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A Six Decade Assessment of Protestantism's Impact on Latin America, 1959-2019: Liberal Regimes and Conversionary Protestantism as Explanatory Variables for Democracy, Economic Progress and Educational Development in Latin America

**Abstract**

This study analyzes the role programmatic Liberal parties played in the period from 1842 to 1923 in creating contemporary democracies, economies, and educational infrastructure in contemporary Latin America. Focusing primarily on data from the Pew Center (2014), the CIA World Factbook and the replication study of Woodberry’s 2014 study of mission density per 10,000 population, we argue that the impact of Protestantism is difficult to separate from the church/State nexus formed in the nineteenth century when programmatic[[1]](#footnote-1) Liberal movements set in motion the economic engines that propelled Latin American nations into their emerging futures.

Since the nineteenth century, scholars have observed that the emergence of Protestantism has resulted in startling effects on politics and economies. Weber (2001), p. 3, observed: “business leaders and owners of capital, as well as the higher grades of skilled labor, and even more the higher technically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprises, are overwhelmingly Protestant.” Another 19th century sociologist, Karl Marx, noted in his least materialist observations in the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, “Cromwell and the English people had borrowed speech passions and illusions from the Old Testament for their bourgeois revolution. When the real aim had been achieved, when the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished Locke supplanted Habakkuk.” (Marx, Tucker, Ed.1975, 596). David Martin has echoed these sentiments more recently when he observes, “the Protestant religion has generally helped to make the path to democracy easy.” (Martin 2016, 174). He adds more elaborately, “Methodism provided a work discipline that led many believers to rise socially and economically, and inculcate skills of organization, articulate speech and leadership that might assist either in business or in the lower ranks of teaching or in the formation of trade unions. David Stoll, while initially concerned about the conservative political influences of evangelical congregations, evolved to observe that evangelical congregations eventually arrived at a stage of concern as to the material challenges of poverty and begin to lean to progressive understandings of politics. (Stoll 1990, xvi).

Steigenga (2001, 62) notes that Evangelicals are not easily distinguishable in political variables from Catholic populations. Anne Motley Hallum observes that evangelical politics are complex, but admits that part of the mix includes right-wing dictators. Paul Freston (2008, 238) states, “there is now more religion, more instances, and variety and accessibility of religion than ever before.” He adds (Freston 2008, 246) that Brazilian Pentecostals span the entire political spectrum, while Guatemalans tend to take on Cold War ideologies, and Peruvians get entangled in corruption. He also notes that Pentacostals have not taken an active role in the process of democratic consolidation. Cleary and Stewart-Gambino (1998, p.5-13) make the points that Pentecostals are independent from the early supposed North American influences and when venturing into the political arena often expressed disillusionment and betrayal, especially in the Peruvian case.

Robert Woodberry echoes earlier observers with a unique twist, “In particular, conversionary Protestants (CPs) were a crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organizations, most major colonial reforms, and the codification of legal protections for nonwhites in the nineteenth and twentieth century. These innovations fostered conditions that made stable representative democracy more likely regardless of whether many people converted to Protestantism.” (Woodberry 2012 p.244-245). This chorus of careful scholars makes an important observation: religion shapes economies and political systems. We do not intend to refute them. We merely wish to add that religious innovations emerge within the nexus of 19th century church state relations. Namely, the actions of Liberal regimes and policies created opportunities for Protestants throughout Latin America.

The Variables

*Dependent Variables.* Most of our dependent variables come from Woodberry (2012). These variables include democracy as defined by Bollen (2001) and Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson (2001). Woodberry compares these indexes to Polity IV means from 1955 to 2010. (Woodberry 2012, 257). Some literacy variables came from the Polansky and Nikolova (2020) replication study, namely Literacy 1980, and Literacy 1950. Literacy 2021 we gathered from the CIA World Factbook. We used the Polansky Nikolova (2020) data for the following measure of the Protestant population: PERCENTPROT1970. To this we added Pew’s measurements of the Protestant Population in 2014, and Gill’s 1998 estimates. We consulted CIA World Factbook Data for the 2021 estimates of Gross Domestic Product Per Capita. The following measures of democracy came from the Polansky and Nikolova (2020) replication study: POLITY5094, POLICY1950, POLITY25507, and POLITY19502010.

*Independent Variables.*  One important variable comes from Woodberry (2012, 257), density of Protestant missionaries per ten thousand population in 1923. We contributed one other variable. Formal liberal party regime duration we define as (A) the number of years (between 1842 and 1923) late 19th and early 20th century liberal party executives held office while (B) operating under an anticlerical constitution or charter (C) and refusing to form coalitions with conservatives.

Table 1.1

Liberal Regime Duration in 21 Latin American Cases

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Argentina | 32 |
| Bolivia | 21 |
| Brazil | 4 |
| Chile | 8 |
| Colombia | 30 |
| Costa Rica | 28 |
| Cuba | 8 |
| Dominican Republic | 0 |
| Ecuador | 24 |
| El Salvador | 12 |
| Guatemala | 15 |
| Haiti | 9 |
| Honduras | 10.5 |
| Mexico | 32 |
| Nicaragua | 7 |
| Panama | 13 |
| Paraguay | 19 |
| Peru | 0 |
| Uruguay | 31 |
| Venezuela | 26 |

(Adapted from twelve cases in a 1999-2014 dialogue with Tony Gill. The Argentine, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Ecuadorian, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Uruguayan cases came from the following sources: Ivereigh (1993, 43-68), Kennedy (1958, 100, 113), Jeffrey (1952, 176, 254, 248), Rock (1975, 31, 33), Klein (1969, 10-64), Weil et al. (1974, 20-24, 60-64), Melville ( 1971, 39-70), Winn (1970, 93), Van Oss (1986, 186,187), Anderson (1982, 19-21), Griffith (1965, 4,5,183,284,306), Stokes(1930, 38, 59-79, 307, 329-31), Peckenham and Street (1985, 162-70), Weil et al. (1971, 163-66), Mainwaring (1986, 27, 238, 261 N. 5), Graham (1968, 255), Schneider (1966, 39-42), Hudson (1998, 43-59, 279), Hudson (1994, 116-34), Fleet (1985), Scully (1992), Drake (1978), Smith (1982), Hanratty (1991, 19-27), Baloyra (1982, 5-6), Blutstein et al. (1971, 60-83), Schmidt (1983, 38), Ministerio de Educacion (1994, 6, 208-11), Merrill (1993, 8-18), Bernstein (1964, 99-115), Meditz and Hanratty (1989, 14-24). The other nine cases not listed above came from maps of the world at [www.CIA.gov](http://www.CIA.gov), when we could get them and the others we got from Wikipedia. We are working on trying to find more prestigious sources.)

Liberal Argentine regimes include Roca (1880-86, 1898-1904) Juarez Celman (1887-90), Pellegrini (1891-92), Saenz Pena (1893-94), Quintana (1895-98), Figueroa Alcorta (1905-10). (Ivereigh 1995, 43-68; Kennedy 1958, 100, 113; Jefferey 1952, 176 ,245 ,248; Rock 1975, 31, 33). Bolivia’s Liberal regimes include Prado (1899-1904), Montes (1904-09, 1913-17), Villazon (1909-13) and Gutierrez Guerra (1917-20). (Klein 1969, 10-64, 411; Weil et. al. 1974 20-24, 60-64). Brazil’s de Morais Barros was a Liberal. (Mainwaring 1986, 27, 238, 261 n.5: Graham 1968, 255: Schneider 1996, 39-42: Hudson 1998 45-59, 279). Liberal regimes in Chile include Santa Maria (1883-86) and Balmaceda (1886-91). (Hudson 1994, 16-34; Fleet (1985); Scully (1992); Drake (1978) Smith (1982). Cuban liberals included Jose Miguel Gomez and Gerardo Machado. We omitted the executive commission of the provisional Government, because it was a broad coalition (though Portela y Moeller, Franca y Alvarez de la Campa and Carbo y Morera had liberal leanings). (Source; Cahoon 2021). Ecuadorian liberals include Alfaro (1897-1901, 1906-1911), Plaza Gutierrez (1901-1905; 1912-16), Baquerizo Moreno (1916-20), and Tamayo (1920-23). (Hanratty 1991, 19-27).

Salvadoran liberals included Malespin, Guzman Aguila, Vasconcelos (1845-51), Del Castillo and Barrios (1857-63). Eleven liberal Nicaraguan leaders had tenures of under two years. (Baloyra 1982, 5-6; Blutstien 1971, 60-85; Schmidt 1983, 38; Ministerio de Educacion 1994, 6, 208-11; Merrill 1993, 8-18). Guatemala’s liberal regimes include Garcia Granados (1871-1873), Barillas (1885-1892) and Reina Barrios (1892-1898). Honduran Liberals include Trinidad Cabanas (1852-1855), Davila (1907-1911), Lopez Gutierrez (1920-1923), and several others with extremely short tenures. (Melville 1971, 39-70; Winn 1970, ‘93; Van Oss 1986, 186-187; Anderson 1982, 19-21; Griffith 1965, 4, 5, 185, 284, 306). Panama’s liberal administrations include Porras Barahona (1912-1916; 1918-1920; 1920-1923)) and nine other brief presidencies. (Medina 1999, 129-142). The Paraguayan liberal era includes numerous regimes from 1904 to 1923. (Hanratty 1990, 17-40). There are no classical liberal administrations in Peru. However, there are secular anticlerical regimes, including Nicolas Pierola (1895-99), Eduardo Lopez de Romana (1899-1903), Manuel Candamo (1903-1904), Serapio Calderon (May- September 1904), Jose Pardo y Barreda (1904-1908, 1915-1919), Augusto Leguia (1908-1912, 1923) Guillermo Billinghurst (1912-1914), Oscar Benavides (1914-1915). (Source; [www.mapsofworld.com/list-of/presidents/peru](http://www.mapsofworld.com/list-of/presidents/peru)). Uruguayan liberals include Batlle y Ordonez (1904-07, 1911-15), Williman (1907-11), Viera (1915-19) and Brum (1919-23). (Hudson & Meditz 1992, 12-25; Weil 1971, 163-66). Venezuelan Liberal regimes included Tadeo Monagas (1855-58), Gual Escandon (1858), de Tovar (1859-61), Tell Villegas (1868-69, 1892) and nine other regimes that held terms of two years or less. ([www.Mapsofworld.com/listof,presidents-venezuela/](http://www.Mapsofworld.com/listof,presidents-venezuela/)).

Data Runs:

First, let us discuss how liberal duration (LIBDUR) does not function as an explanation.

Table 1.2

Liberal Duration as a Predictor of Protestant Missionary Density and Protestant Missionary Exposure

B Std. Error Sig.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LIBDUR With YRSMIS60 Dependent | -.021 | .482 | .966 |
| LIBDUR with  NPMISPC23X10K  Dependent | -.002 | .006 | .708 |

As we can see in Table 1.2 above, Liberal Duration does not allow us to predict missionary density or length of missionary exposure (significance of .966 and .708). This was one of several surprises to us. Moreover, there were several variables that we could not make sense of by using liberal duration as opposed to Woodberry’s concept of mission density.

Table 1.3

Liberal Duration and Missionary Density as predictors of GDPPC in 2021 and Literacy Levels in 2021 and 1980

R2 B Std. Error Sig. Ind. Var.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LIBDUR and Density with Literacy 2021 Dependent | .103  .103 | .291  9.373 | .15  .175 | .113  .202 | LIBDUR  Density |
| LIBDUR and Density with Literacy 1980 Dependent | .166  .166 | .514  17.0 | .286  11.385 | .095  .158 | LIBDUR Density |
| LIBDUR and Density with GDPPC Dependent | .251  .251 | 185.031  14450.515 | 134.425  5443.964 | .187  .017 | LIBDUR Density |

As we can see in table 1.3 neither liberal duration nor missionary density can help us predict literacy in 2021, while liberal duration can help us predict literacy rates in 1980 (significance of .095). Moreover, missionary density outperforms liberal duration when predicting gross domestic product per capita levels in 2021 (significance at .017).

Table 1.4

Liberal Duration and Density by Protestant Population, Polity Democracy Values and Literacy

R2 B Std. Error Sig. Ind. Var.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LIBDUR and Density by PEWPROT Dependent | .124  .124 | -.474  -2.202 | .226  9.218 | .053  .814 | LIBDUR  DENSITY |
| LIBDUR and Density by GILLCOMP Dependent | .384  .384 | -.32  -2.232 | .109  3.319 | .017  .518 | LIBDUR  DENSITY |
| LIBDUR and Density by POLITY5094 Dependent | .069  .069  .107 | .158  -1.921  .162 | .092  3.722  .09 | .104  .612  .088 | LIBDUR  DENSITY  LIBDUR (Bivariate) |
| LIBDUR and Density by POLITY1950 | .055  .055  .105 | .014  -.067  .014 | .008  .332  .008 | .102  .843  .089 | LIBDUR  DENSITY  LIBDUR  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDUR and Density POLITY 25507 Dependent | .061  .061 | -.762  .148 | -.05  .392 | .826  .097 | LIBDUR  DENSITY |
| LIBDUR and Density by PERCENTPROT1970 | .045  .045  .097 | -.572  -.143  -.141 | 3.39  .084  .081 | .868  .107  .098 | LIBDUR  DENSITY  LIBDUR (Bivariate) |
| LIBDUR and Density by LITERACY1950 Dependent | .329  .329 | .999  35.151 | .515  16.424 | .081  .058 | LIBDUR  DENSITY |

In table 1.4 above, liberal duration explains 2014 Pew Foundation’s Protestant population values, Gill’s 1998 Protestant competition values, Polity 5094 values, Polity 19502010 values, Polity 255507 values, percent Protestant population 1970, and literacy in 1950. We were again surprised that the linear relationship between Liberal duration and the two measures of Protestant populations was negative and we will return to this theme in our conclusion. Woodberry’s density variable explains 2021 gross domestic product per capita values, literacy rates in 1950 and Protestant population in 1970.

These density and liberal duration variables are useful to understand quality of democracy, wealth, literacy rates and Protestant populations. We wish now to contract our argument to focus on South America. The problem is that Central American history is too chaotic for us to be confident when coding the duration of liberal regimes. While in South America, there is a greater degree of programmatic liberal policy-making such as literacy promotion, economic progress, and urban commercial development, personalism was more common in Central America, often diluting the content of liberal regime policy. For people familiar with Central American history no single coding of liberal duration could inspire much confidence. The remainder of our data runs will thus focus on two South American subsets, one which includes Panama (LIBDURSA) and one which does not (LIBDURNP). [[2]](#footnote-2)

Table 1.5 South American Cases

R2 B Std. Error Sig. Ind. Var.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LIBDURNP and Density by GILLCOMP Dependent | .643  .643  .714 | .365  -.46  -.458 | 8.515  .131  .115 | .968  .025  .01 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  LIBDURNP (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by PEWPROT  Dependent | .215  .215  .417 | -10.141  -.181  .201 | 7.79  .121  .126 | .234  .181  .149 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  LIBDURNP (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by POLITY19502010  Dependent | .314  .314  .276 | -.932  .008  -.871 | .406  .006  .414 | .055  .268  .068 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  DENSITY  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by POLITY5094  Dependent | .367  .367  .327 | -13.627  .103  -12.787 | 5.397  .084  5.521 | .04  .259  .059 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  DENSITY  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by PCTPROT1970 Dependent | .124  .124  .211 | 3.942  -.245  -.238 | 8.77  .137  -.129 | .667  .116  .102 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  LIBDURNP (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by POLITY25507 Dependent | .342  .342  .237 | -10.176  .105  -9.321 | 4.477  .07  4.782 | .057  .175  .087 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  DENSITY  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by LIT1950 Dependent | .28  .28  .291 | 43.184  .468  41.451 | 23.974  .484  23.708 | .169  .405  .155 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  DENSITY  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by LIT1980 Dependent | .163  .163  .267 | -.871  .358  .356 | 11.897  .185  .172 | .944  .095  .072 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  LIBDURNP  (Bivariate) |
| LIBDURNP and Density by LIT2021 Dependent | .087  .087  .127 | 3.393  .09  .097 | 4.206  .066  .064 | .446  .212  .167 | DENSITY  LIBDURNP  LIBDURNP  (Bivariate) |

As we can see in Table 1.5 three of the dependent variables, PEWPROT (Sig. = .234, .181, .149). LIT1950 (Sig. = .169, .405, .155). LIT2021 (Sig. = .446, .212, .167) are not predictable using liberal duration or missionary density. Three dependent variables are predictable using Woodberry’s mission density variable, namely Polity19502010 (sig. =.055,.068), Polity5094 (Sig.=.04,.059) and Polity25507 (Sig.=.057,.087). Three dependent variables are predictable using LIBDURNP, namely GILLCOMP (Sig.=.025,.01), PCTPROT1970 (Sig.=.116,.102) and LIT1980 (Sig.=.095,.072).

Discussion:

We would like to start a dialogue with Robert Woodberry concerning the conceptual mechanics of his theory concerning the relationship of six variables: conversionary Protestantism, civil society, mass printing, mass education, pre-independence political parties, and democracy.

Figure 1.1: An Approximation of Woodberry’s Model Along Six Variables

Mass Education

Conversionary

Protestantism

Mass Printing Democracy

Civil Society Pre-independence

Political Parties

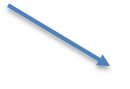
(Source: Woodberry 2012, 256).

In figure 1.1 Woodberry conceptualizes Conversionary Protestantism as an independent variable, with intervening variables (mass education, mass printing, civil society, pre-independence political parties), and the dependent variable, democracy. We offer the following contrasting model

Figure 1.2 Secular Liberal State Model

Conversionary

Protestantism



Mass Education

Secular Liberal State

Democracy

Mass Printing

Civil Society

In addition to the data runs above there is a long documentary trail of qualitative evidence which suggests 19th century liberal administrations had considerable influence on immigrant religious groups, mass education, mass printing, and civil society. It is common to note that liberal parties were intent on taking education away from Parochial Catholic authorities. (Negretto and Aguilar-Rivera 2000, 361; Dix 1989, 24). Negretto and Aguilar-Rivera remind us that literacy ambitions of liberal administrations in Argentina and Mexico knew no bounds: “peasants were not to be blamed for their ignorance, according to Deputy Pena y Ramirez, governments were culpable for not having provided them with adequate public instruction.” (Negretto and Aguilar-Rivera 2000, 375). Virginia Garrard-Burnette (1997, 35) offers the most elegant sketch of the connections between the liberal state and protestant missionary guests;

“Protestant Missionaries came to Guatemala in the ideological vanguard of Justo Rufino Barrios’ Liberal reform in the 1880s. Their work would be intimately linked to Liberal politics through the administration of Guatemala’s most enduring dictator, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who stepped down in 1920 after nearly a quarter of century in power. Liberalism, positivism, Social Darwinism, and Protestantism became the social tools with which the liberal leadership hoped to craft a modern nation. Protestant missionaries, though always few were assigned a central role in Estrada Cabrera’s vision; the invited guests of a Liberal government, these North Americans came to Guatemala to reform not only the souls but also the minds, bodies, and spirits of the indigenous population making them loyal and productive citizens of the emerging state.”

In the Chilean case Methodist Minister William Taylor arrives in Chile in 1877 at the invitation of liberal President Anibal Pinto Garmendia (Gooren 2014, 191). In Caetano’s (2016, 119) interesting work on the Uruguayan case he observes: “A generic description of the right of liberty appears as the find normatively in article 135 of the letter….at the same time this prioritized right appears explicitly through panoply of rights: physical, religious, expressive, labor, commerce, industrial, circulatory, and migratory liberty. In this manner, in the constitutional text liberal references in effect converge from obvious and precise censor restrictions and accumulate broader and also vaguer explicit references, living spaces and dispositions… perceived as modern politics.” (as translated by Dixon, Soto and Arizmendi).

Orlando Salazar Mora and Jorge Mario Salazar Mora (1991, 7) observed in the Costa Rican case:

“With the ascent Guardia to power the strengthening of the liberal state was initiated. This period was characterized by military power, paradoxically being the bases of civil society and political liberty to print, belief in rights, in education, optimism inevitable social progress and fostering the separation of church and state.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Rodrigo Llano Isaza (2006 pp. 11-13) observes concerning the Colombian case that liberal thought has a linear connection of core values from the 19th to the 21st century. After nostalgically quoting Francisco Morazan (President of the United Provinces of Central America from 1835 to 1839) Llano states:

“I am Liberal because I believe in Liberty of Expression, of Print, of Conscious, of Religion, of Education, of Profession, of Being, and Actuating.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Elena Plaza (2005, 42-46) observes the following policy planks in 19th century Venezuela (specifically from 1830-1847):

1. Reinstitutionalization of society and construction of the state apparatus.
2. The homogenization of society including the abolition of slavery and the civilization of the Indigenous, including universal education.
3. The diffusion of laws and the constitution.
4. The consolidation of free press and an illustrious public opinion.
5. The implantation of clear and modern laws that permit economic recovery. (Tr. by Dixon).

Luis Pinto Ferreira and Oscar Uribe Villegas (1962, 38) observed concerning the Brazilian case:

“Already the liberal party symbolizes the interest of the urbane middle class, of ascendant liberal capitalism and in general, the interests of professors, magistrates, and journalists.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Aljovin (2010, 52-57) observes in the Peruvian case:

“The 1856 constitution includes the phrase ‘all citizens have the right to associate peacefully in public or private without compromising public order.’ In 1858 Gonzalez Vigil a liberal critic wrote in praise of associations which he defined as a community of mutual offices. In 1862 Tavara expresses a liberal view and belief in human progress. Two years prior in 1860 the founding of the liberal party was complete.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Castiglia (1998, 24) observes:

“The liberal orientation of its politics of European origin anteposes respect of liberty and the enjoyment of individual guarantees as indispensable for sustained economic and social development for the nation. But this programmatic orientation is accompanied also with a clear civic construction in which they refer to the Anglo-Saxon political tradition with abundant references to Tocqueville, J.S. Mill, Joseph Story and the American founders.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Guachalla (1908, 5-10) observes in the Bolivian case:

“Religion is neither imposed nor restricted. Everyone has the right to profess the ideas and teachings that seem most harmonious with their own criteria, respecting in all cases of ideas of others…. We proclaim the absolute liberty of the press…. double jeopardy is illegal (Tr. by Dixon).

Monteoliva (2002, 18-22) observes:

“The values of the liberals, which resisted the acceptance of traditional Paraguayan values, with eyes fixed on the cosmopolitanism in Buenos Aires.” (Tr. by Dixon).

Concluding Remarks

First, we had no intention of disproving Dr. Woodberry’s thesis that conversionary Protestants promoted Democracy in host nations. His mission density per population of ten thousand performed well on the handful of measures we tested, and we see no point in testing all the variables set forth in the Polansky and Nikolova (2020) Replication Study. We also offer to test Dr. Woodberry’s data directly in case the replication study data differ from the original.

We have set out a preliminary argument that in Latin America, and more definitively South America, Liberal Parties, in competition with conservative parties are influential in creating favorable context for democracy, literacy, economic growth, and protestant missions. It surprised us to see that lower years of liberal dominance coincided with more democratic deepening. We expected the opposite to be true. It is possible that less consolidated liberal regimes were more prone to aggressive immigration strategies to compete with conservative rivals. It is also possible that longer liberal consolidation periods gave liberals and conservatives more time to arrive at a détente, especially as labor movements became a more important threat to property owners, be they rural (Conservatives) or urban (Liberals).

We specifically avoid commentary on African, Asian, and other cases beyond Latin America and make no mention of English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean cases. We are curious about those cases, but still have more work ahead of us to sort out Spanish-speaking cases in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our next tasks are as follows: (1) time series analysis to identify potential modernization-driven changes in GDPPC and literacy rates; (2) qualitative research to build a control group of conservative regimes in contrast to liberal regimes; (3) and further reading of Spanish language histories of those cases the more confidently to sort out the wheat (programmatic liberal parties) from the chaff (personalistic/dynastic strongmen who used the term liberal to describe themselves without pursuing liberal aims such as literacy, economic and urban progress). With this concluded, we can begin the task of wading into African, Asian and Ango-Caribbean cases.

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1. We use programmatic here to be consistent with Scully’s (1992, 11) definition which focuses on ideological constituency. We will avoid focusing on personalistic/dynastic administrations that stayed in power more than 8 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The issue here is that Panama was part of Colombia (South America) until 1903, but also shares many commonalities with its Central American neighbors. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)