# Who Participates Politically in Latin America:

# Institutions, Resources, and Inequality

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Latin American nations have had two decades and more since they restored democracy to rebuild—in some cases build for the first time—democratic patterns of political participation. Many of the democracies that were overthrown in the 1960s and 1970s were known for robust political activity, so much so that the military intervened to end democracy in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay because officers and their political allies felt threatened by popular participation (O'Donnell 1979; Linz and Stepan 1978; Collier 1979). In contrast, since the return of democracy, many have lamented what they see as an anemic volume of political involvement by ordinary citizens (e.g., on Chile, Oxhorn 1994; Posner 1999, 2008), and hence a poor quality of democracy in the region.

In Robert Dahl's famous formulation (1971), polyarchy's two critical dimensions are contestation—or competition—for power and participation, or the degree to which all citizens somehow have the opportunity to participate in the selection of their rulers and in the policymaking process. Dahl further suggests (1971: 1) that "a key characteristic of a democracy [as distinct from a mere polyarchy] is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals." However, without broad participation from the citizenry, the range of its preferences can hardly be known by those who compete for power via elections nor by legislators and other policymakers once they take office. Hence widespread participation is fundamental if a

competitive political system is going to approach the goal Dahl sets down as the standard by which he would rank the regime as a democracy: "the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all of its citizens." (1971: 2)

Central, then, to assessing the quality of Latin American democracy is a consideration of the volume and range of participatory activities engaged in by the citizenry. How much variation do we see across Latin American countries in terms of voter turnout, campaign activities, community organizing, and protest? Essential to our understanding of how Latin Americans might improve their democratic experience is to know who participates and in what ways. Who tends to stay at home? Who protests? Who takes part in local community projects?

Further, does one's commitment to democratic principles and one's assessment of the society's representative institutions drive one's propensity to take part in political activities? A considerable body of academic literature has explored the degree of satisfaction with democracy and the commitment to democratic norms in newly emerging democracies, including Latin America. But do committed democrats actually participate more intensively in politics than those less dedicated to democratic norms? And are those more satisfied with how democratic institutions work more inclined to participate through those institutions?

The latter query begs a more fundamental question: How does the context of participation shape democratic involvement? Within the region, variations in the institutional and social context provide an opportunity to assess how critical institutional and social differences are in encouraging or discouraging different forms of participatory activity in Latin America's new democracies. Do more open representative institutions

encourage more participation? Does a government more active in social policy raise the stakes of political involvement and thus increase it? Does a context of economic inequality discourage political action?

This paper will attempt first to chart the differences in the volume of political participation across eighteen Latin American countries. To do so I first define a set of modes of democratic participation. I then seek to explain why that participation varies across individuals and countries using the 2005 Latinobarometer and contextual variables that chart differences in representative institutions and the economic and social contexts of the eighteen nations.

**Modes of Democratic Participation**

The literature on political participation has long established that individuals may specialize in different modes of participation (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978 is a classic statement). Dalton's conventional division of these modes includes voting, campaign activity, communal activity, contacting officials about personal matters, and protesting.[1] Different modes of participation have different consequences for democratic performance for they make greater or lesser demands on state authorities in terms of policy output and institutional change. The scope of the intended outcome of these different modes may be collective or highly individual—much of the individual contacting of public officials seeks to acquire individualized responses from those authorities. While voting, campaigning, and protesting generally involve conflict—sometimes high levels of conflict—communal activity, such as organizing to improve local public services, may or may not be conflictual and contacting public officials generally is not. In most places

[1] I draw on Dalton (2008: 32ff) to sketch the characteristics of different modes of democratic participation.

voting requires little individual initiative beyond appearing at the polls on election day. Joining in campaign activity and communal activity requires more effort from participants, but contacting officials takes a great deal of individual initiative and protesting involves risk to one's health or position in society. Finally, voting and contacting necessitate little cooperation with others, while other modes of participation require considerably more collaboration with others.

These different characteristics of participative modes suggest that those Latin Americans likely to take up particular modes would have differing personal attributes. We generally expect that individuals with greater socioeconomic resources—particularly income and education—would be more likely to take on the participatory activities that take more time and disposable income, such as working on campaigns or perhaps establishing individual contacts with persons in positions of authority. We might predict that those for whom the state is essential—such as its employees or those working for parastatal firms—would both have a strong incentive to participate in politics to defend their individual interests and also to have a better understanding of how to participate in such a way as to gain their objectives. We generally anticipate that older persons are more likely to undertake conventional forms of political participation—voting, signing petitions, organizing in the community—because they too tend to have a greater stake in the society and better knowledge about how to participate—gained by experience, if nothing else. Younger individuals we might envisage as more likely to take risks, such as the risks associated with protesting.

Students of political participation have also identified attitudes that support political activity. How do democratic values shape the participation choices of citizens?

Voting is the most basic citizen duty in modern democracies. However, voting requires little individual initiative and in many societies may seem to be little more than a civic obligation. One does not need a strong internal norm favoring democracy to turn out on election day. However, taking on more demanding activities, particularly community organizing, may require a more serious commitment to resolving community needs by organizing those in a neighborhood or village for collective action.

**Data**

Until very recently, students of Latin American political participation have faced severe challenges finding individual-level data from surveys that asked relatively detailed questions about patterns of political activity but that also included items that tap the critical attitudinal, socioeconomic, and demographic variables. Surveys on individual countries provide such evidence, but few studies provide such data from countries across the region. Within the past decade, these deficiencies have been addressed by systematic surveys administered across most of the nations of the hemisphere on an annual or biennial basis. The data for this study come from the 2005 Latinobarómetro, administered between 1 August and 10 September in eighteen Latin American nations. The sample size from each country is approximately 1,200, with a total of 20,222 possible cases.[2] Contextual data are at the country level and drawn from Pippa Norris's Democracy Cross-National Dataset (2008).

[2] Technical details of the samples can be found at http://www.latinobarometro.org/fileadmin/documentos/Fichas_Tecnicas/Fichas_T_cnicas_LB_1995-2005.pdf. The questionnaire can be found at http://www.latinobarometro.org/fileadmin/documentos/cuestionarios/Cuestionario_LB_2005.pdf.

**Operationalizing Democratic Participation: The Dependent Variables**

The 2005 Latinobarómetro asks four batteries of questions that provide evidence about political activity. First, it asks simply whether the respondent voted in the last presidential election. Second, it inquires about the frequency of the following acts: discussing politics with friends, trying to convince others of one's political position, working for political parties or candidates, and working on an issue that affects the respondent's community.[3] Third, it poses the often-used battery on conventional and unconventional political activity: "I am going to read out a political activity. I would like you to tell me, if you have ever done it, if you would ever do it, or if you would never do it." The questionnaire then poses the following activities: signing a petition; taking part in authorized demonstrations; participating in riots; occupying land, buildings, or factories; taking part in unauthorized demonstrations; and blocking traffic. Finally, the Latinobarómetro asks about the respondent's history of contacting more powerful individuals, groups, or agencies about problems in one's community: "In the past three years, for you or your family, in order to solve problems that affect you in your neighborhood with the authorities, have you contacted . . ." and then offers the following choices: local government, officials at a higher level, legislators at any level, political parties or other political organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the media.

Drawing on these items, I created a series of dichotomous variables and indices intended to tap different modes of political participation. Exploratory data analysis pointed to at least three different dimensions of political activity in these survey items: *conventional* participation (voting, signing petitions, and engaging in authorized or legal

[3] I do not use simply discussing politics with one's friends as a indicator of participation in this paper.

demonstrations); unconventional participation, or *protesting* (participating in riots; occupying land, buildings, or factories; taking part in unauthorized demonstrations; and blocking traffic); and *contacting* (the entire battery listed in the previous paragraph), which may tap both individual initiative and clientelistic structuring of political involvement. I created additive indices for the conventional participation and contacting dimensions. For the *protest* dimension, I built a dichotomous variable for whether the respondent had engaged in any one of the unconventional forms of political activity (over 93% of respondents engage in no unconventional acts of protest). In addition, the exploratory factor analysis suggested an index summing the frequency of trying to convince others, working for parties/candidates, and working on local community issues, a *participation frequency index*, a nine-point index creating by adding responses about the frequency of the following three acts: trying to convince others of one's political position, working for political parties or candidates, and working on an issue that affects the respondent's community, in which each individual item is scored 0 for never, 1 for almost never, 2 for frequently, and 3 for very frequently.

Besides these variables tapping dimensions of participation and frequency of participation, we can create a dichotomous variable to explore voting *turnout*. We can also examine the determinants of the *frequency of campaign activity* (whether one has worked for a party or candidate), and the *frequency of working to deal with local issues*.

The Latin American countries vary in the volume of participation as captured by these variables and indices. Table 1 offers a summary of the percentage of the Latinobarómetro sample that reported engaging in various forms of participation by country. The self-declared voting rates are not out of keeping with actual turnout rates

over the recent past—Chileans underreport compared to official turnout data while Colombians over report, but the other figures for voting listed in Table 1 are close to actual figures.[4] Were we to consider self-declared voting only, Mexico would appear to be a relatively low participation society. However, on other indicators of political activity, Mexico proves to be the most participative society in the hemisphere. We see that Bolivians report the highest incidence of protest behavior, in keeping with our understanding of recent political events in that Andean nation. Brazilians and Mexicans report especially high rates of personally contacting higher authorities, again in keeping with our understanding of the prevalence of clientelism in those societies. Overall, though, strong similarities across the countries emerge from these data more so than pronounced differences.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of values on the conventional participation index. This index includes voting, so most respondents have at least one form of participation. The figure indicates, though, that about 21% of the respondents in this sample have no conventional political participation—voting, signing petitions, and attending lawful demonstrations. However, over 19% do two or three of these activities. In Mexico and Uruguay, about a third of respondents do two or three.

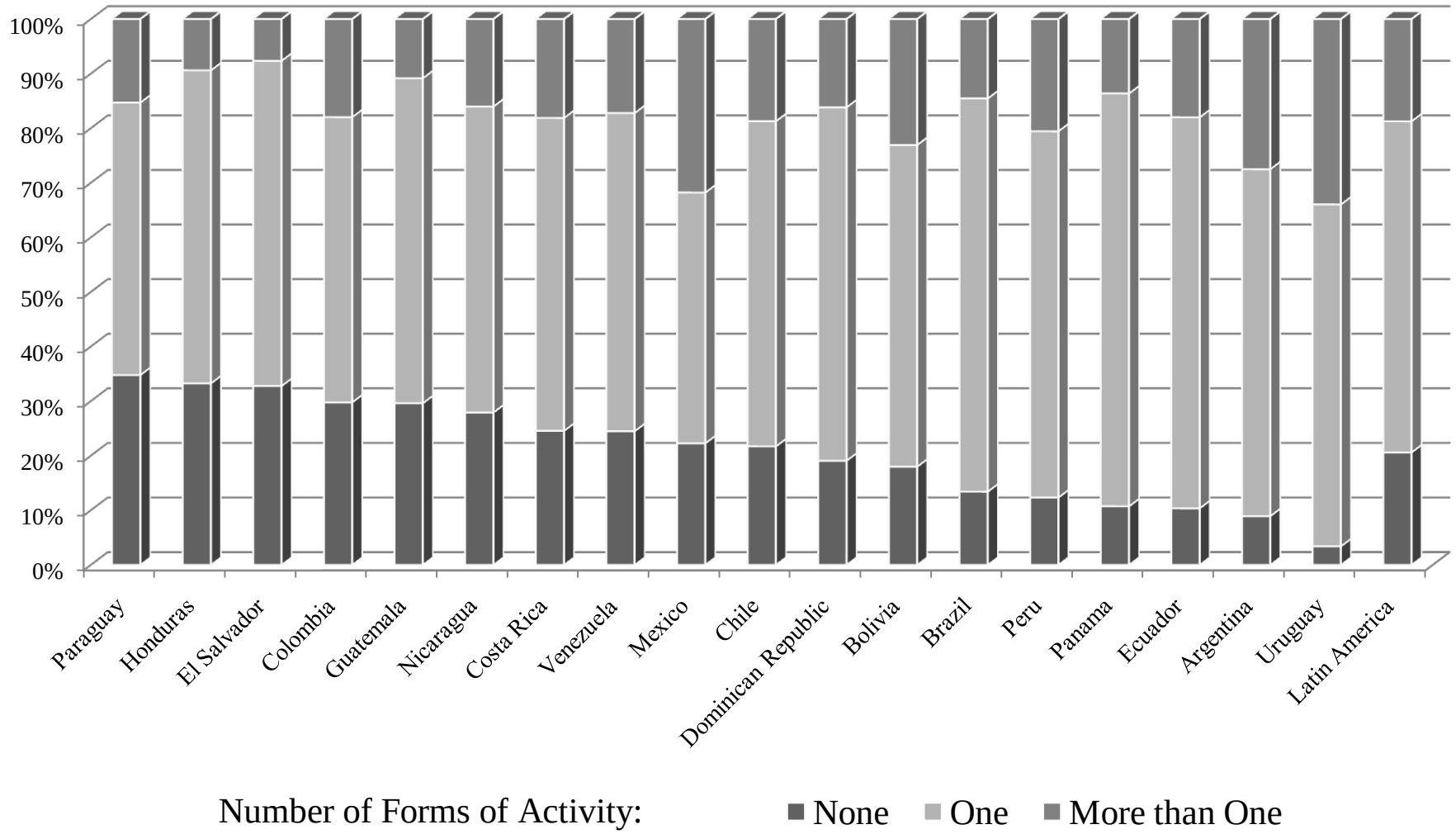
[4] See the figures reported in Latinobarómetro, *Informe Latinobarómetro 2006*, 9 December 2006, at http://www.latinobarometro.org/fileadmin/documentos/prensa/Espanol/Informe_Latinobarometro_2006.pdf

**Table 1: Self-Disclosed Conventional and Unconventional Political Activity in Latin America**

| | *Voted* | *Signed Petition* | *Legal Demonstration* | *Protested* | *Contacting* | *Communal Activity* | *Campaign Activity* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 88 | 26 | 14 | 5 | 32 | 28 | 10 |
| Bolivia | 77 | 16 | 17 | 14 | 47 | 44 | 16 |
| Brazil | 86 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 69 | 30 | 19 |
| Colombia | 63 | 17 | 13 | 5 | 41 | 41 | 19 |
| Costa Rica | 71 | 15 | 12 | 6 | 42 | 26 | 10 |
| Chile | 73 | 19 | 14 | 6 | 31 | 25 | 7 |
| Ecuador | 88 | 13 | 13 | 7 | 29 | 29 | 15 |
| El Salvador | 66 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 34 | 27 | 17 |
| Guatemala | 67 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 38 | 34 | 20 |
| Honduras | 64 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 36 | 24 | 16 |
| Mexico | 64 | 35 | 23 | 9 | 61 | 47 | 17 |
| Nicaragua | 69 | 11 | 12 | 3 | 26 | 26 | 21 |
| Panama | 88 | 11 | 8 | 4 | 41 | 46 | 29 |
| Paraguay | 59 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 49 | 49 | 15 |
| Peru | 84 | 16 | 14 | 5 | 42 | 37 | 13 |
| Uruguay | 96 | 28 | 21 | 6 | 31 | 27 | 14 |
| Venezuela | 71 | 15 | 13 | 7 | 49 | 37 | 20 |
| Dominican Republic | 79 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 45 | 48 | 37 |
| **Latin America** | **75** | **16** | **13** | **6** | **42** | **35** | **17** |

Source: Latinobarómetro 2005.

## Figure 1: Conventional Participation in Latin America



## Figure 2: Frequency of Participation Index

**Convincing Friends, Campaign Activity, and Communal Activity**

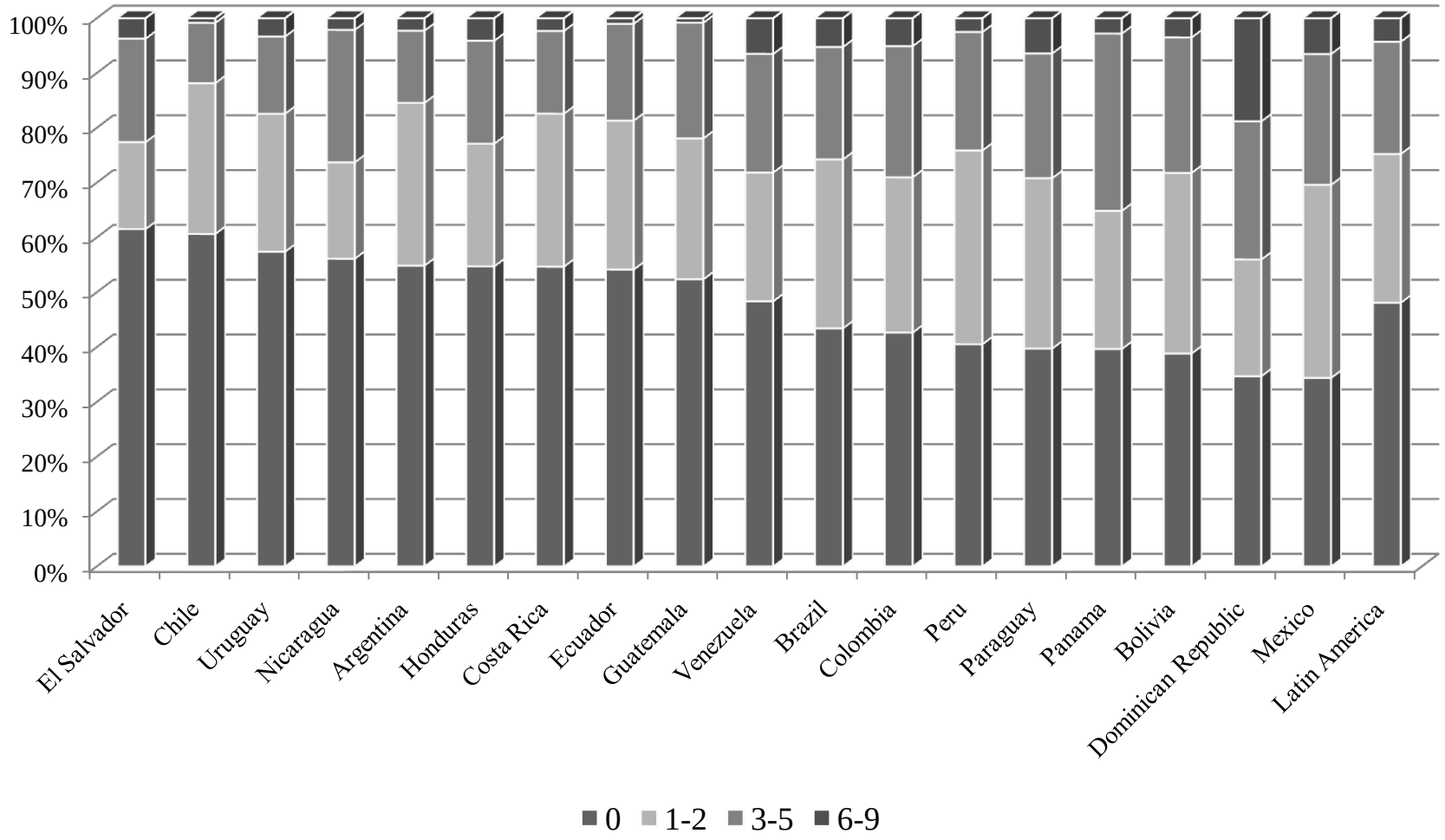


Figure 2 illustrates the combined frequency with which Latin Americans engage in three typical non-voting political acts—convincing friends that one's own political opinion is the correct position, working for parties or candidates (campaign activity), and working on community issues (communal activity). Respondents who said they did all three very often would earn a 9 on this 0-9 scale. As Figure 2 indicates, nearly half of these respondents from South American countries and Mexico do none of these activities ever. The mean score is 1.43, with a standard deviation of 1.82, which implies that only about one-third of respondents score higher than a 3 on this scale. Yet again there is cross-national variation. Those from the southern cone nations—Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile—and some Central American countries—e.g., El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras—are far less active than Mexicans, Dominicans, and Bolivians, all of whom have high levels of communal activity (see Table 1).

**Predictors of Participation**

**Demographic and socioeconomic resource variables.** The Latinobarómetro offers a standard series of socioeconomic and demographic items: age, level of education, occupation, and degree of religious devotion are provided by the respondent; the interviewer codes sex, the size of the town or city in which the respondent lives, and the perceived socioeconomic level of the respondent. These I employ as standard control variables in the multivariate analysis, although we can expect important contrasts to emerge from these variables as we use them as predictors of different types of political activity. For example, protesters might be expected to have a different socioeconomic and age profile than those engaged in more conventional forms of participation. Exploratory analysis suggested that the two occupation categories of particular

importance are whether one is a public sector employee or whether one's work is keeping house—homemaker or housewife. I constructed two dummy variables for public sector employees and homemakers and used no other occupation variable.

**Attitudes and values.** The attitudinal predictors of interest can be grouped into four categories: democratic values, political interest and sophistication, and evaluations of one's life and the political and economic situation.[5] Working in reverse order, I will briefly describe these variables.

Scholars have argued that one's propensity to participate politically may be affected by one's evaluation of the current political situation (e.g., Dalton 2008) and the degree of satisfaction with one's life (Inglehart 1997). Here I make use of three items from the 2005 Latinobarómetro: presidential approval, a measure of one's satisfaction with the sitting government; the retrospective sociotropic evaluation of the economy; and a question asking simply how satisfied the respondent is with his or her life.

Political interest and sophistication variables variables might be otherwise termed *political engagement.* A person's expressed degree of interest in politics is usually one of the strongest predictors of whether one participates politically. The 2005 Latinobarómetro asks the standard political interest question, which I employ. Secondly, scholars often employ measures of political sophistication as predictors of political action—individuals more knowledgeable about and comfortable in thinking about politics will be more likely to be able to make the choice to take political action. One's degree of knowledge about politics might serve as a proxy for political sophistication.

[5] Although scholars from the time of Almond and Verba (1963) have made the concept of citizen competence a centerpiece of their work, preliminary multivariate analysis showed that neither internal nor external efficacy measures had statistically significant effects on any of the indicators of participation. Because this paper does not focus on efficacy, I dropped those variables from the analysis.

The approach of the Latinobarómetro is to ask the respondents how well they think they know the constitution and how much they think they know about political and social events in their country. I use both of these items as variables tapping different dimensions of political sophistication.

Do those who profess to prefer democracy to any other political regime participate more than those who are willing to accept an authoritarian regime under some circumstances? We might expect, *a priori*, that those more committed to a democratic regime would be more apt to see democracy as government by the people. Hence, we might hypothesize that confirmed democrats would be more committed to participate in politics than those who see authoritarianism as a viable alternative to democracy.

The 2005 Latinobarómetro asked several questions intended to assess the public's views of democracy in Latin America. Many of these questions may tap the same underlying attitudinal dimensions, so to capture those essential factors I conducted a factor analysis on the several questions about democracy and its performance. From this factor analysis I determined that we can delineate three basic dimensions of belief about democracy: fundamental democratic norms, satisfaction with democracy as it functions at this moment in time in Latin America, and views about the essential role of parties and representative institutions in a democracy. I built an index of fundamental democratic norms by summing the responses to four questions: (1) The first asks whether one always prefers democracy or in some situations one would consider an authoritarian regime. (2) "Some people say that democracy allows us to solve the problems that we have in our country. Other people say that democracy does not solve the problems. Which statement is closest to your way of thinking?" (3) Respondents were asked to

agree or disagree with the "Churchillian" formulation, "Democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government." And (4), they were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "Only with a democratic system can (country) become a developed country."

I constructed a second index to measure the extent to which respondents believed that political parties and legislatures were essential to properly functioning democracy. The questions asked, "There are people who say that without political parties [a national congress] there can be no democracy, while others say that democracy can work without parties [a national congress]. What is closer to your views?" Finally, I also built an index of democratic satisfaction from four questions: (1) "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (country)?" (2) "In general, would you say that the country is governed for the benefit of a few powerful interests or is it governed for the good of everyone?" (3) "How do you think things are in (country)? Can one criticize and speak out without restraint?" The respondent is then prompted to answer whether one can criticize always, almost always, sometimes, almost never, and never. And, (4) "Generally speaking, do you think that the elections in this country are clean or rigged?"

**Social capital and associational membership.** Building on Putnam's consideration of the role of social capital in promoting political participation in the United States (1995), recent work (Klesner 2007, 2009) has shown that social capital in its organizational dimension – associational memberships in non-political groups – strongly predicts political participation in Latin America. The Latinobarometer asked respondents in the 2005 survey whether they were members of, contributed money to, or

volunteered their time for any of twelve different categories of association. For this study, I created a measure in which I simply counted the number of types of non-political organization a respondent reported being involved as a member. Non-political organizations here included sports and recreation clubs; artistic, musical, or education associations; unions; professional or business organizations; consumer groups; development or human-rights oriented groups; environmental or animal rights associations; health or social service agencies; retirees' organizations; and religious groups. The range of that index runs from 0 to 10; nearly 70 percent of respondents reported no memberships at all.

Other scholars have focused on the attitudinal side of social capital by emphasizing interpersonal trust. Putnam suggests that interpersonal trust is essential for effective civic engagement (1995). Other scholars have explored the role of trust in promoting political participation (e.g., Power and Clark 2001; Benson and Rochon 2004), without a clear consensus being reached yet. In a study of participation in the United States, Uslaner and Brown (2005) found that social inequality is the most powerful predictor of interpersonal trust and that trust has a stronger impact on communal participation than on political participation. The Latinobarómetro asks the standard question about interpersonal trust: "Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust most people, or that you can never be too careful when dealing with others?"

**Political and social context variables.** Students of political participation have long recognized that the context in which an individual is posed with the prospect of participating matters for her ultimate choice to take political action (e.g., see Verba, Nie and Kim 1978). Comparative studies of electoral turnout place heavy emphasis, for

instance, on institutional differences (see Pérez-Liñán 2001 for a cross-national study of turnout in Latin America) such as registration rules, the type of electoral system, the number of parties in the party system, and the day of the week on which the election is held. For this study, I chose three political institutional variables at the country level that may shape different modes of participation: (1) whether the country is governed by a federal or unitary state; (2) the form of electoral system for the lower house of congress; and (3) the type of party system. We should expect a federal state to offer more nodes of participatory opportunity and therefore encourage higher rates of participation than a unitary state. Proportional representation systems, by making it less likely that a vote or other form of electoral activity goes to waste (in terms of representation), ought to promote more political activity. Party systems with more parties should give each citizen more opportunities to be involved politically. I rely on Norris's Democracy Cross-National Dataset (2008) for measures of federalism (following Watts 1998), the electoral system (following the IDEA classification), and the party system.

Other political contextual variable of potential importance include the climate of democracy in the country and its ethnic fractionalization. I hypothesize that those countries that have experience relatively rapid rates of democratization will provide climates welcoming of political participation. To operationalize this concept I use the change in the nation's Freedom House composite score between 1972 and 2003, as reported in Norris (2008).[6] Whether ethnic fractionalization will encourage or discourage political participation depends much on its interaction with other social and institutional variables. In a regime that represses minority voices, ethnic fractionalization could be

[6] Because high Freedom House scores indicate greater abridgement of freedom, I reverse the sign of the measure of change so that positive scores mean the country has become more free. Only three of the eighteen countries in this study had negative scores.

associated with less political participation as ethnic minorities turn inward to protect themselves in a hostile environment. However, at the same time, more ethnic groups likely means more interests that are clamoring for political attention, and hence more political activity by ordinary people. I use the ethnic fractionalization index developed by Alesina *et al*. (2003) and reported by Norris (2008).

In a recent article on participation in Mexico, Holzer (2007) argues that where social spending by the state is low, the stakes of participation for the poor are lowered (because there is little likelihood of gain) and, consequently, their participation is discouraged. To explore this concept, I added a variable that measured total social spending as a percentage of gross domestic product in 1998, as reported by Norris (2008). Because modernization theory has placed heavy emphasis on the causal connection between economic modernization and political participation, I included the nation's value on the human development index (HDI) as a control variable. Finally, like ethnic fractionalization, income inequality ought to have clear links to political activity, probably by discouraging the participation of the poor in more unequal societies. Both of the latter measures are taken from Norris's 2008 dataset. Table 2 reports the values of the eight contextual variables for the countries in the 2005 Latinobarometer dataset.

**Table 2: Contextual Characteristics of Eighteen Latin American Countries**

| | Federal Type | Electoral System | Party System | Change in Freedom House Score, 1972-2003 | Ethnic Fraction-alization | HDI | Total Social Spending as % of GDP | Gini |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | Federal | PR | Two-party | 2.08 | 0.26 | 0.87 | 19.8 | 52 |
| Bolivia | Unitary | Mixed | Fragmented multiparty | 2.13 | 0.74 | 0.70 | 18.4 | 45 |
| Brazil | Federal | PR | Fragmented multiparty | 1.68 | 0.54 | 0.80 | 22.1 | 59 |
| Colombia | Hybrid | PR | Two-party | -1.69 | 0.60 | 0.79 | 14.2 | 58 |
| Costa Rica | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | -0.40 | 0.24 | 0.85 | | 47 |
| Chile | Unitary | PR | Fragmented multiparty | 3.81 | 0.19 | 0.87 | 12.7 | 57 |
| Dominican Republic | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 0.850 | 0.43 | 0.78 | 7.6 | 47 |
| Ecuador | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 2.00 | 0.65 | 0.77 | 6.4 | 44 |
| El Salvador | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 0.50 | 0.20 | 0.73 | 5.8 | 53 |
| Guatemala | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | -0.49 | 0.51 | 0.69 | 6.5 | 48 |
| Honduras | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 1.56 | 0.17 | 0.70 | 11.4 | 55 |
| Mexico | Federal | Mixed | Moderate multiparty | 1.49 | 0.54 | 0.83 | 10.4 | 55 |
| Nicaragua | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 1.63 | 0.48 | 0.71 | 11.2 | 55 |
| Panama | Unitary | Mixed | Fragmented multiparty | 4.50 | 0.55 | 0.81 | 17.2 | 56 |
| Paraguay | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 1.83 | 0.17 | 0.75 | 8.1 | 57 |
| Peru | Unitary | PR | Fragmented multiparty | 2.75 | 0.66 | 0.77 | 8.8 | 50 |
| Uruguay | Unitary | PR | Moderate multiparty | 4.31 | 0.26 | 0.85 | 17.8 | 45 |
| Venezuela | Federal | Mixed | Hegemonic | -1.95 | 0.50 | 0.79 | 11.6 | 49 |

Source: Norris Cross-National Democracy Data (2008).

**Methods and Results**

The data used for this study are mixed: individual-level data from the 2005 Latinobarometer and country-level data to provide the context of participation. Such mixed and multilevel data call for multilevel analysis to avoid inflating the standard errors of the regression coefficients and leading us to inappropriately lenient conclusions about the importance of any particular variable. To address this challenge, I estimated the models reported in the Appendix with the hierarchical linear modeling package HLM v. 6.08.

I used HLM's ordered logit routine to estimate a model to explain the *conventional politics index*. For the dependent variables tapping *contacting*, the *participation frequency index*, and those measuring frequency of working for parties and candidates and local political activity I estimated the models assuming a continuously distributed variable. I employed binomial logit for *protesting*, vote *turnout*, and for *non-participation* (those who engaged in none of these activities). Appendix Tables A1-A8 provide the regression coefficients, standard errors, significance levels, and measures of goodness of fit. In Table 3 I summarize the main substantive findings about the determinants of the distinct modes of participation. In Table 4 I identify the main significant predictors of the frequency of participation for the *participation frequency index* and the frequency of working for parties and candidates and for local (communal) political activity.

Considering the individual-level predictors, we immediately see that conventional participants are older, from higher socioeconomic positions and with higher levels of education. However, controlling for these other measures of modernization, they tend to

be from smaller localities. Those making personal contacts with authorities or the media are also of higher education levels and from less urban contexts. In contrast, non-participants and protesters are both younger and from lower socioeconomic strata. Non-participants are also of lower education levels, from larger cities, and they are not devout in their religious life (hence unlikely to be directed into collective or political participation by religious leaders). Public sector employees take part in conventional activities like signing petitions and attending legal demonstrations beyond what those in other occupations do; they are also apparently comfortable taking the initiative to make personal contact with authorities. However, they are also more likely to engage in contentious politics. Homemakers, in contrast, participate less frequently than what would be expected, except for voting, and they are strongly represented among non-participants.

Turning to the attitudinal variables that are of special interest in this paper, we find that the democratic norms index proved statistically significant only for predicting the conventional participation index shown in Table 3. Counterintuitively, conventional participants, including voters, are more likely to say that democracy can function just fine without parties and a congress. Conventional participants, especially voters, also tend to be dissatisfied with the way democracy functions in their countries. Contactors are also dissatisfied with how democracy functions, as are non-participants.

We learn more about the attitudinal characteristics that predict the differing modes of participation from the political engagement variables. A relatively higher level of interest in politics is a significant predictor of all forms of participation; in contrast, non-participants admit to being disinterested in political affairs. Similarly, conventional

participants, voters, protesters, and those who make personal contacts also claim to have higher levels of knowledge about politics on average than do those who protest or those who do not participate politically at all.

Curiously, conventional participation is associated with low levels of satisfaction with one's life. Having high levels of subjective well-being apparently depresses one's inclination to participate politically in Latin America. Or, we might suggest that those with low levels of satisfaction with their lives have a strong reason to engage in political activity to correct things. Conventional participants, including especially voters, tend to give the sitting president higher approval ratings; not surprisingly, non-participants give their presidents lower approval ratings.

Lastly, political party members are strong participants in all modes of political activity recorded in Table 3. This holds equally true for those with more non-political association members, with the exception of the voting model, where associational social capital is not related in a statistically significant way to going to the ballot box. Again, the converse holds non-participants.

Table 4 allows us to assess the impact of these variables on the frequency of engaging in some typical forms of participation—convincing others to convert to one's own political viewpoint, working for parties and candidates, and working on local community affairs. Those living in smaller communities participate in all of these activities at higher rates than those in larger cities. Men and older people are more engaged than women and younger people. The more devout are more likely work on communal activities than non-church goers. For the overall participation index, those of higher educational achievement take part at higher rates. Again we see that homemakers

in Latin American stay out of politics, relatively speaking, while pubic sector employees are highly engaged.

Here we see that more frequent participants are more likely to hold the view that parties and the congress are essential elements of their democratic regime. Also, those engaging in campaign activity tend to be more satisfied with democracy. In contrast, those engaged in community-level work tend to be dissatisfied with democracy.

As we would predict, those who participate more often in all of these forms of political action tend to trust their fellow citizens. Not surprisingly, more frequent participants have strong interest in politics. They also know a lot about politics and the constitutional order, or so they claim. Again, a strong predictor of the frequency of these conventional forms of participation is the number of non-political associational groups to which one belongs.

What about the role of the political and social context? Are political institutions, ethnic divisions, and income inequality important predictors of political participation in Latin America? Controlling for the individual variables and other contextual factors, conventional participation tends to be higher in the federal states and where members of congress are chosen by proportional representation. PR is associated with turnout, in particular, as we should expect. Meanwhile, contacting politicians and government officials takes place more frequently in federal systems and where the number of parties in the party system is greater – in essence, where there are more opportunities to engage in contacting, individuals are more likely to take advantage of the opportunity to do so.

**Table 3: Determinants of Participation in Different Modes of Activity**

| | ***Conventional Participation*** | ***Protest*** | ***Contacting*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Socioeconomic/ Demographic** | Older<br>Rural<br>higher SES<br>higher education levels<br>public sector employees<br>*NOT homemakers* | Younger<br>*Lower SES*<br>Public Sector Employees<br>NOT homemakers | Male<br>Rural<br>Higher education levels<br>Public sector employees<br>*NOT homemakers* |
| **Democratic values** | Strong democratic norms<br>Unsatisfied with democracy<br>Do not value parties and congress | | Unsatisfied with democracy |
| **Social capital and associational belonging** | Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations | Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations | Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations |
| **Political interest & sophistication (political engagement)** | Strong political interest<br>high knowledge about politics | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics and the constitution |
| **Evaluations** | Low life satisfaction<br>*Approval of presidential performance* | Disapproval of presidential performance | |
| **Contextual factors** | *Federal*<br>Strong democratization trend<br>PR electoral system<br>More ethnically fractionalized<br>Less income inequality | | Federal system<br>Greater number of parties<br>Poor democratization trend |

Mentioned variables are significant at the .05 level; those in italics are significant at the .10 level.
Source: Tables A1, A2, and A3.

**Table 3 (continued): Determinants of Participation in Different Modes of Activity**

| | ***Voting*** | ***Non-Participation*** |
|---|---|---|
| **Socioeconomic/ Demographic** | Older<br>higher SES<br>higher education levels<br>rural<br>public sector employees | Younger<br>*Male*<br>Lower SES<br>Lower education levels<br>Urban<br>Non-religious<br>Homemakers<br>NOT public sector employees |
| **Democratic values** | Unsatisfied with democracy<br>Do not value parties and congress | Satisfied with democracy |
| **Social capital and associational belonging** | Party member | NOT party members<br>Fewer non-political organization memberships |
| **Political interest and sophistication (political engagement)** | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics *and constitution* | Low political interest<br>Low knowledge about politics and the constitution |
| **Evaluations** | Higher presidential approval | Lower presidential approval |
| **Contextual factors** | Strong democratization trend<br>PR electoral system<br>More ethnically fractionalized<br>Less income inequality | Majoritarian electoral system<br>Poor democratization trend<br>More ethnically homogeneous |

Mentioned variables are significant at the .05 level; those in italics are significant at the .10 level.
Source: Tables A4 and A5.

**Table 4: Determinants of the Frequency of Participation in Conventional Modes of Activity**

| | ***Participation Frequency Index*** | ***Frequency of Working for Parties and Candidates*** (campaign activity) | ***Frequency of working on community problems*** (communal activity) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Socioeconomic/ Demographic** | *Older*<br>Rural<br>*Higher education levels*<br>Male<br>Public sector employees<br>NOT homemakers | Older<br>Rural<br>Public sector employees | Older<br>Rural<br>Male<br>More devout<br>Public sector employees<br>NOT homemakers |
| **Democratic values** | Value parties and congress | Satisfied with democracy<br>Value parties and congress | Value parties and congress<br>*Unsatisfied with democracy* |
| **Social capital and associational belonging** | Higher interpersonal trust<br>Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations | Higher interpersonal trust<br>Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations | *Higher interpersonal trust*<br>Party member<br>Belong to more non-political organizations |
| **Political interest and sophistication (political engagement)** | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics and the constitution | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics | Strong political interest<br>High knowledge about politics and the constitution |
| **Evaluations** | Low life satisfaction | Low life satisfaction | *Low life satisfaction* |
| **Contextual factors** | | | |

Mentioned variables are significant at the .05 level; those in italics are significant at the .10 level.
Source: Tables A6, A7, and A8.

While the overall conventional participation index and turnout, in particular, tend to be higher in nations that experienced a stronger trend of democratization in the last quarter of the twentieth century, contacting takes place more frequently where democratization trends were weaker. To the extent that contacting is associated with clientelism, this would suggest that countries making more vigorous movement toward the full protection of civil liberties and the promotion of political rights may be not be encouraging clientelist contacting in the same ways as countries not experiencing such strong democratization trends.

Ethnic fractionalization seems to promote conventional participation, including voting, while higher rates of non-participation are found in more ethnically homogeneous countries. Income inequality tends to discourage conventional participation, again including voting. No contextual factors prove statistically significant in the models seeking to explain the frequency of participation that are reported in Table 4.

**Discussion**

This analysis suggests that many of the usual expectations about who participates in politics in various different activities are borne out in the Latin American context. The older, the better educated, and the economically well-off members of society participate more frequently in conventional forms of political activity than do the younger, the less educated, and the poorer. Hence, in Latin America we find a participation bias in favor of those more richly endowed with socioeconomic resources, which surely contributes to the sense that Latin American democracies today are relatively low quality democracies.

Those with greater interest in politics and who are closer to parties likewise take on conventional political activities more often, as do those who are more knowledgeable about the nation's constitutional structure and about politics in general. More frequent participation comes from those who have higher degrees of interpersonal trust. Social capital is strongly linked to political participation. None of these findings challenge the conventional wisdom. While these attitudes are subject to change, again the economically worse-off Latin Americans would be disadvantaged because the socialization institutions that create political interest, knowledge about politics, and trust tend to be stacked in favor of the wealthy. Social capital can be built, but doing so is a long process, and the operation of Latin American societies tends to favor better-off individuals here too because they have been less atomized by the operation of neoliberal economic reforms and tend to be less pressured in terms of time (and hence more able to become members of the PTA or an environmental group).

In Latin America, protest and non-participation are the preserve of those not well integrated into society. The young are more likely to protest. Non-participants are similarly young, and also poorer and less well-educated than participants. What distinguishes protesters from non-participants is the interest in politics that protesters express and their higher levels of social capital. We might say that both groups are alienated from the political system, but protesters remain integrated in society and have retained their political involvement, although in an unconventional way. Non-participants, in contrast, have withdrawn. Non-participants, of course, out-number protesters by about a three-to-one margin in Latin America.

Do democratic values matter in promoting participation in these young democracies? The preliminary answer based on this research would seem to be "not that much," or mostly in a negative way. While conventional participation seems to be encouraged by democratic norms, none of the particular activities subsumed under conventional participation are predicted by general democratic norms. Meanwhile, most participants are unhappy with the performance of democracy in their own country, and many apparently nominal participants don't even value the role of the main representative institutions (parties and legislatures) in facilitating democratic participation. More frequent participants, fortunately, hold a different view about the centrality of parties and congresses.

The contextual variables I have used here have mostly had the expected impact, to the extent they had any impact at all on predicting participation. Where the democratization trend has been strong, people are apparently more eager to participate in the standard forms of democratic involvement. More open systems of representation – with more parties, PR, or a federal system – tend to encourage individual political action. Providing more nodes of contact leads citizens to contact politicians and public officials more frequently. In more unequal societies, individuals are less inclined to participate through conventional political channels. These findings suggest institutions and inequality matter significantly in promoting or discouraging political participation in Latin America. Perhaps the clearest finding here is that inequality operates cumulatively to favor wealthier (or otherwise resource-endowed) Latin Americans when it comes time to take political action.

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## APPENDIX

### Table A1: Determinants of Conventional Political Activity in Latin America

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **0.023** | 0.007 | 0.000 |
| Sex (Male) | 0.010 | 0.040 | 0.802 |
| Size of City | **-0.018** | 0.013 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | **0.049** | 0.022 | 0.025 |
| Education Level | **0.119** | 0.013 | 0.000 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.353** | 0.066 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | -0.084 | 0.049 | 0.086 |
| Religiosity | 0.016 | 0.021 | 0.435 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | **0.002** | 0.001 | 0.008 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | **-0.008** | 0.001 | 0.000 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **-0.001** | 0.000 | 0.010 |
| Presidential Approval | 0.075 | 0.038 | 0.051 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.018 | 0.018 | 0.331 |
| Life Satisfaction | **-0.066** | 0.021 | 0.002 |
| Political Interest | **0.233** | 0.021 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.207** | 0.022 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **0.108** | 0.024 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | 0.017 | 0.045 | 0.699 |
| Member of Political Party | **0.818** | 0.108 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.260** | 0.023 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | 0.075 | 0.037 | 0.074 |
| Electoral System | **0.340** | 0.083 | 0.003 |
| Party System | -0.111 | 0.065 | 0.121 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | **0.146** | 0.027 | 0.000 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | **1.262** | 0.208 | 0.000 |
| Human Development Index | 1.065 | 0.712 | 0.169 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | 0.005 | 0.007 | 0.489 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | **-0.032** | 0.007 | 0.001 |
| Number of Individuals | 13,643 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.009 | $\chi^2 = 23.598$ | $p < 0.005$ |

Ordered logit regression estimates. Cut points not reported. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

The dependent variable sums the responses to the questions about the whether one had voted in the most recent election, had signed a petition, or had attended a legal demonstration ; it ranges from 0 to 3.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A2: Determinants of Protest in Latin America**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **-0.009** | 0.003 | 0.001 |
| Sex (Male) | 0.123 | 0.082 | 0.133 |
| Size of City | -0.019 | 0.015 | 0.212 |
| Socioeconomic Level | -0.076 | 0.046 | 0.096 |
| Education Level | -0.004 | 0.027 | 0.889 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.261** | 0.119 | 0.027 |
| Homemaker | **-0.313** | 0.118 | 0.008 |
| Religiosity | -0.021 | 0.044 | 0.642 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.514 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | -0.004 | 0.002 | 0.120 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.586 |
| Presidential Approval | **-0.245** | 0.082 | 0.003 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.019 | 0.039 | 0.616 |
| Life Satisfaction | 0.035 | 0.046 | 0.449 |
| Political Interest | **0.143** | 0.042 | 0.001 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.112** | 0.047 | 0.018 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | 0.040 | 0.049 | 0.421 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | 0.068 | 0.091 | 0.455 |
| Member of Political Party | **0.750** | 0.161 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.247** | 0.039 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.096 | 0.158 | 0.557 |
| Electoral System | -0.511 | 0.348 | 0.176 |
| Party System | -0.050 | 0.272 | 0.860 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | -0.003 | 0.112 | 0.976 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | 0.586 | 0.877 | 0.521 |
| Human Development Index | 2.540 | 2.965 | 0.414 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | 0.011 | 0.030 | 0.726 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | -0.014 | 0.030 | 0.643 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,319 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.235 | $\chi^2 = 99.201$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Binomial logit estimates. Dependent variable is dichotomous, indicating whether the respondent had ever engaged in a riot; occupied land, buildings, or factories; took part in an unauthorized demonstration; or blocked traffic. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A3: Determinants of Contacting of More Powerful Individuals or Agencies about Community Issues in Latin America**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.943 |
| Sex (Male) | **0.023** | 0.010 | 0.025 |
| Size of City | **-0.011** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | 0.009 | 0.006 | 0.112 |
| Education Level | **0.019** | 0.003 | 0.000 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.108** | 0.018 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | -0.023 | 0.013 | 0.070 |
| Religiosity | -0.005 | 0.005 | 0.403 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.642 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | **-0.001** | 0.000 | 0.038 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.483 |
| Presidential Approval | 0.000 | 0.010 | 0.975 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.001 | 0.005 | 0.866 |
| Life Satisfaction | -0.009 | 0.006 | 0.116 |
| Political Interest | **0.049** | 0.005 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.043** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **0.033** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | 0.008 | 0.012 | 0.510 |
| Member of Political Party | **0.152** | 0.030 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.100** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | **0.045** | 0.015 | 0.017 |
| Electoral System | -0.053 | 0.034 | 0.150 |
| Party System | **0.107** | 0.026 | 0.003 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | **-0.050** | 0.011 | 0.001 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | -0.023 | 0.084 | 0.788 |
| Human Development Index | 0.130 | 0.284 | 0.659 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.001 | 0.003 | 0.770 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.443 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,319 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.002 | $\chi^2 = 61.372$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Restricted maximum likelihood estimation. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

The dependent variable is a twelve-point additive index created by summing responses to whether the respondent had contacted the following institutions never (scored 0), sometimes (1), or frequently (2): local government, officials at a higher level, legislators at any level, political parties or other political organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the media.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A4: Determinants of Voting in Latin America**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **0.039** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Sex (Male) | 0.003 | 0.050 | 0.958 |
| Size of City | **-0.039** | 0.010 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | **0.086** | 0.027 | 0.002 |
| Education Level | **0.092** | 0.017 | 0.000 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.307** | 0.093 | 0.001 |
| Homemaker | 0.020 | 0.060 | 0.735 |
| Religiosity | 0.034 | 0.027 | 0.205 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.468 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | **-0.009** | 0.001 | 0.000 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **-0.002** | 0.001 | 0.003 |
| Presidential Approval | **0.230** | 0.048 | 0.000 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.006 | 0.023 | 0.791 |
| Life Satisfaction | -0.033 | 0.027 | 0.222 |
| Political Interest | **0.181** | 0.027 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.098** | 0.027 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | 0.053 | 0.030 | 0.073 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | -0.066 | 0.058 | 0.251 |
| Member of Political Party | **0.731** | 0.181 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | -0.007 | 0.031 | 0.816 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | 0.072 | 0.126 | 0.580 |
| Electoral System | **0.786** | 0.281 | 0.021 |
| Party System | -0.238 | 0.218 | 0.304 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | **0.308** | 0.090 | 0.009 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | **1.648** | 0.694 | 0.042 |
| Human Development Index | -0.495 | 2.337 | 0.837 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | 0.025 | 0.024 | 0.341 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | **-0.057** | 0.024 | 0.039 |
| Number of Individuals | 13,646 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.157 | $\chi^2 = 173.863$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Binomial logit estimates. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A5: Determinants of Non-Participation in Latin America**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **-0.021** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Sex (Male) | 0.134 | 0.080 | 0.095 |
| Size of City | **0.059** | 0.015 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | **-0.110** | 0.041 | 0.009 |
| Education Level | **-0.099** | 0.027 | 0.000 |
| Public Sector Employee | **-0.521** | 0.196 | 0.008 |
| Homemaker | **0.367** | 0.087 | 0.000 |
| Religiosity | **-0.146** | 0.041 | 0.001 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.484 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | **0.009** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.781 |
| Presidential Approval | **-0.280** | 0.074 | 0.000 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.004 | 0.035 | 0.907 |
| Life Satisfaction | 0.059 | 0.041 | 0.148 |
| Political Interest | **-0.391** | 0.047 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **-0.215** | 0.040 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **-0.175** | 0.047 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | -0.090 | 0.093 | 0.333 |
| Member of Political Party | **-1.485** | 0.572 | 0.010 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **-0.479** | 0.070 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.164 | 0.122 | 0.212 |
| Electoral System | **-0.635** | 0.273 | 0.045 |
| Party System | 0.004 | 0.211 | 0.986 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | **-0.211** | 0.087 | 0.038 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | **-1.729** | 0.660 | 0.028 |
| Human Development Index | 0.898 | 2.223 | 0.695 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.021 | 0.024 | 0.401 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.036 | 0.023 | 0.144 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,319 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.130 | $\chi^2 = 56.839$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Binomial logit estimates. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A6: Determinants of Frequency of Engaging in Conventional Political Activities**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.074 |
| Sex (Male) | **0.218** | 0.031 | 0.000 |
| Size of City | **-0.043** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | -0.003 | 0.017 | 0.842 |
| Education Level | 0.017 | 0.010 | 0.088 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.314** | 0.053 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | **-0.128** | 0.038 | 0.001 |
| Religiosity | 0.025 | 0.016 | 0.125 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.312 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.173 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.002 |
| Presidential Approval | -0.016 | 0.030 | 0.594 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | 0.011 | 0.014 | 0.440 |
| Life Satisfaction | **-0.059** | 0.017 | 0.001 |
| Political Interest | **0.440** | 0.016 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.205** | 0.017 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **0.120** | 0.018 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | **0.116** | 0.035 | 0.001 |
| Member of Political Party | **1.922** | 0.089 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.304** | 0.019 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.063 | 0.139 | 0.658 |
| Electoral System | -0.112 | 0.308 | 0.724 |
| Party System | 0.004 | 0.238 | 0.988 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | -0.054 | 0.098 | 0.595 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | 0.577 | 0.764 | 0.470 |
| Human Development Index | -1.182 | 2.571 | 0.656 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.016 | 0.027 | 0.574 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.026 | 0.026 | 0.342 |
| Constant | -0.421 | 2.607 | 0.876 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,328 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.198 | $\chi^2 = 478.759$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Restricted maximum likelihood estimation. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

The dependent variable is a nine-point index creating by adding responses about the frequency of the following three acts: trying to convince others of one's political position, working for political parties or candidates, and working on an issue that affects the respondent's community, in which each individual item is scored 0 for never, 1 for almost never, 2 for frequently, and 3 for very frequently.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A7a: Determinants of the Frequency of Working for a Party or Candidate**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.001 |
| Sex (Male) | 0.017 | 0.011 | 0.130 |
| Size of City | **-0.014** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | -0.004 | 0.006 | 0.525 |
| Education Level | -0.004 | 0.004 | 0.277 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.115** | 0.019 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | -0.021 | 0.014 | 0.112 |
| Religiosity | -0.001 | 0.006 | 0.819 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.138 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.013 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **0.000** | 0.000 | 0.022 |
| Presidential Approval | -0.003 | 0.011 | 0.765 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | 0.005 | 0.005 | 0.303 |
| Life Satisfaction | -0.009 | 0.006 | 0.115 |
| Political Interest | **0.116** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.040** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | 0.004 | 0.007 | 0.521 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | **0.045** | 0.012 | 0.001 |
| Member of Political Party | **1.053** | 0.032 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.018** | 0.007 | 0.007 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.027 | 0.041 | 0.525 |
| Electoral System | 0.009 | 0.090 | 0.923 |
| Party System | -0.023 | 0.070 | 0.755 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | -0.012 | 0.029 | 0.695 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | 0.130 | 0.224 | 0.575 |
| Human Development Index | -0.359 | 0.755 | 0.645 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.003 | 0.008 | 0.676 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.005 | 0.008 | 0.492 |
| Constant | -0.003 | 0.765 | 0.997 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,328 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.017 | $\chi^2 = 327.843$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Restricted maximum likelihood estimation. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A7b: Determinants of the Frequency of Working for a Party or Candidate**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.001 |
| Sex (Male) | **0.025** | 0.011 | 0.030 |
| Size of City | **-0.015** | 0.002 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | -0.005 | 0.006 | 0.462 |
| Education Level | -0.004 | 0.004 | 0.286 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.131** | 0.019 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | -0.021 | 0.014 | 0.137 |
| Religiosity | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.001 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | -0.004 | 0.006 | 0.490 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.156 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.013 |
| Presidential Approval | **0.000** | 0.000 | 0.042 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | -0.007 | 0.011 | 0.556 |
| Life Satisfaction | 0.003 | 0.005 | 0.510 |
| Political Interest | -0.012 | 0.006 | 0.060 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.135** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **0.045** | 0.006 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | **0.045** | 0.013 | 0.001 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.041** | 0.007 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.030 | 0.046 | 0.526 |
| Electoral System | 0.001 | 0.102 | 0.989 |
| Party System | -0.026 | 0.079 | 0.750 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | -0.011 | 0.032 | 0.731 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | 0.115 | 0.252 | 0.657 |
| Human Development Index | -0.474 | 0.847 | 0.589 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.003 | 0.009 | 0.745 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.006 | 0.009 | 0.523 |
| Constant | 0.083 | 0.859 | 0.925 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,328 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.021 | $\chi^2 = 380.805$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Restricted maximum likelihood estimation. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.

**Table A8: Determinants of the Frequency of Working on Community Problems**

| | *Coef.* | *Std. Err.* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual-Level Variables** | | | |
| *Resources* | | | |
| Age | **0.001** | 0.000 | 0.008 |
| Sex (Male) | **0.063** | 0.016 | 0.000 |
| Size of City | **-0.021** | 0.003 | 0.000 |
| Socioeconomic Level | 0.000 | 0.009 | 0.992 |
| Education Level | **0.024** | 0.005 | 0.000 |
| Public Sector Employee | **0.154** | 0.027 | 0.000 |
| Homemaker | **-0.049** | 0.020 | 0.013 |
| Religiosity | **0.021** | 0.008 | 0.012 |
| *Values* | | | |
| Democratic Norms Index | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.112 |
| Democratic Evaluations Index | -0.001 | 0.000 | 0.087 |
| Democratic Institutions Index | **0.000** | 0.000 | 0.022 |
| Presidential Approval | -0.023 | 0.015 | 0.130 |
| Retrospective Sociotropic Economic Evaluation | 0.006 | 0.007 | 0.383 |
| Life Satisfaction | -0.014 | 0.009 | 0.098 |
| Political Interest | **0.125** | 0.008 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Politics | **0.064** | 0.009 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of Constitution | **0.059** | 0.009 | 0.000 |
| *Social Capital* | | | |
| Interpersonal Trust | 0.031 | 0.018 | 0.084 |
| Member of Political Party | **0.463** | 0.046 | 0.000 |
| Non-Political Organization Membership Index | **0.207** | 0.009 | 0.000 |
| **Country-Level Variables** | | | |
| Federalism | -0.043 | 0.061 | 0.504 |
| Electoral System | -0.154 | 0.136 | 0.286 |
| Party System | -0.014 | 0.105 | 0.900 |
| Past Democratization (1970-2003) | -0.023 | 0.043 | 0.611 |
| Ethnic Fractionalization | 0.123 | 0.338 | 0.725 |
| Human Development Index | 0.055 | 1.136 | 0.963 |
| Total Social Spending per capita | -0.009 | 0.012 | 0.454 |
| Income Inequality (Gini) | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.323 |
| Constant | -0.152 | 1.152 | 0.899 |
| Number of Individuals | 14,328 | | |
| Number of Countries | 18 | d.f. = 9 | |
| Country-Level Variance Component | 0.038 | $\chi^2 = 401.434$ | $p < 0.001$ |

Restricted maximum likelihood estimation. **Bold** indicates significant at the .05 level.

*Source*: Latinobarometer 2005; Norris Democracy Cross-National Data 2008.