

## Latin America's Pivotal Electoral Year

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Over the thirteen months following 27 November 2005 the vast majority of Latin Americans elect their presidents, and in most cases, their congresses. Twelve nations in the hemisphere hold presidential elections, including all of the larger countries except Argentina. The last scheduled elections will be Venezuela in December, where Hugo Chávez will likely be re-elected. Chávez has called on Latin Americans to abandon neoliberalism, which in theory they could do in this year's round of elections.

The December victory of Evo Morales, an Aymara Indian leading Bolivia's Movimiento a Socialismo (MAS), has encouraged the enthusiasts for change and produced jitters among those worried that these elections could lead to a departure from the market-based model advocated by Washington. However, if they carefully assess the situation, the left will likely find itself frustrated and the right will find that it has over-reacted about the actual degree of change that will come this year, because with some exceptions, voters are not likely to fundamentally alter the economic direction of the continent.

Even if neoliberalism will likely remain the prevailing economic strategy in Latin America, much discontent remains with democracy as practiced in the region—not that democracy faces imminent collapse continent-wide, for most Latin Americans reject authoritarianism. However, citizens seem able to separate out their strong preference for democracy from their unhappiness with how those currently in power are leading them or with how political institutions function in their societies. Those discontents easily could be seized upon by populists like Chávez. Whether they will become the bases of a new populism depends on the institutional strengths of individual nations' party systems, on whether incumbents can seek re-election, and on the themes the main contestants in these crucial elections choose to make their campaign emphases. Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil seem likely to remain more or less on their current paths. Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador, already struggling with governability, could easily change direction.

**Table 1**  
**Latin American Presidential Elections**  
**November 2005-December 2006**

Nation	Presidential Election Date	Simultaneous Congressional Elections?	Incumbent Eligible?	Majority Runoff? (First Round Threshold)	Term Length (years)
Honduras	27 Nov 2005	Yes	No	No	4
Chile	11 Dec 2005	Yes	No	Yes (50%)	6
Bolivia	18 Dec 2005	Yes	No	Yes (50%)	5
Haiti	7 Feb 2006	No	No	Yes (50%)	5
Costa Rica	5 Feb 2006	Yes	Yes	Yes (40%)	4
Perú	9 Apr 2006	Yes	No	Yes (50%)	5
Colombia	28 May 2006	Mar 2006	Yes	Yes (50%)	4
México	2 July 2006	Yes	No	No	6
Brasil	1 Oct 2006	Yes	Yes	Yes (50%)	4
Ecuador	15 Oct 2006	Yes	No	Yes (45% + 10% margin)	4
Nicaragua	5 Nov 2006	Yes	No	Yes (40% or 35% + 5%)	5
Venezuela	3 Dec 2006	Dec 2005	Yes	No	6

United Nations Development Programme, *Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy*, Statistical Compendium (New York: UNDP, 2005), pp. 60-2; "Redrawing the Political Map," *Economist*, November 24, 2005.

### **The Mood of Latin American Electorates**

Evidence from the 2005 Latinobarómetro indicates that Latin Americans favor democracy and the market while expressing frustration with how democracy and the market have worked in their particular societies. They harbor deep distrust of politicians and of the democratic institutions set up to provide them representation.

**Table 2**  
**Attitudes about the Market and Democracy in Countries Holding Elections**

	<i>Preference for Market</i>	<i>Satisfaction with Market</i>	<i>No Military Rule</i>	<i>Satisfaction with Democracy</i>
Bolivia	64	21	59	24
Brazil	65	34	56	22
Chile	62	41	65	43
Colombia	74	32	58	29
Costa Rica	64	25	94	39
Ecuador	59	14	51	14
Honduras	65	22	48	26
México	73	23	63	24
Nicaragua	69	23	70	18
Peru	64	12	48	13
Venezuela	66	48	66	56
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>

*Informe Latinobarómetro 2005*, <http://www.latinobarometro.org/uploads/media/2005.pdf>.

Questions asked: 1. ¿Está Ud. muy de acuerdo, de acuerdo, en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones? La economía de mercado es el único sistema con el que (país) puede llegar a ser desarrollado. 2. En general, ¿Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho y más bien satisfecho; no muy satisfecho y nada satisfecho con el funcionamiento de la economía de mercado en (país)? 3. ¿Apoyaría Ud. un gobierno militar en reemplazo del gobierno democrático, si las cosas se ponen muy difíciles, o no apoyaría Ud. en ninguna circunstancia un gobierno militar? 4. En general, ¿Diría Ud. que está muy satisfecho, más bien satisfecho, no muy satisfecho o nada satisfecho con el funcionamiento de la democracia en (país)?

Chávez may be calling for rejection of neoliberal development strategies, but polling evidence suggests Latin Americans do not really envisage an alternative to the market economy. As Kurt Weyland argues, having lived through one traumatic economic restructuring within the past two decades, ordinary citizens are not eager to repeat the experience. Nor do they see opposition politicians offering real alternatives.

However, Latin Americans are unhappy with their current economic situation. They are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the operation of the market economy in their own countries and pessimistic about future economic performance. Specifically, Latin Americans believe that their leaders have mishandled privatization and that the privatization of public services has been a disaster. Moreover, a substantial majority of Latin Americans worry about unemployment. Respondents who are dissatisfied with the economic situation are making reasonable, rational conclusions, not simply being deceived into such conclusions by populists like Chávez, Morales, and their allies. Conditions should cause Latin Americans to question the management of their economies.

Attitudes about democracy mirror those about the market. Latin Americans strongly prefer democracy to its alternatives but they express dissatisfaction with the practice of democracy. When asked by the Latinobarómetro whether they would consider a military government, the vast majority of Latin Americans responded no, and they believe that for their country to be developed, it must be a democracy. Regime preferences do vary. Less than a majority of Peruvians and Hondurans and barely a majority of Ecuadorians reject the possibility of military government. Nearly all Costa Ricans reject military rule, in contrast, and about two-thirds of Chileans, Venezuelans, and Mexicans agree.

Satisfaction with democracy is another matter, however. Even the firmly democratic Costa Ricans are unhappy with the way democracy is practiced in their country, and fewer than one in five Nicaraguans, Peruvians, and Ecuadorians are satisfied with the democratic performance of their regimes. With some exceptions, satisfaction with democracy parallels satisfaction with the market's performance. Again, in countries that have struggled economically high levels of dissatisfaction with democracy prevail.

Where is the problem with democracy, in the public's mind? When Latin Americans are asked to rate their degree of trust in national institutions, legislatures and the political parties score very low. Less than one in five Latin Americans express any trust in political parties and less than three in ten trust the national congress. Thus the most important institutions of representation rank below such objectively problematic institutions as the judiciary and the police in the esteem of Latin Americans.

As most Latin Americans confront electoral contests this year, such low levels of confidence in key representative institutions like political parties and congress pose dilemmas for Latin American democracy. Indeed, the character of the party system in each nation undergoing elections this year will play perhaps the most important role in shaping the degree of continuity between the government leaving power (or standing for reelection) and that coming into power after the election. To see how this year's contests are likely to turn out, we must take into account not only the public mood, but how those opinions interact with a country's party system.

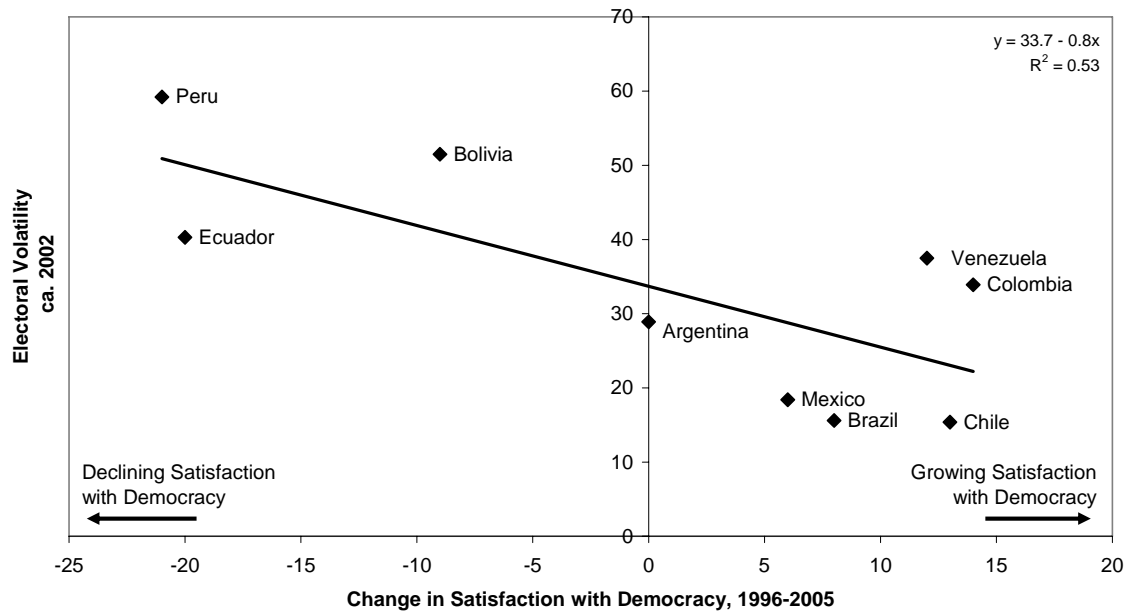
### **Party Systems and Representation**

Scholars of Latin American party systems have emphasized that countries in the region vary dramatically in the extent to which their party systems are institutionalized, a concept that takes into account electoral volatility and the longevity of parties. Among those nations holding elections, we can contrast stable, institutionalized party systems such as Chile's, Costa Rica's, or arguably Mexico's to the highly changeable party systems of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Where incumbents cannot run for reelection and party systems are institutionalized, we can expect reasonably predictable transitions in which, even if the winning candidate promises social or economic change, actual policy changes will be moderate and probably tempered by a congress in which little alteration in party representation is likely. The unstable party systems, however, could yield unexpected winners in presidential elections and more pronounced policy change thereafter.

We can observe a clear connection between party system stability and attitudes toward democracy. In Figure 1 I plot the relationship between electoral volatility in recent elections with the change in satisfaction with democracy over the past decade. This chart shows that the larger Latin American countries with highly volatile party systems have experienced the greatest decline in satisfaction with democracy since the Latinobarómetro began tracking the concept. This relationship surely goes in both directions. In volatile party systems, citizens become frustrated with democracy and cynical about the parties' capacities to represent them. At the same time, unhappy voters likely reach out to new parties and anti-party candidates, increasing the instability of their party systems. In either event, the capacity of the party system to offer stable representation of interests over time suffers from electoral volatility.

**Figure 1**

**Electoral Volatility and Change in Satisfaction with Democracy**



Electoral volatility also reflects the electorate's quest to find better representation, especially in those countries with large indigenous populations. The dissatisfaction with democracy and lack of commitment to democracy as a way of life in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru results not only from respondents' economic evaluations. Frustration in those societies owes much to indigenous peoples' sense that they have not been fully included in the "democracy" in which they live and that those countries' party systems have not represented them. The emergence of Morales's MAS and Pachakutik in Ecuador may begin to address this representation deficit, but in the short term it will only increase the electoral volatility of those nations as new party systems emerge. At the same time, we must recognize that previous party systems have collapsed in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru,

so we should see the emergence of new parties with deeper roots in society than the anti-party, personalist vehicles of politicians like Alberto Fujimori as a positive development.

## **Twelve Presidential Contests**

Whether voters act on their frustrations about the gap between the promise of democracy and its reality depends on whether incumbents can run, on whether party systems effectively channel and represent opinion, and on whether new parties can emerge in the inchoate party systems. This year's presidential contests include three where incumbents can and will run, five where incumbents cannot run but the party systems are relatively stable, and four where incumbents are not eligible and party systems have collapsed.

**Incumbent candidates.** Where incumbents can run, the dynamics of presidential contests differ dramatically from places where no one enjoys incumbency. Races with incumbents are an opportunity for voters to select their preferred candidate, but also a referendum on the incumbent's governance. Incumbents enjoy key advantages over their rivals for power—the attention of the media and name recognition, greater ability to control the news agenda, and often state resources to help finance campaigns. Unless dissatisfaction with an incumbent is severe, rivals cannot expect to win.

In Colombia, President Álvaro Uribe convinced the Colombian congress to pass a constitutional amendment allowing reelection—previously not permitted under the 1991 constitution. Once a Liberal Party member, Uribe ran as an independent in 2002 and won handily. He has governed with the support of Conservative and many Liberal (uribista) members of congress, although he has been at odds with his former party's leadership (oficialistas). His government has followed moderate neoliberal policies but is best known for its hard-line approach to the long struggle with FARC and ELN guerrillas and for its support of Plan Colombia, the U.S. anti-narcotics policy. Washington likes to contrast Uribe to Chávez and will be pleased if Uribe wins in May, as polls suggest he will. However, before then, in March, Colombian voters elect a new congress, where increasing fragmentation of the party system—once among Latin America's most stable—could make governability a challenge in Uribe's second term.

Given the Venezuelan opposition's decision not to contest the December 2005 legislative contests and his high approval ratings, Chávez should win easily when he faces the voters in December 2006. High oil prices and a Bush administration that insists on vilifying him make Chávez's reelection bid even stronger. Surely there exist profound divisions in Venezuelan society and aspects of Chávez's rule are problematic from the perspective of democratic theory, but a majority of Venezuelans support him as he pursues his populist strategies. Chávez has not created an effective party to institutionalize his electoral advantages, but he does count on a myriad of civic associations committed to chavismo, which all but guarantee reelection this year.

How threatening to the continent's prevailing neoliberalism Chávez is can be debated. Venezuela never went far along the path of neoliberal reform in the 1990s, so he is hardly turning back from neoliberalism in the way that other Latin American

countries would have to do if they followed his exhortations. Surging prices for oil and foreign borrowing finance the social programs he has implemented. Others can hardly emulate him, which Washington ought to appreciate by simply ignoring Chávez rather than continuing to provoke conflict in which he can appear as David to Bush's Goliath.

The incumbent facing the strongest challenge this year is Brazil's Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva. Critics often regard Brazil's party system as chaotic, but it has structured presidential choices reasonably predictably since 1994. This year is likely to be the same, although who will be Lula's main challenger has yet to be determined. The losing candidate in 2002, José Serra of the Social Democratic Party (PSDB), now São Paulo mayor, should be Lula's strongest rival, and some early polls have suggested Serra could defeat Lula, partly due to corruption scandals in Lula's Workers' Party. Whether the strongest opposition parties, the Party of the Liberal Front and the PSDB itself, will back Serra remains to be determined. The complexity of a party system in which four major parties compete but fifteen others take congressional seats means that resolving who will contend against Lula in a run-off election may take a long time to ultimately decide. However, the likelihood of a run-off with Lula as one candidate facing an opponent backed by the other major parties is very high—every election since 1990 has featured Lula running against a more conservative candidate, and this one will too. In congress, that party system, with eight or more effective parties, presents enormous challenges to whoever becomes president, as Lula has already learned.

**Stable party systems without incumbent candidates.** Where party systems are relatively stable, even change of presidential leadership is unlikely to dramatically alter the current direction of politics and development policy. This electoral year opened with Honduran voters electing José Manuel Zelaya of the centre-right Liberal Party by a three-point margin over Porfirio Lobo Sosa of the even-more-conservative governing National Party. Honduras's two-party system, the most stable in the region, offers little contrast on policy issues between the parties, and leftist candidates take very few votes. Zelaya had promised to eliminate government corruption while Lobo Sosa took a tougher line on law-and-order issues. Both advocate free trade with the U.S. Hence, Honduran politics will probably change little under Zelaya's presidency.

Also completed is Chile's presidential election, where Michelle Brachelet won the Concertación's fourth consecutive race since 1989. Predictably, the center-left Concertación put forward a united front, with Christian Democrat Soledad Alvarado withdrawing from the race for the Concertación nomination in favor of Socialist Brachelet so that the coalition would be more likely to defeat the two rightist candidates, Joaquín Lavín of the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and Sebastián Piñera of Renovación Nacional (RN), who could not agree to terms for a presidential primary for the Alianza por Chile coalition. The Alianza did present a joint congressional list, but the Concertación won a majority of seats in both houses, putting Brachelet in a strong position legislatively. While many commentators have cited Ricardo Lagos's presidency and Brachelet's victory as evidence of a move to the left, both have led a coalition in which the PDC is the largest party and hardly of the left. Lagos did not and Brachelet is unlikely to divert Chile from its market-based development strategy even if they have been more attentive to social policy concerns than competing leaders of the right would

have been. They have, of course, been more assertive with the aging Pinochet on human rights issues, actions that should consolidate Chilean democracy, not weaken it.

The once highly stable two-party Costa Rican party system has changed significantly in the past five years. The results of the 2002 presidential elections hinted that Costa Ricans were seeking alternatives to the social democratic National Liberation Party (PLN) and the more conservative Social Christian Party. In 2002, Otto Solís of the Citizen's Action Party came in third with more than 26 percent of the vote, forcing Costa Rica to hold its first runoff election in history. However, in the February election, popular former president Oscar Arias, running for the PLN, barely defeated Solís in a highly contested election even though pre-election polling showed that he enjoyed a commanding margin over Solís. Solís opposed the Central American Free Trade Agreement, while Arias supported it. Although the Arias victory should not change the direction of public policy in Costa Rica significantly, Costa Rican voters have indicated their discomfort with the political class and the direction of public policy it has led.

In Nicaragua, the 1979 revolution has structured electoral competition between the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) and its opposition since the first post-revolutionary election in 1984. Daniel Ortega has stood as the FSLN candidate in each election, winning the controversial 1984 race but losing each time since then. He will likely run for the FSLN again in November 2006. Scandal has marked the presidencies of former president Arnaldo Alemán and current president Enrique Bolaños, both of the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC), at least partially explaining the extreme public dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Nicaragua. Because the FSLN and the PLC are closely matched and the PLC's record has been mediocre, either party could take the election.

Given the momentous changes in Mexican politics over the past twenty years, one might be cautious about describing Mexico's party system as relatively stable. However, three distinct parties have emerged, the PRD on the left, the PAN in the center-right, and the PRI, still a party of the center, or at least around which Mexican politics revolves. Vicente Fox's government has made little progress on most policy fronts during its first five years in office, partly due to political ineptness and partly because it simply did not control the congress, where the opposition parties—including now the PRI—have taken advantage of the PAN's minority status to engage in partisan maneuvering.

Mexican voters will face some clear choices on election day: the PRI's Roberto Madrazo has promised to modernize his party but has provoked a serious internal schism through the use of old-time tactics; the PRD's Manuel Andrés López Obrador offers populist-type solutions to years of austerity; and the PAN's Felipe Calderón does not hail from Fox's neopanista, neoliberal wing of his party. However, commentators can easily overstate the programmatic differences among these candidates and their parties and, in any event, none will likely be able to change the direction of Mexican public policy dramatically. NAFTA binds Mexico to the neoliberal agenda and significant parts of Mexican society have benefited from NAFTA. Moreover, none of these candidates will bring a majority of congress in on his coattails, so partisan conflict will likely constrain



major policy change in the next three years, at least. Thus inertia will keep Mexico on the neoliberal track for the foreseeable future.

**Unstable party systems without incumbent candidates.** Latin America's greatest change may come in the Andean nations where the party systems are now highly unstable. Here both the neoliberal model and democracy itself have their lowest levels of public support, reflecting great dissatisfaction with how the economy and the political system have operated. Here too indigenous populations have made their most pronounced appearance on the political stage, demanding fairer representation. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru have become the least governable nations of the hemisphere.

Bolivia's party system was long dominated by the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), but since democracy was restored in 1980, no president has had majority backing in the congress. That earlier party system has collapsed, with the MNR repudiated. However, 2005's election may have established a new party system in which indigenous peoples have an institutional representative in the form of the MAS.

Morales's MAS grew out of a social movement of coca workers and indigenous peasants. His message of economic nationalism, particularly regarding development of Bolivia's extensive natural gas resources; of defiance of the U.S., especially on narcotics policy; and of better representation for the indigenous people who backed his party won him an unexpectedly easy victory. His neoliberal opponent, former interim president Jorge Quiroga, ran for the center-right Poder Democrático y Social Party (PODEMOS), another new organization that won pluralities in Santa Cruz and other eastern, lowlands provinces rich with natural gas deposits. Because Morales and MAS took an absolute majority (54% of the vote and 72 of 130 seats in the Chamber of Deputies), they are in a commanding position to dramatically reorient Bolivian politics, even though PODEMOS holds regional strengths. Because MAS took only 12 of 27 senate seats, however, Morales will have to negotiate with his opponents to call a new constituent assembly to write a new constitution to more effectively incorporate indigenous Bolivians into the political system on terms that respect their cultural autonomy.

While Morales has trumpeted his friendships with Fidel Castro and Chávez, neither can offer him much beyond symbolic support. Even potential allies like Lula are wary of him—Brazil's Petrobras has major interests in Bolivia's gas fields that are likely to outweigh ideological sympathies. Hence, as he has approached the presidency, Morales has toned down some of the anti-business rhetoric that marked his campaign. Bolivian society remains deeply divided, much as Venezuela has been since Chávez came to power. This election suggests that the divisions between Morales supporters and his opponents may be forming up into a new party system.

As in Bolivia, Peru's party system collapsed over the past two decades. The incapacity of formerly dominant parties to adequately represent the poor and the indigenous allowed neopopulists Fujimori and Alejandro Toledo to sweep into office on anti-incumbent platforms in 1990 and 2001. Neither Fujimori nor Toledo created effective parties to incorporate the social groups that backed them into permanent political organizations, however. When Peruvian voters go to the polls on April 9 they

will find former presidents Alan García of APRA and Valentín Paniagua of Alianza Popular on the ballot, but they are more likely to vote for either Lourdes Flores of the center-right Unidad Nacional, the core of which is the Popular Christian Party, or Ollanta Humala of the Etnocacerista Movement, running for the Peruvian Nationalist Party.

Humala's popularity has surged lately, causing observers to note the similarity of conditions between this election and 1990's, in which the then-unknown Fujimori came to power. Run-off rules for presidential elections combined with repudiation of the older parties allows new contenders, especially anti-system candidates, to emerge suddenly, which appears to be happening again, making the April elections highly unpredictable. Should he win, Humala would seem to be a likely ally of Chávez and Morales, but observers have noted that although he is gaining the support primarily of voters on the left and in regions where the indigenous population is concentrated, the candidate expresses a mix of left-wing, nationalist, and authoritarian ideas, along with a pledge to ethnic autonomy. He is the classic anti-system candidate in a society with a large population that is indigenous and alienated from the traditional parties.

Likewise, Ecuador's recent political instability—with seven presidents in eight years—and its fragmented party system make predicting a winner in its October election difficult. In 2002, the eventual winner, Lucio Gutiérrez—best known for his involvement in a 2000 coup—took but 20 percent of the vote on the first ballot. Currently, socialist León Roldós Aguilera and Guayaquil mayor Jaime Nebot of the Christian Social Party present the strongest candidacies to succeed interim president Alfredo Palacio, who took power when congress removed Gutiérrez in April 2005 after massive street protests by Gutiérrez's former indigenous supporters. Gutiérrez had done an about-face, running as a populist but then seeking to implement severe fiscal discipline, to the ire of his former supporters. Indigenous political organizations—particularly Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Pachakutik Multicultural Movement (PK)—will likely play a significant role 2006, as they did in electing Gutiérrez four years ago and as they did in forcing presidential removals in 1997, 2000, and 2005. The PK has not yet declared for a candidate, but Roldós or Rafael Correa, another critic of neoliberalism, are most likely to get their support. Whoever wins is very unlikely to carry a majority into congress, a dilemma that stymied Gutiérrez and contributed to the autocratic actions—including dissolving the supreme court and replacing it with a new one—that led to his eventual removal. Hence, governability is likely to remain the foremost issue in Ecuador for whoever becomes president.

Finally, Haiti's elections were postponed four times as the interim government struggled to put all of the pre-electoral preparations in order, most importantly, registering the electorate. In the end, former president René Préval, an ally of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, led in the first round election finally held on 7 February, but failed to get the requisite 50 percent needed to be declared elected on the first round. However, protests by Préval's supporters forced the hands of Haiti's electoral authorities, who declared him elected without holding the second round elections. As this decision suggests, Haiti's political system seems likely to continue to hover in the realm where the legal order and actual exercise of political power have little connection.

## **A Pivotal Electoral Year?**

Progressive critics of neoliberalism and Washington's influence in Latin America are trumpeting the prospect of a left-ward tilt among the region's governments as the result of this electoral cycle. More conservative observers and the Bush administration itself express alarm that the left could come to power in so many Latin American nations at once. Neither side is likely to find its dreams or its nightmares acted out in 2006 and in the four-to-six years in which those presidents elected this year will govern. More conservative candidates have a good opportunity to win in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, among the larger countries, as well as in Honduras and Nicaragua. Costa Ricans elected an experienced and respected former president, albeit by a very narrow margin. Even if center-left candidates win in Brazil and Mexico as Brachelet did in Chile, the overall direction of those societies will remain much the same as in the recent past because the congress will not change in profound ways. In presidential systems, executives are limited by what legislators are willing to do. In systems that do not produce governing majorities for the president's party, he or she is forced to negotiate all change. Only where the fragmentation of party systems is such that populists think they can use their personal appeal to rule without regard for constitutional norms is rapid change likely in Latin America today.

The most significant change likely to come about because of these elections will take place in the Andean nations with the largest indigenous populations—Bolivia, Ecuador, and perhaps Peru. Here dissatisfaction with how the political system has worked and about how the market economy has failed to deliver its promises for the poor is the most profound. Here also the party system has failed to provide adequate representation for the majority of citizens. Hence, here societies have been largely ungovernable over the last decade. Direct struggle via street demonstrations is a familiar sight. Presidents have been removed or forced to resign because of their failures to meet campaign promises and revelations of corruption. The electorate is angry in these countries and it invites populist politicians to ride to power on that anger. The most important change that will likely result from this populism, however, is a long-needed improvement in the political position of indigenous peoples in those countries. Populist politicians may also speak loudly of the need to abandon neoliberalism, but economic conditions for all but the oil-rich Chávez will not allow much change in their economic strategies.