

# 1 HOW LEADERS IN LATIN AMERICA ROSE TO POWER THROUGH CHARISMA AND POPULIST IDEOLOGY

Populism has been an important force in Latin American political history, where many charismatic leaders have emerged since the beginning of the 20th century, as the paramountcy of agrarian oligarchies had been dislocated by the onset of industrial capitalism, allowing for the emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie and the activation of an urban working class,[9] causing the emergence of reformist and multi-class nationalist politics, centered on a charismatic leadership,[10] such as Aprismo in Peru, the MNR in Bolivia, [and the political movements gravitating around Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Perón in Argentina, Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in Colombia, Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador and others.[11] Ideologically, Latin American populism, with its emphasis on nation-building under an authoritarian leadership as a prerequisite for technological modernization, betrayed the earlier influence of Comtean positivism. Socially, for many authors—such as Brazil's Octavio Ianni—populism should be understood as the political alliance between an emerging industrial bourgeoisie and a newly organizing urban working class, in which the former accepts social reforming for the latter's sake as long as the working class remains politically subordinated to both a more or less authoritarian State and private enterprise,[12] in a process of controlled inclusion of the "masses" into the political system,[13] a co-opting process some Marxist authors like Brazil's Francisco Weffort ascertain was accepted by the newly urbanized working class given their lack of a previously developed class consciousness.[14]

Despite efforts to charter an ideological pedigree to Populism in Latin America, as has been attempted by some, working, e.g., with concepts taken from Perón's Third



Position,[15] Latin American countries have not always had a clear and consistent political ideology under populism. Populist practitioners and movements in Latin America usually adapt politically to the prevailing mood of the nation, moving within the ideological spectrum from left to right many times during their political lives. If populist movements in 1930s and 1940s Latin America had apparent fascist overtones and based themselves on authoritarian politics, as was the case of Vargas' Estado Novo dictatorship in Brazil (1937–1945),[16] or of some of Peron's openly expressed sympathies,[17] in the 1950s populism adapted—not without considerable unease from its political leadership[18]—to heightened levels of working-class mobilization. Therefore, it is not surprising that 1960s populism was associated mainly with radical, left-leaning petty-bourgeois nationalism, which emptied the State of its function as a coercive class-rule apparatus and saw it instead as an organ of representation of the Nation as a whole.[19] Such was the case, for instance, of the Goulart government (1961–1964) in Brazil, Goulart being described as a fiery populist who identified—mainly rhetorically—with the dispossessed and tried to foster a reformist agenda through ties to the organized Left.[20] The fact that Goulart was eventually ousted by the military shows that, in the views of some authors, other populist leaders of the time faced a jeopardy: they were reformists who, in the pursuit of their agenda, had to encourage popular mobilization and class conflict they ultimately abhorred.[21] Consequently, populism was eventually identified by the 1970s military dictatorships as "demagogery" and as a risk to the stability of the existing social order.[22]

In some countries, Populism has been fiscally supported in Latin America during periods of growth such as the 1950s and 1960s and during commodity price booms such as in oil and precious metals.[30] Political leaders could gather followers among the popular classes with broad redistributive programs during these boom



times. Conversely, in others countries, Populism has been historically associated with countering the relative decline of export agriculture with deficit spending and import-substitution policies aimed at developing an internal market for industrial consumer goods.[31] Populism in Latin America has been sometimes criticized for the fiscal policies of many of its leaders, but has also been defended for having allowed historically weak states to alleviate disorder and achieve a tolerable degree of stability while initiating large-scale industrialization. Though populist fiscal and monetary policies, called macroeconomic populism, has been criticized by economists, who see in it the ultimately dysfunctional subordination of economic policy to political goals,[32] some authors acknowledge populism to have allowed non-radical leaders and parties to co-opt the radical ideas of the masses so as to redirect them in a non-revolutionary direction.[33] It's generally regarded that populists hope "to reform the system, not to overthrow it".[34]

Often adapting a nationalist vocabulary and rhetorically convincing manner, populism was used to appeal to broad masses while remaining ideologically ambivalent. Notwithstanding, there have been notable exceptions.

When populists take strong positions on economic philosophies such as capitalism versus



socialism, the position sparks strong emotional responses regarding how best to manage the nation's current and future social and economic position. Mexico's 2006 Presidential election was hotly debated among supporters and opponents of populist candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrado

## **2.CAUSES THAT LEAD TO THEIR RICE AND HOW THEY MAINTAIN IT**

Populism in Latin American countries has both an economic and an ideological edge. Populism in Latin America has mostly addressed the problem, not of capitalist economic development as such but rather the problems caused by its lack of inclusiveness,[37] in the backdrop of highly unequal societies in which people are divided between very small groups of wealthy individuals and masses of poor, even in the case of societies such as Argentina, where strong and educated middle classes are a significant segment of the population.[38] Therefore, the key role of the State in Latin American populism, as an institution, is to mediate between traditional elites and the "people" in general.[39] In appealing to the masses of poor people prior to gaining power, populists may promise widely demanded food, housing, employment, basic social services, and income redistribution. Once in political power, they may not always be financially or politically able to fulfill all these promises. However, they are very often successful in providing many broad and basic services in the short term.[40][41]

