

Delegative Democracy and Confidence in Legislatures: Explaining Institutional Authority and Trust in Latin America

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ABSTRACT:

In this paper, we explore micro-level explanations for the phenomena of “delegative democracy” in Latin America—hitherto examined only at the macro-political level. We test the impact of a variety of country-level *and* individual-level variables on citizens’ propensities to support the delegation of authority to a strong executive and/or to technocrats. We also analyze the impact of these variables on seemingly related phenomenon: levels of citizen confidence in the legislative branch of government. In doing so, we explore the cross-national applicability of theories of support for democracy and trust in institutions—models developed primarily in the US and European contexts. We also discover that the underlying structures of these two phenomena, delegative attitudes and trust in legislatures, are only partially related to one another.

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1) Introduction

In this paper, we explore micro-level explanations for the phenomena of “delegative democracy” in Latin America—hitherto examined only at the macro-political level. We test the impact of a variety of individual and country-level variables on individual propensities to support the delegation of authority to a strong executive and/or to technocrats. We also analyze the impact of these variables on a related phenomenon: levels of citizen confidence in the legislative branch of government. In doing so, we explore the cross-national applicability of theories of support for democracy and trust in institutions--models developed primarily in the US and European contexts.

Operationally, we examine the structure of “delegative attitudes” and support for legislative institutions across a set of “new” democracies in Latin America. Does there appear to be a common set of causes, or do cross-country variations dominate any causal structure? If the former, then this provides some support to an approach that might identify a common set of conditions that lead to strong democratic institutions across Latin America, and perhaps worldwide. On the other hand, if nation-nation variation dominates, then this means that we may need to examine particular national contexts, without relying on a more general comparative framework.

All of this, we hope, will begin to answer the question of whether there is a micro-political component to delegative democracy and inter-branch institutional relations, or whether, alternatively, they are better understood as an elite or macro-level phenomenon. The hypotheses we test are derived in part from literature on support for democracy. However, since a “delegative” attitude, as we operationalize it, does not logically (or empirically) exclude people professing democratic attitudes—and since we are unaware of any other studies focusing on these “delegative” attitudes in particular—we are also engaged in exploratory research. Thus, we test the impact of a number of individual and aggregate-level variables that were highlighted by their use in studies of democratic attitudes and confidence in institutions, *or* based on our own reasoning *vis-à-vis* their plausible impact on “delegative” attitudes.

We find that some theories, particularly recently developed theories of trust in institutions which seem counterintuitive but have been demonstrated for the US case, in fact travel well. We also attempt to adjudicate among seemingly competing theories of

citizen support for democracy. But again, on many questions, we are breaking new ground and have little theory upon which to rely. We draw on logical inferences when we can, and treat our findings as exploratory and deserving of further study.

2) Delegative Democrats?

Given the proliferation of elected regimes around the world, well outside the historic “birthplaces” of democracy in Europe and North America, we should not be surprised that the concept of democracy itself remains highly contested. In contexts other than advanced industrialized democracies—that is, in the “newer democracies”—political scientists have tended to adapt the concept by creating typologies of democracies—“democracy with adjectives”—that highlight one or more features of a consolidated representative democracy that are absent or deficient in these political systems.¹ The reality of the matter is that many elected governments, particularly in newer democracies, fall short of such ideal types.

In a series of articles in the mid-1990s, Guillermo O’Donnell provided a useful point of departure for discussing numerous regimes that, while not entirely authoritarian, are not consolidated democracies either (1994a, 1994b, 1996). He took issue with a teleological assumption implicit in the work of some scholars at the time, that democratic consolidation is an end-state towards which all regimes are in transition—even though they may be stalled indefinitely. O’Donnell instead examines these regimes as they are, not as they hypothetically might become in the future. Some of these regimes may be considered polyarchies, as Robert Dahl (1971) defined them, even if they fall short of being considered full representative democracies. They may periodically hold reasonably free and open elections with relatively low barriers to participation and genuine political competition. Yet the regime itself may be poorly institutionalized, its rules and practices not well established and inconsistently adhered to by political actors and agents of the state.

¹ Collier and Levitsky (1997) argue that generating these subtypes of democracy is most useful when it is accompanied by an application of the concept within a causal model. Moreover, they argue that it is important to distinguish the essential political aspects of democracy and generate more precise definitions, rather than to incorporate increasingly numerous social and economic factors into a conceptualization of democracy.

O'Donnell conceptualizes some of these regimes as “delegative democracies.” In such regimes, executive office-holders, once elected, are relatively unconstrained by other institutions of government. Mechanisms of horizontal accountability—the checks and balances of a presidential regime—are rendered ineffective by political realities or are skirted by the executive. The regime thus takes on a plebiscitary quality. Although opposition parties and legislators may be free to voice criticisms, elections—especially for the executive branch—are virtually the only mechanism of accountability.² Thus, a defining feature of delegative democracies is a preponderance of executive power and the absence of a countervailing balance of power from other branches of government, particularly the legislature. As O'Donnell noted in a later work,

Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office... In this view, other institutions—courts and legislatures, for instance—are nuisances . . . a mere impediment to the full authority that the president has been delegated to exercise (1999, 164).³

It has now been ten years since Guillermo O'Donnell published his influential article, “Delegative Democracy” (1994). Around the same time that O'Donnell was rethinking institutional politics at the highest levels, others researchers were taking on the task of finding out what the average Latin American citizen was thinking about democracy and other issues. Starting in 1995, serious cross-national public opinion polling began to include Latin America. The Latinobarometer organization, formed a few years prior, formally adopted the format of the pre-existing Eurobarometer surveys in 1994, eventually applying these surveys to 18 Latin American countries by 1996. Also in the mid-1990s, the World Values Survey (based at the University of Michigan) began to include Latin American countries in their survey waves with greater consistency. The

²Furthermore, the poor quality of civil and human rights, and the geographic and social heterogeneity of formal and informal rules, (what O'Donnell (1996) calls “low intensity citizenship” and “brown areas” of the rule of law, respectively), suggest that the liberal and republican components of many hybrid democracies are very weak. See O'Donnell (1998) for a discussion of the liberal, republican, and democratic aspects of modern representative democracies.

³ Kenney (2000) directs the reader this quote.

World Values Survey (WVS) inquired about a host of political, economic, social and cultural issues, including questions about democracy and political institutions. These survey items were especially salient given the democratic transitions that many Latin American societies had undergone—or were undergoing—in the 1990s. As well, following the model of social science theories and questionnaires designed in the US and European context, researchers inquired about the issue of trust: trust in fellow citizens, trust in a variety of institutions, and trust in government.

Although we know of no other research tying delegative democracy to trust in institutions, these two areas of scholarship struck us as being potentially related in interesting and fruitful ways. Where does “delegative democracy” come from? There seem to be two schools of thought on this matter. The first, an older line of reasoning, would suggest that Ibero-American political cultures display long-standing tendencies towards personalistic rule and weak institutions (see, for example, Wiarda 2001). Other scholars, including O’Donnell himself, instead emphasize the institutional arrangements that emerged from democratic transitions and the political and economic crises that have beset Latin America since those transitions.

But what about the micro-political dimension? Might the delegative democracy phenomenon also be an expression of broad configurations of public opinion, rather than merely the machinations of political elites or the institutional legacies of authoritarianism and regime volatility? Scholars have argued about whether one needs democratically-minded citizens to have a stable democracy. Could a similar logic hold true for particular subtypes of democracy? Is the underpinning of delegative democracy a populace with a propensity to agree to cede authority to political strongmen or expert technocrats? In beginning to answer this question, we hope to bridge different schools of thought on delegative democracy, and introduce the micro-political dimension—individual citizens—into the debate.

This paper represents the first phase of what we hope will be a longer-term project. In this first phase, we explore the causal effect of a host of attitudinal, demographic, and contextual variables on individual’s professed proclivities towards delegative democracy, as well as their confidence in parliament. Thus we investigate

causality in one direction, to see if there is a micro-level basis for delegative democracy and weak legislatures to be found within public opinion data.

In doing so, we remain cognizant of the possibility of different or multiple causal relations. We are aware, for example, that the ongoing debate about the direction of causality between political culture and experience with political institutions should serve as a caution against making hasty conclusions (see below). Experience with a set of institutional relations and political elite behaviors can shape public opinion and political culture, while particular political cultures may be more prone to criticize or be cynical about elected officials and their governing institutions.

What's more, perhaps Latin American citizens have more trust in institutions—even government institutions—than in legislatures because they are aware of a performance gap or a power imbalance between legislatures and other political institutions. In other words, perhaps Latin Americans dislike their legislative institutions because these institutions really *are* less powerful, less productive, or in some way less worthy of their confidence than the executive branch. Alternately, perhaps Latin Americans are just like everybody else in the world. Trust in the executive of the government tends to be consistently higher than trust in legislatures in most political systems in most times and places. Yet the political salience of low trust in legislatures, or of a gap between trust in government or the executive and trust in legislatures, tends to be higher in Latin America and other new democracies, precisely because of the delegative democracy phenomenon. Future phases of this project—including the accumulation of much more in-depth data on legislatures and legislative-executive relations than currently exist—will address such alternate hypotheses and questions of reciprocal causality.

3) Public Opinion and Attitudes Towards Democratic Institutions

Literature on Latin America

Building on the work of Almond and Verba (1965; 1989), Ronald Inglehart has asserted that civic culture—particularly attitudes of political efficacy, belief in the political system as a whole, and a tendency to trust other people—strongly affects the viability of political institutions. Inglehart (1988) also made the case that national political cultures do in fact exist and are empirically measurable. Like Almond and

Verba, Inglehart (1990) proposed a theory of democratic stability, but he then went on to test it using a quantitative model. His findings highlighted the importance of civic culture on democratic stability. Economic development, he claimed, did not have a significant effect on democratic stability in and of itself. What most strongly increased the likelihood of democracy persisting, he argued, were life satisfaction, interpersonal trust, and lack of support for revolutionary change (i.e. overall satisfaction with the existing system as a whole).

But as these theories traveled into the study of Latin America, Muller and Seligson (1994) argued that Inglehart had it backwards: democratic experience causes the development of civic culture—or at the very least, there is a reciprocal relationship here. The authors tested this alternate model on a broader dataset that added six Central American countries to the 21 cases that Inglehart explored, and took as their dependent variable not years of continuous democracy (as Inglehart had) but rather the level, or quality of democracy. Muller and Seligson demonstrated that interpersonal trust is an effect, not a cause of democratic stability—and their overall findings raised serious questions about Inglehart’s views on political culture and democratization.

At the very least, it seems that studies of democracy and public opinion must account for political, social and economic contexts as well as individual-level observations. Booth and Seligson had argued (in Diamond 1993) that aggregate-level conceptualizations of “national political cultures” can have unexpected or misleading relationships to individual-level survey data. But national context still matters. Camp (2001) notes that citizens’ aggregate definitions and expectations of democracy vary by country. Seligson himself (2001) also finds that, in the Latin American countries he examined, nationality had by far the strongest impact on preferences for democracy over other systems. Yet Alan Knight (2001) raises the question of whether national level is as salient as the “(micro-) political cultures” of region as well as demographic factors such as ethnicity. He also cautions that political concepts may not mean the same thing to respondents within countries, and across countries within the same region.⁴

⁴ Knight further warns analysts to be sensitive to historical and political contingencies. For example, respondents who are dissatisfied with democracy and its institutions may not value democracy in the first place or, alternately, may be committed democrats who are dissatisfied with the way democracy has actually developed. What’s more, respondents who are politically engaged may be tacitly responding to

In terms of individual level factors, Seligson (2001) finds that demographic variables have little or no impact on preferences for democracy over other systems, and that if we control for national context, then level of interpersonal trust has a small (but significant) impact on preferences for democracy over other systems. Furthermore, “respect for rule of law” and “willingness to hold government accountable” are significant predictors of preference for democracy. “Personal happiness,” which Inglehart maintains is a strong predictor of democratic preferences, is only significant if we leave country dummies (i.e. national context) out of the equation.

Analyzing individual level data for Mexico, Chile and Costa Rica, Moreno (2001) asserts that socioeconomic class is the strongest determinant of individuals’ *support for* democracy, but age is the strongest factor in how they *conceive of democracy*. Older citizens tend to hold a minimalist, electoral definition, while younger ones highlight inclusion and protection of minorities as crucial aspects of democracy. As well, education and knowledge of politics tend to lead respondents to have more abstract conceptions of the tasks of democracy (e.g. promoting liberty, protecting minorities) rather than more limited (e.g. electing rulers) or pragmatic (e.g. fighting crime) tasks. Finally, the degree to which individuals support democracy itself shapes their views of the appropriate tasks of democracy. Committed democrats see electing leaders as democracy’s main task, though both committed democrats and committed authoritarians also value more tangible tasks such as fighting crime and redistributing wealth.

Extrapolating from some of this work on support for and conceptualization of democracy, in our study we look at age, socioeconomic status, and education (as well as gender, which was assessed in the abovementioned analyses but was seldom found to be a significant variable). We also test the dependent variables of the abovementioned studies as explanatory variables in our own models, and assess the impact of citizen views of democracy on attitudes toward delegation of power and on faith in legislative institutions.

Building on the notion that nationality—living in and experiencing one country versus another—has a crucial impact on how people feel about democracy, we also began

whether their preferred candidate/party has been winning or losing lately, in their responses to a host of survey questions.

by modeling country dummy variables. However, we then attempted to go beyond the above-mentioned studies, to identify more precisely which qualities of these national societies might shape their citizens' views on democratic institutions and political power. Thus, we include economic variables such as GDP growth rates and aggregate unemployment levels. We also include national-level political variables, such as the degree to which the executive is, in actuality, constrained by other branches of government. Finally, in testing hypotheses about political conflict derived from US scholarship, we also look at several more specific institutional variables, such as the effective number of political parties and the political alignment of the executive and legislative branches at the time that the survey data we are using were collected.

Literature on the United States

The literature on inter-branch relations and confidence in legislative institutions in the US understandably varies significantly from the Latin American literature. Trust in institutions and the legislative-executive balance of power do not seem to have as radical an impact on policy outputs—or on “American-democracy-as-we-know-it.” Thus, the kinds of research questions asked in the US context tend to focus on declining secular levels of confidence in institutions, and on citizens' attitudes towards the “process” of politics (e.g. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001) rather than on the survival or disintegration of the democratic system. In fact, Americans have long professed faith in democracy and the institutions of government (levels exceeding 90% are routine), even while criticizing politics, politicians, and bureaucrats. And even though the meaning of these various measure of trust and confidence has been recently questioned (Cook and Gronke 2005), most scholars agree that Americans love democracy but hate government (Hibbing and Theiss Morse 2001).

There is a long history of studies of public confidence in legislatures as institutions upon which we can draw. At least a dozen individual- and aggregate-level factors have been found to affect public confidence and approval—or “diffuse support” (Easton 1975; Dennis 1981)—for the US Congress and state legislatures. Boynton, Patterson and Hedlund (1969) argue that *higher* socioeconomic and occupational status and higher levels of education increase confidence in legislative institutions. Likewise,

they found that both *higher* degrees of political knowledge and participation, and party identification, increased this confidence. But later studies—most notably Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995)—found precisely the opposite: the more knowledge citizens had of institutions, the greater their disdain for these institutions (see also Cook and Gronke 2001). This means that open institutions that display their debates, conflicts and “politicking” more transparently—like legislatures—earn less citizen confidence than more closed institutions such as the judiciary (see Durr et al. 1997 for results at the aggregate level). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse’s findings also suggest that higher income, higher socioeconomic status, and higher education levels—all of which tend to correspond with greater political awareness—*decrease* the esteem in which citizens hold government institutions in general, and legislative institutions in particular. Familiarity with government, so it seems, breeds contempt.

Factors around which there has been greater consensus regarding their *positive* correlation with US citizen confidence in legislatures include greater feelings of political efficacy (Patterson, Ripley and Quinlan 1992); lower initial expectations of the performance of legislatures (Kimball and Patterson 1997); positive assessments of one’s own legislative representative (Patterson, Ripley and Quinlan 1992); legislatures’ policy alignment with the executive branch (Patterson and Caldeira 1990); and the strength of the national economy in terms of unemployment and consumer confidence (Patterson and Caldeira 1990). It is also true, in the American context, that partisanship and ideology influence approval. Republicans and conservatives, even though they approve of institutions in general (Cook and Gronke 2005) tend to disapprove of Congress (Kimball and Patterson 1997).

4) Data and Methods

Dependent Variables: “Delegative” Attitudes and Confidence in Legislatures

As mentioned above, in this study we seek to explain the formation of two sets of individual political orientations that we initially believed were interrelated: a propensity to support the delegation of authority to the executive branch, and a concomitant lack of confidence in legislatures as institutions. The data that we draw upon are from the World Values Survey (WVS), which conducted surveys in 9 Latin American countries in 1995-

1997⁵ and 6 Latin America countries in 2000-2001.⁶ We model our two dependent variables in each of these periods separately.

To operationalize our first dependent variable, a “delegative” political orientation, we combined responses to two questions on the WVS survey, asking respondents to rate different types of political systems as good or bad ways of governing their country. The first asked respondents to rate “a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections”; the second asked respondents to rate a system in which “experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country.” Positive responses to the first component might be seen as simply an authoritarian attitude, rather than a “delegative” attitude, since the wording paints an image of a president who not only skirts the legislature but elections as well. Nonetheless, although there is a statistically significant negative correlation between preferring the rule of unfettered leaders and valuing democracy over other systems, there are many people who hold both opinions simultaneously. And a majority, in fact, say both that democracy is good or very good, but also that expert rule is also good or very good.⁷ This suggests to us that a sizeable portion of these respondents are what O’Donnell might term **delegative democrats**.

Our measure of delegation consists of a simple additive scale with the two items. They are strongly correlated (.3457, with a two-item alpha of .5211). We thus feel confident that we are capturing, albeit imperfectly, the trait that we seek to explore: “delegative” attitudes among citizens.⁸

⁵ The 1995-97 WVS survey instrument was not administered in El Salvador until 1999, and thus we include data from El Salvador in our analysis of the 1999-2001 wave.

⁶ Both waves of the WVS were also administered in Puerto Rico, which we are not analyzing here. Also, for reasons that are not clear to us, Colombia was surveyed in 1996 using a different survey instrument and a much larger sample size; because of these difficulties, particularly the overwhelmingly large sample size relative to population, we do not include data from Colombia in our 1995-1997 analyses. We did, however, run models using Colombian data and dropping the missing variables, and the coefficient size and significance for the remaining independent variables did not change markedly.

⁷ For example, in the 1995-1997 wave, six percent of the sample said both “Democracy as it currently has developed” and rule by a “strong leader” was “very good,” and 35% of the sample responded “good” or “very good” on both items. The comparable figures for “democracy” and “experts rule” are 9% (both very good) and 53% (both good or very good).

⁸ For all the analyses that follow, we also re-estimated the models separately for the two component items (though we did not report those findings here). While some items lost or gained statistical significance, the basic pattern of results remained the same.

Operationalizing our second dependent variable was a much more straightforward task. In both of the waves of the WVS that we analyze, respondents were asked how much confidence they have in a series of social, cultural, economic and political organizations and institutions. Among these institutions was “parliament,” i.e. the legislature. We are reasonably certain that this measure of “confidence” approximates Easton’s “diffuse support.” In the US context, scholars have contrasted diffuse support to confidence in the leadership of specific institutions (especially members of Congress vs. Congress as an institution). This aspect of confidence is not suggested by the wording of the WVS survey.⁹ Where we do have some concerns is that the “confidence” question may capture the conjunctural approval of the output of the current legislature, as well diffuse support for the institution. As Turner and Elordi (2001) note, the Spanish term “trust” (*confianza*) can also have the connotation of “approval of performance.” Nonetheless, the wording of this survey question in the WVS is virtually identical to other Latin American survey instruments (national and cross-national) that address the same underlying concept, and thus we are using the best available data to answer the question at hand.

Hypotheses

*Basic Demographics (Gender, Age)*¹⁰

We were interested in the impact of gender and age on delegative preferences and confidence in legislative institutions. Though Seligson (2001) found that no demographic variables have a strong significant impact on preferences for democracy over other systems, we were curious to see whether there was a gender gap shaping our dependent variables. One might speculate that Latin American women, living in strongly patriarchal societies, are more likely to support the delegation of authority **and** more likely to have confidence in legislative institutions. However, we encountered no particular theoretical basis on which to hypothesize about the effects of gender. As for age, Moreno (2001) asserts that this is a very important factor in shaping how individuals *conceive of*

⁹ The WVS item asks the respondent to rate how confident they are in an institution; in US surveys, such as the General Social Survey, respondents are asked how confident they are in the *leaders of* particular institutions.

¹⁰ Source of data: WVS surveys.

democracy, if not their overall support for democracy. Older citizens tend to hold a minimalist, electoral definition, while younger ones highlight inclusion and protection of minorities as crucial aspects of democracy. Thus, we hypothesize that older citizens would be more likely to support the delegation of authority, but make no *a priori* assumptions about the impact of age on confidence in legislatures

*Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Political Engagement*¹¹

The literature on delegative democracy does not yield any definitive predictions about the effect of socioeconomic status and education on “delegative” attitudes. Moreno (2001) asserts that socioeconomic status (SES) is the strongest determinant of *support for* democracy, with higher status individuals more strongly supporting democracy. SES also has a significant effect on *characterization* of democracy, with higher class individuals holding a more liberal and process-oriented view of democracy, rather than a pragmatic view focusing on the output of democracy. In the formidable case study and comparative literature on class and democracy in Latin America, we see somewhat more conflicting hypotheses about this relationship. Stereotypically, populist authoritarian tendencies are thought to be held by lower class citizens, while conservative authoritarian tendencies are the domain of the upper classes. Latin America’s neo-populist regimes of the 1990s (Fujimori, Menem, Chavez) tended to derive their support from less-organized or politically excluded lower class citizens—but in the case of Fujimori, also (for a time) from the highest echelons of the upper classes. Looking at a longer sweep of history, Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) found that it was the middle and working classes who most ardently demanded democratic reforms. Our working hypothesis is that lower income levels and lower education levels would contribute to delegative attitudes, though we are aware that contrary arguments could also be supported by theory and by previous studies.

As for confidence in legislatures, based on Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995; 2002) we suspect that individuals with higher socioeconomic status and greater education will be **less** trusting of these institutions. Notwithstanding Moreno’s (2001) findings (see above) and the conflicting hypotheses about class and democracy, we hypothesize (based

¹¹ Source of data: WVS surveys.

on Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's logic) that higher SES—normally education, income, and occupation status, although the last is not available in this study—and higher levels of political interest and engagement lead to greater awareness of politics. This, in turn, leads to greater cynicism about government in general and about openly conflictive representative institutions in particular. Thus, we anticipate negative coefficients on education, income, political interest, and political activity.

*Attitudes and Political Orientations: Financial Satisfaction*¹²

Inglehart (1990) posited that citizens' overall sense of satisfaction with their lives increased the stability of democracy. Similarly, we suspect that if citizens are satisfied with their own financial situation and that of their household, they will be more content with their political institutions—including their legislature. As well, taking a cue from research on public support for neo-liberal reforms in Latin America (Weyland 1996), we suspect that dissatisfaction with one's financial situation will lead citizens to seek extra-institutional solutions to their economic problems. Thus, we hypothesize that respondents who are dissatisfied with their financial situation will be more likely to support the delegation of authority to experts or to powerful leaders.

*Attitudes and Political Orientations: Left-Right Ideological Self-Identification*¹³

Echoing Robert Dix's comparative historical work (1989), Zechmeister (2004) has suggested that the strength of left-right semantics in Latin America is generally lower than that found in advanced industrialized countries, though it varies significantly from country to country within Latin America. What's more, even in industrialized countries, left-right ideology is more symbolic, e.g. predicting party affiliation, than it is policy-oriented, e.g. predicting stances on concrete issues (Ibid; see also Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Evans and Whitefield 1998; Knutsen 1998).

Notwithstanding these caveats, we are curious about the possible role of left-right ideology in shaping the attitudes we are investigating. We reserve for future phases of our project the task of modeling the ideological location of actual executives and

¹² Source of data: WVS surveys.

¹³ Source of data: WVS surveys.

legislatures. However, we suspect that individual respondents' left-right ideological self-identification shapes their attitudes towards democracy and institutions in ways that are strongly conditioned (for and against) by the actual policy outputs and ideologies of the political leaders of the day (as has been found in the US by Kimball and Patterson 1997). Since several of Latin America's delegative democratic or competitive authoritarian regimes of 1990s (e.g. Peru under Fujimori) implemented neo-liberal reforms, we might associate self-identified right-wing citizens with the delegation of authority. Yet other regimes with extremely strong executives hewed to the left (e.g. Venezuela under Chávez) and supported more traditionally populist policies. Thus, at this stage we have no definitive hypothesis regarding the effect of left-right ideology on delegative attitudes in Latin America.

In the comparative literature on trust in institutions, however, we can glean theoretical insights about the impact of left-right ideology on confidence in the legislature. According to Cook and Gronke (2005) and Brehm and Rahn (1997), conservatism tends to be associated with trust in institutions while liberal views tend to be more critical and suspicious of institutions. Ironically, however, conservatives in the US are also more critical of Congress (e.g. Kimball and Patterson 1997). Thus, we could infer that, in Latin America, right-leaning citizens would have less confidence in legislatures than left-leaning citizens—and possibly are more likely to be delegative democrats.

Attitudes and Political Orientations: Interpersonal Trust¹⁴

In light of the ongoing debate between Inglehart and Seligson (see above) regarding the relationship between interpersonal trust on democracy, we were interested in testing the impact of attitudes of interpersonal trust on attitudes regarding delegation of authority and confidence in legislative institutions. Though Seligson disputed Inglehart's argument that trust causes democratic stability, he did concede that trust has a positive (albeit small) impact on citizen preferences for democracy over other systems. We might also logically infer that people who trust others would be more likely to support a representative institution such as a legislature, and would be uncomfortable curtailing the

¹⁴ Source of data: WVS surveys.

power of those representative institutions by delegating authority to a single individual or branch of government (see also Brehm and Rahn 1997). Thus, our working hypothesis is that higher levels of interpersonal trust would lead to lower levels of delegative attitudes and higher levels of confidence in legislatures.

*Attitudes and Political Orientations: Characterization of Democracy and Overall Valuation of Democracy*¹⁵

Among the items that appear in the WVS, respondents are asked a series of questions in which they characterize their support for democracy—whether democracy is bad for the economy; whether democracies are indecisive and “have too much quibbling”; whether democracies are good at maintaining order; and whether democracy is the best possible system despite these potential problems. We have created an index of Democratic Characterization using these variables, in which high values suggest an emphasis on democracy “warts and all,” and low values suggest a focus on the problems rather than the virtues of democracy.¹⁶ Additionally, in a separate single question, respondents are also asked to rate the overall value (for their country) of having a democratic system. We suspect that citizens who profess strong, unwavering democratic values will be less likely to support delegation of authority, and more likely to express confidence in the most representative, deliberative branch of government, the legislature.

*National Economic Context: Aggregate Factors (GDP Growth and Unemployment)*¹⁷

Following the dictum that “nation matters” (Camp 2001; Seligson 2001) we began by running models with country dummy variables.¹⁸ But we were dissatisfied with

¹⁵ Source of data: WVS surveys.

¹⁶ The alpha for this scale, by country, exceeded .63 in all 2000-01 cases except Peru (alpha=.55). For 1995-7, the scale performed less well; the alpha exceeded .5544 in all cases except two: Mexico (.52) and again Peru (.46). Though not reported here, we estimated all models with the individual items, and no results are changed. We chose to use the scale for clarity and ease of presentation and interpretation.

¹⁷ Source of data: World Bank.

¹⁸ Though we do not fully report the results here, we found that values and significance of coefficients for attitudinal and demographic variables remain largely consistent when we move from models with country dummy variables to models with aggregate level variables. In addition, the models with aggregate level variables fit almost as well as, and in some cases better than, the models that include country dummies. For instance, in the 1995/7 wave, the regression model predicting delegative attitudes including country dummies returns a F-statistic of 51.14, while the model with aggregate indicators has an F of 49.44, and

merely establishing that national context was a statistically significant predictor of the political attitudes we are examining. Thus, we attempted to “unpack” these national contexts and examine the effects of several aggregate-level economic and political factors on our dependent variables.

Again, based on the premise that, in good economic times, citizens will be more content with their political institutions, we predict that higher GDP growth and lower unemployment levels will lead to greater confidence in the legislature. As well, research on public support for neo-liberal reforms in Latin America (Weyland 1996) has indicated that citizens facing the prospect of economic losses are more willing to take risks to avert these losses. Thus, we hypothesize that low or negative economic growth and higher unemployment levels will lead to more support for extra-institutional solutions to economic problems, including the delegation of authority to experts and to powerful leaders.¹⁹

*National Political Context: Executive constraints*²⁰

One aspect of national political context that speaks particularly strongly to both of the phenomena we wish to explain is the actual balance of power between the legislature and the executive. Alluding to delegative democracy, Moreno, Crisp and Shugart (2003) have noted an “accountability deficit” in Latin America. Other scholars have pointed to a broad range of formal inter-branch relations in Latin America (see Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997) or suggested that the stereotypical weakness of Latin American legislatures has been exaggerated in the comparative politics literature (Morgenstern and Nacif 2002; see also Crisp and Botero 2004). We believe (and have argued elsewhere—see Levitt 2003) that this is an empirical question, and that the real balance of power between executives and legislatures is only vaguely approximated by the formal rules of the game. Thus, we employ an indicator that gauges the actual degree to which executives are constrained by other branches of government, chiefly (though not exclusively) the legislature. Following Muller and Seligson’s (1994) finding that

insignificant difference. In 2000, the model including aggregate indicators performs /better/ (F=27.89 vs. 26.19). The comparative log likelihoods for the ordered probit models are of similar relative magnitude.

¹⁹ Note, however, that we were unable to find reliable unemployment data for 2000 and 2001, and thus leave this variable out of our models for the most recent wave of the WVS survey.

²⁰ Source of data: Polity IV, Marshall and Jaggers (2002). We also attempted to include an indicator of the quality of democracy—the POLITY indicator itself—but this was so closely correlated with executive constraint that we had to drop the variable.

democratic experience shapes individual civic attitudes, we similarly hypothesize that living in a delegative democracy or even a competitive authoritarian regime (see Levitsky and Way 2002) —systems with low levels of executive constraints—will condition citizens to accept the delegation of authority, while a more balanced political system will lead citizens to expect stronger checks and balances. By the same logic, we might hypothesize that living in a system with a weak or ineffectual legislature will lower citizens' confidence in that institution, while a more active and independent engaged legislature will earn citizens' trust. However, such expectations are again tempered by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's argument that what citizens most dislike is messy, conflict-ridden politics—of the sort found in systems with legislatures that are able to act autonomous and effectively check the power of the executive.²¹ These Americanist scholars would lead us to believe that living in a delegative democracy or a competitive authoritarian regime would lead to a *higher* level of confidence in the legislature, with citizens perhaps preferring these institutions' inactivity or subservience to their ability to check the executive.

*National Political Context: Effective number of parties*²²

We suspect that legislatures with a large effective number of parties (ENP, by seat)—knowing nothing about actual inter-party relations, and using purely stochastic reasoning—will be more conflict-ridden. Again borrowing a page from Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, this will in turn engender a negative reaction from citizens. Thus, we hypothesize that higher ENP will lead to a stronger proclivity to delegate authority and lower levels of confidence in the legislature as an institution.

*National Political Context: Legislative-executive alignment*²³

By the same logic, we hypothesize that a legislature that is politically aligned with the executive—by partisan majority or coalition—will lead (conflict-averse) citizens to trust that legislature, and to see as unnecessary the delegation of authority to executives. On the other hand, legislatures that are not politically aligned with the executive frequently become embroiled in conflict with those executives. In Latin America, the end result is often serious political crisis, or even a *coup d'état* (see Kenney 2004). Thus,

²¹ We also control for the political alignment/disalignment of the two branches—see below.

²² Source of data: compiled by Jorge Schiavon, CIDE, Mexico D.F.

²³ Source of data: POLCON (Political Constraints) 2000, Witold Henisz.

living in a political context in which the legislature is not aligned with the executive may generate delegative attitudes and low levels of confidence in the legislature (though this raises the question—which we are not able to address here—of which branch citizens will blame for inter-branch conflict).²⁴

5) Results

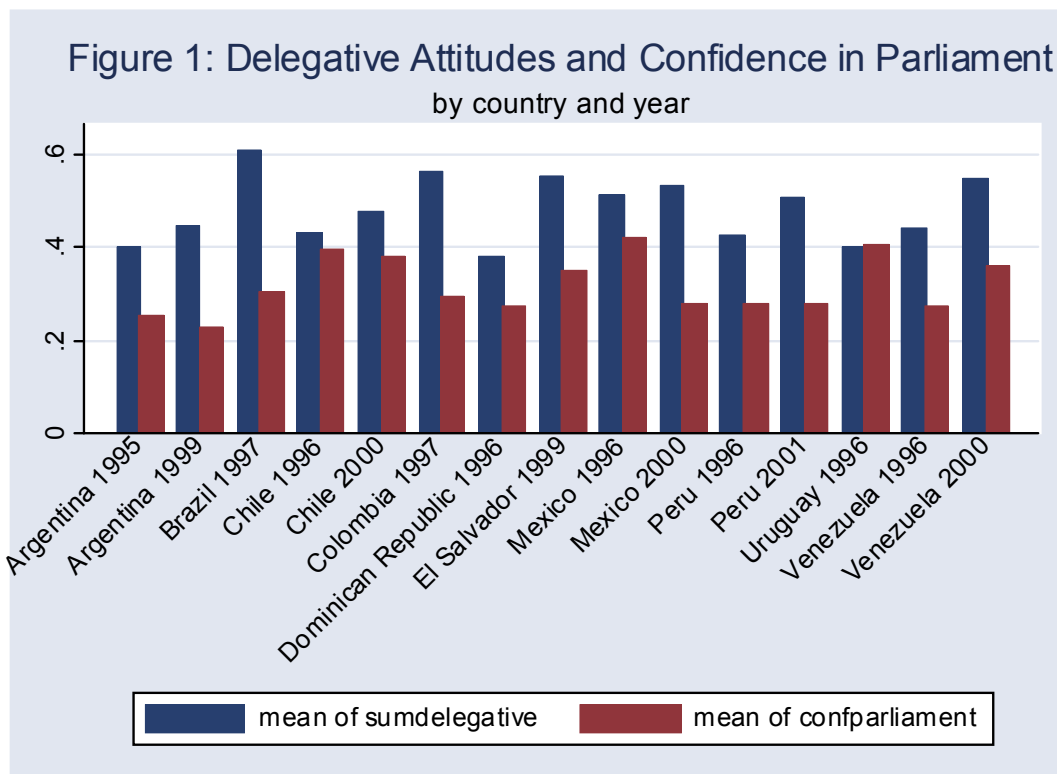
As a first cut, we display the basic pattern of delegative democracy and confidence in the parliament for the countries and survey years that we are analyzing. (Note that both variables have been recoded to the 0-1 range for the purposes of this display, with 1=endorsement of the item in question). A few things are immediately evident in Figure 1. First, as we noted above, delegative attitudes and confidence in parliament may not be two sides of the same coin. It is true that some countries that display high levels of delegative attitudes, such as Brazil, also have a citizenry expressing relatively low levels of confidence in parliament. Brazil displays the widest gap between the percentage of the population expressing confidence in parliament and those endorsing delegative rule. In another case, Uruguay (1996), we see the mean level of confidence in parliament actually exceeding the level endorsing delegative rule.

Overall it appears, as in the US, that Latin American citizens are rather negative about their parliamentary institutions, even though the question asks more abstractly about “parliament” and not the current leadership. But Figure 1, on the whole, does not convince us that societies with strong delegative attitudes *necessarily* have lower mean levels confidence in parliament. What is more, at the aggregate level, confidence in legislatures and delegative attitudes do not always reflect the actual autonomy of legislatures or actual delegative democratic practices.²⁵ Mexico, surveyed in 1996, displays the highest mean level of confidence in the legislature—even though, at the

²⁴ In future phases of this project, we would also like to include data on the productivity of legislative institutions and (as suggested above) the left-right orientation of legislative output. Until a few years ago, there was a dearth of comparative studies of legislatures. This has been remedied somewhat in recent work by Morgenstern and Nacif (2002) (see also Crisp and Botero 2004), and by the accumulation of quantitative data on roll call voting by institutionalist scholars such as John Carey (2004). However, the deeper comparative studies have, to date, focused on a rather limited number of countries—and on the most active, best institutionalized legislatures in the region. We hope to further fill in these scholarly lacunae, particularly for the more institutionally unstable and crisis-ridden among the Latin American cases.

²⁵ We do make the case, below, that such a relationship may be found at the individual level.

time, the Mexican Congress was still firmly under the control of a single-party state apparatus. In 2000, Venezuela was undergoing Hugo Chávez’s “Bolivarian Revolution,” which included the reshuffling of institutional power in ways that strengthened the executive and weakened the autonomy of the legislature. Though this is reflected in the mean for delegative attitudes, that survey also evinces a remarkable (and rising, compared to 1996) level of confidence in a decreasingly powerful legislature.



These puzzles further prompted us to move beyond country-level analyses, and attempt to model the micro-level foundations for delegative democracy and trust in legislatures.

5.1: Multivariate Analysis of Delegative Attitudes

Demographics

Higher income and more education seemingly leads citizens to hold “delegative” attitudes, while lower income and education levels appears to dampen these attitudes. In

both time periods we examined, we found that higher income and education levels had small but significant negative effects on the propensity of citizens to support the delegation of authority to experts or strongmen. These results indirectly support earlier findings from public opinion research regarding the positive impact of SES and education on support for democracy, as well as a more liberal and representative characterization of democracy. It does not support the view that the wealthy in Latin America would pragmatically support delegation in an effort, for example, to implement neo-liberal reforms—although the timing of the surveys and the specific countries included may mean that such upper-class support for delegation was temporary and that we missed these phenomena with the data that we have.

Neither gender nor age had significant effects on delegative attitudes in either of the periods we analyzed. Thus, we were not able to support our hypotheses derived from the findings of Moreno (2001) and others who argue that older citizens hold a minimalist view of democracy (focused on elections) while younger citizens have a more expansive, inclusive view.

Attitudinal / Political Orientation

In both waves of the WVS survey, respondents' left-right ideological self-placement had a significant effect on delegative attitudes. Specifically, right-wing Latin Americans were notably more willing to delegate authority to experts or strongmen than were left-wingers. Though we had no definitive hypotheses regarding this relationship, our findings are consistent with the pattern of strong leaders in delegative democracies imposing “order” and implementing neo-liberal reforms—though the 2000-01 wave also included data from Venezuela, then (and now) under a strong, left-leaning executive.

We also found that esteeming democracy, rather than focusing on its negative traits, diminished an individual's tendency to hold a delegative attitude, in both time periods. The impact of this variable, how positively or negatively a citizen characterizes democracy, was by far the strongest relationship that we found in both the 1995-97 and 2000-01 models.

Table 1: Delegative Attitudes, regressed on demographic, attitudinal, and aggregate (economic and political variables)

	1995-1997		2000-2001	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Income	-0.004 (0.002) *		-0.003 (0.002)	
Gender (female)	-0.008 (0.006)		-0.010 (0.007)	
Education	-0.005 (0.002) **		-0.008 (0.002) **	
Age	0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)	
<i>Attitudinal/</i>				
<i>Political Orientation</i>				
Financially Satisfied	0.001 (0.001)		0.001 (0.001)	
Left-Right Self-Placement	0.006 (0.001) **		0.005 (0.001) **	
Interpersonal Trust	0.002 (0.009)		0.010 (0.010)	
Political Activity	0.002 (0.016)		-0.020 (0.019)	
Political Interest	0.005 (0.003)		-0.004 (0.004)	
Characterization of Democracy	-0.248 (0.020) **		-0.266 (0.020) **	
Overall Valuation of Democracy	-0.038 (0.013) **		0.007 (0.016)	
<i>Aggregate Economic and Political</i>				
GDP Growth	-0.004 (0.001) **		0.007 (0.001) **	
Unemployment	-0.004 (0.001) **		--	--
Executive Constraint	-0.007 (0.004) *		-0.097 (0.011) **	
Effective # of Parties	0.025 (0.003) **		0.075 (0.011) **	
Inter-Branch Alignment	0.008 (0.011)		-0.108 (0.020) **	
Constant	0.598 (0.035)		1.035 (0.054)	
N of Observations	5888.000		4326.000	
Adjusted R-squared	0.116		0.085	
Root MSE	0.242		0.238	
Source: World Values survey, World Bank, and data collected by the authors. Coefficients are ordinary least squares regression estimates. *= .05, **=.01 level of significance.				

Closely related to this, a higher overall valuation of democracy also had a significant (though smaller) dampening effect on delegative attitudes in the 1995-97 period. In 2000-01, however, the direction of the relationship between them holds but the results are not statistically significant.

More financial satisfaction and higher levels of interpersonal trust, two factors suggested by Inglehart's (1990) work, had no significant effect on delegative attitudes. Neither did levels of political activity or political interest, contrary to our tentative hypotheses.

Economic and Political Context

The effects of aggregate-level economic factors such as economic growth and unemployment levels are inconclusive and difficult to interpret. In the 1995-97 period, citizens living in countries with lower levels of GDP growth tended to support the delegation of power and authority. In 2000-01, we found a significant but diametrically opposite relationship: *higher* GDP growth tended to promote delegative attitudes. This may be an artifact of the particular countries included/excluded in the two waves of the WVS survey; a more substantive interpretation, perhaps based on political learning over time, would require analysis beyond the scope of this paper.

Also curious was the effect of unemployment levels. While we did not have comparable data on unemployment in 2000-2001, in the 1995-97 period we saw a negative relationship between unemployment levels and delegative attitudes. In other words, citizens of countries with higher *employment* levels tended to be more willing to delegate authority.

We had initially hypothesized that economic factors such as employment levels and GDP growth would have similar effects on delegative attitudes: during bad economic times, people would be more willing to delegate authority than during good economic times. Perhaps this finding reflects a genuine sea change in citizens' reactions to their economic environments; perhaps the finding is an artifact of the particular countries surveyed in 2000-01; or perhaps it is an effect of not being able to statistically control for unemployment levels in this period. Clearly, the relationship between these two economic variables—and their relationship with delegative attitudes—may be more complex than we had surmised, and would merit further study.

In terms of political context, political systems in which executives were relatively unconstrained and unfettered by other institutions had the hypothesized effect in both time periods. As we hypothesized, living in a delegative democracy (or a competitive

authoritarian regime) seems to form citizens' attitudes such that they are more accepting of the delegation of power.

Institutional factors such as the effective number of parties and legislative-executive alignment also had, by and large, the predicted effects on delegative attitudes. Countries with more fractionalized legislatures tended to have citizens with a greater propensity to delegate power to experts or to a strong leader. Likewise, the partisan alignment of the legislature and the executive seemingly decreased the delegative attitudes of citizens in these countries in 2000-01, though no significant effect was found in 1995-97 and the sign of the coefficient was reversed.

5.2: Multivariate Analysis of Confidence in Legislative Institutions

Demographics

Higher levels of income had a small but significant effect of decreasing citizens' confidence in their legislature in both the 1995-97 period and in 2000-01. Similarly, higher education levels led to lower confidence in legislatures in 2000-01; the relationship was not significant (though similarly negative) in 1995-97. These results conform to the findings in recent literature on the US (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1995; 2002). In neither period were gender or age significant predictors of confidence in parliament—though we did not have any specific hypotheses regarding age and gender.

Attitudinal / Political Orientation

In both periods, citizens' sense of financial satisfaction had significant effects on their trust in the legislature. As we had hypothesized, taking a cue from Inglehart (1990), feelings of financial well-being led to more positive feelings towards legislative institutions.

Our findings for the effect of interpersonal trust also supported Inglehart's logic, though only for the 1995-97 period. In that first period, willingness to trust others had a strong, positive relationship with levels of confidence in the legislature. (Oddly, in the 2000-01 period, the relationship is small, negative and non-significant.)

Although our findings on delegative attitudes above suggested that they were related to right-wing ideological self-placement, here we find that right-wing Latin Americans (in both periods) tend to have more confidence in the legislature than their

left-wing compatriots. This too confirms our hypothesis, derived from the US literature--that right-wing ideology tends to promote trust in institutions—though it is notable that such a relationship holds in a region with a vastly different political history and ideological spectrum.

A citizen's level of interest in politics had the strongest consistent effect on confidence in the legislature across the two time periods. As we had hypothesized, based loosely on the work of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995), it appears that the more interested someone is in politics—and thus the more information they have—the lower the esteem in which they hold their representative institutions.

However, we had made similar predictions for citizens' level of political activity, and in the 2000-01 period this factor had the opposite effect from that which we hypothesized. More active citizens were more likely, not less likely, to express confidence in their legislature. (No significant relationship was found in 1995-97, though the sign of the coefficient was negative).

For characterization and valuation of democracy, in the 1995-97 period we found that a citizen's confidence in parliament was strongly and positively related to that citizen's citing the virtues, not the problems, of democracy. This supports our hypotheses; however, no significant relationship was found in 2000-01, though the coefficient was positive. Similarly, we found that overall valuation of democracy had a significant positive impact on trust in legislatures only in 2000-01. (In 1995-97, the relationship was positive but not significant).

Table 2: Confidence in Parliament, by demographic, attitudinal, and aggregate (economic and political) variables				
	1995-1997		2000-2001	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Income	-0.017	(0.007) *	-0.023	(0.008) **
Gender (female)	0.002	(0.028)	-0.054	(0.033)
Education	-0.013	(0.008)	-0.024	(0.009) **
Age	0.001	(0.001)	0.000	(0.001)
<i>Attitudinal/</i>				
<i>Political Orientation</i>				
Financially Satisfied	0.033	(0.005) **	0.026	(0.006) **
Left-Right Self-Placement	0.043	(0.006) **	0.027	(0.007) **
Interpersonal Trust	0.253	(0.038) **	-0.077	(0.043)
Political Activity	-0.091	(0.068)	0.214	(0.087) **
Political Interest	-0.205	(0.015) **	-0.204	(0.018) **
Characterization of Democracy	0.541	(0.089) **	0.022	(0.088)
Overall Valuation of Democracy	0.014	(0.059)	0.423	(0.072) **
<i>Aggregate Economic and Political</i>				
GDP Growth	-0.020	(0.004) **	0.005	(0.006)
Unemployment	-0.042	(0.004) **		
Executive Constraint	0.134	(0.015) **	0.098	(0.047) *
Effective # of Parties	-0.025	(0.013) *	-0.059	(0.051)
Inter-Branch Alignment	0.150	(0.048) **	0.632	(0.091) **
Cutpoint 1	-0.150	(0.153)	-0.112	(0.240)
Cutpoint 2	0.901	(0.153)	1.138	(0.241)
Cutpoint 3	1.979	(0.154)	2.063	(0.242)
N of Observations	6295.000		4528.000	
Log-likelihood	714.100		412.300	
Pseudo-R square	0.045		0.038	
Source: World Values survey, World Bank, and data collected by the authors. Coefficients are ordered probit estimates. * = .05, ** = .01 level of significance.				

Economic and Political Context

All of the aggregate-level economic and political factors that we modeled were significant predictors of support for legislatures in the 1995-97 period, but several dropped out of the model in the 2000-01 period. In 1995-97, both stronger economic growth and higher unemployment are negatively related to confidence in parliament. We

had predicted that a better employment outlook would build citizens' confidence in their legislative institutions, and these findings confirm our predictions. However, we had also hypothesized that stronger economic growth would have a similarly salutary effect on confidence in legislatures, and our findings demonstrate precisely the opposite: citizens living in a slower-growth economy appear to be *more* likely to express confidence in their legislatures. As we also found in our analysis of delegative attitudes, it seems that GDP growth and unemployment levels have different—even contradictory—effects on attitudes towards authority and institutions. What is more, in the 2000-01 period (for which we were unable to model unemployment), GDP growth is not significant—but the coefficient runs positive, rather than negative as it did in 1995-97. Again, explanations for these curious findings may be substantive or, alternately, they may be a product of the choices of countries surveyed or our inability to include unemployment in the 2000-01 model. Regardless, these findings merits further study.

The degree to which executives are constrained by other branches of government had a positive impact on citizens' confidence in their respective legislatures. This relationship was stronger in the 1995-97 than in the 2000-01 period, but regardless, we were able to support our hypothesis that experiencing a political system with a more active (or at least “reactive”—see Morgenstern and Nacif 2002) legislature seems to boost citizens' trust in those legislatures.

The fractionalization of these legislatures also had the hypothesized effect on trust levels in 1995-97. The fewer effective number of parties, the more confident individuals were in their legislative institutions. (Though we found no statistically significant effect in 2000-01, the direction of the relationship remained negative.) Though one might assume that a larger number of parties—a wider range of political groups with which to identify—might lead citizens to identify more strongly with their legislative institution, this is not the case. Greater legislative fractionalization—and we might assume a more conflictive legislature—reduced citizens' confidence in that institution. The support that this offers to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's theory is promising for future research, particularly in light of the diverse array of party systems found in Latin America, compared to the relatively centrist two-party system of the US Congress.

Finally, the political alignment of the executive and the legislature was positively related to confidence in parliament in both time periods. As we had predicted, citizens' reacted positively to harmony between the two branches and negatively to conflict between them. We do not know if inter-branch disalignment affects citizens' confidence in both branches equally or if legislatures, *ceteris paribus*, tend to bear the brunt of the blame for discord in government—another issue worthy of further study.

6) Discussion

When we first began work on this project, we anticipated that delegative democracy and confidence in legislatures were two sides of the same coin. We theorized that an individual who endorsed control by unelected strongmen or experts would also express low levels of confidence in the legislature. Analytically, this implies a negative correlation at both the macro and micro levels. These patterns, we believed, would correspond to the conventional images of legislative-executive relations in the countries in question. It turns out that the story is more complicated than that. In support of many of our claims, we found that in all three of our constellations of explanatory variables—demographic, attitudinal, and aggregate political/economic—many had the expected impact on individuals' attitudes towards institutions and the concentration of political power. Other relationships were something of a surprise, and require further examination.

We start with the aggregate patterns. First and foremost, we are encouraged to find that our economic and institutional variables provide almost as much explanatory power as an atheoretical set of country dummies. Countries matter, of course, and no brief comparative study can capture all of the nuances and idiosyncrasies of different political cultures. However, we successfully identified a small set of institutional measures that seem to capture at least a substantial part of national political institutional environment and possibly national political culture.

The fact that aggregate-level political factors had some of the most consistent effects on individual attitudes is support for those, like Seligson, who argue that “nation matters.” The institutional context in which a citizen lives may have an impact on their attitude towards institutions and political authority (note, for example, our finding that

more political parties do not lead citizens to express higher levels of support for parliament; the reverse seems to be true). The experience of living in a delegative democracy or competitive authoritarian regime perhaps made citizens more willing to accept such arrangements. It is also possible that the reverse causal process is at work: that it was citizen attitudes that made possible the narrower concentration of political power in these countries. Additional research is needed in order to resolve this mirror image of the Seligson-Inglehart debate.

At the individual level, we were encouraged by consistent, and predicted, patterns between an individual's socioeconomic position and their attitudes toward delegative democracy and toward the legislature. The effects of education (our most solid demographic finding) and income tell us that poorer, less educated Latin Americans are more willing to support the delegation of authority, and, at the same time, more trusting of their legislative institutions (and vice versa—better educated and higher income Latin Americans express less confidence in *both* experts/strongmen and elected legislatures). These findings might seem contradictory, yet they do support the image of delegative democracies as neo-populist regimes drawing their support from the lower classes. The findings are also precisely in line with recently-developed theories of trust in US institutions: higher levels of political information and exposure actually engender cynicism, not trust, towards institutions.

Finally, explanations based on individual attitudes and political orientations fared well and largely conformed to our hypotheses. We found some strong support for our initial notion that delegative democracy and trust in legislatures were two sides of the same coin. Some explanatory variables—such as citizens' valuation and characterization of democracy as a system—had the logically related (i.e. opposite) effects on delegative attitudes and trust in legislative institutions. As we suspected, citizens who value democracy in and of itself, despite its attendant "problems," are less willing to see authority delegated away from representative institutions, and express greater confidence in those institutions. Yet other explanatory variables had divergent effects that confirmed separate theories but inquired our preliminary notion that delegative democracy and low confidence in legislatures were closely related phenomena. Citizens' who identified as right-wing supported the concentration of power but also expressed confidence in their

legislatures. Since we control for inter-branch alignment and executive constraint, we cannot simply infer that right-wing support for legislatures is the product of those institutions being weak or subservient. Instead, our findings conform both to the association in Latin America between right-wing ideology and authoritarian tendencies, *and* to US-based findings that conservatives have more trust in institutions.

Financial satisfaction, contrary to theories of delegative authority and economic reform, had no impact on delegative attitudes—but such feelings of well-being do increase confidence in legislatures, which loosely conforms to Inglehart’s theories of democratic stability.

Finally, political interest, political activity, and interpersonal trust—factors that speak to the literature on civic culture—had no impact on delegative attitudes. They *were* related to confidence in legislatures, but not always in ways that are consistent with theories of civic culture. Confirming to both the broad civic culture literature and the more recent US-based theories, Latin American citizens who trust other people also tend to trust their institutions: the legislature, in this case. However, more active and engaged citizens tended to have *lower* levels of confidence in legislatures—which supports recent US-based theories but seems to infirm theories of civic culture.

7) Conclusion

The underlying structures of Latin Americans’ support for the delegation of authority to strongmen or experts on the one hand, and their distrust of legislative institutions on the other, converge in some ways and diverge in others.²⁶ Strongly valuing democracy as a system *does* lead citizens to support the checks and balances and the representative institutions that scholars of delegative democracy have found lacking in many of the “new” democracies. Living in a more institutionally balanced, less delegative system is also related to support for such horizontal accountability, though we cannot say for certain which is cause and which is effect. We can also infer that even

²⁶ As a final check on our results, we ran a seemingly unrelated regression (SURE) model. The SURE model assumes that there are unknown quantities that may be causes of both delegative democratic attitudes and confidence in the legislature, surely a correct assumption. The basic pattern of results, including statistical significance of all indicators, remains intact under the SURE specification..

citizens who do seem to appreciate legislative autonomy do not like political conflict between and within branches of government, and react negatively to it.

Where the two phenomena diverge remains an important point of interest for us and for future research programs. Right-wing ideologies in Latin America seem to be both quasi-authoritarian and, at the same time, trusting in institutions. Civic engagement has little effect on delegative tendencies and a negative impact on institutional trust. Socioeconomic factors—both individual and aggregate—seem to have complex relationships with delegative democracy and institutional politics that are not well explained by current research. As well, we are not presently able to address the degree to which citizens' attitudes are a response to particular policy outputs, ideological traits among power-holders, or the quality of legislative productivity.

What we can say is that there do, in fact, seem to be valuable and cogent, though complex, micro-level explanations for delegative democracy—a phenomenon previously addressed largely at the macro level—and for trust in legislative institutions in Latin America.

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