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POPULAR REPRESENTATION IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

An Agenda for Research

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The problem of mass politics and popular, or lower-class, political representation has been an abiding issue in Latin America. While Latin American countries exhibit a long history of democratic constitutions, the lower classes have not been well represented, especially relative to their large numbers. Throughout the region, historically the world's economically most unequal, anti-popular political actors have pursued a variety of strategies to reduce lower-class political influence. The military regimes launched by the coups of the 1960s and 1970s are a dramatic example: the resort to authoritarianism was historically the response to a perceived threat stemming from lower-class political pressures. Since the 1980s, when the region established relatively stable democratic regimes, the question of popular representation has become particularly salient, and many studies have explored a great variety of topics related to this issue. It is now time to build on these studies and pose the question of mass politics and popular representation and to undertake macro comparisons across historical periods and across countries.

The issue of popular representation has arisen in the contemporary period in light of the dual transitions of marketization and democratization, with seemingly different implications. On the one hand, changes in the international economy and the debt crisis led to a process of economic reform and a new market-oriented economic model that was often adopted despite political opposition. Its initial consequences included increased inequality, social dislocation, and hardship. It thus seemed adverse to the representation of popular interests. At the same time, the region's seemingly more stable and institutionalized democracies have created space, opportunities, and resources for social mobilization; the proliferation of popular associations has provided a potential organizational infrastructure for popular interest politics; unprecedented initiatives in social policy have been directed toward the traditional "outsiders" in the informal and rural sectors; and the election of left-leaning presidents in the new century seems to usher in a new period of responsiveness to popular interests. These economic and political changes have raised the question of the nature of democracy, accountability, and the political representation of the popular classes—the question with which Latin American countries have struggled for over a century.

Scholars have directed much attention to these issues, focusing on the implementation of economic policies and their social consequences, the nature and functioning of democratic institutions, political parties, and popular associations. However, these studies have generally remained ahistorical and fragmented, usefully focusing on discrete components or aspects of structures of popular representation and frequently limited to a restricted set of comparisons. This more restricted purview in part reflects the difficult empirical and conceptual task of analyzing popular—or lower-class—representation at a macro level. In this chapter, we advocate the importance of a research program that adopts a comparative framework and integrates many of these topics at a higher level of aggregation. We discuss an approach for this research agenda in terms of two complementary analytic perspectives.

The first perspective is historical, as over-time change and temporal comparisons are illuminating, both descriptively and causally. Historically, the question of mass politics and popular representation was first posed in the earlier part of the 20th century with the formation of a new working class, which organized labor unions to advance its interests. In the contemporary period the question of mass politics and lower-class inclusion has been posed again, in part reflecting the decades-long formation of a new segment of the working classes in the informal sector. The informal sector has formed new organizations and made new demands. At the same time, economic conditions have also changed, affecting, differentially, all sectors of the working class as well as their “representational weight” relative to other classes. Thus an analysis of popular representation that takes world historic time and historical change seriously is appropriate.

The second perspective approaches macro comparisons, whether historical or “cross-sectional,” through the lens of something akin to Schmitter’s (1992) notion of a “partial regime.” Specifically, we refer to two partial regimes of popular representation—or more accurately of state–society intermediation—in which communication and influence goes in both directions between state and society. The first is the party system; the second is the “popular interest regime,” the set of organizations through which the popular sectors have sought to pursue their interests (Collier and Handlin 2009:4). The concept of “partial regimes” focuses attention on structures, institutions, and organizations as well as the behavior of political actors within these interacting arenas, or sites, of interest intermediation. The analysis in Collier and Collier’s *Shaping the Political Arena* (1991) can be interpreted as arguing that these two partial regimes were initially constructed during the critical juncture of labor incorporation, when party systems were substantially restructured and a new popular interest regime was founded. Since those partial regimes have recently undergone significant change, now is an appropriate time to adopt a macro perspective on both historical and cross-sectional comparisons.

Because we urge historical as well as cross-national comparisons, we take as a starting point the analysis in *Shaping the Political Arena* and implicitly have in mind the same comparison set of relatively advanced countries in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. This chapter first reviews the way the two partial regimes, the party system and popular interest regime, emerged as durable legacies from the critical juncture of labor incorporation. **It then highlights major discontinuities in those legacies in the contemporary period and raises the question of whether a critical juncture analysis is again appropriate for understanding the contemporary period.** The last section turns to the question of how new structures of popular representation are being reconfigured. Despite the rise of “post-material” interests and some findings that party systems do not express class cleavages, analysts should consider the way in which the material interests of the popular sector may be not less salient, but rather demobilized. Finally,

the chapter begins a discussion for orienting research on popular representation around the analysis of the two partial regimes.

The Critical Juncture of Labor Incorporation

In setting up the basis for a historical comparison, we start with an analysis of the initial partial regimes of popular representation, founded in connection with the process of labor incorporation, when mass politics was first introduced in the region. In the framework of a critical juncture analysis, new institutions or structures for interest intermediation can be analyzed as the outcome of strategic decisions made in response to changing economic and social conditions, which, once founded, are enduring. For present purposes, the causal logic of the critical juncture of labor incorporation can be understood through the following sequence: socio-economic change generates a new political challenge, the resolution of which results in new (or reconfigured) partial regimes. This causal sequence took the following form.

By the first part of the 20th century, economic and social change brought an unprecedented political challenge: the inclusion of the formal working class.¹ The export boom at the end of the 19th century spurred new urban commercial and industrial activities, which transformed the social structure of many Latin American countries from a two-class model, based on lord and peasant in the rural economy, to a four-class model, based in the new urban economy as well as in the export sector. The four-class model included the landed oligarchy and peasants plus two new actors; the middle sectors—a rising, rival elite that would challenge the land-based oligarchy—and a growing proletarian class of wage earners in the new economic activities. These two new classes posed the challenge of their own political inclusion, though in quite different ways. The middle sectors challenged the political dominance of the traditional landed elite; the working class challenged the larger capitalist system through strikes, protest, and revolutionary ideology. The middle sectors were thus engaged in a bi-frontal struggle, against both the old oligarchy and, as capitalists and employers, the working class. Once middle-sector interests captured the presidency, they turned immediately to the “social question”—the response to radical, working-class protest.

This response was the foundational moment of “labor incorporation,” in which the working class became a legitimate, legally recognized political actor. It constituted the initial episode in constructing an institutionalized arena of mass politics. The common component in this response was to legalize and regulate unions, creating a formal, legal system for channeling and resolving class conflict through a system of industrial labor relations. In this way, unions became the primary organizations of the urban working class, mediating state/working-class relations, channeling labor-capital bargaining, and ending the cycles of protest and violent repression that preceded incorporation.

Within this common pattern, differences emerged as a result of distinct coalitional patterns and strategic interactions of elites and the working class—the interaction of strategies from above and below. From above, the strategic choice of the new political leaders was whether or not to mobilize the labor movement as a base of political support, and the decision was influenced by the nature of oligarchic opposition. From below, the choice was whether or not to respond to any such “overture,” and the decision was influenced by the strength of the working class and the concessions it wrung in exchange for that support.

These dynamics may be seen most clearly in two polar types. Mexico and Venezuela exemplify the pattern of mobilizing labor support, and Chile and Brazil exemplify the strat-

egy of controlling and demobilizing labor. Two types of class coalitions resulted: a cross-class "populist" coalition of the middle sectors and working class in the former pattern and, in the latter, a cross-sectoral, urban-rural "accommodationist" coalition of the middle sectors and traditional elite, against, in effect, the lower classes. Thus, when mass politics were born, in the first pattern the working class was part of a cross-class coalition, whereas in the second pattern no cross-class coalition with the working class was formed. The type of class-coalitional pattern, which would endure, gave rise to quite different structures of mass politics. In Mexico, for instance, mass politics began in the wake of the 1910-17 Revolution and in Chile with the 1920 election of Alessandri. In Mexico, the subsequent presidents constructed multi-class coalitions, whereas in Chile the subsequent President Carlos Ibáñez did not and left instead a legacy of class-based politics.

In terms of the present discussion, these coalitional strategies led to the founding of the two partial regimes of popular interest intermediation. With respect to the party system, the new class coalitions served as the basis for party formation and party system crystallization. Where political leaders mobilized labor support, as in Mexico, a political party vehicle was necessary to attract and channel worker and union support in the electoral arena. These leaders thus founded a cross-class "populist" party—that is, a union-affiliated or labor-based party (LBP). The transition of labor incorporation was the unique "opportunity," the historical moment, when populist LBPs were founded. The populist LBP became the largest party in the country, anchoring and stabilizing the party system and resulting in a one- or two-party system.² The long-ruling dominance of Mexico's PRI is the clearest example of this pattern. Alternatively, where a populist LBP was not founded, the union movement became affiliated to a 20th-century classist LBP—smaller Socialist or Communist parties—and the result was a fractionalized, multi-party system that exhibited increasing polarization and instability. Chile provides the clearest example of this second coalitional pattern; party fractionalization, polarization, and class-based politics culminating in the victory of Marxist parties under Allende, and then the military coup that deposed him.

With respect to the interest regime, labor incorporation established a common structure, albeit with some variations. This popular interest regime has been analyzed as the Union-Party Hub, or the UP-Hub, to highlight the key commonality: the central position of party-affiliated unions as the organizations of lower-class interest intermediation.³ Unions became the privileged organizations for intermediating lower-class interests in both the interest regime and the party system. In the interest regime, unions were controlled by extensive state regulation enshrined in labor law. This law underlay a state corporatist system that shaped the structure and activities of unions through extensive constraints. At the same time the law also contained a number of "inducements," which bestowed benefits on legally recognized unions. Through legal standing, membership requirements, subsidies, and state access, unions were privileged not only vis-à-vis dissident unions but also vis-à-vis other types of lower-class organizations. This overall outcome characterizes cases in both patterns (those more similar to Mexico—such as Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela—and those more similar to Chile, namely Brazil) even though the latter put greater reliance on constraints in the legal regulation of unions. In both patterns, too, unions were active participants in the party system, as they were affiliated to political parties and delivered electoral support to them, whether they were linked to multi-class LBPs as in Mexico or to more classist parties, as in Chile. Because of these union-party linkages, the two partial regimes of popular interest intermediation were thus significantly integrated or interpenetrated.

From the point of view of popular representation, these structures exhibited two serious flaws. First, unions were controlled by a corporatist labor law, and, in addition, either both

types of LBPs, populist and classist, had representational drawbacks. Where unions were affiliated to a populist party, as in Mexico, they were a core constituency of the largest party, which brought unions into the governing coalition, provided the party was not banned by the military, precisely because of its links to unions.⁴ However, the working class was a *junior* member of the coalition, and party affiliation served to control workers as well as to represent them. Where instead unions were affiliated to classist parties (or banned populist parties), they were consigned to the opposition coalition for most of the post-WWII period. Yet, as in Chile, these classist LBPs grew in electoral strength over the post-WWII period, as did, accordingly, the political influence and access of the union movement. However, this growing influence was perceived as a threat by elite interests, and politics became increasingly polarized and unstable. The result, ultimately, was a strong backlash and military coup. Thus, in all cases, albeit in different ways, this first historic structuring of mass politics proved to be problematic from the perspective of popular representation.

A second representational flaw was the exclusivity of the UP-Hub. Given the pre-WWII timing of these origins, the UP-Hub as a popular interest regime centered on the formal working class but substantially marginalized the informal working class, whose subsequent growth came to outpace that of formal workers. Other organizations, such as neighborhood associations, existed, but these played a peripheral role compared to unions, which had the advantages of a membership base, organizational and material resources, and access to the state primarily, but not exclusively, through political parties. Thus the scope or “density” of especially the privileged part of the interest regime was restricted under the UP-Hub.

These structures of popular representation, emanating from the politics of labor incorporation, endured through the period of Import-Substitution Industrialization (ISI). This growth model had a demand-side logic to support a domestic market for national production based on increased mass purchasing power. Because workers’ wages could be seen not only as a labor cost but also as a source of demand, the model could underwrite a degree of “class compromise”—or at least a cross-class populist coalition. Employment in the state bureaucracy and parastatals likewise expanded aggregate purchasing power. Unionization, if it had any effect on wages and employment levels, had the same demand-side advantage. Thus, ISI was compatible with a kind of “organized capitalism,” based on a unionized formal sector. The ISI model supported the reproduction of the UP-Hub as an interest regime that privileged unions as popular organizations and LBPs as potentially viable governing parties.

The period of labor incorporation has thus been analyzed as a critical juncture, a founding moment that signaled a new period of mass politics and established a particular set of enduring political structures. During this period, unions were legalized, and the pattern of their partisan affiliation to either populist or classist LBPs was established. Three components of an enduring legacy were set in this founding moment. First, patterns of class coalitions were constructed in which, most importantly for present discussion, the formal and especially unionized working class either was bound up in a multi-class coalition or remained independent of such coalitions. Second, distinct types of party systems were established: either one- or two- party systems with unions comprising the core constituency of the largest (populist) party, or fractionalized and polarizing multi-party systems with unions affiliated to classist parties. Third, the first popular or lower-class interest regime was established, the UP-Hub, in which these party-affiliated unions, having official state recognition and greater access, became the privileged lower-class interest organizations, although they were regulated and controlled by the state through labor laws, in a pattern characterized as state corporatism.

The End of the Legacy: A New Critical Juncture?

Although these party systems and interest regimes were enduring legacies of the critical juncture of labor incorporation, the contemporary period has seen substantial discontinuities in both partial regimes. These discontinuities signal the end of this legacy. The critical juncture was analyzed as the response to economic and social structural change and to the political challenge of the new interests and demands thus produced. The end of the legacy and change in the partial regimes in the contemporary period can be analyzed in terms of a parallel causal sequence. Economic and social structural change has produced a new political challenge: a new set of demands, again for policy reform and for the inclusion of new groups. Is it then appropriate to analyze the contemporary transformation in partial regimes as a new critical juncture? **While we can observe discontinuity and may also be able to discern the beginnings of divergent trajectories of change, temporal and cross-national variation itself does not justify the use of a critical juncture analysis.** We review the economic and social transformations leading to change in the partial regimes. **Yet we suggest that, until we can distinguish an outcome, a stable legacy, it may yet be premature to apply the analytics of a critical juncture framework to the contemporary period.**

Socioeconomic Change

Since labor incorporation, social and economic change has been profound. It has consisted of both incremental change and more sudden shocks. Incrementally, Latin American economies changed from being primarily agricultural and pre-industrial to substantially industrial and urban. In the process, social structure has also been gradually transformed. If the earlier critical juncture reflected a change from a two-class to a four-class structure, when landlords and peasants were joined by workers and diverse “middle sectors” who constituted a new industrial and commercial elite strata, a more complex structure now adds a middle class and the informal sector, at the same time that all classes are quite highly differentiated, in part because of their different relations to the market (Portes and Hoffman 2003).

If it once made sense to speak of “the middle sectors,” it now no longer does. While there is still a sector of relatively small, weak commercial and industrial interests, there is also a stronger and varied modern capitalist class in the industrial, financial, and agri-business sectors. Economic openness, capital mobility, and asset concentration has increased the structural power of segments of the capitalist classes vis-à-vis the working classes. Meanwhile, the landed elite has either integrated into this capitalist class or shrunk considerably. A larger and differentiated middle class composed of white collar workers, managers, and professionals has also emerged from “the middle sectors” and now occupies a space between the capitalist class and working class. There is now also a more differentiated set of working classes: formal workers, like employers, are more differentiated in terms of openness to the international economy, and informal workers have increased in size and importance. Hence, incremental social change that has accumulated since party systems were crystallized has increased both the middle class and an informal sector of lower-class workers.

More abrupt was a change away from the economic model based on ISI. This change was a response partly to internal economic factors and partly to changes in the international economy starting in the 1970s—with the end of the Bretton Woods exchange rate regime and the onset of new patterns of trade openness, global production, and increasing flows of international finance capital. The impact of these changes culminated with the debt crisis of the 1980s and its aftermath. Latin American governments responded by shifting from

state-led ISI to a new model of greater market coordination. The new model has a quite different logic. Most importantly, in terms of political implications, it put unions on the defensive in a way that constituted a challenge to both LBPs and the UP-Hub. Wages became primarily a cost rather than also a source of aggregate demand. The model thus produced incentives for flexibilizing the labor market and for reversing the privileged position, political access, and gains of unions. The logic of the ISI model, which provided the economic basis for a “class compromise,” has largely been superseded, although countries have varied in their response to these incentives, according to political factors.

Party System Change

Accommodating these social and economic changes put enormous strain on the “traditional” parties of the post-incorporation period.⁵ Unions have lost much of their salience and privileged position as the core constituencies of LBPs, both populist and classist, or at least the types of concessions and the linkages parties have vis-à-vis unions have changed. These parties vary in the extent to which they have successfully appealed to the growing middle classes and informal workers as electoral constituencies. The decline of traditional parties as a group can be seen in their vote share in elections to the lower house in the national legislature. For the comparison set of countries in *Shaping the Political Arena*, a dramatic decline of the traditional parties occurred in the six cases without fractionalized party systems (see Figure 36.1). Early in the 1980s the vote share of the two top parties (or the single party in Mexico) was between 70 and 90 percent; by the late 1990s this share had declined dramatically, typically below a majority.⁶ In the fractionalized, multi-party systems of Brazil and Chile, the top two parties never achieved a large combined vote share and did not witness similar decline.

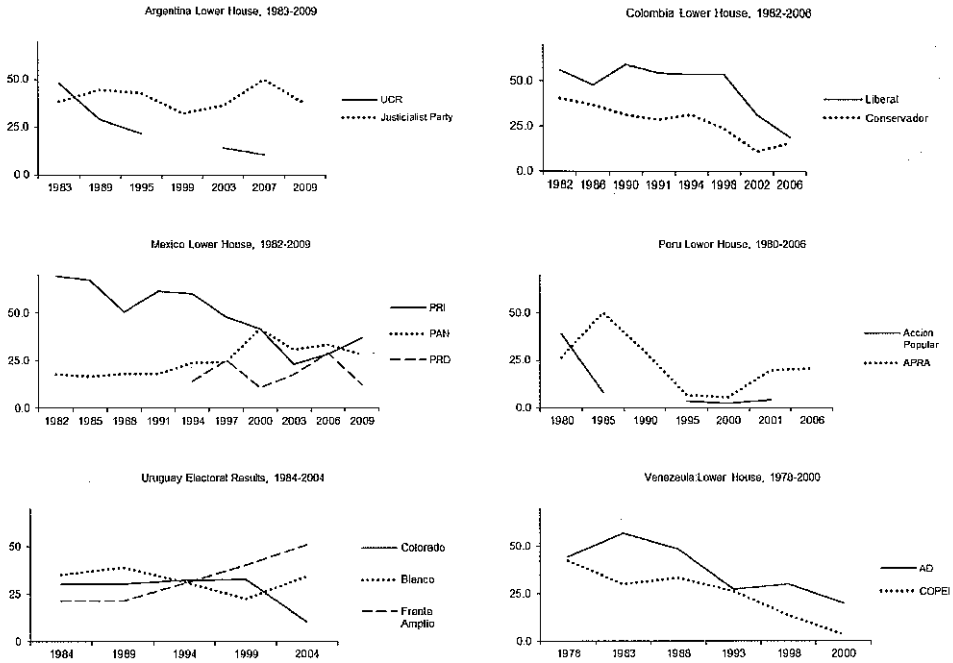
With the decline of the traditional parties the region has witnessed a rise of the partisan left and an increasing personalization in the party system. By the late 2000s, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, and Venezuela all had presidents representing various shades of the left, while in Mexico a leftist presidential candidate mounted a serious challenge (see Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010; Levitsky and Roberts forthcoming). The ascendancy of the left is remarkable in light of the prior period when the election of leftist presidents provoked military interventions. Personalistic parties have also tended to move into the void created by the decline of traditional parties, as both ex-presidents and political newcomers have become presidential candidates independent of party organizations and reliant on their own brand (Corrales 2008).

Interest Regime Change

The popular interest regime has also shown a sharp discontinuity; specifically, the popular interest regime has shifted from the UP-Hub to the Associational Network, or A-Net. The change in economic model signaled a political reversal for unions as organizations of popular representation, and they no longer occupy the central, privileged position that they used to. At the same time popular associations have proliferated and potentially provide informal workers with an unprecedented array of organizations to advance diverse popular interests. The popular interest regime is composed of what Evans (2010) has called a “concatenated diversity” of loosely and flatly linked organizational forms, with different capacities, interests and strategies.

The A-Net has a number of traits that set it apart from the UP-Hub. First, then, the

Non-Fractionalized Party Systems



Fractionalized Party Systems

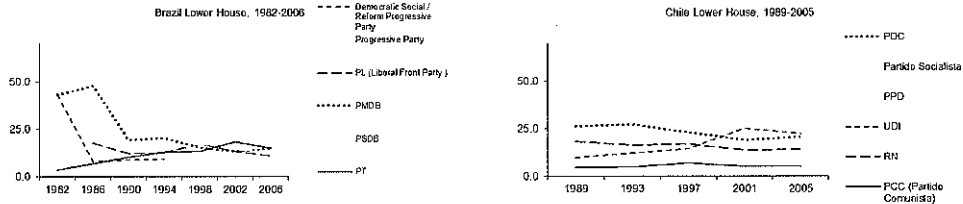


Figure 36.1 Traditional Party Decline. Source: Georgetown Electoral Systems for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru; Luna (2010) citing www.elecciones.gov.cl for Chile; Luna (2007) citing Buquet 2005 for Uruguay Roberts (forthcoming) citing *Consejo Nacional Electoral, Gobierno de Venezuela* for Venezuela.

nature of the “base organization” of the popular interest regime has changed, with a decline in the salience of unions and a rise in a multiplicity of associations organized around consumption-related issues (e.g., neighborhood, food distribution, health, education, housing), as well as associations of peasants and of rural workers. Table 36.1 shows the relative decline in union density. Second, parties are less central and have grown more distant to popular organizations, both to associations, many of which have no partisan links, and often to unions as party strategies and policy orientations have shifted. Third, the A-Net has the horizontal structure of a network rather than the more vertical, hierarchical structure of the UP-Hub, given that union structure tends to culminate in a national, peak-association.

Table 36.1 Union Density Before and After Neoliberal Reform (percent of total labor force unionized)

	<i>Pre Reform (1980)*</i>	<i>Post Reform (1995)</i>	<i>Percentage Point Difference</i>	<i>Percentage Difference</i>
Argentina	44.7	22.3	-22.4	-50.1
Brazil	13.6	23.8	+10.2	+75.0
Chile	35.0	12.7	-22.3	-63.7
Colombia	9.2	5.9	-3.3	-35.9
Mexico	24.1	22.4	-1.7	-7.1
Peru	23.0	5.7	-17.3	-75.2
Uruguay	20.9	12.0	-8.9	-42.6
Venezuela	25.2	13.5	-11.7	-46.4

* Because reform in Chile occurred during the military period before 1980, the pre-reform date is 1973, the year of the military coup.

Source: Roberts (forthcoming)

This difference in the structure of the A-Net reflects both (1) the decline in union centrality (the move away from a “hub” in the interest regime in the aggregate) and (2) the fact that the greater variety of active popular organizations scale and coordinate much less than unions and generally have the fluid interactions of a network.

Interpreting the Changes

With the change in party system and interest regime, some analysts have seen the contemporary period in terms of a new critical juncture. Two approaches to identifying a new critical juncture have explicitly or implicitly received attention. These correspond to the two contemporary macro changes in Latin America—and, indeed, in the world. The first examines the challenge of moving to a new neoliberal economic model and argues that the varying experiences in responding to that challenge had an important impact on the party system and unions. The second emphasizes the effects of the third wave of democratization. It focuses on the challenge of incorporating the burgeoning informal sector at a world historic moment of social movement mobilization and civil society activation and under more politically open, democratic institutions. For example, Roberts (2002) and Reygadas and Filgueira (2010) suggest, respectively, that the contemporary period is marked by a “neoliberal critical juncture” or a “second incorporation crisis.” Given these fundamental discontinuities, can one say that a new critical juncture has taken place in Latin American politics?

A critical juncture is not an empirical phenomenon—or even a discontinuity—that “objectively exists” in the world. Rather, a critical juncture is an analytic assertion which involves two components. The first, perhaps more obviously, is that the analyst must assert that some important, common transformation has taken place and must identify the variation in the ways that countries experience it. Analytically, this cross-national variation in the character of their transformation amounts to different “scores” on an independent variable. Second, the analyst must assert that a consequence of this transformation, and corresponding to these scores, is a set of identifiable political structures and organizations that are sticky or that produce a causal sequence or path of change. That is, an analyst must identify systematic variation in a durable outcome in order to posit a critical juncture argument.

On this basis, we argue that it may be premature to employ the analytics of a critical juncture. To be sure, Roberts (2002, forthcoming) has noted a pattern of profound party

system change in countries with LBP; and Collier and Handlin (2009) have noted a change away from the UP-Hub to the A-Net, as well as some cross-national variations in types of A-Nets. Thus, some new trajectories and diversity of outcomes can be detected. However, these analyses are just the initial stages of identifying new patterns in either partial regime. In order to make a critical juncture argument, it is not sufficient to establish a discontinuity, or to argue for the end of a legacy or even a “new beginning.” A critical juncture argument is an assertion about a “founding moment,” in which the analyst must identify what is founded. In terms of the partial regimes of present interest, the challenge is to assert that clearly defined, stable structures have been founded, or that patterns of change have flowed from variation in responses to a common “critical juncture” challenge—and further, to supply the logic or mechanisms that link these patterns to the variation in response to the challenge.

The Ongoing Problem of Popular Representation: Toward a Research Agenda

In approaching such a research program, two questions arise. First, in the 21st century, does it “make sense” to study “popular” representation? This question arises in light of analyses suggesting that class may no longer structure the party system or electoral politics. Second, among the many traits for comparison, how might one conceptualize more aggregate dimensions for comparison at a macro-level? This is a difficult question, and we can only suggest some preliminary dimensions of analysis.

The (De)mobilization of Material Interests

During the 20th century, social class was the dominant cleavage in party politics and structures of interest representation. At the end of the 20th century, however, some analysts challenged the salience of class cleavages in electoral and interest politics. For example, in the contemporary period, some scholars of Western European politics have suggested that post-materialist issues are more salient than material interests, as more prosperous and equal social groups mobilize along rights, cultural, identity, and cross-cutting policy issues (e.g., environmentalism, human rights, democracy, indigenous rights, among others) (Inglehart and Rabier 1986). Despite a parallel literature on economic adjustment to globalization and the issue of retrenchment of social protection, many scholars have argued that “class analysis has grown increasingly inadequate” (Clark and Lipset 1991: 397). In Latin America, Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) similarly suggest that in Chile regime cleavages, which aligned voters into pro- and anti-authoritarian blocs, are more salient than class cleavages, and similar arguments have been made about the regime cleavage that brought the right and left together against the PRI in Mexico. In light of these developments, does it still make sense to analyze “popular” representation, conceived largely in terms of “class” categories or social categories along a materialist dimension?

We suggest that it does; the contemporary period is a profoundly materialist moment in Latin America. With respect to Latin America’s two macro transitions to democracy and markets, mobilization for democracy has all but ended, and the regime-based cleavage has receded. In contrast, issues of poverty and marketization—the restructuring of capital both internationally and nationally, the political salience of economic reform, and the economic role of the state—is an ongoing, long-term and unfolding materialist issue. The recent rise of the left, substantially as a reaction to neoliberal reforms and the incidence of their negative impacts, indicates that materialist issues have not been superseded. To be sure, Latin American identity-based movements have emerged, particularly movements organized around

indigenous and gender rights. However, rather than signaling a shift towards post-material interests, mobilization based on these identities is typically also in part a strategy for advancing material interests. For example, in Bolivia and Ecuador, indigenous mobilization is a means for advancing the interests of the lower-class rural sector and a means for demanding the state's provision of goods and services as much as an expression of cultural identity. The mix of indigenous and materialist strains is also clearly seen in Mexico's Zapatista movement, which dramatically burst into public view on the day that NAFTA went into effect.

Evidence from the *Latinobarómetro* surveys supports the claim that material interests remain salient. When asked "what is the most important problem facing your country?" respondents overwhelmingly identified materialist issues. In the years between 1995 and 2007, "employment" alone was most frequently identified as the most important problem (except in Colombia, where in most years during that period it was surpassed by terrorism). These data are all the more remarkable given that the responses were to an open ended question. Although the indicator shows some volatility and some decline by the mid-2000s, the evidence suggests that public opinion in Latin America places a very high priority on materialist issues (see Table 36.2).

Although material interests remain salient, they may not structure the party system or electoral politics. Rather, the material interests of the popular sector may be strategically demobilized, or they may remain unmobilized by problems of collective action. More systematic comparative analysis remains to be done to explain variation in the priming of materialist or non-materialist cleavages and the incapacity of the lower classes to articulate their interests through the party system and to activate them in the interest regime.

On the one hand, then, material interests of the popular classes may be demobilized actively from above, as part of a political strategy. As Gibson (1996) noted, the core constituency and ideology of parties on the political right provide incentives to prime *non-class* cleavages and to emphasize valence issues in their appeal to voters. For left parties, whether they are in government or opposition is also important. It has been widely noted that the policy constraints on parties, even LBPs, that govern in "neoliberal times" and especially in times of austerity may discourage class mobilization. Quite different may be the incentives of opposition parties and the conditions under which they either radicalize or moderate

Table 36.2 Salience of Material Interests, 1995–2007 (percent of years problem identified as most important in open-ended response)

	<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Chile</i>	<i>Colombia</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Peru</i>	<i>Venezuela</i>
Employment*	91.7	75.0	66.7	27.3	66.7	100.0	41.7
Low Salaries			8.3				
Inflation					8.3		8.3
Education			8.3				33.3
Health		16.7					
Corruption	8.3	8.3			8.3		
Crime			16.7		16.7		16.7
Terrorism				72.7			
Total Number of Year Observations	12	12	12	11	12	12	12

*Includes unemployment and employment instability

Source: *Latinobarómetro* (1995–1998, 2000–2007)

their appeals in vote-maximizing strategies. Understanding the incentives that political entrepreneurs face regarding the mobilization of lower-class interests, the formation of cross-class alliances, and the framing of policy debates in terms of class appeals in the contemporary period thus remains an important item on the research agenda.

On the other hand, the demobilization of material interests of the popular classes may result from problems of collective action from below. Constructing common interests and identities across fragmented groups, and scaling or networking atomized, local associations are both serious challenges to coordinating collective action. The new economic model, the attendant relative decline of unions, and the often accelerated process of informalization has exacerbated a number of working-class divides—such as wage employees and own-account workers, formal/insider and informal/outsider workers, public and private-sector workers, those in tradables and those in nontradables. Further, as the base unit of organization in the interest regime has shifted from unions to associations, the collective action problem of scaling up across organizations has increased, since associations are diverse, are often territorially based, and lack organic linkages to parties, which could serve as brokers. Future research should consider class (de)mobilization as a process both from above and from below.

Macro Comparative Analysis

This section begins to lay out an agenda for macro-level research on structures of popular interest representation based on the two partial regimes of state-society intermediation, the interest regime and the party system, which may serve as the building blocks of analysis. The analytic challenge is to conceptualize interesting dimensions of popular representation rooted in a cross-national comparison of these partial regimes and their inter-relationship. The additional task is to derive propositions that explain variation in country “scores” and/or explore outcomes such as the policy process. We cannot here definitively identify the dimensions for such an analysis but begin by identifying, as points of departure, some of the less aggregated themes in the existing literature.

Both individual parties and party systems are central to any macro level study of popular representation, and extant studies focus on a number of traits. The task is to aggregate them conceptually into a macro party-system dimension of variation. The types of linkages parties establish with voters have become a major topic of analysis, and many studies have paid particular attention to those that are clientelistic, programmatic, or personality based (Stokes 2005; Roberts 1995; Kitschelt et al. 2010). Organizational linkages, however, should not be ignored. A variety of types of linkages, exchanges, and perhaps dependencies exist between different types of parties and types of organizations. These linkages may be important for parties despite the trend toward more “capital-intensive” campaigning and catch-all, media-based vote-getting strategies, based on more individual, instrumental, and contingent linkages with citizens (Boas 2010).

At the level of the party system, several traits are relevant for studying popular representation. Linkage types may be variously distributed across parties, and the nature of intermediation and representation of party systems as a whole may vary accordingly. While electoral volatility has received substantial attention, the European literature reminds us that one should analyze volatility both within and across party blocs of the right, left, and center (Bartolini and Mair 1990). This question raises yet another: the degree to which the party system is a vehicle for expressing or subordinating class interests and to which lower-class interests are expressed by a governing coalition. In examining the distribution of class support among the parties and the degree to which party systems as a whole are

class-based, analyses traditionally look at the distribution of lower-class support. It would also be interesting to look at the distribution of upper-class voting as an alternate indicator. The analytical task, however, is to conceptualize the ways key dimensions of representation may combine to produce overall types of party systems.

Studies of the interest regime remain incipient and disaggregated, often restricted to a limited number of associations, often in a few neighborhoods, and rarely reaching the macro level of "regime." Broader gauged comparisons, at the municipal, national, and cross-national levels, are necessary for building a macro analysis. With the shift to the A-Net, a large variety of urban and rural associations are now prominent in the popular interest regime, and the empirical task of aggregation may be daunting. Further, to some degree unionism is also more diverse with the formation of dissident labor confederations more oriented toward social movement unionism and with ties to community-based association.

Again, analysis should not only proceed at the associational level but also conceptualize ways to aggregate up to the broader interest regime. Scholars have distinguished types of associations, the most common being between professionalized NGOs and more community-based, participatory associations; however more conceptual and empirical work could lay a better basis for developing typologies, perhaps on dimensions such as participation and the nature of relations to the base or "target" population, material resources, human capital, expertise, and strategies of action. Studies should also explore the collective action problems faced by different types of associations, both to attract and sustain grass-roots participation and to coordinate across associations. Collier and Handlin (2009) have suggested that these collective action problems may be related to two sets of factors: (1) traits of associations and the nature of the demands they make and (2) state policy towards both associations and the substantive areas associations engage. However, much empirical work is needed to pursue these issues. It is important to analyze the distinct problems of collective action faced by different societal interests, because these challenges affect their effectiveness and influence within the larger interest regime. Relations and coordination among organizations across both similar and diverse issues and types are also key, as are demand-making activities, including patterns of participation in state-sponsored policy councils.

The interpenetration of the two partial regimes primarily focuses on party-association linkages. Party ties to popular associations will not replicate the more organic—or cooperative—relations parties traditionally had with unions, given the fluid organization of the A-Net, but it is nevertheless essential to understand the variety of party-association linkages that have emerged among different types of parties and different types of associations. The panoply of ties is the result of interacting incentives on both sides. On the organizational side, questions include: Under what conditions do organizations make demands for discretionary, distributive goods, and under what conditions do they demand rule-based, programmatic benefits? When do organizations pursue these demands through parties, and when do they opt for extra-partisan strategies?

The goal is to aggregate these themes to derive conceptual dimensions that reveal interesting variation in the intermediation and hence representation of popular interests at the macro level. Collier and Handlin (2009) have suggested some dimensions for analysis and some emergent cross-national differences, though others may prove fruitful. The dimension of *autonomy* from the state, well analyzed for unions in the UP-Hub, is as important for the A-Net, though it is more complex given the decentralized and more heterogeneous nature of the A-Net. Another dimension is the level and nature of *coordination* across the two partial regimes, as well as the scaling of more diverse associations through a network, rather than a

confederated structure of more similar organizations, as in the UP-Hub. Access to the state and to policy making remains important, and in the current period it has come to include access through participatory state institutions. The relations popular organizations have to political parties—and to political leaders—are relevant to all these dimensions, as these ties can either compromise autonomy from the state or bolster demand making, provide access to the state and policy-making venues or divert attention from programmatic aims through clientelistic distributions, and function to broker cross-organizational coordination and scaling or act to compartmentalize types of associations.

Assessing these macro dimensions requires an approach to aggregation that must occur across the wide variety of popular interest organizations, popular constituencies, and interests, as well as across parties. An equally tricky task is to assess the relative weight of diverse popular-sector interests compared with opposing interests. Our concern with structures of interest intermediation focuses on their role in popular representation, but representation may be a relative or relational concept. Perhaps the best approach to this thorny issue may be policy-making studies. A focus on the policy process is one approach for assessing the comparative “weights” and interactions of opposing interests and understanding the mechanisms of representation at different sites and stages of policy formation and implementation.

Since the wave of democratization in Latin America in the 1980s, much of the political science literature has focused attention on many topics pertinent to popular representation. Relevant studies have examined properties of the electoral system, the nature of political parties, the incentives of politicians qua representatives as they also pursue careers, “new” social movements and popular organizing, the politics of economic reform, new social policies, participatory institutions, and the new left. This research, which has been accumulating for about three decades, has generated rich, descriptive analysis and insights that have contributed to theory building. It is now time to push the agenda of popular representation forward by aggregating these topics and adopting a more macro perspective and one that is comparative, both historically and cross-nationally. The party system and interest regime are central structures of interest intermediation and are key foci for advancing this agenda. Aggregation at this level is conceptually and empirically difficult; but it a fascinating challenge.

Notes

- 1 The following is based on the analysis of Collier and Collier (1991).
- 2 Sometimes a two-party system also resulted as a holdover, where the union movement became electorally mobilized by the traditional 19th-century liberal party that confronted the traditional conservative party, as in Colombia and Uruguay.
- 3 In this chapter, the discussion of the popular interest regime is based on the analysis of Collier and Handlin (2009).
- 4 In Argentina and Peru the military banned populist parties, prohibiting them from occupying the presidency.
- 5 It may be noted that though the military regimes of the c.1970s often sought to transform the party system, they generally failed in this mission. In most cases, the post-military party systems looked remarkably like those preceding military rule. The identity of the parties changed most in Brazil, though a fractionalized multi-party system remained, despite original military intentions.
- 6 In Uruguay, only one of the two traditional parties experienced a steep decline. In Argentina, only the historically smaller UCR declined, while the PJ has remained strong.

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