives, for their part, characterize themselves by their anti-system profile and ideological rigidity, usually expressed through the primacy of ultraconservative views on cultural issues. The case of Brazil exemplifies the personalist radical right: the *bolsonarista* movement was organized as a loose electoral coalition around a populist leader and personalistic electoral vehicles. Finally, the ultraconservative partisan right is comprised of new right-wing forces that have combined ideological extremism with significant investments in the construction of party organizations and brands. The *Centro Democrático* in Colombia fits this latter category. While the party first emerged around the leadership of right-wing president Álvaro Uribe, it succeeded in developing a clear programmatic identity that emphasizes a hardline approach to security issues.

Although *Fuerza Popular* in Peru is similar to *Centro Democrático*, in that it succeeded in building a strong party brand by emphasizing “*mano dura*” policies to fight crime, it does not fit the radical right category very well. The *Fujimorista* party emerged initially as a radical, populist alternative, but over time became part of the political mainstream, which was reflected in the changing profiles of party sympathizers. Moreover, *Fuerza Popular* has been characterized by some ideological flexibility, adapting its programmatic identities to shifting competitive environments. In sum, *Fujimorismo* seems to be a borderline case, situated somewhere between the partisan moderate and ultraconservative partisan right categories.³

The last category in our typology includes cases of low organizational investment and ideological moderation. The electoralist right is characteristic of organizationally thin center-right electoral vehicles whose activities are mostly organized around the goals of running electoral campaigns and seeking votes. Because the electoralist right is mainly concerned with vote maximization and gaining access to office, it pursues pragmatic and ideologically flexible strategies that are inimical to ideological radicalism. In this sense, these parties

³ The cases of *Fuerza Popular* and *Centro Democrático* are analyzed in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

deal with the crucial dilemma faced by the political right in unequal societies by downplaying the party's policy agendas and connections to the upper classes.

In some cases, these electoralist parties put together a loose coalition of office-seeking politicians (or local political machines) whereas, in others, they are built around charismatic leaders. The latter category is exemplified by CREO in Ecuador. The party was created mainly to sponsor the presidential project of businessman Guillermo Lasso, who was indeed elected in 2021. Despite the party's electoral success, it remains highly dependent on Lasso's personal leadership (Navia and Umpiérrez de Reguero, 2021). For their part, the office-seeking electoralist right includes parties that function mainly as political machines focused on the goal of obtaining access to government. While these parties cannot be classified as personalist in the sense that their survival is not dependent on a particular leader, they tend to be oriented toward the distribution of particularistic⁴ goods and rely on thin organizational structures. The Brazilian Progressive Party (PP), which evolved from the pro-military PDS (Social Democratic Party), is an example of this latter category (Table I.1).

It is worth pointing out that these types constitute theoretical definitions whose empirical manifestations are always "impure." In other words, real-life cases usually have components of different partisan types at the same time, even if some predominate over others. Likewise, partisan types define party states, that is, they characterize parties at a given point in time, not for perpetuity.

Furthermore, the boundaries between the four different quadrants are not equally porous; it is easier to leave some quadrants than others. On the one hand, organizational investment requires early decisions by leaders, and these decisions strongly impact parties' trajectories (Cyr, 2017; Levitsky et al., 2016b), so it is difficult for a party with low organizational investment to transform into one with extensive organization. Likewise, a solidly organized party can better survive setbacks without losing those resources.

On the other hand, the programmatic strategy is more easily adaptable. A right-wing party that adopts an initial strategy of moderation can later move toward more radical positions if it perceives that this is more profitable in electoral terms, either because of changes in the median voter or because of the emergence of challengers who use a more radical discourse to contest the same constituency. However, programmatic strategies sustained over time build party brands (Lupu, 2016), generate voter loyalty, and attract a type of political personnel compatible with those positions, making it difficult to modify these strategies without incurring costs for both the party and its base.

⁴ In this sense, our definition is similar to Kellam's (2015) concept of "particularistic parties" in presidential systems. She argues that these parties specialize in selling support to minority presidents in exchange for access to government jobs and resources. Unlike Kellam (2015), however, we do not agree that cultivating a reputation as providers of government patronage and pork implies that these parties are necessarily nonideological.

TABLE 1.1 *A typology of right-wing movements and parties*

	High and medium organizational investment	Low organizational investment
Moderation strategy	Partisan Moderate Right Traditional Partisan Right (Conservative and Liberal Party in Colombia, National Party in Uruguay) New Mainstream Partisan Right (PRO in Argentina)	Electoralist right Electoral vehicles (CREO in Ecuador) Office-seeking parties (PDS/PP in Brazil)
Radicalization strategy	Ultraconservative Partisan Right Hardliner Partisan Right (<i>Centro Democrático</i> in Colombia)	Radical Right Movements Populist Radical Right (Bolsonaro’s Social Liberal Party/Liberal Party in Brazil Republican Party in Chile)

Now that we have proposed a conceptual scheme to understand major differences between the left and right, as well as distinct alternatives within the right, we can proceed to systematically analyze the demand and supply sides. We start with the former, looking at the changing landscape of mass attitudes.

THE DEMAND SIDE: RIGHT-WING VOTERS
AND THE NEW RIGHT

In recent decades, the left–right dimension has become increasingly important in determining the structures of mass attitudes in Latin America. The comparative political behavior literature has demonstrated that voters react to changes in elite behavior, adopting more stable and ideologically grounded preferences as parties develop platforms that are clearly distinct from one another (Lupu, 2016; Zechmeister and Corral, 2013). Data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) show that the percentage of voters who do not answer the question on left–right self-position has fallen consistently since 2010 (Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini, 2021). Likewise, a previous study showed how elite polarization fosters greater ideological identification at the mass level (Zechmeister and Corral, 2013). When we consider the entire region, voter identification with the right remained extremely stable from 2008 (20 percent) to 2019 (23 percent), according to LAPOP surveys (Lupu, Oliveros, and Schiumerini, 2021). However, there is substantial variation across countries.

We utilized LAPOP surveys from 2006 to 2019 to estimate the evolution of voters’ identification with the right in Latin America. Voters with scores from 8 to 10 on the 10-point scale were classified as “right-wing.” Figure 1.1 shows the evolution of the right-wing electorate by country.

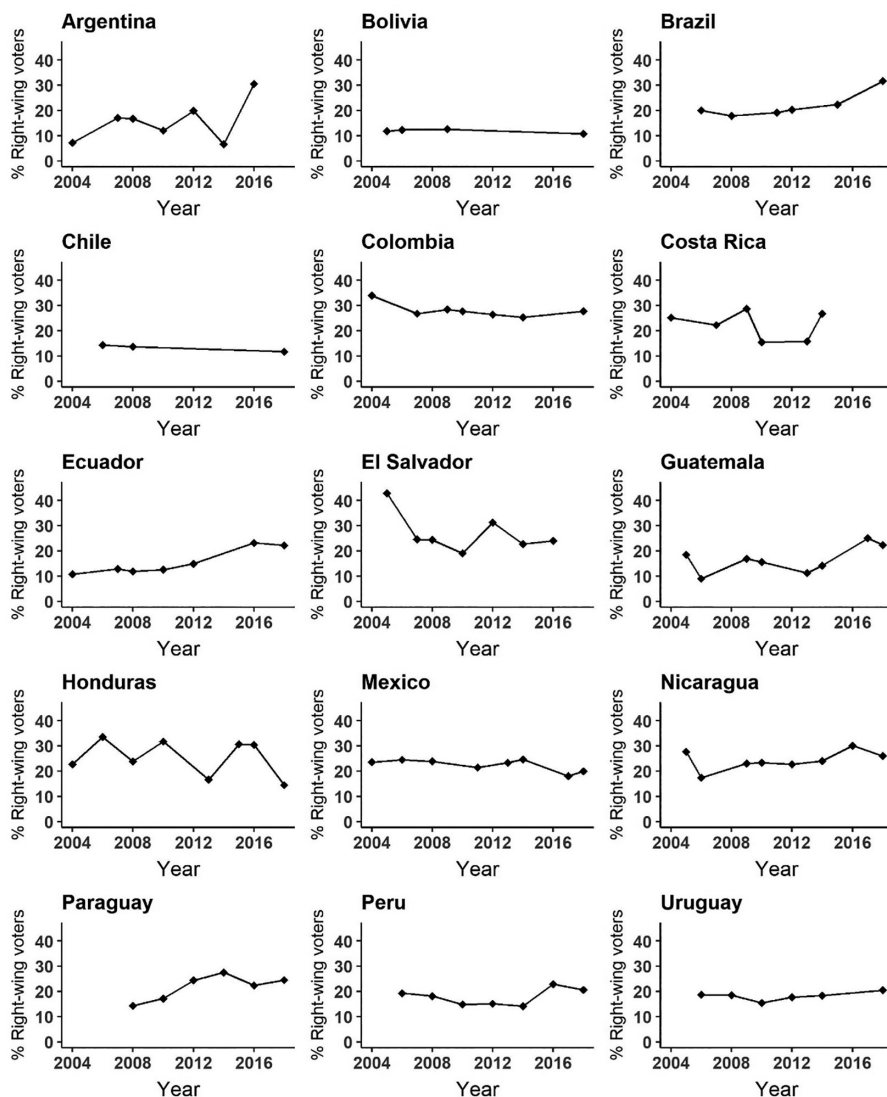


FIGURE 1.1 Voters' identification with the right in Latin America, 2008–2020.

In countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador, there was an upsurge in identification with the right in recent years. There are other instances (e.g., Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, and Bolivia), however, where the proportion of right-wing voters remained mostly stable. Overall, when one looks at voters' ideological identities, there is no evidence of a generalized rightward shift. Instead, what we find is an increase in the proportion of right-wing voters in countries

that have witnessed the emergence of competitive right-wing alternatives, such as CREO in Ecuador, PRO in Argentina, and the radical right in Brazil.

But explicit identification with the right does not tell the whole story. There are other factors that underpin voter support for right-wing options. As Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser (2019) argue, the recent right-wing turn in several Latin American countries is partly a consequence of retrospective voting. The end of the commodities boom produced serious restrictions on the redistributive consumption–expansion policies that had given broad support to leftist governments (Campello and Zucco Jr., 2016). Worsening economic conditions and the emergence of corruption scandals reduced the support of the most volatile sectors of the electorate for left-wing incumbents, while simultaneously boosting support for right-wing challengers in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, and Argentina (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021).

Likewise, concern about security has grown in Latin America in recent decades (Lupu et al., 2021). Evidence shows that, unlike in other contexts, being a victim of crime is associated in Latin America “with dissatisfaction with democracy and support for authoritarianism, vigilantism, and harsh policing tactics” (Bateson, 2012). Although the electoral success of the appropriation of security is not guaranteed (Uang, 2013), some conservative parties have found this issue to be a resource for expanding their electoral support while avoiding a debate on the equality–inequality axis, as was the case of Arena in El Salvador (Holland, 2013) and the PRO in Argentina (Vommaro, 2019a).

Relying on Latinobarómetro surveys, we built a simple measure of the salience of crime and political violence in Latin America. It records the cumulative proportion of respondents who considered crime, drugs, political violence, and/or terrorism as the top problems in their countries. As seen in Figure I.2, crime and/or political violence have become major issues in several Latin American countries over the last decades. While countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala have experienced cyclical patterns, with mass electorates’ concerns with public security oscillating throughout the last decades, there have in other instances been consistent and significant increases in the importance of crime in the public agenda since the 2000s (e.g., Uruguay and Chile).

Right-wing forces have often responded to voters’ concerns with rising crime by promising to implement *mano dura* (“strong hand”) policies often associated with the systematic violation of human rights, arbitrary punishment, and the militarization of law enforcement (Holland, 2013; Krause, 2014; Visconti, 2020). This illiberal approach to public security argues that it is necessary to sacrifice some civil and political rights to allow law enforcement agencies to fight crime effectively. To evaluate the prevalence of such views among Latin American electorates, we utilize a LAPOP survey question that records respondents’ support for a military coup when crime rates are very high. Figure I.3 shows the percentage of voters who answered positively to this question in the latest (2018/2019) and earliest LAPOP waves (2004/2006) for which this question was asked.

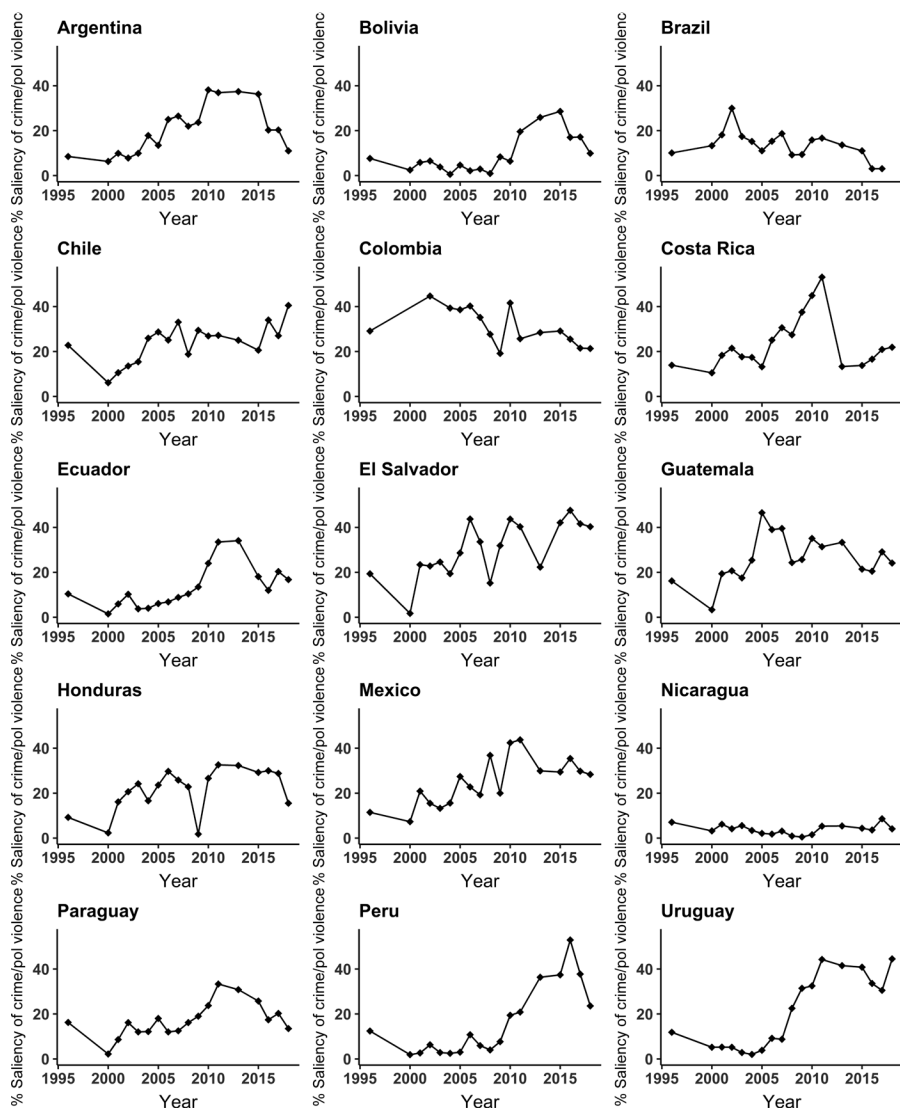


FIGURE 1.2 Percentage of voters who consider crime, drugs, and political violence/terrorism as major national problems, Latinobarómetro (1996–2018).

While support for an openly authoritarian approach to public security decreased in almost all the fifteen countries for which we have longitudinal data, the percentage of respondents that would back a military takeover to fight crime remained high: over 30 percent in more than half of the countries in the sample.

The last piece of the puzzle is moral issues in the public debate. The advance of feminist and LGBT+-rights activism has contributed to the politicization of

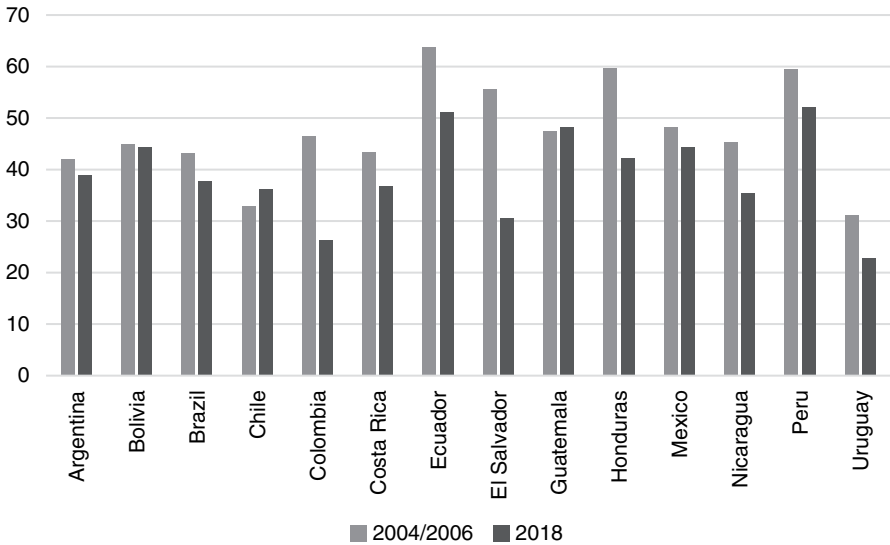


FIGURE 1.3 Percentage of voters who would support a military coup when there is a lot of crime, 2004/2006–2018.

Source: LAPOP 2004, 2006, and 2018.

the progressive agenda regarding family models, gender identities, and reproductive rights (Kessler, Vommoro, and Assusa, 2023). Secularization has fostered greater acceptance of LGBT rights among the mass public, thus favoring policy changes such as the legalization of same-sex marriage. However, the resilience of active conservative nuclei, on the one hand, and the speed of these social changes, on the other hand, have created fertile ground for the appeals of conservative political actors (Boas, 2020; Corrales, 2020; Smith, 2019; Villazón, 2014). Thus, attacks on “gender ideology” – the label chosen by conservatives to delegitimize the progressive moral agenda – were at the center of the electoral appeals in the plebiscite for the peace accords in Colombia in 2016, and for the 2018 and 2022 presidential elections in Brazil.

As seen in Figure I.4, the acceptance of gay marriage has increased throughout the region since 2010 according to LAPOP survey data. The bars represent country mean scores ranging from 1 (totally oppose) to 10 (totally agree).

While LGBT+-rights activism has found increasing support in Latin American societies, and especially so in Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, conservative views remain highly prevalent for reproductive rights. Figure I.5 shows the variations in country mean scores based on responses to a World Values Survey question on the acceptance of abortion. The scale ranges from 1 (never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable). The figure reports data for all Latin American countries included in at least two waves of the World Values Survey.

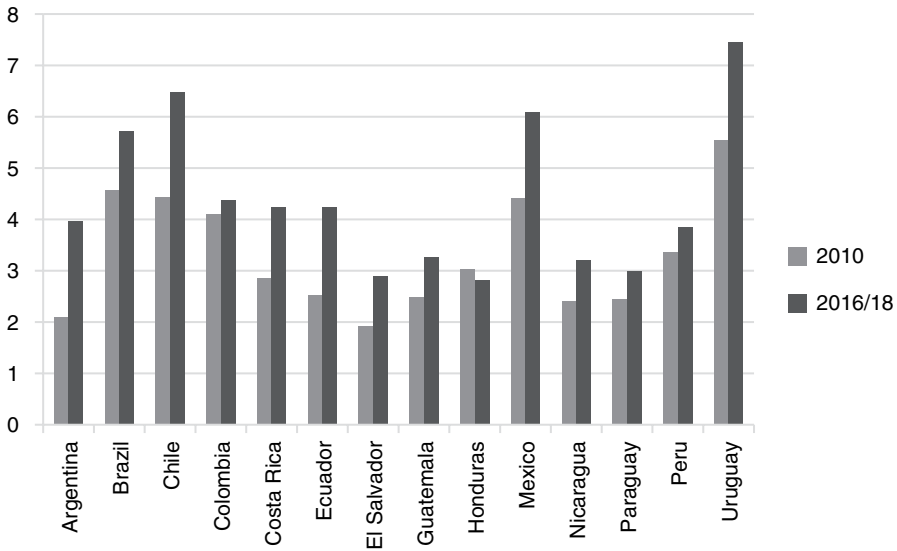


FIGURE 1.4 Mean support for gay marriage in Latin America (1–10 scale), 2010–2016/2018.

Source: LAPOP 2010, 2016, and 2018.

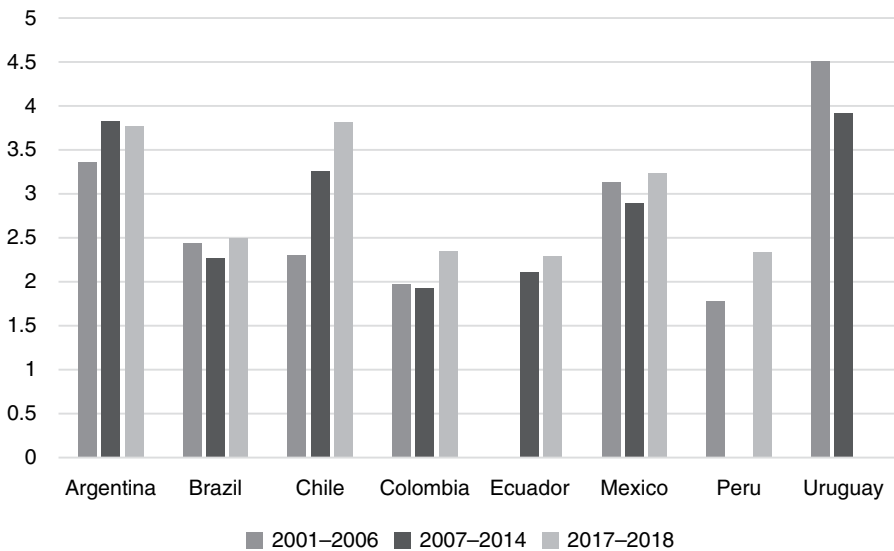


FIGURE 1.5 Mean support for abortion in Latin America (1–10 scale), 2001–2006/2017–2018.

Source: World Values Survey, various years.

As can be seen in Figure I.5, approval of abortion has remained low in Latin America. By 2017–2018, mean scores ranged from 2.29 (Ecuador) to 3.8 (Chile) in the 10-point scale of the World Values Survey.

Using country-level data, we find a strong positive statistical association between the proportion of secular voters and the support for abortion in a given country ($r = 0.70$). Secularization is also correlated positively with the approval of gay marriage ($r = 0.55$).⁵ Looking more closely at individual cases, we find that the most progressive country in Latin America on these two issues (Uruguay) had the highest proportion of secular respondents in the region in 2018, according to Latinobarómetro: 55 percent.

We also find that gay marriage is a highly divisive issue in contemporary Latin America. We compared polarization on cultural issues (abortion and gay marriage) with polarization on the traditional left–right economic divide through two LAPOP survey questions on income redistribution and state intervention in the economy. The latter question measured respondents' support of state ownership of major industries, whereas the former captured voters' approval of state policies to reduce income inequality. We use the standard deviations of responses aggregated by country as a proxy for polarization within each country. To allow for comparison across dimensions, the original 7-point scale utilized in the questions on income redistribution and state ownership (1 – strongly disagree; 7 – strongly agree) was transformed into a 10-point scale. Table I.2 reports the standard deviations for each dimension and country using the latest LAPOP and World Values Survey waves. The highest scores obtained for each country are in bold.

In all fifteen countries listed in Table I.2 except Honduras, gay marriage is the issue that most clearly divides the electorate. It is noteworthy that the correlation between mean support for gay marriage and polarization on this same issue is very strong and positive ($r = 0.80$), which indicates that country-level aggregate increases in acceptance of LGBT rights hide important differences in the evolution of voters' attitudes.⁶ In other words, while mass electorates have become, on average, more progressive on the issue, the pace with which these values change differs across different groups of voters. It would follow that this leads to higher levels of polarization.

In contrast with gay marriage, redistribution is the least polarizing issue in most countries. This likely reflects the very high levels of support for active state intervention in fighting inequality: By 2018, mean scores for this dimension

⁵ Correlations were calculated using country-level data and pooling observations across different LAPOP and WVS waves. The total number of observations is sixty-two for LAPOP data on gay marriage and twenty-eight for WVS data on abortion, covering fifteen countries. We relied on Latinobarómetro surveys to estimate the percentage of secular voters due to the broader coverage of this particular source. Secular respondents were defined as those who reported no religious affiliation when answering the relevant Latinobarómetro question.

⁶ Correlations were calculated using country-level data and pooling observations across different LAPOP waves. The total number of observations is sixty-two, covering fifteen countries.

TABLE 1.2 *Voter polarization in Latin America, selected issues*

Country	Redistribution	State ownership	Abortion	Gay marriage
Argentina	2.86	3.06	2.91	3.67
Bolivia	2.46	—	2.32	3.10
Brazil	2.72	2.97	2.54	3.79
Chile	2.24	—	2.80	3.57
Colombia	2.43	2.78	2.61	3.42
Costa Rica	2.12	2.71	—	3.58
Ecuador	2.37	2.58	2.02	3.33
El Salvador	2.37	2.75	—	2.94
Guatemala	2.70	2.74	—	3.10
Honduras	2.86	3.12	—	3.01
Mexico	2.36	2.88	2.85	3.47
Nicaragua	2.48	2.83	—	3.11
Paraguay	2.69	2.64	—	2.94
Peru	2.42	2.68	2.27	3.06
Uruguay	2.54	3.15	3.13	3.39

Sources: LAPOP 2018/19; World Values Survey 2017/20.

ranged from 6.74 in Bolivia to 8.64 in Costa Rica (using the transformed 10-point scale). It is also noteworthy that support/opposition for redistribution does not clearly differentiate left-wing from right-wing voters, according to the 2018/2019 LAPOP surveys. With the exception of Uruguay, the differences in mean support for redistribution between voters that identify with the left and those that identify with the right are very small and lack statistical significance. The same pattern is found when we compare the mean positions of left-wing and right-wing voters on the state ownership of major industries.

To sum up, while there is no evidence that Latin American voters have either become more conservative in ideological terms or become less willing to back redistributive policies after the left turn of the 2000s, a substantial portion of the region's electorates hold typically conservative views on law-and-order issues and reproductive rights. Moreover, the recent expansion of LGBT rights throughout the region has been followed by the polarization of mass publics. Lastly, there is evidence that the secular-religious division is related to mass attitudes on gay marriage and abortion specifically.

The changing demand for conservative alternatives has created an opportunity for right-wing forces to reorganize around noneconomic issues. This is not to say, however, that these emerging issues and political conflicts were destined to become new party alignments. As we argue throughout this book, new right-wing elites were more likely to succeed in their electoral strategies when they were able to purposefully politicize specific issues and conflicts that are orthogonal to the left-right economic divide, shifting the lines of political conflict in their own favor.

THE SUPPLY OF CONSERVATIVE ALTERNATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE RECASTING OF THE POLITICAL RIGHT

Moving forward, we explore the changing composition and contours of the partisan right in Latin America. The right-wing electoral alternatives currently on offer are the products of different eras and histories. This diversity encompasses (at least) three generations of right-wing parties.

The oldest generation is formed by traditional parties born between the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Most of them are parties created before World War II that have competed in elections since at least the 1950s. These countries did not experience military regimes or had right-wing parties that built strong social roots. Several of the major parties within this group belong to the partisan moderate right quadrant of our typology. For instance, the National Party (*Blancos*) emerged as the result of prolonged conflicts between liberals and conservatives in nineteenth-century Uruguay, which in turn led to the development of strong mass partisan attachments (Coppedge, 1998b). It became consolidated as a center-right, moderate party that survived the left turn of the 2000s and remains competitive in national elections up to the present day (Nocetto et al., 2020); in fact, they elected the current President of Uruguay in 2020.

The second generation of right-wing parties emerged during authoritarian regimes or democratic transitions. They have also met uneven fates. The *UDI* and *RN* in Chile and *Arena* in El Salvador have survived several electoral cycles and maintained important positions in their party systems, while other parties such as the *ADN* in Bolivia, the *PAN* in Guatemala, and the *UCEDE* in Argentina have experienced electoral decline and/or collapse after a period of relative success (Borges, 2021a; Loxton, 2021).

There are two clear examples of the partisan moderate right and electoralist right-wing parties within this group of parties. Chile's *UDI* clearly belongs to the first category. While it was founded by hardcore supporters of Chile's dictatorship (1973–1989) in the 1980s, the party gradually moderated its appeals to attract a larger pool of voters (Siavelis, 2014). *UDI* has also succeeded in building a strong organization and developing shared identities and values among its members, which has allowed it to survive electoral setbacks without losing its core members (Rosenblatt, 2018).

In stark contrast to the *UDI*, Brazil's *PP* emerged from the regional political machines that constituted the backbone of the military ruling party, *ARENA*. Party leaders did not care about investing in a strong party brand or organization. Instead, the *PP* has become specialized in supporting whichever government is in power in exchange for access to the pork and patronage resources controlled by the federal executive (Power, 2018; Borges, 2021a).

The third generation of right-wing parties is made up of groups that emerged from the wreckage of collapsed party systems between the beginnings of the neoliberal consensus crisis and the left turn. Successful parties from this

generation in terms of party-building are much less numerous; instead, personalist vehicles and nonparty movements stand out. The PRO in Argentina is the most successful party-building case, while the *Centro Democrático* in Colombia seems to have moved forward with such a process as well, establishing roots in the war cleavage that has marked Colombian politics for decades and developing a distinctive programmatic identity.

Although it has managed to gain a foothold among traditional right-wing parties, it is not clear how resilient the CD will be to electoral setbacks or a leadership change. Not only are these two parties different in terms of organizational investment, but they also have clear differences in terms of ideology. The PRO belongs to the partisan moderate category, whereas the *Centro Democrático* fits squarely within the ultraconservative partisan right quadrant of our typology. The other cases of right-wing forces that achieve relevance in the electoral arena and the public space are personalist vehicles, such as Lasso's CREO in Ecuador.

Within the third, post-2000 generation, there is yet another group of political forces that have emerged. These are PRR movements with low organizational investment but well-developed programs and electoral appeals. Figures such as Javier Milei in Argentina, and parties such as *Cabildo Abierto* in Uruguay and the Republican Party in Chile (Campos Campos, 2021; Nocetto et al., 2020) often follow political mobilization strategies that resemble those of social-media influencers. These political forces not only have led the reaction to the cultural and the distributive agendas of the left turn but also produced a break with the programmatic moderation of the post-1980s right-wing parties (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019).

Because the PRR in Latin America has often dispensed with strong party organizations, we place this subgroup of the third generation of the Latin American right in the lower left quadrant of the typology, which combines low organizational investment and ideological radicalism. The case of *bolsonarismo* in Brazil illustrates these features rather well. As Ferreira, Fuks, and Smith demonstrate in Chapter 10, the success of *bolsonarismo* owes a great deal to evangelical churches and politicians, who are primarily organized in a suprapartisan caucus in Congress. It is especially illustrative that Bolsonaro abandoned the personalistic electoral vehicle that sponsored his 2018 presidential candidacy (the PSL) in his first year in office, swapping them for the office-seeking Liberal Party (PL) in order to run for reelection. This indicates that parties and party brands have mostly played a secondary role in the strategies of Brazil's radical right.

Overall, the third generation of the Latin American right is highly diverse in terms of its programmatic and organizational profiles. There are still important similarities, however, among the post-2000 generation of right-wing parties that set them apart from the previous eras of right-wing parties.

We explore major programmatic and organizational differences across these various generations of right-wing parties by relying on a large comparative dataset of Latin American parties, the DPEILA (Dataset of Parties Elections

and Ideology in Latin America). The DPEILA relies on various publicly available sources, including major expert surveys (V-Party, Global Party Dataset, and PREPPS), elite surveys (Parliamentary Elites in Latin America, PELA and Brazilian Legislative Survey, BLS), and individual-level surveys (LAPOP, World Values Surveys, and Latinobarómetro) to measure several features of parties and party systems in Latin America, including levels of ideological polarization and fragmentation, parties' issue positions, and political cleavages (measured both at the elite and voter levels) for sixteen countries over a large time span.

While the DPEILA includes various measures of ideology for each party, we opted to use the V-Party 2020 expert survey because it covers a larger number of parties and election years than the PELA surveys of legislators. Experts were asked to attribute a score ranging from 0 (far left) to 6 (far right) for all parties obtaining at least 4 percent of the national vote in lower-chamber races. The V-Party project relies on Bayesian item response theory (IRT) modeling techniques to account for differences in rater reliability and rater thresholds and thereby yield reasonable estimates for the latent concepts being measured.⁷ We placed each party into a three-category ideological classification (left, center, and right) by defining equal intervals for each category within the 7-point V-Party scale. Parties were classified according to their mean ideology score, considering all elections for which there existed valid observations.⁸

One potential disadvantage of the V-Party survey is that it asks experts to rate the same parties over different electoral cycles, which may lead to bias and measurement error. Still, when we compare the V-Party ideology scores with the measures based on various waves of the PELA survey, we do not find significant differences in parties' ideological placement. In fact, the V-Party and PELA ideology scores are very strongly correlated ($r = 0.95$), which indicates that using either expert or elite survey data does not produce substantially different ideological classifications of Latin American parties.

In addition to grouping Latin American parties by ideological bloc, we used data obtained from the Party Facts project to classify parties according to the period in which they were founded. The first wave includes all right-wing parties founded before the 1980s. The second, or intermediary, wave comprises the period between democratic transitions and the twenty-first century. Finally, the most recent wave of right-wing reorganization can be said to have started in 2001, since the first decade of the twenty-first century coincides with the left turn that brought about a series of challenges to conservative forces.

⁷ The IRT measurement models take ordinal values as an input to produce an interval-level, standardized estimate of the given latent trait, considering patterns of cross-rater disagreement, bridge, and lateral coding ratings (Coppedge et al., 2019: 19). These standardized measures are then linearly transformed into the original ordinal scale of the V-Party measures.

⁸ We believe that this is justifiable because ideology scores do not change substantially over time. Moreover, for about 60 percent of the parties in the dataset, there are only three valid ideology scores or fewer.

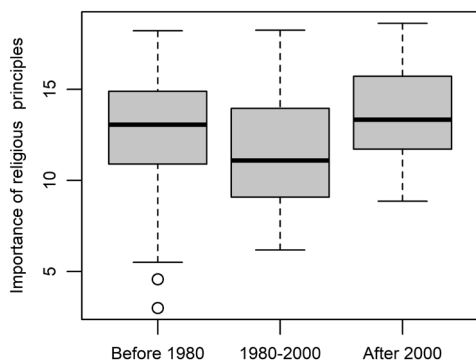


FIGURE I.6 Boxplot of right-wing parties' positions on the secular–confessional divide, by party founding date.

Source: DPEILA – PREPPS 2006, 2015, and 2019.

Our analysis uses indicators obtained from the 2006, 2015, and 2019 PREPPS and from several waves of the PELA surveys with legislators. The PREPPS data covers a total of fifty-one right-wing parties. Since the PELA surveys cover a broader time span than the PREPPS from the mid-1990s until the late 2010s, we opted to work with a subset of the data that only covers the post-2000 period. By doing this, we can rest assured that our comparisons across different indicators analyze similar periods.

We start our analysis by looking at differences between each of these right-wing generations in the secular–religious divide. To operationalize this dimension, we rely on the PREPPS expert survey question on the importance of religion and religious principles for party elites. This indicator measures secularism/religiosity on a 20-point scale, with higher (lower) values being attributed to less (more) secular parties. Figure I.6 shows boxplots for each of the periods being compared.

The boxplot shows that right-wing parties created after 2000 are less secular than those created during the second wave (1980–2000). These differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the distribution of scores for third-wave, post-2000 parties, is more homogeneous, with a standard deviation of 2.6, as compared to 3.7 and 3.3 for Waves 1 and 2, respectively. These results suggest that recently created right-wing parties have been more willing to mobilize voters along the secular–religious divide.

Next, we compare the three generations of right-wing parties on the state–market divide by using multiple waves of PELA surveys. Unfortunately, the PELA questions dealing with the economic left–right dimension were different for different waves. Before 2012, the questionnaire included a general question on the economic role of the state that asked legislators where they would position themselves regarding two extreme alternatives: an economic system with maximum state intervention or, alternatively, a pure market economy. The 2012–2015 and

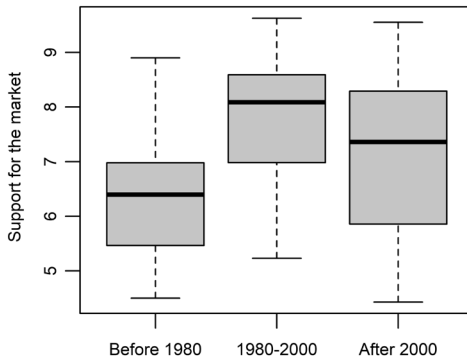


FIGURE I.7 Boxplot of right-wing parties' positions on the state-market divide, by party founding date.

Sources: DPEILA – PELA surveys, various years.

2016–2020 waves utilized a battery of questions on the economic role of the state. Therefore, we opted to operationalize the state–market divide throughout these periods by averaging legislators' responses to three questions that measure, respectively, disagreement over the role of the state in economic production, job creation, and guaranteeing citizens' economic welfare.⁹

As seen in Figure I.7, right-wing parties founded after the year 2000 exhibit lower levels of support for a market economy with less state intervention in comparison to parties created during the previous wave (1980–2000). But when compared to the older parties founded before 1980, post-2000 parties are more in favor of a market-oriented economy. When we compare groups using a simple analysis of variance, we obtain a large and statistically significant *F*-statistic ($p < 0.01$), which indicates that the distributions for each generation of right-wing parties are substantially different from the others.

When we look at the distribution of the parties' positions on the divisive issue of abortion, we also find relevant differences between the latest generation of right-wing parties and the previous ones. Party scores were calculated using a PELA survey question that recorded legislators' support of women's right to abortions, ranging from 1 (totally disapprove) to 10 (totally approve). The scale was inverted, thereby attributing higher mean scores to parties that were less supportive of abortion. Figure I.8 shows the boxplots for each generation of right-wing parties.

The median right-wing party that was founded after 2000 has adopted a more conservative position on abortion in comparison to the median right-wing party founded in the previous wave (1980–2000). Parties created before the 1980s have a median position that is similar to that of the post-2000 group.

⁹ We rescaled all the different PELA questions according to a 10-point scale. The measures were also inverted so that higher values indicated greater opposition to state intervention and support for a market-oriented approach.

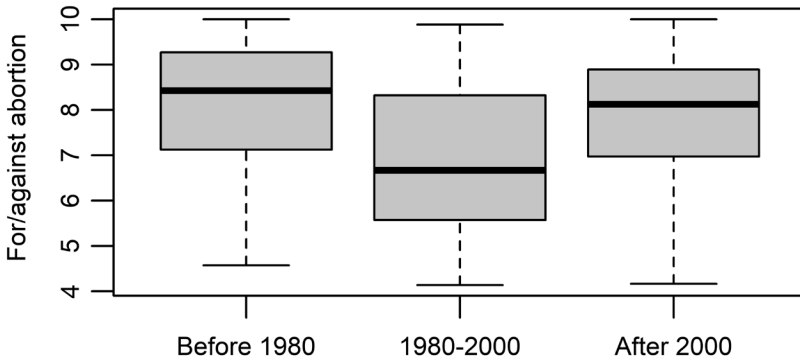


FIGURE 1.8 Boxplot of right-wing parties' positions on abortion, by party founding date. Sources: DPEILA – PELA surveys, various years.

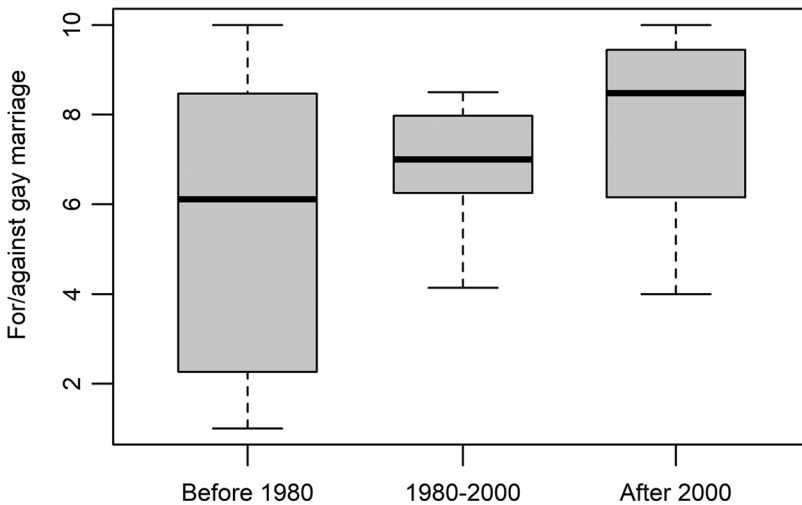


FIGURE 1.9 Boxplot of right-wing parties' positions on gay marriage, by party founding date.

Figure 1.9 shows the distribution of right-wing parties' positions on gay marriage across different founding dates. We relied on a PELA question that recorded legislators' support of same-sex marriage using a 10-point scale. Adopting the same procedure utilized for the question on abortion, we inverted the scale.

Once again, we find that right-wing parties founded after 2000 are substantially more conservative than their predecessors. The median position of the post-2000 wave is 8.48, which indicates that about half of the parties in this group are located at the extreme of the 10-point scale measuring opposition to gay marriage. Although the data should be analyzed with caution because of the limited sample size ($N = 26$), the strong correlation between the party-level measures of opposition to abortion and gay marriage ($r = 0.80$) suggests that these patterns are consistent with one another.

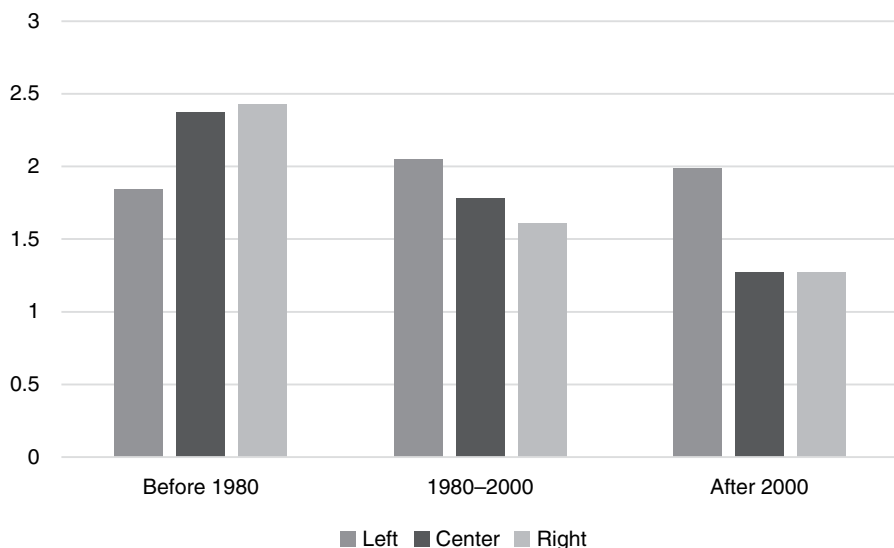


FIGURE I.10 Mean party routinization by ideological bloc and party founding date. Source: V-Party; DPEILA.

We also compared right-wing parties' positions on law and order, using a PREPPS question that captured parties' support for *mano dura* policies. Regarding this particular dimension, we did not find any relevant differences across waves. Parties founded after 2000 favor hardline policies against crime as much as those from previous eras. Thus, we decided not to report these results.

Lastly, we look at party organizational strength to get a sense of elite investment in party-building over time. The comparative literature has shown that building territorial organizations with stable decision-making rules takes time. To the extent that organizational consolidation is a function of party age, new right-wing parties are very likely to have weaker organizational structures than their predecessors. Thus, to have an idea of the "expected" levels of party strength over time, we compare right-wing parties with left-wing and centrist parties across the three waves. We use a composite measure of party routinization based on two V-Party expert survey questions. The first question measures the presence of local party offices throughout the country's territory, while the second measures the presence of party activists and personnel at the local level. The routinization index is calculated as the mean of these two measures, ranging from 1 to 4. Mean scores by ideological bloc and party wave are reported in Figure I.10.

Right-wing parties created after 2000 have significantly weaker organizational structures than those created between 1980 and 2000, and even weaker organizational structures than parties created before 1980. Although these differences are consistent with standard theories of party-building, one should note that new left-wing parties created after 2000 obtain substantially higher scores than their right-wing and centrist counterparts. This suggests that party

age alone does not explain all the differences in organization building across waves and ideological blocs. It seems that left-wing party leaders have opted to build stronger organizations than right-wing and centrist elites, at least since the 1980s, and that this trend was reinforced in the post-2000 period.

Overall, our descriptive analyses suggest that the recasting of the political right after 2000 has involved the emergence of parties that differ from both the political left and older right-wing organizations in their emphasis on non-economic issues and identities. Indeed, new right parties are on average less supportive of neoliberal, market-oriented policies and less secular, and they adopt more conservative views on abortion and gay marriage than the previous generations of conservative parties. Moreover, right-wing parties created after 2000 have been characterized by rather weak and underdeveloped organizations, especially in comparison to left-wing parties.

Despite these similarities, there is substantial variation in terms of the organizational and ideological profiles of third-generation right-wing forces, an issue that is explored throughout this book. While the reliance on weak formal organizations has, with few exceptions, been a generalized characteristic of the post-2000 right, the new right has at times succeeded in the ideational dimension of party-building, establishing a clear programmatic identity and cultivating mass partisan attachments. In this sense, the lack of institutionalized organization cannot be taken as a synonym for nonpartisan strategies.

The chapters in this book demonstrate that the programmatic strategies of the post-2000 right have varied as well. Although the emphasis on cultural (as opposed to economic) issues is a common trait of right-wing parties created after the turn of the century, emerging conservative forces have adopted distinct profiles regarding the degree of ideological rigidity and radicalism. Our typology of right-wing parties and movements accounts for this variation. It also distinguishes radical right movements built around populist leaders (such as Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil) from cases of radical right party-building that have produced party brands that are relatively autonomous from their founders.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into two parts. The first part – *Building Right-Wing Parties and Partisans* – addresses the construction of right-wing party organizations and brands in Latin America and is comprised of five chapters.

In *Conservative Decay and Reaction: Accounting for the Divergent Trajectories of the Latin American Right*, André Borges and Ryan Lloyd provide an explanation for the varying degrees of success for right-wing strategies of adaptation and survival during and after the Left Turn. They argue that right-wing parties were most likely to survive and remain competitive in national elections when they relied on strong party brands and organizations, which, in turn, depended on when the parties were founded and whether they had roots in an authoritarian past.

In *Conservative Parties in Latin America in Adverse Times: The Rise of the Argentine PRO in Comparative Perspective*, Gabriel Vommaro focuses specifically on conservative party-building processes. As a main case, it analyzes Argentina's PRO party, one of the most important cases of conservative party-building in Latin America. It offers an explanation for the success of right-wing parties born in nonauthoritarian contexts based on the strategic decisions of leaders to build high-cost resources (ideational and organizational) that allow parties to take root in adverse contexts. He demonstrates that the competitiveness of right-wing parties has been driven by three factors: programmatic innovation by personalistic leaders; the organizational mobilization of both core and noncore constituencies; and an elite fear of the "Venezuela model."

In *Crafting Partisanship in the Context of Party Organization Fragility: The Resilience of Fujimorismo in the Electoral Arena*, Carlos Meléndez develops two main arguments to account for the surprising longevity of *Fujimorismo*. First, although Alberto Fujimori did not invest resources in party-building during his authoritarian government (1990–2000), he developed populist appeals that contributed to the formation of a political identification with *Fujimorismo*. Second, the second-generation leader of *Fujimorismo*, Alberto's daughter Keiko, has been trying to convert this nascent partisanship into a resource for party institutionalization ever since her first presidential campaign in 2011.

In *The Uneven Success of Uribismo in Colombia*, Juan Albarraín, Laura Gamboa, and Juan Pablo Milanese try to explain the concurrent success of the *Centro Democrático* at the national level and its underachievement at the subnational level. They argue that this disparity is linked to two interrelated variables: the security cleavage along which the *Centro Democrático* has developed its partisan identity, and its weak subnational partisan structures. Security issues mobilize voters on the national level, but are too broad to be relevant in local elections.

Lastly, in Chapter 5, *Right-Wing Partisans in Contemporary Chile*, Ariel Becerra and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser look at the right-wing landscape in Chile, which now has four different parties. To better understand the similarities and differences between these four parties, they analyze novel survey data that allow them to offer a detailed picture of those who identify with the right in contemporary Chile. By mapping out the right-wing electorate of the country, they show that the formation of a stable electoral coalition between these four right-wing parties is anything but simple because of the important ideological differences between their voters.

The second part of the book – *A New Right? Ideational and Programmatic Change after the Left Turn* – analyzes how right-wing actors have adapted to social and political changes during and after the left turn of the 2000s.

In *Progressive Policy Change, Cultural Backlash, and Party Polarization in Latin America*, Robert Vidigal and André Borges use data from DPEILA

to understand the recent rightward move in many party systems within the region, as well as the ensuing processes of party-system polarization. They argue that major economic downturns favor radical, antisystem alternatives, thereby creating an opportunity for newly created parties to campaign on extreme policy platforms. They also demonstrate that polarization increases when leftist incumbents are associated with progressive policy change, as right-wing parties become more ideologically extreme. This indicates that the left turn of the 2000s has at times favored the radicalization of important sectors of the right.

In *The Latin American Populist Radical Right in Comparative Perspective: Constraints and Opportunities*, Lisa Zanotti analyzes the structural constraints on the emergence of PRR parties in Latin America. Unlike Western Europe, material values are still of vital importance in several Latin American countries because of high levels of inequality in the region, which represents a major constraint for the emergence of the PRR that only some parties have been able to overcome.

In *Between Gattopardismo and Ideational Change: The Mainstream Chilean Right's Winding Road to Moderation*, Stéphanie Alenda, Miguel Angel López, Kenneth Bunker, and Nicolás Miranda explain how the Chilean right has been reconfigured due to the multidimensional crisis that has shaken Chile since the end of 2019. They analyze how tensions regarding competition and identity have affected relevant actors and structured their perceptions, calculations, and behaviors.

In *Whose Right, Whose Left? Navigating the Complexities of Right-Wing Politics in Venezuela*, Maryhen Jiménez and Guillermo T. Aveledo argue that the main divide of Venezuelan politics is now between democracy and autocracy rather than the ideological left and right. As authoritarianism and repression have increased and Venezuela's socioeconomic decline has worsened, there has been a prioritization of competitiveness through a centrist approach over an emphasis on ideological purity among right-wing movements and factions.

Finally, in *A Conversion to the Right: The Case of the 2018 Election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil*, Matheus Ferreira, Mario Fuks, and Amy Erica Smith examine how religious transformations in Latin America over the last few decades have influenced the rise of the right. Analyzing a five-wave panel study from the "Democracy on the Ballot" project, they show that Bolsonaro won much of his support from evangelicals and Pentecostals during the final month of the campaign. While they find little support for the notion that attending church or discussing politics in church influenced vote choice, church leaders' endorsements of Bolsonaro did in fact matter, as did attitudes regarding the importance of religion in one's own life, the approval of church engagement in elections, anti-LGBT attitudes, and authoritarian parenting values.

This book makes three important contributions to the study of Latin American politics, and more broadly, to the comparative literature on conservative parties and right-wing politics. First, it represents the most ambitious

and systematic effort to date to understand the renovation of the political right in Latin America, its causes, and its consequences. In addition to highlighting key differences between the post-2000 political right and previous right-wing generations, the book develops a categorization scheme to account for variation in the ideological and organizational profiles of emerging right-wing alternatives. We use comparative and case-study chapters to demonstrate that the rise of the radical right represents an important and novel outcome for the conservative reaction to the wave of progressive governments of the early 2000s.

Second, the book engages with major theoretical and empirical questions about the challenges of conservative party-building in highly unequal societies. While the empirical findings are consistent with previous research, showing that conservative party consolidation is a relatively rare phenomenon, they also indicate that right-wing parties may succeed by combining organizationally thin structures with strong party brands. By emphasizing cultural issues that are orthogonal to the economic left–right divide, new right-wing forces have been able to mobilize mass electorates and develop distinctive ideological identities while simultaneously establishing roots in emerging political cleavages.

Third, the book contributes to the comparative literature on conservative parties by unraveling the mechanisms through which center–right parties gradually lose ground to more radical alternatives. As opposed to Western Europe, where cultural backlash was associated with a conservative reaction to post-materialist change in mostly secular societies, the politicization of religion has been a major driving force behind the polarization of party systems and mass electorates in Latin America. The alliance between the PRR and the evangelical right in countries such as Brazil and Chile is clear evidence of these trends. Progressive policy and value shifts in Latin American countries during the left turn increased the saliency of cultural issues, from abortion to LGBT rights. However, as opposed to Western European cases, the evidence presented in this volume indicates that cultural backlash in Latin America has been mostly an elite-led, top-down process, as conservatives and populists have sought to create new political divisions. In this case, they specifically rely on polarizing narratives that pit the values of “the people” in opposition to the progressive agendas of the (mostly leftist) cultural and political elites.

