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HOW POPULIST LEADERS ARE ELECTED: LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

Populism is a political phenomenon that has occurred throughout all regions of the world and has spanned many different time periods. It is a political movement that advocates for the will of the common person by opposing what is presented as a corrupt elite. Although populism has historically varied in certain characteristics, such as ideology, a country can predict the likelihood of the election of a populist leader by examining the economic and political trends that predate the election. The focus of this paper is Latin America, the region of the world most affected by populism. Specifically, three case studies are presented: Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Later, a case study of Donald Trump in the United States demonstrates that certain economic and political trends within the state go beyond the boundaries of Latin America and remain true in different regions of the world.

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Introduction

What is Populism?

Defining Populism

From the 1860s and 1870s socialist Narodnik movement that unsuccessfully attempted “going to the people” to create a revolution of the poor against the Marxist movement in Russia to the November 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump in the United States, populism has affected countries around the world for centuries. In the United States, the effects of the racist populist People’s Party (1892-1900) played a part in the development of the *de facto* and *de jure* segregation such as the Jim Crow Laws during the early twentieth century (Robert Levine, 7). In Europe, populism first appeared during the inter-war years through peasant movements in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and during a movement in France by Pierre Poujade in the 1950s, but became more common after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 6). Populism has even had recent success in parts of Africa and Asia with election of leaders such as the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the Zambian President Michael Sata, and the former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 7). However, of all of the regions of the world that have been affected by populism, none have seen such a powerful effect as Latin America. Latin America has experienced countless populist leaders and movements such as José María Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador, Peronism in Argentina, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Fernando Collor de Mello, Gertúlio Vargas, and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in

Brazil, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and Evo Morales in Bolivia. Few countries in Latin America have escaped the effects of populism and populist movements in the last few centuries.

Populism is a movement that advocates for the will of the common person by opposing what is presented as a corrupt elite. Populist movements identify an enemy, either real or imagined – for example Communists, landowners, corrupt political insiders, anti-nationalist foreign imperialism, inner city minorities, Muslims and/or immigrants – and use their threat and their outside status to build links with the commoner. Additionally, populists promise to spend money, purportedly to create equality, but often this is a means to reward support. Populism can appear differently depending on time periods and nations, it can be a left-wing or right-wing movement, it can take the form of a democratic or an authoritarian movement. Despite the discrepancies across location, time, or ideology, the core of populism lies in the division between the elite and the people who wish to acquire power – or have a powerful leader who gains access to power in their name – that they feel the elite is keeping from them. Like fascism, the variety in populist movements creates difficulty in defining and characterizing populism, but amidst the discourse these characteristics remain true.

Historically, populism has manifested itself in different ways in varying regions around the world; populism can be either right-wing or left-wing and can cover many different ideologies. The core of populism is based on three concepts: the people, the elite, and the general will (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 5). The general will of the people can be adopted from any ideology and varies with the time and characteristics of the elite leadership that the people are desiring to oppose. Both left-wing and right-wing populism have appeared in Canada; first left-wing populism dominated from the 1930s to the 1960s, but since then right-wing populism has become predominant (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 6). Populist movements also vary in how essential

a leader is to the movement. In Western democracies, populism is often expressed with a prominent leader that takes control through a political party (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 7). This connection between leader and political party has been seen with Pauline Hanson and One Nation in Australia, Jean-Marie Le Pen and the National Front (FN) in France, Silvio Berlusconi and Forza Italia in Italy, and Geert Wilders and the Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 8). Alternately, when the Danish populist leader Karel Dillen passed away, the Belgian Flemish Interest (VB) with which he was associated continued to grow without his leadership (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 8).

United States populism has also formed without the guidance of a leader. There are examples of populist leaders in the United States, such as Governor Huey Long of Louisiana, but more often populist movements in the US have been leaderless (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). The Populists of the 1800s were typically organized in scattered regions, and in 1896, the Populist Party did not have a presidential candidate, so they were obligated to support someone outside of their party for the elections that year (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). More recently, the right-wing Tea Party and the left-wing Occupy Wall Street movement have both correctly identified as a populist movement, but neither have had a distinct leader, and Occupy Wall Street even prides itself on its leaderless status (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). This example of leaderless populism also occurs around the world occasionally, such as the protests against the 'stuttgart 21' project in Germany, the White Marches in Belgium, the anti-austerity-measures protests in Europe and Israel, and the protests that make up the current Arab Spring (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). While it is true that these movements have not had the same longevity compared to that of movements with strong leaders, they are still important to note.

Many different groups and academics have labeled leaders or movements as “populist” and have tried to identify for themselves how the topic of populism should be best approached. The field of political science introduced one view of populism by looking at the movements and policies that it inspires. This view seeks to define populism by examining the anti-establishment movements and the various economic policies that these movements adopt (Roberts 2016; Roberts 1995; Weyland 1996). By comparison, some economists chose to create boundaries for what constitutes populism by studying the flow of money and economic policies of regimes (Roberts 2016; Dornbusch and Edwards 1991; Edwards 2010). There are also politicians and political analysts that have used the term to condemn political leaders or to “claim democratic credentials,” (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 2). This leads various different groups of academics, politicians, and journalists to see populist leaders or movements in a different light. For example, a political scientist, an economist, and a politician might all look at a particular populist like Hugo Chávez in very different light. The political scientist might seek to study Hugo Chávez through his harsh critiques of the corrupt Venezuelan government and how that created such a strong support from his loyal *chavistas*. An economist might focus on the Bolivarian Missions, a set of social programs enacted by Chávez in the hopes of redistributing wealth to the poor and indigenous people of Venezuela. A politician or political analyst might look at Chávez’s speeches such as his address to the UN in 2006 (where he called President George W. Bush a devil) or his alliance with countries such as Cuba and then study how these aspects of his presidency affect democracy. When so many different groups have labeled leaders or movements as “populist,” it is important to examine the overarching themes and characteristics of these movements and leaders to develop an all-encompassing definition of populism.

In the Oxford bibliography titled “*Modern Populism in Latin America*” Luis Roniger identifies common characteristics of populism that reappear in most every examination include the bond of leader and masses, an emphasis on executive power overriding the division of power, legislation by decree, a politics of anti-politics, a general trend where political parties remain secondary to mass movements, and unfulfilled expectations of social change (Roniger). Although these characteristics seem to be far-reaching, they are all essential to defining and understanding populism as a whole.

Populism proves difficult to define because it begins with the people; yet unlike democracy, it need not be shaped or defined by the people. Populism is born out of the idealistic hopes of an oppressed group of people who do not often have the power to implement their ideas. This allows their desired leader to target an enemy and in many cases then frame their goals. In many cases the hope of the masses can often be misplaced in a leader unwilling or unable to implement the ideas of the larger group; this disconnect can lead to disappointment in the larger movement. For example, many people question whether or not Vargas truly cared about the labor unions and the poor of Brazil or if he simply used the oppression that people experienced as a stepping stone for political power. In his book, *Father of the Poor? Vargas and His Era*, Robert M. Levine points out a disconnect between what Vargas said he would accomplish and the actual policies and outcomes undertaken and accomplished by Vargas. This contradiction between the goals of the masses and the leader’s goals not only makes it difficult to define populism, but also difficult to define populist leaders once they take office. If the leaders do not fulfill the promises of the masses, or do not have the economic resources to do so, then the question arises of whether the leader should still be classified as a populist. This confusion

existed surrounding Yrigoyen in Argentina, and although he was originally considered a populist, many thought he deserved to lose that title throughout the course of his career.

The leaderless and left-leaning populist Occupy Wall Street movement, with its slogan “we are the 99 percent,” criticized the corrupt decisions of the economic elite and investment banks that devastated the lives of everyday Americans (Lowndes and Warren). The categorization of each movement relies on the ideologies of the people from which the movement is born, in this case the masses, who vary based on culture and time. In their work, “Populism and Political Leadership,” Cas Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasse attempt to find a link among populist movements, and they define populism as “an ideology or world view that assumes that society is characterized by a Manichean division between ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite,’” (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 1). Many populist movements gain momentum by demonizing the people in power and demanding the rights that they have not been given. One widely agreed upon characteristic of populism is that all forms “involve some kind of exaltation and appeal to ‘the people’, and all are in one sense or another anti-elitist,” (Roberts 2016; Canovan (1981: 294). Specifically, the elite are targeted as the enemy, and the demonization of the elite results in growth of the movement. This is seen throughout Latin American populism, and appears in each of the specific case studies that will be discussed in this paper. These examine several different periods of populist leadership in Latin America. In Argentina, the Peróns fought to represent the working class and to take away power from institutions, such as the church and the agrarian landowning elite, that they deemed repressive and elitist. In Brazil, Vargas’ constant appeal to the labor unions and his refusal to conform to the coffee exporting elite won him a large support from ‘the people’ of the country. In Venezuela, Chávez is constantly seen attacking the corruption within the nature of politics in Venezuela and in the imperialist strategies of the

western world; his efforts are intended to make it clear that he desires to give power and control back to the people of Venezuela.

Furthermore, Populist movements often portray themselves in the context of a David and Goliath story, where the populists represent the weaker but moral underdog that fights faithfully to take down the powerful and evil giant of the corrupt government. This definition demonstrates an idealistic idea where the ‘good’ is rising up to defeat the ‘evil’ that is keeping them down, leading us to believe, according to this definition, that the core of populism lies in its morals and ideals. Luis Roniger argues that populism is “a form of mass politics that claims to represent the common people,” (Roniger). This idea that populism represents the common people is essential to the definition of populism.

Cas Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasse offer very specific details of populism, outlining four conceptual approaches to defining the term. First, populism can be defined as a discourse or a set of ideas. This stresses that populism sees the political platform as one that should represent the common people who are taken advantage of by the establishment (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 3). Second, populism can be defined as a pathology. This is the idea that populism is a threat to democracy and can spread with the same nature as a disease. The nature of the disease, say Kaltwasse and Mudde, is the distance between the populist leaders and the common people they try to help through solutions that are oversimplified and authoritarian (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 3). Third, populism can be defined as a political style that can be employed by a political leader. The aim of this populist ‘style’ is for the leader to stay connected with their constituents through emotional means that may not truly solve problems (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 4). Last, populism can be defined as a strategy that politicians can use. This strategy helps the political leader to gain power through the support of their large governing body (Weyland 2001: 14).

This paper uses a combination of the discourse and style approaches to define populism. This is because defining populism according to pathology disguises the effects of populism as a definition. It is arguably more important to discuss the causes of a populist movement in the definition rather than its effects, as the causes are essential to the movement and the effects will most likely be starkly different in every situation, and not necessarily a 'disease'. The strategy approach is similar to the style approach, but it assumes the motives of the movement to be the manipulation for power. It is impossible to know the true motives of the leaders of populist movements, and as noted above there are often no leaders to employ a strategy of any kind against the people. Instead, the discourse and style approaches are the best way to interpret populism. Populism as a discourse accounts for the point that populism begins with the masses and contains a set of ideas that causes the 'people' to rise up against the establishment. Employing only this approach does not account for the important aspect of leaders in populism, especially as many of the populist movements gained strength through following a leader who promised to bring equality for those wronged in the past. That is why a broad definition of populism works best; specifically, the discourse approach must be combined with the style approach, which thus takes into account the numerous populist leaders and how the ideals of populism can also be closely tied to their leaders. An essential part of populism is how the leaders and followers interact to try and accomplish their goals of providing rights for the 'people'.

Therefore, taking into account the previously stated definitions of populism and the approaches in defining populism, the best definition of populism remains to be a movement that advocates for the will of the common person by opposing a corrupt elite. Although movements such as these have occurred all over the world, an important place to study populism because of

the multitude of cases is Latin America. This paper examines three Latin American populists, so it is necessary to discuss the history of populism in Latin America as a whole before beginning the discussion of each specific case.

History of Latin American Populism

Populism has been more common in Latin America than other parts of the world. The study of populism, especially in Latin America, became more frequent in the middle of the twentieth century. Scholars have attempted to understand the various governing styles in Latin America, especially those that adopted some socialist ideas. Yet, “populism” as a term was made famous by Gino Germani in 1971, as he distinguished populism from authoritarianism (Roniger; Germani 1971). As continued in his studies, he also created two categories of Latin American populism: liberal populism and national populism (Roniger; Germani 1978). Generally, liberal populism is seen when the middle class stands up and demands political participation; usually the lower class is small or unable to come together in this case. National populism, such as Peronism, is seen when the lower class is the one to mobilize and their demands are political, social, and economic.

In current discourse, Latin American populism is typically divided into ‘three waves of populism’ (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 7). First is the classic populism of the 1930s and 1960s, of which one example is the Peróns in Argentina. A second “populism” is that of the neo-liberal populism during the 1990s, one example is Alberto Fujimori in Peru. A final “populism” is the radical leftist populism from 2000 onward, with a prime example seen in Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. Just as these distinctions are important to understand, it is also important to note that

even within one region or even one country, populism can change over time. When studying populism, it is essential to have a broad view of cases around the world and throughout time before studying individual cases. With this background, we can now move to a discussion of historical context and history of three Latin American populists, which are the focus of this study. These involve the Peróns in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.

Latin American populism differs from populism in other regions of the world because of the strong presence of charismatic and powerful leaders, often known as *caudillos* (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 7). The word '*caudillo*' comes from the Latin word for head (*caput*), which alludes to the leadership that these *caudillos* had and the importance of that leadership (Lynch 1992). *Caudillos* are political or military leaders in Latin America, and have even been characterized as dictators. While it is true that *caudillos* typically take an authoritarian approach to exercising power, they are not always considered dictators. '*Caudillos*' seek to make themselves central to their movements so that they cannot be separated from the power they hold. These individual leaders have been able to monopolize power and portray themselves as the 'unified will of the people', (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 7). One example of a *caudillo* in Latin America is Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793-1877) from Argentina (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 11). He is commonly credited as one of the first *caudillos*, ruling by exercising a personal power comparable to authoritarianism (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 11). He was a controversial militia leader who converted into a politician, and he advocated for provincial rights and more traditional social structures within the Federalist Party to oppose the Unitarians so strongly that he helped to cause civil wars that made many Argentinians flee the country (Shumway). While some historians do consider Rosas to be an early populist, it is important to note that a *caudillo* and a populist leader are not synonymous.

Latin American populism has been known to have a greater number of *caudillo*-type leaders than other regions in the world, but not every Latin American leader or populist leader can be characterized as a “*caudillo*.” Thus, Latin American populism (and populism as a whole) should not be defined by or equated to the authoritarian nature of a *caudillo*. In fact, many populist leaders have supported democracy within their countries and do not employ authoritarian strategies to maintain power (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 11). Although *caudillos* are not synonymous with populist leaders in Latin America, they are still important to recognize because populist leaders in Latin America have been influenced by *caudillo*-style tactics even if they were not considered *caudillos* themselves.

Historically, *caudillos* within populist movements in Latin America have employed many different strategies to achieve power and try to fulfill the will of the people. They are usually very charismatic individuals who use this charisma and opportune situations to rise to power. For example, economic crises, a political vacuum, or mass social protests have been known to help *caudillos* rise to power (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 2, 10). Usually upsets such as these cause social crises and trigger people to call for change. These populist leaders, especially those associated with authoritarian tactics, often come to power when people trade their freedoms for security and hope of a better future. Although populist leaders do not always abuse their power, populist leaders in Latin America are not typically motivated to promote democratic ideals. Typically, populist *caudillos* support the incorporation of marginalized sectors into society and defend (the realization of) elections, but they can suppress certain freedoms when they threaten or oppose populism (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012). Populism and *caudillos* within populist movements are central to Latin America’s history. Countless times, populist movements in Latin America have

brought together different socioeconomic classes to demand social justice. Thus the charismatic populist leaders have frequently given a crucial voice to those who have felt oppressed.

Chapter 1 – History

Argentina - Juan and Evita Perón

Trail to Argentine Populism

Even more than other Latin American nations, the history of Argentina has been saturated with populism. Argentina has had not one wave of populism, but two distinct populist movements: Radicalism and Peronism. Founded by Juan Domingo Perón and his wife, Evita Perón, Peronism in particular has shaped every aspect of Argentine life since its inception. The causes of these movements can be found in the economic and political history of Argentina in the decades leading up to the birth of these populist movements.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Argentina experienced incredible economic growth. Argentina became the richest country in Latin America due to its comparative advantage in supplying agricultural goods such as meat and grain to the North Atlantic. Beginning in 1895 – with the exception of two brief recessions in 1899 and 1907 – the gross national product increase by about 6 percent a year (Rock, 165). This was reflected by the growth of agriculture between 1895 and 1914; farmland increased from 5 million to 24 million hectares, the wheat acreage tripled, the corn acreage quadrupled, and the linseed acreage quintupled (Rock, 165). Argentina had such great success economically because of its superior land (the fertile lands of the Pampas were some of the best in the world), the new technological advances such as the steam vessel (able to ship goods faster and more reliably), and a process for chilling meat that not only kept produce fresh, thus making it transportable from Buenos Aires to London, but also the meat was

dry aged during transport, and arrived in Europe more flavorful and more marketable than European meat (Horowitz, 23; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 240).

In addition to the economy, Argentina's population was also in rapid growth. The population rose from 3.9 million in the 1985 national census to 7.8 million in the 1914 census (Rock, 165). The population increase was also due to improved living standards that cause a rising birthrate and a falling death rate (Rock, 165). Additionally, the economic wealth of Argentina had attracted a large number of immigrants who were able to help build railroads and other types of infrastructure in order to increase the amount of goods that Argentina could export (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 240; Horowitz, 23). In fact, between 1905 and 1913, the annual balance of immigrants over emigrants exceeded 100,000, and by 1914 about a third of Argentina's people were foreign-born and around 80 percent of the population consisted of immigrants and those descended from immigrants since 1850 (Rock, 166).

Thus, in many aspects, Argentina was prospering. Yet in other ways, the rapidly changing Argentinian society created inequality between social classes. The middle class in Buenos Aires had grown to be the largest group of its kind in Latin America – around 40,000 people and four-fifths immigrants (Rock, 175). The working class in Buenos Aires contained about 400,000 people, three-quarters of them immigrants (Rock, 175). A widespread problem in the working class was the lack of adequate housing; about four-fifths of the working class lived in one-room apartments (Rock, 175). The gap between the conditions of the working class and the elite became more apparent during this time, and many in the working class became frustrated with their conditions.

Despite the changes in the economy which caused the development of a middle and working class, the government was still controlled by elites who manipulated the voting system

and put forth a false front of democracy (Horowitz, 23). This rampant fraud seen throughout Argentine politics created an unsettled feeling among people who felt slighted. The three groups that were most commonly unhappy during this era were the newly prosperous landowners, the old aristocratic families that did not benefit from the economic growth, and the industrial and middle classes who were consistently left out of politics (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 245). These three groups came together in 1890, attempting an armed revolt because of their disdain for the contemporary political system (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 246). Although the rebellion was ended easily, the groups changed gears in early 1890s to form the *Unión Cívica Radical* (UCR) in order to try to develop a way to participate directly in the government (Tamarin, 32). The first form of populism in Argentina, that is Radicalism, began out of the formation of this political party.

Hipólito Yrigoyen was one of the first leaders of the UCR, and he quickly gathered an almost cult-like following by stressing change, dispensing patronage, and creating jobs (Horowitz, 23-24). Through Yrigoyen, the UCR was able to bring together the middle class in a moral fight for representative democracy that had not been provided for them through the oligarchy currently running Argentina (Tamarin, 33). Because of this following, Yrigoyen is often cited as an early populist leader in Argentina. In 1916, Yrigoyen won the first open presidential election in Argentina (Horowitz, 25). He met his first crisis as president in 1918-19 when labor strikes broke out throughout the world because of the reduced buying power of their wages (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 246). In 1920, the *Liga Patriótica Argentina*, a ultra-rightist civilian paramilitary group, began attacking workers in the streets and shooting protesters to once again repress the labor movement in Argentina through fear (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 246). Where originally the Yrigoyen government had taken a pro-labor stance before taking office, it

became clear that he only supported the working class in an effort to gain votes. When the violence from the labor strikes threatened the public opinion of him, his administration no longer supported the strikes and even supported some of the violence against the protesters (Horowitz, 26). By mid-1921, the strikes threatened to reduce export earnings and undermine his coalition, and Yrigoyen ended all support to the labor groups on strike (Horowitz, 26). Due to Yrigoyen's tendency to only support the urban working class to gain votes, many historians have debated whether or not Yrigoyen was a populist or just a popular leader. Soon, both socialism and communism began to gain popularity as a reaction to the right-wing movements in the hopes of changing the injustices of Argentine capitalism and protecting the labor union movement (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 246). The constitution did not allow Yrigoyen to be reelected, so in the next presidential election of 1922, the momentum of the leftist movements aided the Radicals to elect their choice, Marcelo R. De Alvear (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 247; Horowitz, 26). The Radicals continued to dominate politically through the next presidential election in 1928, at which point Yrigoyen was reelected to the presidency and the Radicals dominated both houses in Congress (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 247). By this time, it seemed that Yrigoyen had abandoned his populist ideals in favor of any platform that would gain him reelection.

Many groups started to feel threatened by the political power that the Radicals possessed, and on September 6, 1930, the military overthrew Yrigoyen, claiming that a coup was necessary because Yrigoyen had accomplished little and that some thought he was senile and unable to run the government (Horowitz, 27; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 247). These military officers thought that if they could overthrow Yrigoyen, that power would again return to the aristocrats and that the class struggle would disappear (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 247). This began a

wave of conservative governments from 1932 to 1943 that tried to appear democratic, but in reality used fraud to stay in power (Horowitz, 27). Again, Argentina was ruled by elites who were corrupt and distant from the middle and working classes.

This proved to be a severe problem when the elite introduced Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) to combat the Great Depression because this new policy increased the size of the urban working class immensely (Horowitz, 27). This expansion of the working class was different than the expansion of the middle class during the economic boom of the early twentieth century because the 1940s working class was more literate than before (they were now about ninety percent literate), more mobile because they only recently arrived into the cities from the countryside, and a higher percentage of the working class was Argentinian (in contrast to the European immigrants before) (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). As the urban working class increased but were still unnoticed and uncared for by the political elite, the number of unions increased to protect the rights of the workers. Unfortunately, these unions were not always effective because employers did not negotiate with unions and the government was inconsistent with its duty of mediating labor disputes (Horowitz, 27).

Rise of Peronism

In June of 1943, a group of military officers that was opposed to unions and communists seized power from president Ramón Castillo (Horowitz, 29; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). The government took over unions and closed labor confederations, and it became nearly impossible to call strikes (Horowitz, 29). Soon, a group of army officers began to summon different union leaders to figure out the goals of the workers, and Juan Domingo Perón emerged

from this group of officers (Coniff, 29). Juan Domingo Perón was from a middle class family, and had risen through the ranks of the Argentine army to the rank of colonel (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). He became a great force in the army by late 1943 after taking an active part in the movement that seized power from Ramón Castillo, and he soon became vice president and minister of war, an ambitious move for an officer (Horowitz, 29; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). His real influence began when he became secretary of labor in 1943 (Navarro, 50). Perón became the head of the National Department of Labor in October 1943, and although some were confused why he chose this department since its powers were limited, Perón was able to use this position to win over the working class (Horowitz, 29-30).

About a month later, Perón converted the National Department of Labor into the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security, which gave him more power and jurisdiction at the national level (Horowitz, 30). Perón used his influence to create policies that won over unions through giving the unions assistance that helped them and through repressing organizations that did not cooperate with him (Horowitz, 30). When Perón spoke, he emphasized the importance of unions, and continued to build trust with the working class that the military was unable to build themselves (Horowitz, 30).

On October 9, 1945, the military officers that became threatened by the working class' growing attachment to Perón forced Perón to resign from his positions of minister of war, vice president, and secretary of labor (Horowitz, 31-32; Navarro, 51). Before Perón was forced out, he made a speech at a worker's rally that announced several measures that favored labor, but this angered the military and they threw him in jail in Marín García Island on October 13 (Navarro, 51). The workers who were loyal to Perón became outraged at his being taken out of power, and they began to assemble to demand his release (Navarro, 51). On October 15, sugar workers in

Tucumán went on strike, an action that inspired the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) to vote for a general strike on the 18th (Navarro, 51; Horowitz, 32). On the morning of the 17th, thousands of industrial workers decided to strike early and they left their jobs to flood Buenos Aires to demand Perón's release (Navarro, 51). Finally, the military released Perón, and he appeared on a balcony of the Casa Rosada later that night and spoke to the protestors (Navarro, 51; Horowitz, 32). Two important effects that developed out of the events of October 17th were the bond between Perón and the working class and Perón representing the collective will of the working class of Argentina (Horowitz, 33; Navarro, 52). This helped pave the way for his presidency.

Perón Presidency

In February of 1946, Perón was not expected to win the presidential election due to his unorthodox methods of campaigning, but he won with 52.4% of the vote (Horowitz, 33). He received 1,527,231 votes out of a total of 2,734,386 despite the fact that he was up against an array of ideologically different political parties that were united against him, including the opposition of the United States (Navarro, 53). In addition to the presidency, his party won all the Senate seats, a large majority of the Chamber of Deputies, and all but two of the provincial governorships (Navarro, 53). Because of this, Perón was able to immediately enact policies without much opposition. Perón enacted a new system where Argentina would be organized according to functional groups (industrialists, farmers, and workers), and the government would be a final mediator of conflict between different groups (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). He also released a new Five-Year Economic plan in which the *Instituto Argentino de Promoción del*

Intercambio (IAPI), a new foreign trade institute, was given an incredible amount of power through a state monopoly over the export of key agricultural crops (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). This gave Argentina “the most state-directed economic policy this far seen in twentieth century Latin America,” (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251).

Throughout Perón’s first term, he made sure to stay in the good graces of the urban workers and used power of the industrialists and armed forces (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). He continued the tactics he developed during his time as the secretary of labor to encourage strikes and get the government on the side of the laborers to earn their favor (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). Perón ensured that the urban workers were his priority, and through his new policies real hourly wage rates increased 25 percent in 1947 and 24 percent in 1948 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). Also between 1946 and 1950, labor’s share of the national income grew 25 percent (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). The people that grew unhappy with these changes were the landowners because the IAPI bought their land and capital at low, fixed prices (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). Because of all of these changes, the GDP grew by 8.6 percent in 1946, by 12.6 percent in 1947, and by 5.1 percent in 1948 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 251). Perón’s strategy of appealing to the workers seemed to be working well.

Another reason that Perón’s administration gained immense support was due to his wife, Evita Perón. Eva (Evita) Duarte de Perón met Perón in 1944, an actress at the time, and quickly became interested in politics (Horowitz, 35). When Perón became president, she became essential in the ministry of labor, even though she never held a post (Horowitz, 35). She was the one who helped the unions accomplish their goals and helped fulfill the promises that Perón had made to the working class. In 1947, she opened the Evita Perón Foundation that helped to manage orphanages, build hospitals, organize boys’ soccer tournaments, and many more social

programs and community building events (Horowitz, 36). This foundation helped Evita to be more accessible to the people, and increased the people's bond and love for her (Horowitz, 36). She was also extremely influential in helping women get the right to vote in Argentina in 1947 (Horowitz, 36). Evita created a separate Peronist women's party that grew to all parts of the country and helped Perón greatly in succeeding elections (Horowitz, 36). This in itself is an example of populism within the Perón regime because they created a group of voters that were indebted to them by giving them a voice they did not previously have.

Then in 1949, Argentina experienced the first trade deficit since the end of WWII, inflation doubled within a year and rose to 31 percent, and a severe drought ruined many of the exportable goods (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). Despite these changes, Perón was still reelected to a second term as president in 1951, after he had amended the constitution so that he could be reelected (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). He won with 67 percent of the 6.9 million votes and was favored heavily by women because he had given them the right to vote in 1947 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). However, due to the declining economy Perón became more and more authoritarian, and began to heavily oppress those who spoke out against the regime, such as *La Prensa*, the leading opposition newspaper that was expropriated in 1951 (Horowitz, 33; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). Some people that supported Perón during his first term because of the economic prosperity began to oppose him (Horowitz, 37).

Evita, who had become comparably loved and influential to him by the people, fell ill with cancer and died in July of 1952, devastating Perón and Argentina as a whole (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). Evita had been a source of strong advice for Perón while she was alive, and once she died the repression intensified as he seemed drunk on power (Horowitz, 37). It is possible that Evita had been the face of populism in the Perón administration, and her death

simply revealed a desire for power that Perón had possessed all along. Through Evita's work in the government, her creation of the Eva Perón Foundation, and her support of women's suffrage, she was able to meet people's needs through social services and acquire immense support from the masses (Navarro, 114, 131, 133). Without Evita's focus on these groups, the Perón administration began to lose popular support. In 1952, Perón's advisors proposed a second Five-Year Plan that created a contract with Standard Oil of California in 1945 to increase foreign capital, had new incentives to agriculture, and asked workers to accept a wage freeze for two years so that the government could invest and improve the economy (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 252). Perón tried to regrow the economy by reversing some of his older policies, but only angered all parts of society, as no social class could gain in the stagnant economy without harming another class (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 253).

In 1954, Perón tried to drastically redefine Argentina's cultural view of itself, distancing the Catholic Church, a very powerful organization in Argentina (Horowitz, 36). The Peronist radicals legalized divorce, mandated that all parochial schools would be under government control, and staged massive demonstrations in 1955 against the Church, even burning down famous cathedrals in Buenos Aires (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 254). By this time, the entire country of Argentina was incredibly tense, and everyone adopted extreme views (Horowitz, 37). The social classes and the church threatened to take down Perón's regime, and it was the battle between Perón and the Catholic Church in September of 1955 that gave the military grounds to tell President Perón to step down or to face civil war (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 254; Horowitz, 37). Perón did not want war, so he retreated to the refuge of Paraguayan gunboat that gave him asylum across the Paraná river (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 254).

Even though Perón was sentenced to exile, he still continued to wield his influence. Many people were still loyal Peronists, but were split in whom they favored politically; so Perón supported different candidates here and there, making sure not to let anyone gain enough power to surpass him (Horowitz, 38). In 1966, the military seized power again and began to “restructure” and “rationalize” the economy by banning politics and taking away power from the unions (Horowitz, 38). In the late 1960s the urban class, frustrated with the political and economic situation, began to riot violently, the worst of the riots in Cordobazo in 1969 which lasted two days and left more than sixty people dead (Horowitz, 38). These riots undermined the military regime, and people looked back to Perón to bring back the political and economic stability that they experienced during his first term as president (Horowitz, 38). The military wanted to stop the violent riots, so they agreed to have elections in March 1973 (Horowitz, 38). In the election, Perón supported Héctor J. Cámpora, the candidate from the Judicial Liberalist Front, a Peronist coalition (Donghi and Eidt). Cámpora won the election and allowed Perón to return from exile (Donghi and Eidt). When Perón returned via the Ezeiza International Airport in June, there was a gunfight between the right-wing and left-wing Peronists due to the tension that had grown over the fight for influence once Perón returned (Donghi and Eidt). In July 1973, Cámpora resigned, and Perón was reelected to the presidency and took office in October 1973 (Donghi and Eidt). Once Perón regained the presidency, he was faced with an enormous amount of work to fix the economy and to reconcile the left and right groups of Argentina (Horowitz, 38). He would never get the chance to fail or succeed as after only about eight months in office, Perón passed away and was not able to complete his third term as president (Horowitz, 38).

Traits of Argentine Populism

In general, populists in Argentina tried to not consider themselves as class-based (Horowitz, 23). Instead, they focused on acquiring social justice for the working class, allying with unions, integrating the poor into society, and building a strong state with power focused on the president (Horowitz, 23). Usually, the populist message promised change to bring social justice, but not change that would alter the nature of society (Horowitz, 23). Argentine populism was true to the idea of the “pure people” rising up against the “corrupt elite.” Populist leaders in Argentina tended to be incredibly charismatic and had a nationalistic style by referencing native traditions of the country (Horowitz, 23).

For example, Yrigoyen gained power as a populist by speaking about altering society without changing the underlying nature of the hardworking urban class (Horowitz, 25). It became apparent that Yrigoyen only supported the working class to gain power, but nevertheless his tactics as a populist proved to be nationalistic. On the other hand, Perón completely embodied these characteristics as a tall and commanding figure, a powerful speaker, and a charming man who had genuine charisma (Horowitz, 29). Perón had the ability to navigate himself through the ranks of the military and the government, but he did not manipulate his way into the presidency; he won the support from the working class and the unions and occupied the presidency through legitimate means (Horowitz, 29). Later on in his career, mainly his second presidential term, Perón made more decisions to keep power for himself and oppress his opponents rather than rule democratically (Horowitz, 33). This makes some question Perón’s motivations in helping the working class. It is difficult to see Perón’s real motivations because he was indeed influenced by European ideologies such as Fascism, and wanted order, but he also had a great desire for power that he wanted to keep to himself (Horowitz, 29).

It is impossible to speak of Argentine populism without also talking about Evita Perón. Her work attributed greatly to create the populist regime that is called Peronism today. Her charismatic relationship with the people was a huge factor in Argentine politics that lived on past even her death, Perón's exile, and his eighteen-year exile (Navarro, 47). She was loved by large portions of the poor classes and worked tirelessly to obtain rights for the unions and working class (Horowitz, 35). When she kept working even though she was sick with cancer, she was idolized as the motherless woman who became a mother to the people of Argentina and sacrificed her life for the happiness and wellbeing of the downtrodden (Navarro, 62). Many even lifted her up so much that they saw her as an almost saint (Horowitz, 36). She was seen as a beautiful, virgin-like figure, whose mission was to give herself to others even to the point of her death (Navarro, 62). Even now in Argentina she is still found on paraphernalia, an iconic figure that is celebrated and loved. Without her contribution to Perón's presidency, less people would call his regime a populist one. Many attribute the populist nature of the Perón administration solely to Eva because she was the one who gained the support of many women in Argentina, the working class, and the poor. Without Evita's relationship with Argentinian society, Perón may not have been categorized as a populist at all.

Together, Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón exemplified both populist techniques and characteristics of Argentine populism. The Peróns advocated for the will of the common person through their support of the working class and through Evita's charity work and backing of women's suffrage. They also opposed a corrupt elite by making an enemy of the oligarchy and military dictatorships that governed Argentina. They spent money to support the urban working class and unions, aid the poor of the country, and give women the right to vote. Only with the decline of the economy during Perón's second term did he not have the money necessary to

continue a populist administration, and it transformed into an authoritarian administration. Still, the admiration and vast following that the Peróns obtained from the Argentinian people, especially from the working class, demonstrates the success of the populist tactics of the Peróns. True to Argentinian populism, Perón used charisma to garner the support of the working class through creating an enemy of the oligarchy, and he and Evita both focused on bringing social justice to the poor in society while still focusing the power on the president. The Peronist movement that arose from their leadership used populist strategies that still leave an effect on Argentina's society.

Lasting Effects

Even after Evita died in 1952 and Perón was exiled in 1955, there was significant support for Peronism. Perón's populist regime proved one that would stay to influence Argentine society for decades beyond his actual presidency. After Perón was exiled, there was a divide in society between those who stayed loyal to Perón and those who believed that Peronism needed to be wiped out from Argentina entirely (Horowitz, 37). Even today, Peronism is still controversial, but there remains steady support for the Peróns and the work they did for the urban class, the poor, and unions. Many different military regimes that came before and after Perón could not stop his influence and his effect on Argentina. Even when symbols and images of Perón were banned and Peronists were not allowed to take part in elections or hold office after Perón's exile, resistance movements emerged to continue to fight for Peronism in Argentina (Horowitz, 37-38). Some effects of the radical and Peronist populism in Argentina have been a larger role of the state in the economy, a bloated bureaucracy, and a disdain for military intervention (Horowitz,

40). Although populism has affected the state's role in the economy, the expansion of the state sector has decreased slightly since the times of Yrigoyen and Perón because traditional populism does not go along with that type of economy (Horowitz, 41).

Argentine populism has left a lasting legacy in the culture, society, and political style of Argentina. There is still a trend of strong party leaders, a reluctance to accept other parties as legitimate political contenders, and many parts of society do not trust Peronism because they do not have faith that the ideals promised by Peronists will be delivered (Horowitz, 42). In all, populism helped to create the idea of the moral oppressed people rising up against the corrupt opposition, where anyone who opposed the Peronist movement lacked moral virtues (Horowitz, 42). Populism brought together many people to fight for social justice, but it also created many divisions in society and caused many to fear the power that Peronism held (Horowitz, 42). It seems that the scars of populism in Argentina may never completely go away and that the country will always be affected by its history of populism.

Brazil - Getúlio Vargas

Trail to Brazilian Populism

After Brazil's independence in 1822, a number of products like sugar, rubber, and coffee competed to be the most lucrative export; overall, however, coffee proved to be the most influential export economically in the post independence era (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 306). In the nineteenth century, coffee began to be produced in copious amounts because of the ideal environment Brazil provided for its growth (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 306). In the 1890s, coffee exports grew remarkably, and in 1901 Brazil was exporting about 15 million sacks of

coffee, nearly three-quarters of the world's supply (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 306). At the beginning of the twentieth century, coffee made up about one half of Brazil's foreign exchange, and coffee's economic dominance also began to dominate Brazil's social life, frequently accompanying meetings or social gatherings (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 306-307).

The prosperity of such a strong economy also came with risks for Brazil. One risk was the risk of overproducing coffee due to the difficulty of predicting the future market when trees had to be planted (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 308). This was because it was necessary to predict the demand of the market six years in advance before planting trees (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 308). There was also a variation in the world market when disasters like the Great Depression struck and brought the price of coffee down from 22.5 cents a pound to 8 cents a pound (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 308). The Great Depression also revealed that Brazil was only relying on a few customers (the United States, Britain, and Germany), and when those customers could not buy coffee, it devastated the Brazilian economy (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 308). Furthermore, Brazil slowly started to lose its monopoly on coffee in the twentieth century, with its share of the world market in 1900 (75%) declining to 67% in 1930 and 35% in 1970, where it has since leveled out (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 308). Brazil's strong history with coffee has made it incredibly vulnerable; when the coffee prices are high, Brazil is doing well, but if the coffee prices plummet, then the national outlook is grim (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 307).

After Brazil gained its independence from Portugal in 1822, it remained a constitutional monarchy until 1889 when the emperor, Pedro II, was removed from office by the military. At this time, Brazil became a secular federal republic that was focused on economic liberalism, but ruled dictatorially until 1898 (Robert Levine, 6). After 1898, the government was stabilized and

able to grow politically under the *paulistas*, the center-right Republican Party of São Paulo that brought the first modern republican movement in Brazil (Robert Levine, 6). The 1920s brought a wave of proto-populists, a group that supported the working class and the lower and middle class that were often overlooked by the government (Dombush and Sebastian, 43). This group was tired of conforming to a government that did not serve their needs, and used this passion to fire up crowds with flamboyant speeches and charged statements (Dombush and Sebastian, 43). Soon, a group of elected officials caught wind of this movement and also began to appeal to the masses. Among this group were Maurício Lacerda, Adolfo Bergamini, and João de Azevedo Lima, who began to appeal to the working and lower class by representing unions, employee associations, and the retired class so that they could find more people to support them in elections (Dombush and Sebastian, 43-44). The 1930 presidential election was a turning point in Brazilian history. The sudden appearance of populist leaders began to change politics and increased the number of people who wanted to be involved in the political process. The official candidate for the election was Júlio Prestes, and he ran against Getúlio Vargas, who appealed to the urban middle-class voters (Dombush and Sebastian, 44). Prestes won the election because most of the politicians decided to remain loyal to the politics already in place, but politics in the country would not stay in the status quo for long (Dombush and Sebastian, 44).

Rise of Vargas

Getúlio Dorneles Vargas, born on April 19, 1883, was not always involved with politics. At age twelve, he was sent to a military school in Ouro Preto, and eventually enlisted in the infantry in Rio Grande hoping to be appointed to the military academy in Rio Pardo (Robert

Levine, 14). In the beginning of the twentieth century when Brazil and Bolivia entered a boundary dispute over Acre, Vargas asked to be discharged so that he could attend law school (Robert Levine, 15). He was released from the military on the medical grounds that he had epilepsy, which was untrue (Robert Levine, 15). He did well at his law school in Porto Alegre, editing the school newspaper, *Debate*, and becoming active in the student republican faction (Robert Levine, 16). After his graduation in 1907, Vargas' father set him up with the position of assistant district attorney, and because he was well liked, he was elected to the state Chamber of Deputies in 1909 at the age of twenty-six (Robert Levine, 16). His reputation was a man that was well liked, but also one who procrastinated and was wary of what information he entrusted to others (Robert Levine, 16). In 1910, the nation had its first popularly contested election, and in 1922 Vargas was named the majority leader of the senate after he ran and won a seat (Robert Levine, 17-18).

After Vargas' defeat in the presidential election of 1930, many people began to complain about ballot stuffing (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 314). Tensions about this fraud increased until several state militias decided to march to the nation's capital, pressuring the federal military to dispose the sitting president and put Vargas into power as an interim president, who had waited to carry out a revolution at just the right time (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 314). The politicians that supported Vargas in the revolution joined him in his new government, but the confusion of the transfer of power combined with the New York stock market crash in 1929 made it difficult for Vargas' administration to become organized (Dombush and Sebastian, 44). A group of men that supported Vargas, but were now frustrated with his inability to accomplish anything formed the *Club 3 de Outubro*, a group named for the date that the revolution began (Dombush and Sebastian, 44). They called themselves *tenentes*, because many of the men were

former lieutenants, and they put pressure on Vargas for the nationalist reforms that they had fought for in the original revolution (Dombush and Sebastian, 44-45). Vargas chose to side with the *tenentes* briefly during 1931 and 1932 because he was afraid of losing power without them, but their measures to obtain the social changes they wanted soon became too aggressive for Vargas to support (Dombush and Sebastian, 45).

During this time, a *tenente* leader named Pedro Ernesto Baptista was becoming incredibly popular in Brazil. In 1931, he became Rio de Janeiro's mayor after becoming involved with the revolution in the 1920s, even though he was originally a talented surgeon in the city (Dombush and Sebastian, 45). He was fully supported by the *tenentes*, as he was also elected in 1931 to be their president, and his support in the next few years grew beyond the borders of Brazil as he was admired by many different politicians in other states (Dombush and Sebastian, 46). His success gained him popularity and also envy, and many police and investigators tried to take down Baptista by connecting him with communist conspirators in 1935 during the communist revolt (Dombush and Sebastian, 46). Although Baptista's warnings helped Vargas protect himself when the police rounded up numerous intellectuals and shut down the Federal District University, in 1936 Vargas allowed Baptista to be arrested on charges of conspiracy when unanswered letters were found written from the communist leader Luís Carlos Prestes to Baptista (Dombush and Sebastian, 47). One reason for this betrayal could have been the strong possibility of Baptista becoming Vargas' successor in 1938 (Dombush and Sebastian, 47).

However, before the 1938 election could occur, Vargas launched the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945). This was a period of dictatorship led by Vargas that began with Vargas broadcasting on the radio on November 10, 1937, that congress had been taken over by the military (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 317). In the morning of November 10th, Vargas gathered together his chosen

cabinet members for the coup and asked them to sign a new constitution (Robert Levine, 49). All but one cabinet member signed the constitution, and at 8 p.m., Vargas made his announcement of the coup (Robert Levine, 49). Many Brazilians easily accepted this coup because they desperately desired order and security (Robert Levine, 49). This dictatorship developed into a “legal hybrid combining elements of Salazar’s Portugal and Mussolini’s Italy,” (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 317). The government banned all paramilitary groups, but one such group, the Integralists, unsuccessfully tried to take down the Vargas dictatorship (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 317). Vargas dominated the political scene during his dictatorship, appointing himself to another presidency that would end in 1943, but then also used WWII as an excuse to call off the elections in 1943 so that he could stay in power (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 317-318).

In 1943 and 1944, Vargas changed his tactics because he thought that the end of WWII could bring a transition to democracy (Dombush and Sebastian, 47). He began to heavily support the workers in his speeches, and created the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) in 1943, which ensured workers that he was on their side (Dombush and Sebastian, 47). Vargas began to gain favor in the eyes of the general public through the media’s portrayal of him bestowing the masses with benefits, and he tried to capture this favor in 1945 by starting a new political party called the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) (Dombush and Sebastian, 47-48). This was the time where Vargas, the dictator, started to develop a politics of populism. However, in 1945 the army staged a coup against Vargas and he retreated in a self-imposed exile to his family ranch in Rio Grande do Sul (Dombush and Sebastian, 48). Vargas won a senate seat the following year, and moved back to Rio de Janeiro, but he stayed quiet until he was able to win back the favor of the public (Dombush and Sebastian, 48).

Vargas Presidency

In 1950, Vargas decided to run for president again in what became the “first truly modern election of the country” (Dombush and Sebastian, 48). This would be the first time that Vargas ran for presidency or held power as a populist. Vargas and his daughter did much work to ensure that he had enough approval to win. His daughter, Alzira, worked within the PTB in the feminine branch to ensure that Vargas held a lead in the polls among women because of Vargas’ hand in giving women the right to vote in 1932 (Dombush and Sebastian, 49). Vargas launched a two-month campaign in eighty-four cities to promote his image as a grandfatherly figure who was warm and well-liked (Dombush and Sebastian, 49). The results yielded that Vargas won 48 percent of the vote against his two opponents, and this was the highest plurality that Brazil had ever seen (Dombush and Sebastian, 50).

Throughout his presidency, Vargas implemented many plans that aligned with the promises he made to the masses. His economic policy was incredibly important to him, evident by how he almost immediately brought in a team of engineers, economists, and planners to devise a way to obtain capital and technology from public and private sources abroad (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 321). He also tried to promote a fair (or at least somewhat fairer) distribution of wealth (Dombush and Sebastian, 50). To do this he created a national bank that gave public loans to needy industries, he nationalized petroleum development in 1953 which led to more jobs held by the large company Petrobras, he tried (but failed) to nationalize electric power utilities to give more service to poor areas, and he devoted time to labor laws, social security, unemployment, and welfare (Dombush and Sebastian, 50).

Despite the progress that Vargas made, everything was made more difficult because of the economic and political state of the country (Dombush and Sebastian, 50). For example, the

military did not like the work he was doing with labor unions, and even his own support between the PTB-PSD coalition was weakening (Dombush and Sebastian, 50). Just as in any other populist regime, Vargas needed money to fulfill his populist promises. In 1952, a recession began in Brazil, and at this point, Vargas was sixty-two years old and not able to bounce back as quickly as he had before (Dombush and Sebastian, 50). Money is essential to any populist government, and without a strong economy, Vargas was not able to uphold his pledges to bring equality to the poor in Brazil. In just a few months, many people started to lose faith in the Vargas administration. In 1954, Vargas tried desperately to gain back popular favor. The minimum wage had not been increased since the Estado Novo had fixed the minimum wage in 1940, and Vargas went against his minister of finance and announced that the minimum wage would be increased 100 percent; higher than even the left-leaning redistributionist politicians had suggested (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 323). In fact, Vargas attempted to raise the minimum wage in 1954 from \$131 a month to \$252 a month (Robert Levine, 124). This promise increased inflation and caused the minimum wage to plummet, a decrease that lasted until 1992 when the minimum wage bottomed out at \$120 a month (Robert Levine, 124).

The tension rising because of the rise in minimum wage soon came to a climax due to the criticism against the Vargas administration. Of the many critics, Carlos Lacerda became the most famous for his outspoken disapproval of Vargas. At first, he wrote for the sensational press, but then he began writing for the *Tribuna da Imprensa*, a self-owned paper (Dombush and Sebastian, 51). With Lacerda's high intellect, uncompromising honesty, and eloquent speaking skills, he quickly became the spokesperson for the country's frustrations with the Vargas administration (Dombush and Sebastian, 51). Vargas became the main target of Lacerda's satire, and soon Vargas represented all things bad about the establishment (Dombush and Sebastian, 51). In a

desperate attempt to save Vargas' reputation, Vargas' bodyguard attempted to assassinate Lacerda in mid-1954 but missed and accidentally killed an air force major who was on security (Dombush and Sebastian, 51). Even though the bodyguard was most likely acting of his own accord, this scandal created a national campaign to take Vargas out of office which evolved into the military coup that caused Vargas to take his own life on August 24, 1954 (Dombush and Sebastian, 51).

Traits of Brazilian Populism

There are many similarities between populist leaders in Brazil including and before Vargas. First, even though the populist leaders in Brazil lived in the cities during their careers, almost all of them grew up in rural areas and provincial towns away from the city (Dombush and Sebastian, 60). Second, they had political influences from their fathers, but they usually forged their own trail instead of following their parents (Dombush and Sebastian, 60). Third, they were not prone to being religious or having a military life (Dombush and Sebastian, 60). Fourth, they were politically ambitious in that they got into politics early and did everything in their power to work their way up to executive offices (Dombush and Sebastian, 60-61). Fifth, they were charismatic and used their intelligence and speaking skills to motivate and persuade crowds (Dombush and Sebastian, 61). Sixth, they were good at, and enjoyed, campaigning and deliberating with opponents (Dombush and Sebastian, 61). Finally, they changed the rules in Brazil for how politicians get into office and hold office through their unorthodox means of campaigning, ability to shape voting behavior, and use of media, transportation, public relations, and efficient organization (Dombush and Sebastian, 61).

Many of these qualities apply very closely to Vargas. He was born in a small riverside frontier town near the Argentine border in Brazil, and got his first job through a connection with his father but branched out and rose through the ranks himself (Robert Levine, 13,16). He was not religious, and although he went to a military school, he did not have an interest in staying in the military and left for law school and then government work (Robert Levine, 16). Vargas was incredibly charismatic, and became the “best-known” and “most-liked” person in the country when he was campaigning in 1950 (Dombush and Sebastian, 49).

This was reflected in the 1930 presidential election; even though Vargas lost, his appeal to middle-class and urban voters made Brazilians discontent with Prestes as their leader (Dombush and Sebastian, 44). His campaigning in 1950 was unorthodox in that he stayed at his ranch until only a few months remained before the election, acting as if he needed to be coaxed back into politics, and then launched an extensive tour all over Brazil in just a few short months (Dombush and Sebastian, 48-49). During this campaign, his daughter helped to create Vargas’ image of a man who was not swayed or lured by the corrupt politicians, but who stayed fast to his promise and alliance to the common people (Dombush and Sebastian, 49). This image was supplemented with photographs and caricatures of Vargas that showed him casually relaxing on his farm in cowboy clothes while drinking the traditional yerba mate tea or smoking a cigar (Dombush and Sebastian, 49). This helped the common people to trust and relate to him, which was important to Vargas because of the people’s general distrust in the government. To the public, Vargas was a smiling man who was confident, thoughtful, and well-liked (Dombush and Sebastian, 49).

Vargas became a populist during his last campaign and presidency as he targeted the *paulista* landowners who he claimed only cared about coffee instead of the poor. He gained

support from the working class through the charismatic image he and his daughter worked to put forth, and promised to use money to bring social justice to the poor of Brazil. Ultimately, Vargas was not able to follow through on his promises in the way that most Brazilians hoped he would, but his populist style of campaigning and governing changed the rules for Brazilian politics for years to come. The rise of modernism in contemporary Latin American requires an assessment of modern populism that goes beyond the goal of this essay, but this is considered further below.

Lasting Effects

During the 1950s, populism changed the course of Brazil's history. Although it was short-lived, the reaction to populism was drastic. It not only changed the way that politics was done during that era, but also instilled fear in those who thought populism was dangerous for Brazil. After Vargas' suicide in 1954, Caretaker regimes, or temporary governments, ruled Brazil until Juscelino Kubitschek was elected to a full presidential term in 1955 with João Goulart, Vargas' former labor minister, elected as vice president because of the split-ticket electoral rules in Brazil (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 323). His main goal was economic stabilization, and his persistence in sticking to his economic plan despite pushback from crumbling alliances in Congress and pressure from the military created many problems for his successor (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 323). In 1961, Jânio Quadros was elected president, with João Goulart as vice president again (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 323-324). When Quadros mysteriously resigned in August of 1961, the military feared a populist government under Goulart, so they reached a compromise where Goulart would remain president with a new parliamentary system that kept Goulart accountable to Congress (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 324). Goulart's presidency grew

more complicated as inflation rose drastically by 1963; meanwhile, the military was taking brash measures to eliminate populism because they opposed the radical politics that they believed populism possessed (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 324; Dombush and Sebastian, 55-56).

In 1964, the military took over and did everything it could to completely wipe out populism once and for all (Dombush and Sebastian, 43). From 1964 to 1985, a series of authoritarian governments, headed by four-star generals, ruled Brazil (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 326). The authoritarian regimes tried to keep up some appearances of democracy like elections for congress, but if their power was threatened, all democracy was taken away so that they could stay in power (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 326). Voter turnout actually rose because voting was mandatory, but many people turned in blank ballots as a protest (Dombush and Sebastian, 58-59). However, the military did not work alone to accomplish all of this; the populists themselves were fighting so violently between themselves that they helped the military by suppressing each other (Dombush and Sebastian, 57). In the late 1960s until the late 1970s, the repression worsened, and populists lost their political rights and never recovered them (Dombush and Sebastian, 57-58).

In the late 1970s, political rights and a general amnesty was restored in Brazil (Dombush and Sebastian, 58). Thus began the slow process of healing in Brazil over the next decade that began with some of the exiles and populists being able to come home (Dombush and Sebastian, 58). In 1985, the army finally yielded to the citizens and turned over their power, only under the condition that none of the army officers could be tried for crimes that were committed during the dictatorship (Dombush and Sebastian, 58). By the late 1980s, there were weak and disorganized political parties, but analyses of the polls during the dictatorship showed that the voters grew in sophistication during the dictatorship, one of the reasons that political scientists were describing

Brazil as a model of the “new democracy” that was spreading all over the world by the 1990s (Dombush and Sebastian, 59). Looking back, it is evident that the rise of the military was in direct link to threats they felt from populist regimes. Historically, and even today, populism proves to be a charged topic that makes many with opposing views feel threatened. In the case of Brazil, as in many other cases, this has caused a drastic reaction from the military or other opposing forces to eliminate populism.

More recently in Brazil, populism has made a reappearance in the administration of Luiz Inacio (Lula) da Silva, but it has not come without resistance. Lula was elected to the presidency in 2002 as the first left-wing president in over 50 years, with attempts to run for presidential office three other times in 1989, 1994, and 1998 (BBC News, March 2016; Telesur). Lula has been widely considered as a populist for his work with unions, his commitment to prioritizing the poor, and the amount of money he spend during his presidency on social programs and rising the minimum wage (BBC News, March 2016). He left office in 2010, but his protégé, Dilma Rousseff won the presidency and became Brazil’s first female president (BBC News, September 2016). Although she was elected to a second term in 2014, she too experienced harsh opposition to her presidency, and was finally impeached on August 31, 2016 (BBC News, September 2016). She was impeached on the grounds that she was moving funds between government budgets to plug deficit holes in popular social programs so that she would have a better chance of being elected in 2014 (BBC News, September 2016). Rousseff criticized the impeachment saying that her right-wing rivals had been attempted to impeach her since she was elected as president and that “they have convicted an innocent person and carried out a parliamentary coup,” (BBC News, September 2016). Many people, such as Daniel Gallas, a Business correspondent for BBC, comment that the impeachment may have been a pretext to removing Rousseff from office

because the economy was not doing well (BBC News, September 2016). As the 2018 election draws near, Lula has hinted that he might run for president again (Telesur). Again, right-wing rivals target him saying that he orchestrated a bribery scheme in the state-run company, Petrobras (Telesur). All of these recent events prove that populism continues to meet severe resistance and that money and the economy continue to be integral to populist governments. Even after so many years, the legacy of populism in Brazil continues to have an ongoing effect on the country.

Venezuela - Hugo Chávez

Trail to Venezuelan Populism

The first half of the twentieth century in Venezuela was dominated by dictators, such as Juan Vicente Gómez in the 1930s. Under Gómez, Venezuela began to rely solely on oil, and this shift to an emphasis and necessity of oil still affects Venezuela today (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 219). Populism in Venezuela began because of opposition to the Gómez dictatorship expressed through the political party Acción Democrática (AD). Acción Democrática was founded by exiled students during the dictatorship and headed by one student named Rómulo Betancourt (Ellner, 117). Betancourt knew that a leader needed the ability of connecting with people on a level that everyone could understand, and this helped him become popular among the AD members (Ellner, 120). In 1945, the AD launched a successful coup and took power from Gómez, but they were overthrown by the military in 1948 (Ellner, 117).

However, Acción Democrática did not disappear; it grew to be the largest political party in Venezuela and began to dominate politics by the late 1950s and 1960s when Betancourt and his followers regained power in 1958 after the transition to democracy (Gott, 21). The Christian Democratic Party (COPEI) were the AD's largest rivals, occupying several presidencies to set up a change in power from time to time (Ellner, 117). Some say that the AD let COPEI win elections periodically to set up the appearance of democracy, but either way it is clear that these two parties dominated the political and social realm of Venezuela during the late 1950s and into the 1960s (Gott, 21). For a Venezuelan trying to get a job, it was essential to have a membership in one of these two political parties, an indication of the widespread corruption within the political parties (Gott, 21). This angered the poorer groups in the country, unable to keep jobs or secure power, and resentment grew throughout the 1960s (Gott, 21).

The 1970s brought an economic boom through the nationalization of oil companies like Shell and Exxon (Gott, 21). State money from this nationalization was poured into developing the oil industry, and Venezuela became the richest country in the region because of its new principal export, petroleum (Gott, 22; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 222). Despite the excitement of the economic boom, time revealed that the state sector was not efficient or competitive, and it was overmanned and corrupt in the way that it dealt with the oil industry (Gott, 22). Soon, Venezuela accumulated an incredible amount of foreign debt because of greedy international bankers, and tensions in the country rose (Gott, 22).

In 1989, the country's anger was compounded by a policy enacted by President Carlos Andrés Pérez that included drastic economic cuts that led to a rise in the cost of living (Gott, 49). This policy included the privatization of state-owned companies, the liberalization of trade, and the deregulation of economic activity, but it also caused an increase in the prices of gas and

public transportation which deeply impacted Venezuela's poor (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 226). The rise in bus fares ignited a large-scale protest that would later be called the *Caracazo* because of its origins near Venezuela's capital, Caracas. The protests began on February 27 in Guarenas, a small town 30 km east of Caracas, because the bus fares had been doubled that morning (Gott, 43). Soon, the protests reached the town of Petare, and once the protests had been televised in mid-morning, other major cities such as Maracay, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Ciudad Guayana, and Mérida also started protesting (Gott, 43). The poor came down from the hills surrounding Caracas and looted the city for a week despite the fierce military repression (Gott, 20). The government formally stated that the deaths during the *Caracazo* were 287, but independent observers predicted the death toll to be around 2000 people (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 226). The deaths from this event were an indication of the severity of the economic crisis at the time and the desperation of a people calling for change.

Rise of Chávez

Out of this chaos rose Hugo Chávez, the embodiment of contemporary populism in Venezuela. Chávez was born on July 28, 1954 on the plains of Venezuela to two politically active schoolteachers (Gott, 26). Chávez had to move to the cities to pursue higher education, which later motivated him in his attempts to even out the population of Venezuela and encourage those in the dense city to populate the sparse areas of Venezuela with the promises of more schools, development, and a fresh start (Gott, 30). At the age of seventeen, Chávez enrolled as a soldier, and he entered the military academy in Caracas in 1971 (Gott, 35). He graduated in 1975 with the rank of sub-lieutenant, and spent the next two years in a counterinsurgency battalion in

abase in Barinas (Gott, 36). Here, Chávez started to feel sympathy for the guerillas that his battalion was fighting and started to take notice the corruption of the military officers, and by extension, the entire political scene in Venezuela (Gott, 36). Because of these influences, in 1977 he decided to form a revolutionary group called the Ejército de Liberación del Pueblo de Venezuela (ELPV) (Gott, 36).

In 1982, Chávez began to organize a new group called the Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario - 200 (MBR-200), named to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Simon Bolívar, a radical revolutionary who fought to liberate many countries from Spanish rule (Gott, 38). It began as a place for a few young officers to study politics, but the officers grew to desire to plan a coup (Gott, 38). In 1989, MBR-200 was not yet ready to use the momentum of the Caracazo protests to their advantage, so they waited until August 1991 when Chávez was given the command of a parachute battalion in Maracay (Gott, 48). The group planned a coup for February 4, 1992, with attacks on the defense ministry, the military airport inside the city, and the Miraflores palace (Gott, 63). Somehow, higher officers caught wind of their plans, and the coup failed when Chávez's attempts to capture Pérez failed and Chávez himself was captured (Gott, 67). Although the other MBR-200 leaders were successful in their endeavors, Chávez asked to speak on television briefly so that he could ask his comrades to put down their weapons and surrender. After one minute of air time where he apologized for failing but reassured the people that this failure was only for now, he became a symbol of the revolution and the representation of salvation for Venezuela (Gott, 67).

Chávez was given a long prison sentence beginning in 1992, but was eventually only jailed for two years when congress removed President Pérez from power in 1993 for embezzling more than \$17 million, and the new president Rafael Caldera released Chávez and others

involved in the 1992 coup (Gott, 121). Once he was released from prison, Chávez made it his new political goal to become president, and it was not long before his dream was realized (Gott, 134).

Chávez Presidency

After Chávez was released from prison, he was determined to win the next presidential election. Over the next few years, Chávez tried to draw support from political parties and grassroots groups so that he could overcome the obstacle of a system that did not favor newcomers (Gott, 138; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). He also founded the Movimiento Quinta República, a new political party, to prepare for the election of 1998 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). In order to raise support for his political party, he made claims that the other political parties like AD and COPEI were out of touch with the general population (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). He spoke passionately about the corruption within the Venezuelan governments that caused the widespread poverty in the country, despite being rich in oil (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). In the December 1998 election, Chávez was indeed able to gain enough support, and won with 56.2% of the vote (Gott, 139; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228).

Once Chávez was inaugurated, he immediately began a process of radical reform in the country. He signed a decree for a national referendum in which the people would decide on whether or not a Constitutional Assembly would create a new constitution for Venezuela (Gott, 143). The people approved the drafting of a new constitution, and Chávez was able to dismantle the Supreme Court and use the constitution to allow presidential reelection, strengthen executive

powers, and weaken checks and balances in the government through the creation of a unicameral legislature (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 230). Although these changes gave the government a great amount of unchecked power, Chávez showed that he was motivated by the will of the public by scheduling elections for May 2000 that re-legitimized every elected official in the country, including himself (Gott, 144). Chávez won the presidency again with a majority of 59.8% (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230).

Although he enjoyed favor among the people, other issues loomed on the horizon. During Chávez's first year in office, Venezuela's GDP was down more than 5 percent because of the oil and petroleum prices lowering (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). To rectify this, Chávez decided to take control of the petroleum industry. In 2002, he tried to take over the board of directors of PdVSA, a powerful state-sponsored petroleum enterprise, but oil workers went on strike to protest (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). Chávez fired most of the oil workers that went on strike, and this caused a series of marches that lasted a week in April 2002 where the protesters demanded Chávez's resignation (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). Chávez retaliated by shutting down five private television stations and condemning the protesters (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). While he was speaking, the violence of the protests outside the presidential palace erupted, and gunmen killed over fourteen people when they opened fire on the crowd (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). Chávez was seized and arrested, but hundreds of thousands of loyal Chávez supporters demanded that he be returned (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230). Their wish was granted, and Chávez was back in power within forty-eight hours (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 230).

This attempted coup changed Venezuela's relationship with the United States. Chávez blamed the Bush administration for aiding the coup against him, and his grudge manifested in

direct actions against the United States (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 231). For example, he formed an alliance with Fidel Castro in Cuba (an enemy of the Bush administration), he blatantly opposed the United States' proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas and pushed his alternate plan (the *Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas*), and called President Bush "the devil" in his plea to the UN in 2002 to make Venezuela a part of the Security Council (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 231).

However, criticisms of the Chávez regime continued, as the unemployment had risen to 20 percent and inflation was nearing 30 percent (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 231). In late 2002, Chávez fired more than 17,000 PdVSA workers because of a strike, replaced the board of directors, and completely restructured the company (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 231). Chávez then decided to restructure his political strategy and introduce a new political plan to build socialism in the twenty-first century that would bring a new wave of democracy based in grassroots organization in neighborhoods, workplaces, and the countryside (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 232). He began the Mission for the Fifth Republic "to secure the well-being of the national community, to satisfy the individual and collective aspirations of the Venezuelan people, and to guarantee a state of optimum prosperity for the fatherland," (Gott, 136).

These programs garnered enough support for Chávez to win the 2006 presidential election with 63 percent of the vote (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 233). Within the next few years, Chávez was able to continue his plan to promote socialism in the twenty-first century because of funds gained from the rise in oil prices (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 233). Oil prices were \$10 a barrel in the late 1990s, \$59 a barrel in 2005, and \$147 a barrel in mid-2008 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 233). Because of this rise in prices, the value of Venezuelan exports rose from \$10 billion in 1998 to over \$50 billion in 2007 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green,

233). There is much debate as to how the Chávez administration spent this money. Some say that a lot of money was spent on Chavista foreign policy schemes, building the military, wasteful projects, and to personally benefit government loyalists (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 233). Others defend Chávez by bringing light to the funding that was spent in social programs to help the poor, especially with health and education (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 234). Despite the talk of corruption within Chávez's government, he still seemed to be the favorite in the 2012 presidential election (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 234). Suddenly, Chávez was hit with severe cancer and had to go to Cuba to seek treatment (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 234). Although his sickness was obvious to the public, he was still able to win the election, winning 54 percent of the vote, but his cancer took his life before he could be inaugurated, and he died in March 2013 at the age of fifty-eight (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 235).

Traits of Venezuelan Populism

Chávez's populism in Venezuela was characterized by his charisma, his use of the media, and his actions taken against anyone who opposed him. Chávez was successful in gaining grassroots support through appealing to those who had been neglected by the government (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). He was described as "brash, outspoken, unconventional, and down-to-earth," and his direct nature attracted the middle classes and the urban poor (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 228). He used rhetoric that had not been used since revolutionary times in Latin America, and used the figure of Simón Bolívar to further the legitimacy of his revolutionary rhetoric (Gott, 13). His criticism of the imperialist and capitalist nature of the

current world inspired a nationalist movement within Venezuela as people desired to change the global structure of the developing world (Gott, 13).

In addition to his charisma, Chávez was known for his use of the media to further his populist regime. From the moment he appeared on television after his attempted coup in 1992 and became the nation's physical manifestation of hope for a better future, he realized how powerful the media could be (Gott, 23). During his presidency, he appeared on television most days of the week to stay connected with the Venezuelan people, and propaganda of his good deeds were broadcasted to show his optimistic and confident personality (Gott, 28). His use of media was pivotal in his ability to connect with his supporters, and was one of the key reasons why he was and is still worshiped by a large population in Venezuela.

Chávez's understanding of the importance of media motivated him to try and control his public image at any cost. This was seen in his shutdown of five private television stations during the marches of 2002 so that he could control the way that the media was portraying the current events (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 232). Just like he heavily condemned the protesters, Chávez constantly criticized anyone who did not support him. He even went so far as to bully, harass, and denounce the critics of his government just as he once attacked the corrupt politicians that came before him (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 232; Gott, 175). Chávez consistently used criticism of opposing forces to obtain control politically as he packed the courts and resisted any form of checks and balances (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 232). In all spheres, Chávez dominated in his presidency and held on to his power by any means necessary, enacting his populist regime on those who wanted it and those who did not.

As a populist, Chávez targeted the oil owners, elite politicians, the media, and even George W. Bush to create an enemy to fight against. He was incredibly nationalistic and swore to

devote a majority of his money and resources to bring equality to the working class in Venezuela. His charisma enabled him to gain an incredible following of devoted supporters so that he could exert an enormous amount of influence on Venezuela for many years and onward into the future.

Lasting Effects

The effects of populism are still largely unknown because of the recent death of Chávez in 2013. After his death, the country of Venezuela entered a period of mourning and despair, as Chávez's supporters held him up to the status of a savior for their country (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 235). Although the lasting effects of Chávez's populist regime as a whole will not be known until more time has passed, there are still visible positive effects of Chávez's presidency. For example, the real social spending per capita more than tripled, the poverty rate fell 16 percent from the beginning of his presidency to 2010, extreme poverty fell 7 percent during his presidency, the infant mortality rate fell by more than one-third, gains were made in healthcare and education, and the number of social security beneficiaries more than doubled (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 234). On the other hand, Chávez's economic decisions have been highly criticized, and many are suspicious of corruption within his administration. Political scientist Francisco Rodriguez commented that "there is little or no evidence that Chávez is finally sharing Venezuela's oil wealth with the poor. Most existing statistics do not show significant improvement in either the well-being or the share of resources directed at Venezuela's most disadvantaged citizens," (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 234).

In all, Chávez's presidency brought controversy, violence, and oppression. Even now, Venezuela is still being affected by Chávez's rule. On March 29, 2017, the Venezuelan Supreme Court took over the Congress, and a broadcast on National Public Radio conveyed that the Court would now control all "parliamentary capacities," (Otis). This decision is substantial because the Venezuelan government has already been moving toward a more authoritative government, and now there is one less governing body to preform checks and balances. It has also been said that the Supreme Court answers directly to President Nicolás Maduro, giving the Maduro government even more power (Otis). The Maduro government is already holding over 100 political prisoners and has canceled elections, making Jose Miguel Vivanco, the Americas director for the Human Rights Watch, call Venezuela a dictatorship (Otis). The future effects of this change is beyond the scope of this paper; only time will tell how Venezuela will continue to be affected by Hugo Chávez's populist reign as the Maduro government moves into a new stage of authoritarianism.

Chapter 2 – Case Studies

Examining the history of populism in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela raises a few important questions: Why were these populist leaders elected? Are there factors that make a nation-state more likely to democratically elect a populist leader? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at each country's economic trends and political trends leading up to the election of the populist leader to see if there are any commonalities.

Economic Trends Preceding Populism

Argentina

Juan Domingo Perón was first elected in 1946, but economic trends in Argentina affected the election before it occurred. Argentina emerged in the international economy beginning at the end of the nineteenth century when the country went through its great export boom beginning in 1880 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). Almost overnight, Argentina converted from a poor country to the wealthiest country in Latin America through exercising its comparative advantage in meat and grain (Horowitz, 23; Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 240). Naturally, this economic change brought many other changes for Argentina. One such change was the rapid urbanization of Argentinian cities. By 1914, 53% of the country was urbanized because many Argentinians flocked to the cities to find work (Tamarin, 32). Conversely, the export boom also attracted a large amount of European immigrants. This influx of European immigrants began to create

conflicts because they largely shared the elite's views of how the economy should be run, even though the poorer classes of society were largely excluded from this economic structure.

However, between 1913 and 1929 there were two periods of depression for Argentina because of the lack of international demand for Argentina's agricultural goods (Rock, 193). The first depression began in 1913 and lasted until 1917 (Rock, 193). After 1917, the economy recovered and there was a renewed economic boom until 1921 (Rock, 193). Then there was another depression between 1921 and 1924, which recovered again until 1929 (Rock, 193). The first depression was caused by the Bank of England raising interest rates to correct a payments deficit in Britain from wars in the Balkans, and was compounded by a failure in the 1913-1914 harvest and the outbreak of WWI that hurt international trade tremendously (Rock, 193). Both the depression of 1913-1917 and the postwar depression that began in 1921 caused unemployment to rise and the trade union movement to collapse (Rock, 196).

After 1924, the Argentinian economy recovered and grew until the US Stock Market Crash of 1929. Between 1929 and 1932 the real gross domestic product fell about 14 percent (Rock, 214). Once again, Argentina's reliance on agricultural exports made the country vulnerable to economic crises as the global economy varied, but in comparison with other Latin American countries, Argentina was able to recover from the Great Depression relatively quickly. Because of the global economic depression and the economic crises within Argentina, the government decided on a policy of Import Substitution Industrialization to protect its own resources and economy (Horowitz, 27). By 1939, the real gross domestic product was almost 15 percent higher than it was in 1929, and 33 percent higher than it was in 1932 (Rock, 214). The change to Import Substitution Industrialization by the conservative oligarchy in power at the time proved to repair the damage done to the economy during the Great Depression.

This new policy change also created a rapid expansion of the working class that was more literate, mobile, and native Argentinian than the urban population during the era of the export boom from 1880-1914 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 250). Unions increased, but they were not effective because they were ignored by their employers and even by the government (Horowitz, 27). Before unions were broken down because of the economy, but during this time period the union members learned that they could not rely on their government to support them even through economic prosperity. Global crises such as both World Wars and the Great Depression created an economic instability that unsettled the urban working class in Argentina. The rapid urbanization combined with the ambiguity of the Argentinian economy created many changes with not much certainty. This created a base for an unsettled feeling among the urban working class and the first seeds of a need for change in Argentina. Despite the recovery of the economy during the end of the 1930s and into the 1940s, union members and the urban working class realized that they still would not receive their fair share from the government, so they began to search for other ways to gain representation leading up to the years of the 1946 election that would elect Juan Perón.

Brazil

Similar to Argentina, Brazil also experienced economic instability through a dependence on agricultural exports, rapid urbanization, and economic crises. In the postindependence era, Brazil relied on coffee to stimulate its economy. In the 1890s, Brazil experienced an incredible amount of economic growth, and early in the nineteenth century coffee made up around half of

Brazil's foreign exchange (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 306). This economic growth in the coffee industry created a rapid urbanization that tripled the population of São Paulo between 1890 and 1920 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 312). The state of São Paulo even accumulated a debt larger than that of the nation of Brazil and was responsible for 30 to 40 percent of Brazil's output nationally (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 312).

The reliance on coffee brought instability through the inability to control the world market; it was impossible for Brazil to control the world price of coffee, the demand of its buyers, and foreign competition. This led to economic crises the moment that there was an economic crash that affected one of Brazil's few purchasers of coffee. The economic crash of 1929 in the United States affected Brazil more so than Argentina because coffee was more of a luxury item that people were not willing to spend money on during a time of financial crisis. The coffee harvesters had no one to sell their product to, and the government was left with the task of balancing this economic crisis.

Instead of helping the coffee harvesters, the government focused on its buyers outside of the country, an economic decision opposed by most of Brazilian society (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 314). This betrayal of the government felt by many Brazilians created legitimacy for the populist ideals that had begun to appear in Brazil during the 1920s. These economic crises created support for Vargas in his first try to become president in 1930. Although he did not win the election, the economic instability in Brazil gave populism its first foothold that would begin to flourish through frustrations with political instability and violence and corruption in the state.

Vargas profited from the revolt of 1930 as he became the interim president. Vargas tried to put expensive new programs into place to get elite support, but he could not do so because of the financial crisis in Brazil in 1930 (Conniff, 93). By the end of 1930, hundreds of businesses

had gone bankrupt, unemployment rose drastically, wages fell 10 to 15 percent, and payrolls were often not paid (Conniff, 93). By mid-1931, the worst of the Depression had passed, and the growth of physical production in the industry rose at around 10 percent per year for the rest of the decade (Conniff, 94). Meanwhile, the Vargas regime was drifting more and more toward dictatorship until Vargas launched the *Estado Novo* in 1937, officially toppling the representative government. Before his dictatorship, Vargas had begun to put an emphasis on stimulating industrialization, and he strengthened this emphasis during the *Estado Novo* (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 319-321). Because of the power that the *Estado Novo* had, Vargas was able to organize and strengthen marketing cartels in cocoa, coffee, sugar, and tea, and create new enterprises like the National Motor Factory to produce trucks and airplane engines (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 318). Although Vargas did make successful strides to improve the Venezuelan economy, Vargas was met with opposition because of the *Estado Novo*'s strict security forces, frequent torture, and control of the news (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 319). The *Estado Novo* came to an end when the opposition became too great, and Vargas was forcibly removed in 1945 (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 319).

After WWII and the end of the *Estado Novo*, the Dutra government (1946-1951) decided to return to relying on coffee exports, once again putting Brazil in an unstable position economically (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 321). The new government also eliminated the strides that Vargas had taken to stimulate industrialization during the *Estado Novo* (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 321). These economic changes, as well as political influences, helped to enable Vargas to be democratically elected to the presidency in 1950 because the Dutra Government did not improve the economy like the Vargas administration did, however authoritarian some of Vargas' methods were.

Venezuela

Venezuela, much like Brazil, had an economy very dependent on one sole resource. In the case of Venezuela, that resource is oil. Oil became essential to Venezuela's economy in the 1930s, but the nationalization of the oil companies in the 1970s created an economic boom that affected Venezuela greatly. By the late 1980s, Venezuela began to rely on foreign investment because of the increasing globalization of international trade (Gott, 50). Venezuela's ties to foreign investors made them vulnerable to drastic changes in their economy based on the fluctuating global prices of oil. Venezuela had always had a slightly vulnerable economy due to the reliance on oil, but in the years directly leading up to the election of Hugo Chávez, this economic crisis created a frantic need to stabilize the economy. In January 1989, Venezuela's president, Jaime Lusinchi, decided to suspend the repayment of foreign debt to help combat this economic crisis (Gott, 52-53). President Lusinchi was fearful that Venezuela's spending had finally caught up to them, and they would not even be able to repay foreign debt without spiraling into an economic crisis.

Venezuelans had already begun to fear an economic crisis, and this fear was compounded by President Lusinchi's last decisions in January 1989. Lusinchi decided to suspend repayment of the foreign debt because the foreign reserves were running out (Gott, 53). This terrified the Venezuelan people and put pressure on the next president, Carlos Andrés Pérez. Newly elected Pérez decided to adapt the Washington Consensus, a 10-point program to try and pay back the large debts that Venezuela (and Latin America) had incurred (Gott, 51). Unfortunately, this plan only created more economic instability in Venezuela because it ignored the needs of the poorer inhabitants of Venezuela. The attempts to hold an economic crisis at bay created rebellion in Caracas when the rising prices of petrol caused the bus fares to rise. This rebellion, now called

the *Caracazo*, left as many as 2000 people dead because of the military's attempts to repress the poor protesters looting the city of Caracas (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 226; Gott, 20). This rebellion was a visible effect of the economic stress that had been weighing on Venezuela for years, caused by a dependence on oil and superfluous spending. The economic events that caused the *Caracazo* directly led to the attempted coup led by Colonel Chávez in 1992 and Chávez's rise to power.

Comparison of Economic Trends

Argentina experienced cycling periods of depression and recovery in the 50 years before the 1946 election due to the unreliability of the international market prices for the agricultural goods that Argentina relied on exporting. The uncertainty of the economy and the exclusion of the unions led to frustration among the common people of Argentina. In the decade leading up to the election, the economy had recovered from the Great Depression, causing the rise in unions again, but still the government refused to recognize the unions and the urban working class that had now become more literate and mobilized than ever before. Brazil's economy in the decades leading up to Vargas' election as a populist president in 1950 consisted of a reliance on coffee that created an economic crisis throughout the Depression that affected political decisions. Once Vargas took power as an interim president and a dictator, he focused on stimulating the economy through industrialization and social programs, but after the *Estado Novo*, the Dutra government made decisions to transition away from Vargas' plans to stimulate the economy. Instead, the Dutra government committed themselves to agriculture, transitioning back to a reliance on coffee

and making Brazil once again vulnerable to fluctuating world market prices. Venezuela built its economy in the 1970s on one sole export: oil. Because of the reliance on oil and superfluous spending from the government, the fear of an economic crisis led directly to rebellion and to the coup that would bring Chávez into the national spotlight.

In each Latin American country, the economy first expanded rapidly due to certain exports such as meat and grain for Argentina, coffee for Brazil, and oil for Venezuela. In Argentina and Brazil, the rapid growth of the economy caused the urbanization of cities and attracted immigrants that increased the population immensely. For each of the countries, the economy was unstable because of the reliance on the particular export. Each country endured economic crises in the decades leading up to the election of a populist leader, either due to the Great Depression or government corruption. In the case of Argentina and Brazil, a few years before each of the populist leaders were elected, the economy improved. This enabled the disenfranchised groups – mainly union workers and the urban working class – to gain enough power and influence to choose a populist leader in the next election.

Political Trends Preceding Populism

Argentina

The history of Argentine politics consists of a constant battle between the conservative and the liberal elite with different sectors of society being excluded from power. In the nineteenth century, liberals in Argentina were concerned with the creation of a nation state, leading the country in economic expansion, and removing *caudillos* from power (Rock, 120, 160). The nineteenth century conservatives in Argentina were focused on resisting these

movements and maintaining the traditional hierarchical structure. Radicalism, Argentina's first populist movement, grew out of these elite conflicts and political exclusions. Around 1870, formal politics in Argentina had been ruled by the mercantile and landed elites that held a monopoly on political power (Rock, 129). The electoral law of 1863 had promised to allow popular participation in the political process, but the elections continued to be controlled by the small oligarchy in power (Rock, 129). These oligarchs were challenged by three groups that felt that they were being excluded from this power: the newly prosperous landowners, the old aristocratic families that did not benefit from the export boom, and the middle class that was excluded politically (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 245). After a failed attempt to overthrow the government in 1890, these groups created the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) in the early 1890s (Tamarin, 32). Argentina's first populist president, Hipólito Yrigoyen, gained power through this political party (Horowitz, 23).

As soon as the conservative powers in Argentina felt that Yrigoyen's leftist government along with the rising power gained by socialists and communists in Argentina were gaining too much power, the military overthrew Yrigoyen because of their fear that the conservative powers would be entirely excluded from the government. The coup in 1930 led to a conservative government that, along with the wake of the Great Depression, squelched the support for the Radicals in Argentina (Rock, 214). These conservative governments restored an oligarchic style of governing to Argentina, rigging the elections to keep themselves in power while pretending to favor democracy (Rock, 214; Horowitz, 27).

The 1930s, also called *La década infame* (The Infamous Decade), was known for the corruption within the government despite the reforms that the government instilled to improve the economy during the Depression (Rock, 214). However, corruption within the government

was not a new concept in Argentina. When the UCR was founded in 1890, one of the UCR's goals was to eliminate the voter fraud, personalism, jobbery, cronyism, and backroom political deals that the conservative elite employed daily in the government (Tamarin, 32). At this time, the middle class was limited politically because of the elite's need to dominate the political realm and control the systems monitoring higher education and jobs. In addition to this frustration, suffrage was also limited for the middle class because of the fraud, bribery, and bargaining within the government at the time (Tamarin, 32-33). Resentment of the corruption within the government is a common theme in Argentina's history. So, once World War II began in the 1940s, the Argentine military and the general population in Argentina began to call for steady leadership from sources outside the government (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 249). This distrust in the politicians and political system created an opportunity for Perón to come to power in Argentina.

In 1943, Argentina continued its tradition of a violent transfer of power as a group of army officers seized power and began to fight against unions. This coup was triggered by the announcement of the president's choice for a successor in the 1943 presidential elections (Rock, 247). This candidate was Patrón Costas, viewed by the common people as just another aging oligarch who would continue the pattern of fraud and corruption that had occurred in the 1930s (Rock, 247). Perón first emerged from a group from within the army officers of the coup, tasked to find out what the unions desired (Horowitz, 29). For the next two and a half years, there was a considerable amount of political change during the de facto regimes of Generals Ramírez and Farrell, and this change resulted in Perón being elected to the presidency in 1946 (Rock, 214). This was possible due to the incredible support he received from the trade unions and the urban working class, united to call themselves *peronistas* (Rock, 214).

Argentina's political trends have been characterized by left-right conflicts, political exclusions, and pattern of coups. Consistently, politics in Argentina involves the left and right elites battling for power and leaving out the urban working class. Additionally, the left and right insist on taking power from each other forcefully, creating an unstable political system with no consistent structure. In these battles for power, many groups have been excluded, including the urban working class. The exclusion of this group and the failure of unions, enabled Perón to gain power through accumulating the confidence of the union members. If the government had worked out differences without violent overthrows and excluding groups, the unions may have gone to the government to appeal for their wishes. Instead, the instability in the political realm caused the urban working class to be uncertain about the success of appealing to the government at all.

Brazil

Brazil experienced political instability in the clash between the elites and the poor and in the series of coups to transfer power. The poor classes were constantly excluded from political power and decisions. In fact, during the First Republic (1889-1930) millions of Brazilians lived in extreme poverty because the wealthy oligarchy that ran the country (Robert Levine, 4). Unfortunately, the elitist government continued unconcerned with the state of poverty in Brazil, and continued on holding all of the power within a small minority of the total population. The poor's clash with the elites appeared most frequently during Hermes da Fonseca's presidency in 1910-1914 as the poor started political battles against the regime of incumbent candidates that

they felt did not represent them (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 312). By the end of the First Republic, urban labor also continued to be neglected, and many began to criticize and oppose the politicians (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 314).

The instability of Brazilian politics was reflected in the violence and revolts in the streets throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1922 and 1924 there were a series of barracks revolts led by lieutenants, and by the early 1930s street brawls and terrorism increased between different political groups under the new Vargas interim presidency (Skidmore, Smith, and Green, 316-317). The violence between political groups and the exclusion of large groups of Brazilians began to spiral out of control, and many Brazilians began to call for change.

The neglect of the poor and urban classes and the culture of violence created a political instability that bred the next phase of politics in Brazil. In 1930, the political instability of the class conflict in Brazil compounded as a new tradition began in which leaders came into power and were taken out of power through unorthodox means. This began with Vargas taking power via a coup in 1930, and continued with Vargas launching the Estado Novo in 1937 and eventually the military overthrowing Vargas in 1945 as he threatened to accumulate power again through the Brazilian Labor Party (Dombush and Sebastian, 48). The abrupt change of power in all of these situations created a political realm in Brazil of confusion as Brazilians were not sure if they could rely on the stability of the political system and structure. This made Brazilians more likely to support Vargas in his presidential campaign of 1950 when he re-invented himself and truly established himself as a “full-fledged populist,” (Dombush and Sebastian, 49).

Venezuela

The fear from the economic crisis in Venezuela was quickly made worse due to the political exclusion and history of coups that made the political system similarly unstable. Democracy in itself has been a fairly new development for Venezuela, but even the democratic structures set up in the more recent system of politics have excluded many. Even the apparent two-party system that has been in place since the 1950s evolved out of political exclusion felt by exiled students during Juan Vicente Gómez's dictatorship in the 1930s (Gott, 76). These students created Acción Democrática (AD), a political party that, along with the Christian Democratic party (COPEI), has dominated Venezuelan politics since the end of the dictatorship. AD was the largest party and allowed COPEI to win elections from time to time to keep up democratic appearances (Gott, 21). Ironically, AD ultimately caused the same political exclusion that they originally felt themselves. Venezuelan's could not hope to hold a job or have any influence in society without being registered in either AD or COPEI, and this political exclusion began to create frustration in the societal classes that did not have enough money to initially create space and security for themselves within Venezuelan society.

In addition to the frustration in the two-party system, the political system was also unstable in its history of violent takeovers. AD took over in 1945 with a coup, but was then overthrown by the military in 1948 (Ellner, 117). These coups and military takeovers established the norm that there were times where a leader or administration needed to be violently ousted to restore a 'better' administration in its place. It seemed that any transition between styles of government in Venezuela, whether that has been from dictatorships or democracies or military administrations, the transition had occurred through a coup or takeover. This tradition continued in 1992 when there was an attempted coup against President Pérez. Although this coup was not

successful, it introduced Chávez to Venezuela as a possible savior for the nation of Venezuela.

This tradition not only created uncertainty for the citizens of Venezuela as to future administrations or possible coups, but also legitimized Chávez as someone who could bring real political change, despite the failed coup attempt. This political instability began to plant the seed of distrust in the government, and corruption within the state following the attempted coup further pushed the Venezuelan people to put their faith in Chávez to bring economic and political stability and equality.

Following the 1992 attempted coup, the government consistently proved to the people of Venezuela that they could not be trusted through the corruption and human rights violations committed within the state. The Amnesty International annual reports for Venezuela beginning in 1992 and leading up to Chávez's election to the presidency in December 1998 consistently report torture of prisoners of conscience from the 1992 coup, ill-treatment of prisoners, and extrajudicial executions. The 1992 report includes the "frequent use of torture by the security forces" against the prisoners of conscience, some deaths of these prisoners, "extremely harsh" prison conditions, at least one person "disappeared", and dozens of extrajudicial executions (Amnesty International, Venezuela 1992). The torture in 1992 even included "beatings, near asphyxiation with plastic bags, electric shocks, and mock executions," (Amnesty International, Venezuela 1992). Each year after 1992 lists many of the same violations: torture, harsh prison conditions, extrajudicial executions, etc. For example, the 1996 report includes "scores of people, including children," that were extrajudicially executed, at least 25 prisoners that burned to death in a prison in Caracas, torture and ill-treatment by the security forces, and prison conditions that remained extremely harsh (Amnesty International, Venezuela 1996).

By 1998, the torture and ill-treatment continued, and human rights defenders and community activists began to be threatened and harassed (Amnesty International, Venezuela 1998). So, by this time there were people in the community that began to speak out about the human rights violations that were occurring within the state. In the face of so much violence committed by the state, on top of the political exclusion of the poor of Venezuela by the government, the citizens began to search for solutions outside of the typical government track. Hugo Chávez looked more attractive as a candidate because of the government's failure to fairly represent and protect the people of Venezuela. Chávez's unorthodox populist campaign and presidency appealed to Venezuelans that had been hurt by Venezuela's economic instability, political instability, and corruption within the state.

Comparison of Political Trends

Argentina's political trends have been historically characterized by fighting between right-wing and left-wing governments, political exclusions of the urban working class and poorer citizens, and numerous coups to transfer power. In the decade leading up to the election of Juan Perón, the widespread corruption within the conservative oligarchy led to a coup in 1943. After 1943, the many changes brought on by the coup and the support of the disenfranchised groups in Argentina enabled Juan Perón to be elected to the presidency in 1946. Brazil's political trends that lead to Vargas' election as a populist leader in 1950 consisted of clashing between the elites and the poor and coups to overthrow the government. The exclusion of the poor was seen repeatedly in protests in the streets and within the military. The violence regarding each person or town only escalated as more influential people, such as Vargas, were able to use the instability

to stage coups against the current government. Venezuela's political trends have been patterns of political exclusion and coups. The examples of political exclusion have in the decades leading up to Chávez's election included a governing elite that puts on the pretense of democracy but is characterized by corruption to control power. The frustration of this political system has caused a pattern of coups when a particular group feels that power cannot be transferred democratically. This created a segment of the population that is excluded amidst a system that is uncertain in its structure for Venezuela.

The political trends of all three of these countries have been dominated by political exclusion of the poorer groups of the time and by coups to transfer power. At the root of all of the political distress first lies the social injustice and inequality of large groups of people that do not feel that they are being fairly represented by their country. In each of these countries, the reason that the poor do not feel well-represented is that the governments are simply fighting for their own power. In Argentina, the right-wing and left-wing governments fought each other for power and forgot about the urban working class. In Brazil, the government was run by the elite that were out of touch with the poor and wanted to hoard their power and wealth. In Venezuela, the corruption within the government led to political groups being excluded, which led to violent reactions. The combination of the political exclusions and the violent transfers of power on top of the historically long periods of economic fluctuation that each country faced made the election of a populist leader more attractive.

Conclusion

In the cases of Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela there were some similarities in economic and political trends that increased the likelihood of the election of a populist leader. In each country, a long history of economic fluctuations caused by a reliance on certain exported goods created a culture of uncertainty that the people would be provided for. Even in the case of Argentina and Brazil where the economy improved in the few years before the populist leader was elected, this gave disenfranchised groups the ability to elect a different leader so that if the economy worsened again, the government would take care of them. Every government needs to make decisions about where to spend limited money, but when people fear that their baseline economic needs will not be met, it consistently leads to unhappiness and a desire for a new government that will at least ensure that its people are taken care of.

Often when citizens feel that their economic needs are not met, they turn to the political system to fix these issues. In addition to the economic instability in these countries, there was a considerable amount of political trends that rendered the countries unable to meet the needs of their people. In Argentina, the conflict between the conservative and liberal elite constantly left entire sectors of Argentina's population disenfranchised. In Brazil, a clash with the elites and the political exclusion of labor unions produced a feeling of injustice that was targeted at the governing oligarchy. In Venezuela, the political exclusion of the apparent two-party system and the history of coups created an unstable government that did not represent all its citizens equally. The political structures in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela at the time were not equipped to respond to the economic complaints of the people, but instead made the situation worse by further excluding those who already felt the unease of the economic instability. The combination

and interaction of these economic and political trends were essential in the years directly leading up to each country's election of a populist leader.

Chapter 3 – Implications

As discussed in the first chapter, populism is an ideology that has affected more than just Latin America. Populism has touched all corners of the world and continues to have an influence even today. Most recently, populism has gotten attention through the presidential campaign of Donald J. Trump in the United States. Politicians and newscasters alike have been bringing attention to Trump's populist strategies, and this attention has given new relevancy to the study of populism and populist regimes. In this chapter I will discuss populism's relevancy currently in the United States and examine whether the economic and political trends from chapter 2 bear any similarities to US populism.

Populism in the United States

History

Populist movements in the United States have their own distinct history and characteristics compared to the rest of the world. Populism in the US has tended toward the right, but there have been movements from both the right and left. One of the first large populist movements in the US was a right-wing movement called the "Know-Nothings." The Know-Nothing movement was a movement in the 1840s that demanded immigration restrictions because of the fear that the Irish Catholic and German immigrants would steal jobs from the Americans (The Week, "A brief history of populism."). The Know-Nothings were soon disbanded because of factions that arose due to different viewpoints on slavery. Later, in the

1880s, a new string of populism began in the US due to the southern farmers who were going into debt because of the falling cotton prices and a drought in the Great Plains. The farmers and labor unions formed the People's Party, more commonly known as the populists, who aimed to take down big bankers that did not spread the wealth equally. However, this party was short lived (1892-1900) and its racist positions led to some of the Jim Crow laws in the south during the early twentieth century (Robert Levine, 7). After the existence of these two parties, some populists joined the Democrats and some extreme populists supported Huey P. Long, a radical governor in Louisiana, but most populists were wiped out by the anti-extreme views that the Cold War conveyed (The Week, "A brief history of populism."). Populism has since returned in the right-wing Tea Party movement and the left-wing Occupy Wall Street movement (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 12). Most recently, the media has been naming both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, political candidates of the 2016 presidential election, as populists. Some politicians have even compared Donald Trump's campaign to the Know-Nothing movement of the 1840s and Bernie Sander's economic message to the populists of the 1880s (The Week, "A brief history of populism.").

In all, populism in the US has been most often right-wing, leaderless, and associated with the middle class. These right-wing movements have often criticized the poor in America rather than try to help them, and the movements have had a history of targeting the immigrant community as well as the wealthy and the corporations (Hawkins, 197). There have not been many populist leaders in the United States compared to other parts of the world. In the history of United States populist movements, Huey Long has been one of the only populist leaders that have held any kind of office. The populist movements, such as the Populists of the 1880s, developed spontaneously and without a leader, mostly organized regionally and supporting

national candidates from other political parties (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). Even the more recent movements such as the Occupy Wall Street movement or the Tea Party movement have operated without a strong leader (Kaltwasse and Mudde, 12). The populist movements in the United States have also been largely supported by owners of property or modest enterprises, along with farmers and the middle class (Hawkins, 198). These supporters are concerned with issues such as monetary policy, corporate regulation, and deficit spending (Hawkins, 197). While the campaign of Donald Trump echoes many themes of historical populism in the United States, his case is making history with the fact that he has become such a strong populist leader. Perhaps an American populist leader has finally arrived.

Current Relevancy

The most recent occurrence of populism in the United States has been the populist wave surrounding the election of Donald Trump. Newscasters from both the left and the right have categorized Trump as a populist. For example, there have been many articles written about Trump's populist campaign and strategies such as a New York Times article by Thomas B. Edsall titled "The Peculiar Populism of Donald Trump." In a Newsweek article, Chris Lehmann states that most political observers agree that Donald Trump's campaign has been noticeably populist (Edsall, "The Peculiar Populism of Donald Trump"). A Washington Post article by Griff Witte, Emily Rauhala, and Dom Phillips even goes so far to state that the "populist wave of 2016" that elected Trump is part of a larger populist revolution that did not originate in the United States and will expand far past this country (Witte, et. all., "Trump's win may be just the beginning of a global populist wave"). Historically, the term "populist" has been used as a label

by political opponents to degrade their rival's name. As these media sources are all considered liberal and Trump is more conservative, the motivations of these sources using the term "populist" to describe Trump are put into question. However, in this case even the notoriously conservative station, Fox News, has accepted the populist label and uses it to describe Trump in the article "President Trump's Populist Pitch: The meaning of 'America first'," (Kurtz). The widespread usage of the term "populist" to describe Donald Trump by both liberal and conservative sources has established Trump as a populist in the eyes of the media and most Americans alike. President Trump's campaign truly has commercialized populism and made it a hot button topic in the United States currently.

But what does the American media mean by populism? We must independently examine his ideals to determine whether or not he deserves the title of a populist and to see whether or not he conforms to the typical nature of populism in the United States. If populism is defined as a movement that advocates for the will of the common person by opposing what is presented as a corrupt elite, then a populist leader is someone who represents a movement such as this. A populist leader is integral in defining the enemy that the movement is fighting against and dictates how the money will be spent to obtain the goals of the common people. When examining President Trump's speeches, debates, and quotes from the 2016 presidential race, it is easy to see that he fits well into this definition.

The definition of a populist leader requires the populist leader to embody the Manichean allegory of the "pure people" rising up against the "corrupt elite" that is seen so often in populism. During Trump's campaign kickoff in June 2015, he stated, "We need somebody who can take the brand of the United States and make it great again. Ladies and gentlemen: I am officially running for the president of the United States, and we are going to make our country

great again,” (Sanchez). The theme of “making America great again” was integral to Trump’s campaign from the very beginning, and he continued this theme throughout the campaign. Trump consistently vowed to the American people that he would make American great again by taking power away from the government and giving it back to the people. This promise continued in Trump’s Inaugural Address when he said, “Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another, or from one party to another -- but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People,” (Trump, Inaugural Address). Trump, a businessman and apparent outsider in politics, has consistently emphasized his desire that the government should answer to the people and not vice versa. He has criticized the American government for taking wealth away from the people and acting in their own interests rather than the interests of the people. Later in his inaugural address, Trump states that the day he was inaugurated “will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now,” (Trump). Many Americans support him because they believe that Trump is not entrenched in the complicated political system the way that most politicians are, and they hope that a president that is not a politician will better represent them. His supporters believe that he is listening and that he will not forget them. President Trump fits the mold of a populist because he believes that the people should rise up against the corrupt government of the United States, and he has inspired a large group of people to rise up against this oppressive power. The idea that Trump would lead the revolution of the common American against the corrupt government fulfills the definition of a populist leader seamlessly.

Trump also fulfills the requirements of a populist leader because he has frequently made an enemy out of institutions that oppose him in order to generate a larger following. Trump has targeted many things, the first being the government. He blamed the government for taking wealth that should belong to the American people commenting that, “[f]or too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished -- but the people did not share in its wealth,” (Trump, Inaugural Address). He has cited the government as corrupt on many occasions, and made the claim that his opposing candidate, Hilary Clinton, would only be a continuation of that corrupt government by saying, “We can not take four more years of Barack Obama and that’s what you get when you get her,” (Daniel S. Levine). In addition to the government, Trump has also made an enemy out of the institution of the church. Tom Murse, a writer for ThoughtCo. highlighted in an article that Pope Francis commented that “a person who thinks only of building walls... is not a Christian,” and Trump became infuriated saying, “If and when the Vatican is attacked, the pope would only wish and have prayed that Donald Trump would have been elected president,” (Murse). Just as many populist leaders before him, Trump makes a habit of criticizing the institutions that speak out against him and making them into enemies that must be transformed.

In addition to institutions, Donald Trump also attempted to make an enemy of numerous groups of people such as Mexicans and Muslims. Donald Trump has made many offensive comments about Mexican-Americans such as a comment during his campaign kickoff where he said, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. ...they’re sending people that have lots of problems. ... they’re bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people,” (Sanchez). Because of these views, Trump has also vowed to build a wall between Mexico and the United States and “have Mexico pay for that wall,”

(Sanchez). Trump has made it clear that a few of his main objectives are to take the jobs back from China and Mexico and create a ban on Muslims to decrease terrorism (Sanchez; Murse). The Muslim ban would be a “complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on” concerning the terrorist attacks (Sanchez). By doing this, Trump has created an enemy out of Mexicans and Muslims and has increased a fear in the United States of immigrants being dangerous and stealing jobs. This has increased Trump’s support in the hopes that Trump will protect Americans from harm and lost jobs.

In addition, the populist movement under President Trump has many similarities to the populist movements that took place in the United States in the past. One characteristic of US populism is that their policies favor protection of individual property rights and careful control of the money supply (Hawkins, 197). President Trump favors protection of American borders and jobs and stated in his inaugural address that “protection will lead to great prosperity and strength,” (Trump, Inaugural Address). He plans to make all decisions regarding trading, taxation, immigration, and foreign affairs with a protectionist viewpoint because he feels it will best benefit the working class in America, a view that matches typical US populism. In addition, populism in the United States usually focuses on economic issues such as monetary policy, corporate regulation, and deficit spending (Hawkins, 197). Trump also seems incredibly concerned with monetary issues such as these, and he expresses grievances with the past governance of the United States in his inaugural address by saying:

“For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry; subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military; we've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own; and

spent trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has disappeared over the horizon,” (Trump, Inaugural Address).

By saying this, Trump expresses his desire as president to stop unnecessary spending that will not benefit the American public and will send the nation in to more debt. His focus on controlling the spending of the government and directing funds towards different goals expresses populist thought akin to US populism. In addition to condemning governments that are spending unnecessarily, the right-leaning populism that appears in the United States also has a tendency to politically attack poor people, especially immigrant communities and racial minorities (Hawkins, 197). As expressed above, President Trump has been notorious for speaking out against racial minorities in the United States and has long expressed his desire to build a wall to keep out illegal immigrants from Mexico. In his inauguration speech, Trump urged Americans to “buy American and hire American” and to “protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs,” (Trump, Inauguration Speech). Often populism is assumed to support minorities and immigrants, but in the United States, Trump follows the pattern of populism in doing just the opposite. Also, United States populist movements have been historically associated with property owners of small to medium-sized enterprises, such as the farming community and the middle class (Hawkins, 198). Even though President Trump himself is very wealthy, he has made a distinct effort to appeal to the middle class. For example, he expresses his concern for the middle class by saying, “One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world. But that is the past,” (Trump,

Inaugural Address). Trump vows to bring jobs back to the United States and increase the wealth in the middle class. Trump's commitment to supporting the middle class once again lines up well with traits of past populism from the United States. Overall, it is safe to say that Trump is both a populist and has more or less followed the trends of populism in the United States. Trump's behaviors and ideologies may differ in some ways from populist leaders in Latin America, but this does not disqualify his campaign from being an example of populism in the United States. There is some debate in whether or not Trump will remain a populist during his presidential career. To do this, he must follow through on his promises through using economic resources. He has made many claims that have already proven difficult to follow through with, such as building a wall on the boarder of Mexico and the United States and making Mexico pay for it. He has also promised to bring back many jobs to the United States and increase infrastructure spending by a trillion dollars (The Editorial Board). All of these promises are only possible if Trump can gain access to money amidst a debt-ridden government and Republicans and Democrats that cannot seem to agree on anything. Now, the world will watch to see if the populist presidential candidate will also become the first populist president of the United States.

Comparison to Latin American Populism

Before analyzing the United States in the years leading up to Trump's election to see if there are similar factors to those in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, it is important to compare the Latin American populism outlined in this paper to Trump's populism in the United States. There are many differences between United States and Latin American populism, like the

importance of a strong leader to Latin American movements. Populist movements in Latin America have often been named and characterized by their leaders because they have been so essential to their movements that often followers wonder if the movement would be able to continue without the leader. In the United States, the largest populist movements have all been leaderless and less mobilized than movements in Latin America. This is why Trump emerging as a populist leader is so groundbreaking for the United States; he could be changing the way populism appears in the United States. However, President Trump still differs from Latin American populist leaders because his policies are more right-leaning than most movements in Latin America. Compared to the right-populism of Trump, Latin America has a tendency for left-populism that supports redistributive policies for the developing regions where the inequality is extremely high (Hawkins, 198). The classic populist movements in Latin America, such as Peronism, more closely resemble Trump's right-populism because they appeared in a time where many were openly critical of the communist movements and tried to break all ties with the Soviet Union. However, the majority of populists in Latin America tend to be left-leaning, such as Chávez, and employ very different policies than populists in the United States like Trump.

Conversely, there are also a few similarities between Latin American populism and United States populism under President Trump. One similarity is that both Latin American populists and President Trump seek to come to power and represent the wishes of certain people through seeking the support of the masses. This comes from the populist idea of the "pure people" rising up against the "corrupt elite" (Kaltwasser and Mudde, 1). Though it is often difficult to tell whether the populist leader, in either place, is more motivated by gaining power for himself or if he truly cares about the people he is fighting for. It is almost impossible to tell whether the leader's platform is developed to solely reflect the views of the people or if it is

developed to tell the people what they want to hear in exchange for power. This is reminiscent of the case of Juan Perón in Argentina, who originally defended the cause of the union workers to gain support for the election, but whose wife was the only one tried to improve the everyday lives of the union workers. This ambiguity often raises questions about the reliability of populist leaders. Another similarity is the reaction of Latin American populists and Trump to differing views. Both the Latin American populist leaders and Trump have incredibly strong personalities and also have a tendency to criticize those who do not agree with them. One example in Latin America is Hugo Chávez shutting down five private television stations in April 2002 when protesters demanded Chávez's resignation. President Trump has already shown similar reactions when he criticized the courts for not approving his Muslim ban and the countless times that he has called the media corrupt when they have spoken out against him. One such example is when he called CNN polls "fake news" because they projected him losing the presidential election (Nelson). Since his induction, he has continued to be critical of anything negative said about him such as low approval ratings. This is timely for the United States because Americans have the ability to see the end result of similar tendencies of populist leaders in Latin America. The responsibility then falls on the checks and balances set up in the United States to ensure that President Trump's motives are pure and freedom of speech and press will not be inhibited.

Trends Preceding Populism in the United States

Economic Trends Preceding Populism

The United States, like Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela has had a long history with economic fluctuations. The most infamous period of economic instability in the history of the United States was the Great Depression from 1929 to 1939. The stock market crash that caused the Great Depression affected the entire world and caused economic instability in places like Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. However, the most recent period of economic instability that has directly affected the political realm within the last decade has been the 2008 recession. This recession, now called the Great Recession officially began in December 2007 and lasted until June 2009. It began when an \$8 trillion housing bubble burst, and affected the job market the most since the Great Depression (The Economic Policy Institute). The job loss was severe with 8.4 million jobs lost by the US labor market in 2008 and 2009, making up 6.1% of all payroll employment (The Economic Policy Institute). The National Bureau of Economic Research, the official arbiter of US recessions, reported that there were officially 10 recessions between 1948 and 2011 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1). Still, none were as severe as the 2007-2009 recession, and the job loss was about twice as severe as even the deep recession that began in 1981 (The Economic Policy Institute).

The unemployment rate was one of the most highly affected factors of the recession. In December 2007 when the recession began, the unemployment rate was 5.0 percent, but at the end of the recession it was 9.5 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics even commented that there was a significantly higher proportion of long-term unemployed (greater than 27 weeks) in this recession and the time after the recession than in any

other recession (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2). A few months after the recession in October 2009, the unemployment reached a climax of 10.0 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2). Unfortunately, the US economy has yet to fully recover from this recession. There are still many statistics that have not returned to what they were before the recession (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1). In the fourth quarter of 2016, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reported that the demand for goods and services (actual GDP) was about \$175 billion (or 0.9 percent) less than what the economy was capable of producing (actual GDP), creating an output gap (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). This output gap is part of the legacy of the Great Recession and reflects that the unemployment rate is still too high and the productivity in companies is still too low. This has not only had a great impact on US economy but also US culture.

The impact of the job loss during the Great Recession was that family incomes dropped, poverty rose, and many Americans lost health insurance because they could not find jobs (Economic Policy Institute). This resulted in widespread fear in American communities and families. In December 2008 alone 524,000 jobs were lost, and this even began to instill fear in the employers that they would go bankrupt if they did not fire more employees (Uchitelle). The fear then affected the families as hundreds of thousands of people were unable to find full-time jobs (Uchitelle). Then President-elect Barack Obama stated at a news conference in Washington that there were “real lives, real suffering, real fears” behind the statistics published about the loss of jobs (Uchitelle).

The economy has steadily improved since the end of the recession in June 2009. Under the Obama administration, the financial stabilization bill (TARP) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were enacted at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, respectively. Because of these programs, the economy has averaged a 2.1 percent annual growth since 2009

(Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). The job losses have also reversed since Obama became president, with private employers adding 16.3 million jobs in the 85 months of sustained growth since February 2010 (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). Even the amount that workers are earning is finally recovering from the recession, although this has been slower than other aspects of the economy, only averaging 2.2 percent annually (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). The unemployed workers per job opening has steadily decreased; in 2009 there were about 7 unemployed people looking for work for every job opening, and in January 2017 there was a ratio of 14 job seekers for every 10 job openings (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). Although the impact of the Great Recession has been great, many aspects of the economy have begun to recover since the end of the recession in 2009.

Political Trends Preceding Populism

Political trends within the United States have also played a role in the election of Donald Trump. The source of much of the political strife has been the political tension between the Democrats and the Republicans. The recent polarization of the two dominant political parties has led people to either become disenfranchised with the political system or more extreme in their own political views. A 2014 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center polled more than 10,000 adults found that Republicans and Democrats are “further apart ideologically than at any point in recent history” and there are more and more Republicans and Democrats that “express highly negative views of the opposing party,” (Doherty). This conclusion comes from the data that the share of Americans who express consistently conservative or consistently liberal views has increased in the past two decades from 10% to 21% (Doherty). The result of this, Doherty

mentions, is that some places where the two parties used to overlap ideologically do not exist anymore (Doherty). So, Americans have become more extreme in their own views and are losing connections with those that think differently than they do. One effect of this ideological distancing is that the political parties are now pitted against each other and unable to compromise or understand opposing viewpoints. This leads members of opposing political parties to have negative opinions of those from the opposite party. This is also reflected in the 2014 survey, reporting that in the last two decades the amount of Republicans that have very unfavorable opinions of the Democratic Party has risen from 17% to 43%, and the amount of Democrats that feel extremely negatively about the Republican Party has also risen from 16% to 38% (Doherty).

A 2016 survey by Pew Research Center followed up on the previous study and discovered effects of the polarization of the Democratic and Republican parties. One such effect is that Republicans and Democrats tend to agree on less issues. The survey reported that 20% of Democrats and 16% of Republicans “almost always” agree with their own party’s stances, while 44% of both parties say that they “almost never” agree with the other party’s stances (Fingerhut). This lack positions that Republicans and Democrats can agree on has instilled fear and prejudice in Republicans’ and Democrats’ views of each other. In fact, the survey went on to state that 55% of Democrats say that the Republican Party makes them afraid, and 49% of Republicans say that of the Democrats (Fingerhut). Also, 70% of Democrats said that Republicans are more closed-minded than other Americans, and 67% of Democrats think that they are more open-minded than other Americans (Fingerhut). Meanwhile, 52% of Republicans think that Democrats are closed-minded, and many Republicans also think that Democrats are more immoral (47%), lazier (46%), and more dishonest (45%), (Fingerhut). These percentages are staggering, and reflect that Americans are losing the ability to respectfully disagree with someone and respect a

person that has different views than they do. This fight between Democrats and Republicans has turned the political arena into a game where the only objective is to secure power for one particular party. Politics has turned into a win-lose scenario where the only good outcome lies in a person's party winning. This has taken the focus off of the issues and the real problems that America is facing and placing it on the politicians and the power that they hold.

This shift in American politics has made the political arena incredibly unstable, and this instability has led to many protests from those who feel their voices are not being heard. 2015 in particular was categorized as a year with many protests. In fact, an RT International gathered footage and social media posts that showed protests from every month of 2015. The protests began on January 1st with a Black Lives Matter demonstration and continued for the rest of the year (RT International). Many of the protests were surrounding police brutality against African Americans, such as the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, following the death of Michael Brown. The copious amount of protests demonstrates the anger and frustration that was rising in American societies as entire groups of Americans were not being represented well by their current political system. This unrest of American people displays the political instability of the country in the years leading up to the election of President Donald Trump and the people beginning to turn to methods outside of the political system to express their grievances.

Like Venezuela, the United States of America also committed human rights violations in the years leading up to the election of a populist leader. The Amnesty International annual report for 2012 reports that there were 43 executions in 2012, the conditions in prisons was cruel, and there were still detainees in Guantánamo Bay in Cuba despite President Obama's promise to shut down Guantánamo (Amnesty International, USA 2012). Even the 2016/2017 Amnesty International annual report states that there were still harsh prison conditions and detainees in

Guantánamo, and there were also concerns about the treatments of refugees and migrants (Amnesty International, USA 2016/2017). In 2014, the Human Rights Watch reported that the United States' "rights record is marred by abuses related to criminal justice, immigration, national security, and drug policy" and that the victims are "often the most vulnerable members of society: racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, children, the elderly, the poor, and prisoners," (Human Rights Watch, 2014). This report supports the causes behind many recent protests about police brutality against African Americans and the mistreatment of Native Americans and immigrants.

Along with these reports of human rights abuse within the government, the belief that the government is corrupt has become widespread and normal in American society. For example, in 2014 a Gallup poll reported that 75% of Americans acknowledged that corruption was "widespread throughout the U.S. government," (Rosen). This belief affected the 2016 presidential election because the belief that politics is "rigged" is now a core assumption and something that most Americans just accept (Rosen). One attributing factor to this belief in recent years has been disagreement with decisions made by the Obama administration. For example, many Americans have disapproved of Obama's decisions regarding trade because of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade agreement that seeks to strengthen economic ties between the United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Australia, Peru, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore, and Brunei, through removing tariffs and standardizing regulations that make trade easier between these countries (Caddell & Associates, "Survey of US Voters"). A survey conducted by Caddell & Associates surveyed 1,950 registered US voters to gauge whether or not Americans supported the TPP, and found that most informed voters were strongly against it (Caddell & Associates, "Survey of US Voters"). An article by

Curtis Ellis commenting on this study states that the poll shows that Americans have “a deep distrust of Washington politicians and so-called free trade,” (Ellis). It also asserts that the results in this poll prove that the government is “corrupt, out of touch and indifferent to the interests of the American people” and that politicians are “more interested in protecting their own power than in doing what’s right for America,” (Ellis). While some parts of this article are incredibly charged, they represent viewpoints of real Americans that were frustrated with the decisions of the Obama administration. The combination of human rights violations and the belief that corruption is widespread in the government has caused many Americans to lose faith in the political system sticking to the status quo.

Comparison

In the United States, the economic trends in the years leading up to President Trump’s election have been periods of economic fluctuation during the Great Recession with an economic recovery in the years leading up to the election of Donald Trump. This is very similar to the economic trends of Argentina and Brazil, where each country experienced economic instability and then recovery directly before the election of the populist leader. In every case study, the fluctuations in the economy led to uncertainty in the stability of finances for every day citizens. The uncertainty caused by the economy combined with political trends to create an opportunity in each case for a populist leader to come to power.

The political trends in the United States are also similar to some trends in Latin America. For example, the feud between the Democrats and the Republicans is comparable to the liberal and conservative feuds in Argentina. On a larger scale, both the United States and the Latin

American countries experienced distrust in their government due to political instability and corruption. While some of the political instability may have taken different forms in Latin America than it did in the United States – for example, the history of coups in Latin America – the theme of the distrust of the government because of the disenfranchisement of certain groups of people remains the same. The fear that people have because of political protests or uprisings causes people to take unorthodox measures to ensure their safety, such as electing someone not typically seen in the country's political realm.

Conclusion

Populism is a political movement that advocates for the will of the common person by opposing what is presented as a corrupt elite. Populist movements identify an enemy to garner support, promise to spend money to create equality. Populism can be left-wing or right-wing, can appear differently depending on time periods and nations, and can take the form of a democratic or an authoritarian movement. Despite the variance in populism, populist movements have occurred all across the world, most commonly in Latin America.

The three case studies examined in this paper were the populist movements led by Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Although these cases differed in many ways, all three countries experienced economic and political trends in the years leading up to the election of the populist leader that made the leaders more likely to be elected.

Similarities such as these may have been expected within a similar geographical region, but many trends remained true in a recent case in the United States concerning President Donald

Trump. In the years leading up to the 2016 presidential election, the United States also experienced similar economic and political trends leading up to the election. This consistency across time and geographical distance brings legitimacy to these trends in predicting the election of a populist leader in any region of the world. Countries around the world can expect that if these economic and political trends exist, the citizens will more likely call for the election of a populist leader.

Despite his populist campaign, it is unlikely that Donald Trump will be able to rule as a populist president in the United States. He will most likely not be able to obtain the money he needs to follow through on his promises, and he has already proven to have changed some of his views once elected. Regardless, he was elected because of his populist campaign and the promises he made before he was elected, so whether he rules as a populist does not detract from the economic and political trends that led to the revolutionary election of a populist candidate to the US presidency. Even if Trump does not become a populist, his unorthodox political methods will still have a great influence on the future of the United States. These economic and political trends led to presidencies that changed the course of Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, and will likely have a great impact on the United States through Donald Trump.

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Internship with the Salaam Center Summer 2016

Provided English lessons for Muslim immigrants in Baltimore
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Internship with Business Access, LLC Summer 2015

Traveled to Texas, Connecticut, and New York to assist orientations and meetings
Scheduled orientations with achievers
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Answered phone calls and scheduled Capitol tours
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