

# A Hoot About The World



*Demagogues, Debts and Dollars:  
Latin America's Search for  
Prosperity*

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# A Hoot About the World

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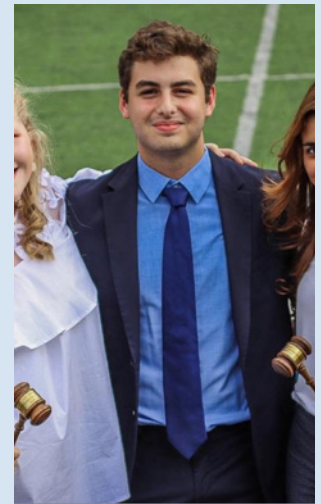
VICTORIA CANAVAGGIO

# WRITERS

Verónica Varela is a determined young woman that has achieved great things thus far, despite only being seventeen years old. She is a student and friend, worth admiring. As an active volunteer and member of the debate team, Verónica is set on making a change and leaving her distinct print in this world. She is also passionate for whatever she believes in, never leaving without a fight defending her opinion. In her article titled “The Road from Despair to Autocracy”, Varela addresses the threat Latin America faces of reverting to the dictatorship hotspot it was not so long ago.



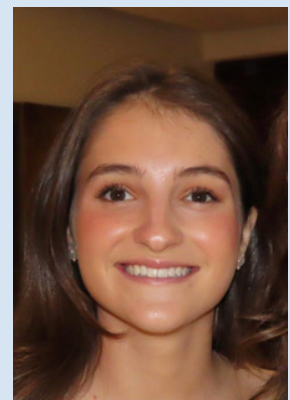
Daniel Tomas is the Vice President of Class of 2021. You can find him arguing philosophical ideologies, ranting about random country’s policies, or just overall fussing over his love for International Relations. Carrying on his passion for advocacy, Daniel has been a part of the AIP Debate Team for several years now and just last year he created and led his very own virtual conference, GovSim. Continuing to shine a light on not only international issues but those in his own country, he has also served as volunteer and board member of SUWAIP. Always looking to cause a positive impact in his country. In his essay, The New Pendulum, he creates a masterful metaphor that illustrates the swing between populism and technocracy in current day Latin America. A must read for all interested in understanding the direction our region is heading.



Jean Pierre Leignadier is a well-rounded individual. He is a member of the AIP debate team, Math Olympics, theatre club, and soccer and football teams; excelling in each one. Additionally, he gathered experience by writing a paper on emerging markets called “Emerging Markets and Their Importance to a Diversified Portfolio,” where he discusses underdeveloped countries and the actions to take for them to develop. Consequently, “The Building Block for the Forgotten Continent,” touches on Latin America’s needs for an increase in market economies and the steps to take towards it.

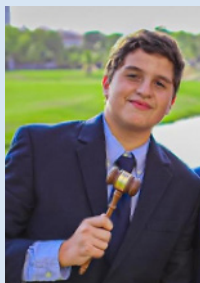


Irma Torres, the first female class president at AIP, is a hardworking and honorable individual. She enjoys spending her spare time contributing and helping lead organizations such as Inspirando Mentees and Olimpiadas Especiales. Irma is a firm believer that education is the pathway to becoming a better society and progressing. Through the organizations she forms a part of she contributes to having a more educated Panama. In her article, Torres highlights just how needed a better education system is in Latin American countries, especially in Panama.



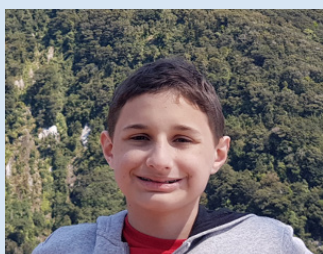


# WRITERS



Arturo Zequeira is a natural leader. He is the vice president of the AIP Debate Team and has taken his debating skills into advocating and helping the most needed, as the president of AIP Student United Way. In his article, “The 2021 Peruvian Elections,” Zequeira addresses the political reality faced by Latin Americans, in this case, using the example of 2021 Peruvian Elections, which just took place. He analyzes how populism has been present in both sides of the electoral process, between candidates Pedro Castillo and Keiko Fujimori, and how Peru represents a polarized Latin America, giving a wakeup call to the region’s society to battle these agendas.

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The recognition of Darío Boyd’s exceptional character and vast knowledge is true among his fellow peers. In his *Forgotten Continent* book review, readers can immerse themselves in the depths of various Latin American case studies as he puts into display an insightful perspective on the various issues of the region.

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Maria Fernanda Del Rosario is a bright and kind individual. She enjoys spending her free time teaching math and English to young kids through the student-led organization Inspirando Mentes. Not only that but Mafe, as her friends call her, also helps lead other non-profit organizations like Student United Way AIP, and Somos Voces through which she has been able to positively impact people’s lives. In her book review of *Naked Economics* she gives a broad overview of a book she considers to be a must-read for everyone. As she argues, this book teaches people everything that is necessary to succeed financially in today’s world in a way that is easily digestible.

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Cristina Gandásegui, the assistant director of AIP Theater, is an avid reader and determined student. Cristina is a firm believer that technology can indeed be used for good, and if used properly it can become a huge asset for both governments and citizens. In her insightful article “Cyber Governance: Taking Back the Internet,” Cristina showcases the current state of cyber and its future, not only that but she professes the importance of cyber in today’s societies. The article touches multiple topics such as user privacy, data, distrust, regulation, the constant state of change and most importantly how governments should use the internet. Cristina asserts the idea that cyber technology is indeed a tool for good and it shouldn’t be alienated nor shunned “by embracing the power of social media and the cyberspace”.

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Victoria Mendoza is a seventeen-year-old women’s rights advocate and the co-founder of the Girl Up student club at AIP. Girl Up is a campaign of the United Nations that aims to help girls all over the world access their inner power to advance in skills, rights, and opportunities. In “Latin America’s Systemic Machismo Culture,” Mendoza addresses thoroughly the systematic disadvantages and misogyny men face on a daily basis. She explains us how the cumulus of injustices, silence, and violence severely strike not only women, but our economies and everyone’s wellbeing.

# Editor's Letter

Maria Fernanda Del Rosario

For the past century, Latin America has been plagued by many issues in development with roots that range from the legacy of the colonial era to the natural resource myth. Although it seemed like this curse was lifted when the region experienced a commodity boom during the 2000s, Latin America has seemed to fall behind into a place of stagnation in recent years. Frustratingly, this seems to make citizens ignore the consensus that the combination of democracies and market economies is the perfect recipe for a nation's success.

Why are Latin Americans making unexpected, and often impractical, decisions in the voting booths while trying to search for a better future? Daniel Tomas detects Latin America's new pendulum: "swinging between populism and technocracy." He contends that, as democratic governments have failed to live up to their promises, Latinos have become more susceptible to populist ideas, making this political tendency a conundrum the region will continue to face in the 21st century.

Jean Pierre Leignadier – advocating for market economies – emphasizes the importance of incentives as a tool to help raise a country's human capital and thereby make economies prosper. As he argues, only creating an environment of competition and incentives will help Latin America on its "journey back to relevance."

Irma Torres highlights the role of education. She positions education as the best investment anyone can make and explores what makes humans truly valuable. Using a thoughtful analysis, she demonstrates how investing in human capital will take you on a rippling effect of success and help "make a long-lasting difference on Earth."

Verónica Varela cautions Latin Americans, who filled with frustration and disappointment, follow "undemocratic tendencies." She calls out citizens willing to give up all their freedoms for the sake of unrealistic promises from government leaders.

Finally, Arturo Zequeira studies the role of populism in the 2021 Peruvian presidential elections. He analyses what leads this country to choose communist Pedro Castillo and nationalist Keiko Fujimori as two radical frontrunners for these elections.

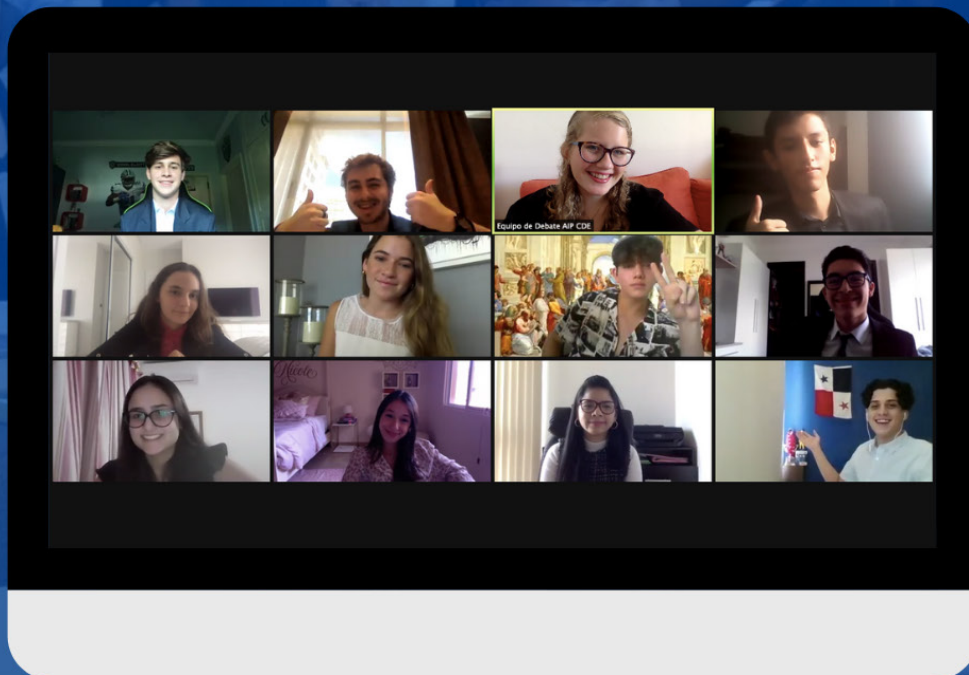
This issue then concludes with two profound book reviews from must-read books that can help you better understand Latin America and the functioning of the economy. Darío Boyd analyses Michael Reid's *Forgotten Continent: A History of the New Latin America*, while María Fernanda Del Rosario examines Charles Wheelan's *Naked Economics*. Then, Cristina Gandásegui and Victoria Mendoza further explore two problems prevalent not only in Latin America but the world as a whole – cybersecurity and machismo.

It is impossible to pinpoint one specific cause of Latin America's unproductivity and stagnation, so there is no perfect solution to the problem this region is facing. Regardless, these thought-provoking articles are a wake-up call to the region, and they leave us wondering, how long will Latin America's search for prosperity take? Or is this even a plausible goal for the region?





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# The New

Daniel Tomas

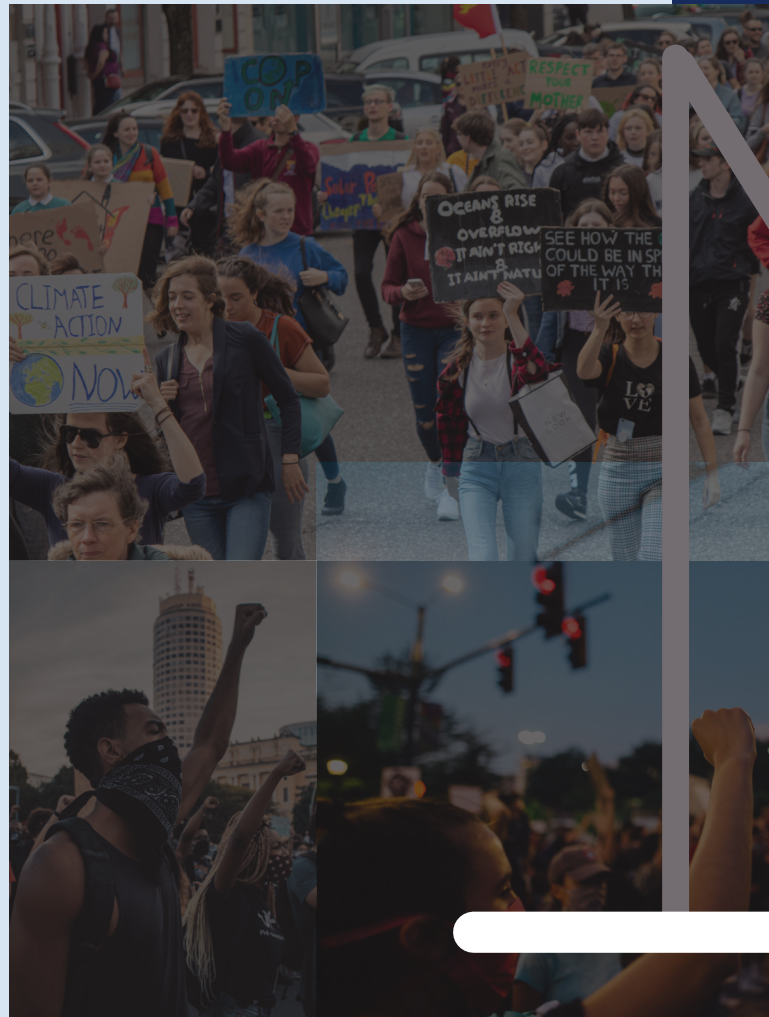
Since the start of the late Modern Era, the world has experienced drastic geopolitical changes that have set it swinging in a pendulum. From dictatorship to democracy, states sway between these two political systems experiencing social upheaval, economic downturns, and overall instability. The pendulum's swing can be seen most clearly in Latin America, where industrializing nations led by oligarchs have fallen into periods of dictatorship or liberty for almost a century, continuing to oscillate between the two.

As the digital era begins, however, a liberal order has started to permeate throughout the region. In his book titled *Forgotten Continent*, political commentator Michael Reid explains that the dawn of a new century, accompanied by new export-driven market economies, has promoted the consolidation of democracy in LATAM. After years of ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization), the region's states have finally begun to open up to the globalized world, leaving behind many of the isolationist policies of the 20th century. Reid states that "market capitalism tends to produce a large middle class of property owners who have an interest in [democracy]," which leads to the aforementioned liberal order that LATAM is experiencing. Essentially, "the pendulum between dictatorship and democracy has stopped," because liberty dominates the global arena and the Americas are embracing a 'consolidated democracy.'

Unfortunately, still haunted by the ghosts of its past, Latin America continues to suffer from an acute case of economic inequality, corruption, and polarization. Prompted by these issues, a new dichotomy that transcends ideology has settled itself in the region. The old pendulum has ceased to swing, but now a new pendulum is swinging: old political parties are deteriorating replaced populist messages of salvation thrive, while on the other hand technocrats claim to know the real path towards progress -- indeed, further examination of this new pendulum is necessary.

## The Need for Change

The general acceptance of democracy in LATAM has not created political stability. Many Latin American states continue to operate under century-old political parties that involuntarily trade power amongst each other. The same parties have become comfortable with this system, conforming to a cyclical source of power.



# Pendulum

The old parties and their unfulfilled promises are no longer enough for citizens who expect prosperity.

In response to this, new political parties that preach the ‘ideology of the people’ have emerged in various Latin American countries. Using inflammatory language, party leaders grab the crowd’s attention by appealing to a sense of revolution and immediacy. The people are tired of the old parties that seemingly exchange power and never bring about real reform or progress. Years of inaction have caused a demand for improvements in policy—an idea exploited by the new populists. The leaders of these new parties present themselves as saviors of the people, ready to rebuild the old political systems to rid their countries of the diseases (corruption, decay, inequality) that hinder development. They encourage hatred and outrage against the current system and utilize scapegoats to pursue political goals. They are one of the extremes of the new pendulum: populists.

## **Nuevas Ideas – The Case of Populism**

Some countries in Latin America have unfortunately fallen into the hands of these demagogues, electing them in a desperate move to rejuvenate the state. Venezuela, El Salvador, and Brazil have all elected populist leaders that threaten the ‘consolidated democracy’ by toying with authoritarianism.

The newest and most frightening case of populism in LATAM is El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele, a millennial elected in 2019 under his newly formed political party called Nuevas Ideas. Bukele created his own group un-

plural, and inclusive political party without obsolete ideologies.” Fundamentally, he created a party that vows for the people, regardless of which ideological path that might lead him to. To many, he was the face of hope for change and security, but it seems like his approach to change has caused the old pendulum to swing again. Even though Bukele preaches about democracy, liberty, and transparency, his actions provide another answer to what he really believes. As president, he has been able to crack down on gang violence and corruption, yet his promise to protect polity is far from fulfilled. In the past months, his government has been criticized by the international community for violating human rights, most notably abuse towards prisoners, and abusing his executive power. His overall image has stayed fairly popular, however, as his populist rhetoric has granted him the favor of millions of Salvadoreans. To them, the change Bukele has brought about was more than urgent, which explains why this nation has passively ignored its president’s abuses.





## **Leave It to the Experts**

On the other side of the new pendulum lies a system new to LATAM but present in older, more worn-out democracies: technocracy. This political system is usually attributed to Latin America through its states' general acceptance of financial advice from international organizations. Held down by the weight of massive debts, most—if not all—countries in Central and South America have accepted debt relief from the IMF through policy change.

This type of leadership—one in which democratically-elected bureaucrats appoint technical experts to lead the government—has recently gained traction due to the global pandemic. Health officials and leading scientists have become the prime policy makers in some states, leading through executive orders instead of laws. Presidents and legislators have rescinded their power to support the experts and rebuild healthcare infrastructure. A disadvantage, though, is that experts have no sense of accountability towards the public, meaning they do not need their approval to create policy.

The reality is that technocracies remove too much of the political sentiment that is bolstered by populists. By taking away politics from government, disputes rise and people demand representation. Yet, as our worlds become more technical and polarized, could a technocracy save us from civil conflict?

## **Political Uncertainty**

The new pendulum, swinging from populism to technocracy, serves as a symbol of the current state of our democracies. It seems like polity is here to stay, but populist rhetoric and undemocratic technocrats might threaten its longevity.

In any case, LATAM's political arena has set its eyes on populism, as demagogues spring up in different countries at every election. El Salvador's situation is simply a taste of what might occur in other countries, where populist leaders might destroy their states in the name of the people – like Chávez. Nonetheless, the pandemic has demonstrated the potential of technocracy, which might lead to the reconsideration of the status quo. The question is, what does LATAM's future hold, and will it be enough to rid it of its status as the 'Forgotten Continent?'

WRITE



STYLE

# The Path to Development: A Market Economy

Jean Pierre Leignadier

**T**he economic history of Latin America in the past century has largely been one of disappointment. The states in the region were oozing with potential from early on, but almost every country has fallen behind global growth patterns. The plague of stagnation and underdevelopment that has engulfed the region has resulted from many leaders who choose to continue to employ economic systems that are historically discredited, all while coupled with authoritarian control over their respective countries. Throughout the 20th century we have seen this toxic combination of leftist and authoritarian governments that do not provide the people with proper living conditions or opportunities to flourish. They take advantage of the lack of education of the masses and their frustration with problems like inequality and poverty and proceed to give wasteful handouts. More recently, we see Latin America moving away from authoritarianism but still clinging to leftist populist governments fail to deliver on their promises, and the very system they claim brings equality only slightly alleviates poverty.

Latin America needs to embrace and increase the scope of market economies while eliminating the government's paternalist and protectionist role. This shift would increase productivity through effective use of incentives, spur innovation through competition, and stimulate the growth of new industries. When people are productive and free to compete, innovation and development happen at a much faster rate, and coincidentally, almost all Latin American countries are desperately lacking both things. A sturdy private sector incentivizes competition, which creates jobs, reduces poverty levels, and improves the standard of living conditions for all citizens.

## **Competition, Private Companies, and the Expansion of Jobs**

With a market economy and some government interference to prevent anti-competitive practices, people can embark on their ventures to see themselves better off. When people have an incentive to succeed, they cultivate an incredible level of ingenuity because of competition, and they dream up marvelous innovations that make others' lives easier and make the market stronger. Countries that have developed robust economies through capitalism have shown that the power of cooperation makes financial success much more achievable, for which people seek to establish companies in collaboration with other skilled people to make their products or services more competitive. In addition to inciting cooperation and fueling the establishment of private companies, competition creates new jobs, which makes way for a middle class with better living conditions. It also drives the construction of superior infrastructure, which may aid companies in being more effective and productive. Infrastructure development can even bolster the progress of new sectors, such as the tourist sector, with modernized works of architecture. These reforms, combined with the right amount of government regulations to avoid misleading predatory tactics, price fixing, and the emergence of monopolies, would contribute to the growth of the economy.



### **Education Enhanced**

The elevated competition in a market economy spurs people to invest in human capital. In other words, it makes people want to broaden their range of skills. An increase in the population's focus on human capital brings up the demand for accessibility to a higher quality of education and specific training. This competition makes private education more economically accessible because private schools, taking into consideration their competitors, will lower their costs of attendance, so they can have more students enroll in them. This stimulates the foundation of private schools and institutes of higher education with better-equipped facilities and in time, more capable professors. As thus far governments have failed to provide citizens with an accessible high-quality education or the means necessary to improve their human capital, it is of utter importance that they start to direct more funds towards education and human capital training, so citizens can have all tools necessary to increase their human capital. This improvement in the availability of enhanced education not only makes people better off and more able to compete in the growing economy but it also makes everyone more prepared to take on and appropriately exercise posts in national institutions, which the region is in desperate need of.

## **Importance of Incentives**

Government funded programs (ranging from redistribution packages, to health care, to education) are vital for the well-being of the large underprivileged part of the Latin American population and the reduction of inequality. However, for governments to properly fund these programs, taxpayers in Latin American countries need to have money in their pockets (which implicitly comes through a robust economy). We need to remind ourselves of this. The government's money comes from its citizens: taxes on their income, sales tax on their spending, taxes on their investment and capital. We seem to forget this, as if the state will simply provide. We need to recall that if people are not productive and if the private sector is not flourishing, these programs will also underdeliver. Large state subsidies cost money and at times also produce adverse effects by disincentivizing work. Thus, we need to think about incentives that motivate citizens to contribute to society, by rewarding their hard work and talents, as crucial to making social programs helpful and purposeful for all countries. For instance, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) reward citizens in vulnerable communities for fulfilling government-defined requisites that often focus on the development of human capital so that the next generation can break the cycle of poverty. This government approach can alleviate extreme poverty while still encouraging citizens to improve their human capital. Reducing the inequality gap is an urgent necessity, but to obtain a long-term solution that can contribute to the growth of Latin American countries and for social projects not just be a band-aid, governments should focus on incentivizing social projects to motivate people to increase their human capital, so they can improve their own quality of life.

## **The Journey Back to Relevance**

With correct implementation, market economies provide the perfect conditions for Latin American countries to flourish. When applied, leftist populist governments have proven ineffective in providing people with money to be better off and therefore failed to deliver on their promises of social equality. A capitalist system is the perfect building block for the region, as the mix of competition, incentives, and better opportunities increases human capital, which provides Latin American citizens a platform to get on their feet and continue growing and competing with the developed countries of the world.



# The Miracle That Starts with

Irma Torres

# E

Countries function because the people who are educated lead and share their knowledge at home, in their jobs, and as members of society. Everyday tasks such as reading the news, doing math at the supermarket, or driving to your job is possible because you and your family invested in your education. Everything from a child learning to read, to the discovery of penicillin, to traveling to the moon is possible because of education. Education, however, seems not to be the priority, even though it constantly proves its role in making ourselves and our countries prosper.

The reality is that in a world that is constantly changing and developing, we need to strengthen our critical thinking and focus on our responsibility to adapt and contribute to a better future for ourselves and our community. This sum of skills called *human capital* allows us to work anywhere and at any time. It is an intangible asset that, as Charles Wheelan says, allows you to survive in any city if you only had you and your brain. The more you invest in education, the more opportunities and freedom you and the people around you will have.

## **An Incomplete Definition**

Everyone talks about education, but what is it really? Dictionaries define it as “the knowledge and development resulting from the process of being educated.” Although the definition is not wrong, it is not enough because it fails to address crucial aspects of education. When we think of this term, it is easy to picture books, teachers, and schools; educating is much more than that, though. Education is a vehicle meant to help you understand the world and who you are from a holistic point of view. It is a tool that trains you to find solutions to unexpected problems. It is also the foundation for human capital and the source that will help you find your passions. Unfortunately, there are a lot of misconceptions regarding education. It has been called overrated, boring, a waste of time...the list of negative adjectives is never-ending. People who judge and describe education with these terms cannot be blamed because they have yet to understand the purpose behind it. If you are one of them, I hope that this article will provide a new perspective for you.

## **Education Does Make a Difference**

Regardless of how rich or successful a country is, it will never reach its full potential if the quality of its education system is subpar or if there is a significant percentage of uneducated citizens. Education is crucial. Education is meant to help you discover what you like and find the qualities that set you apart. People give their best when they do things that fulfill them. The most talented lawyers, professors, or engineers are those who are interested in their profession. Discipline and effort are the two secrets behind successful countries. Take China and India: both countries have around 1.3 billion people. China has a literacy rate of 97% and a GDP per capita of \$11,000. India has a literacy rate of 76% and a GDP of \$2,000 per capita. This is still nothing compared to Switzerland, though. In that country, there is a 99% literacy rate and the GDP is \$86,000.

Top 10 Countries that Maximize Human Capital			
Rank	*per Human Capital Index 2015	GDP per Capita (\$) (2021)	Rank
1	Finland	54,330	14
2	Norway	81,995	4
3	Switzerland	94,696	2
4	Canada	49,222	19
5	Japan	42,928	25
6	Sweden	58,977	11
7	Denmark	67,218	6
8	Netherlands	58,003	13
9	New Zealand	47,499	22
10	Belgium	50,103	17

### Efficient Investments Lead to Endless Opportunities

Education is broad and diverse. There is no secret recipe and one size does not fit all. There are endless ways and tools you can use to educate yourself, ranging from books and encyclopedias to computers of the latest technology. There is an endless amount of information available to us, but since our time is limited we must think of the quality of the education we want to receive instead of the quantity. Remember that time is a limited resource and it must be spent wisely. People tend to hold responsible teachers and the government for the holes in our education systems, but we have to take into consideration that education starts at home. Schools are, unfortunately, not enough. Although I agree with the fact that education systems need to be more accessible, flexible, and modernized, I think that the way to begin closing the education gap is by targeting education at home. Parents are the ones that spend the longest amount of time with their children. Fathers, mothers, and guardians should do their best to lead by example and surround their children in environments where discipline, effort, and tolerance are basic pillars. I am not one to judge because I am not a mother and I understand parenthood is a difficult task, but these three pillars are necessary to form successful humans.

## A Necessity that Yields

Knowledge earns you freedom of choice and opportunities. Once you know yourself and your preferences, you will be able to shoot your arrow down the path of life you find suits you best. Understand that “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest” or in other words, that “money invested today in human capital will yield a return in the future.” Education goes far beyond books and classrooms and it is never-ending: the day we die is the day we stop learning. Try to find topics you are interested in but have not found time to research, and remember, dear reader, that education is about quality, not quantity. It changes and revolutionizes our world for the better, but first we must believe in it, spread the message, and start at home. Together, with good education, we can make a long-lasting difference on Earth.



# The Road from Despair to Autocracy

Veronica Varela

**H**ow rational thought unexpectedly disappears in LATAM's voting booths...

Since the beginning of time, Latin America has seen and survived countless perils at the hands of all kinds of institutions, ranging from the Spanish conquistadores to the power-thirsty dictators who toppled democracy throughout the 20th Century. During the colonial period, Latin America was neglected by its colonizers, who did not care about their wellbeing or the effective functioning of Latin American society. This has embedded a sentiment of desperation and fear in the minds of Latin Americans, even in modern society. The people are begging for change, and they want it now.

Despite Latin America's tumultuous past and countless issues, the region is progressing. Nevertheless, the threat of self-destruction continues to loom over it. Latin Americans are falling into the trap of hopelessness to the point that they flirt with, and sometimes engage in, undemocratic tendencies and ideals expecting that they will be better off.

Latin America's underlying desire for immediate miracle solutions, a need for stability, and a lack of long-term vision have shaped the region into a magnet for aspiring autocrats and populists, and this will only worsen in the future if it is not handled. People are desperate for change, which has allowed many undemocratic leaders to rise to power. One would think that these unfit rulers have seized their power through undemocratic means, but, in reality, many have gained their position through democracy. Individuals welcome unqualified politicians with open arms because they believe that said leaders can save them and somehow make continuously failing systems work. However, just because a candidate opposes the political ideology of the current failing leader does not automatically guarantee that he will be successful. The problem is that the public fails to see that in many cases the biggest culprit is not the system, but the person who enforces it and their mismanagement. A picture-perfect case is Brazil and their election of Bolsonaro, who symbolized a complete rejection of their past abysmal governments.

More drastically, citizens could elect an individual that topples democracy and brings down any hope of improvement with it. For example, what occurred in Venezuela and Nicaragua. The general sentiment of hopelessness and its effects have remained present in Latin America for decades and still prevail today. Nonetheless, decades of suffering and torture have made them less powerful, but not inexistent. The desperation and irrational hopes appear at different scales, but always threatening to revert Latin America to the dictatorship hotspot it was, not so long ago.

Nobody wants to suffer...  
right?



Whatever it takes...  
right?



## **Fallen from the sky**

Nobody wants to suffer... right? Latin Americans seem to have taken this basic assumption to heart, to such an extent that they are willing to believe that politicians can provide miracle solutions to all of a nation's problems instantly. Situations can worsen astoundingly quickly when this happens. The same does not apply for improvement, although Latin Americans are convinced that it does; any desperate individual in a terrible situation would want a miracle to save him. The difference between any desperate individual and a desperate Latin American individual, though, is that Latin Americans have a never-budging hope that empty promises of miracles are true. Aspiring presidents, and dictators, know all about "the unfulfilled Latin American dream of painless modernity" [1] and use it in their favor. Latin American political prospects seem to be fluent in the language of falsehoods and empty promises. Therefore, it is not difficult to see how politicians' seemingly natural ability to lie and the public's desperation to improve the status quo are a recipe for disaster. Voters believe outlandish promises of overnight economic stability and inexistent inequality because they need to. People, either consciously or unconsciously, ignore the complexity of government and solutions which, although tedious, are necessary for democracy to function properly. Latin America's irrational optimism not only aids unfit candidates but threatens to make the region worse off because little meaningful change is happening.

## **Whatever it takes... right?**

Few regions have embodied the 'whatever it takes' mentality as repeatedly and drastically as Latin America has. The same desperation that makes voters support anyone who promises miraculous solutions makes them rationalize drastic measures to reach, what they hope will be, a better future. This occurs to such an extent that the public has justified autocracy in hopes of rescuing the socioeconomic state of their nation. Many even believe the idea that autocratic stability is better than democratic instability. History has proven this widespread belief to be quite powerful in various instances. The coup that toppled Salvador Allende's regime was supported, or at least accepted, by many Chileans because they believed that it would bring stability to their desolate state.

The Latin American frantic desire for stability is not merely an issue of the past, however. Latin Americans seem to learn, but not enough. The 2006 Nicaraguan presidential elections prove this. Daniel Ortega, the notorious former dictator, won the presidential title democratically with nearly 10% more votes than the runner-up. People voted for their ex-dictator because previous democratic leaders had brought massive corruption and had not healed the nation's old wounds. So, Nicaraguans excused Ortega's poor governing and abuse. Ortega's second regime will become a quinceañera soon and, unsurprisingly, it has proven to be just as self-serving and problematic as the first one.

## **Short-term goggles**

Directly connected to the previous two Latin American vices, is the general lack of long-term vision. Desperation makes people support, or submit to, short-term solutions that risk the future of their nation and Latin America as a whole. To put it into perspective, let us imagine that someone is late to work and has to choose between taking the bus or driving. This person would likely choose to drive. When in a rush, virtually no one stops to ponder upon the negative impact of driving in comparison to taking the bus, because all that seems to matter is arriving on time. The same applies to government. When voters are in a rush to live better, they care significantly less about the long-term effects of their actions on their nation.

Whether it is justifiable or not, this is a fact. The lack of long-term vision and analysis of possible repercussions is disastrous, especially when it is combined with the fact that people generally never believe that things can get worse. So, Latin Americans take drastic and potentially damaging measures to rise from, what they think is, rock bottom. From accepting clientelist bribes to, as is the case with Nicaragua, electing leaders who are notoriously unsuited for the task because people fail to see past empty promises, the short-term-centered choices of the public make Latin America increasingly susceptible to incompetent leaders.



## **Doom or development**

It is no secret that the Latin American region has plenty of issues. Furthermore, it seems overwhelming to target issues such as these because they are embedded in the culture of Latin American societies. There is despair in the air, which has catastrophic consequences on a national and regional level. Not all hope is lost, however, even though it might sometimes appear as if it is. To lower the risk of Latin American states relapsing to their past catastrophes and ending up as another Nicaragua or even Venezuela, the public and governments should partake in or implement three things.

The first is to contribute to historic memory. Latin America's unfortunate past serves as a reminder of the problems of succumbing to desperation. Nations should and must strengthen their historic memory museums and objective educational curriculums. Moreover, several states in the region could implement international guidelines to safeguard these memory programs and initiatives from ideological changes in government. The next solution is as simple as strengthening education nationally and regionally. Education is not something that governments cannot afford to leave on the backburner, and the public and lawmakers must start acting like it. Through policies such as economic incentives for educators and accessible school transportation, the Latin American youth will receive a better education. This allows them to make better and more informed decisions that are less guided by manipulated messages. Finally, as a community, Latin America needs to be more realistic. It might seem straightforward to follow this stereotypical advice, but it could make or break democracy. Being aware of the country's status quo, economically, politically and socially, allows voters to know what their state actually needs. Consequently, this diminishes the strength of populist leaders and false messages promoted to instill fear. Latin America has come a long way, but it needs to go even further. By implementing modern solutions, policymakers and citizens can eradicate the mindset that has held Latin America back for far too long.



# WRITE THE FUTURE



# THE 2021 PERUVIAN ELECTIONS

Arturo Zequeira

Latin American politics have always seemed like a rollercoaster worsened by the continent's controversial relationship with the United States of America – its superpower upstairs – and a troubled history that still holds vital importance in every aspect of life for its citizens. Since almost all Latin countries have similar sociopolitical environments, this rocky political environment is the norm, making the 2021 Peruvian elections a crucial matter as they may represent the future path for the continent.

Like most countries in Latin America, Peru has been historically plagued by populism, with both governments on the left and the right seeking popular support at all costs. As the country sought democracy and a less radical political hegemony after the '70s dictatorship, the following decades have still created a rugged political environment marked by socialists like Alejandro Toledo, fascists like Alberto Fujimori, and overall instability. Furthermore, the country seems to be battling the effects of a new form of populism with the Pink Tide – a term that refers to the political and civil rise of socialist movements in the area. Although the term has been juggled around during the last few years, the recent Peruvian election between communist Pedro Castillo and nationalist Keiko Fujimori has led many to ask if this newfound populism may prevail.

The 2021 Peruvian elections simply exemplify the problematic politics of a country with vast socioeconomic differences within a region saturated by populist tendencies. Entering an electoral process with a political environment categorized by incomplete presidencies and innumerable political scandals, the Peruvian elections show the numerous qualities that cultivate candidates from the “extreme” left and right with communist Pedro Castillo and conservative Keiko Fujimori. As the country enters what could be a period of communism, it is essential to consider if this is the beginning, or consolidation, of left-wing populism in the region.

## **An open relationship between the past and the present**

It is frequently said that to understand a country, one must carefully analyze its history, an idea that goes perfectly in hand with understanding Peru's context. Heavily influenced by Spanish colonial rule, Peru has been ruled by the oligarchical white since its independence movement in the 19th Century. Not only has this created deep rooted resentment from the mainly mestizo and indigenous majority, but it has defined the way politics and economics developed: limited infrastructure, a lack of opportunities, and social inequity in the country. Perhaps the most direct result of this reality lies in the left and right's populist agenda that caters to the resented majority, the desire for reform, and redistribution.

Although populism has always been a difficult matter in the country, recent years have presented several mass protest movements that have led to numerous incomplete presidencies: Peru had a whopping three presidents during 2020. Not only does this exemplify the extremely unstable political environment in the country, but it also shows the general discontent of a majority that seeks less corruption and wealth redistribution. Upon blindly analyzing this context, many may quickly assume that the country has been retroceding in terms of equality and progress. However, levels of inequality have greatly diminished within the last decade: the country's Gini index shows a decrease in inequality of over 14% within the last 20 years. In a way, this purely shows the effects of blatant corruption that have led to an overall frustration, fostering a dangerous populist agenda that seeks to center itself on the mass desire for change in the country.



## The Beginning of the End?

In a way, this fragile political atmosphere can only lead to where we are today: The 2021 Peruvian Presidential elections and its confusing results. First of all, we can see that the first round gave victory to Keiko Fujimori, daughter of imprisoned ex-president Alberto Fujimori, representing the right with politics that gravitate towards conservatism. Marxist-Leninist Pedro Castillo, representing the left with radical and populist proposals including the limitation of private industries, exports and imports, and even a constituent assembly similar to Venezuela's, gained a surprising majority, too. With such radical candidates, the elections have become a very polarized matter; results in the second round are still being debated as Pedro Castillo takes a slight lead and many accuse him of fraud.

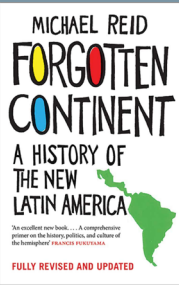
## What does this all mean?

Although this bizarre electoral process may be considered singular to Peru's unstable political environment, one must consider this election as essential. Why? In a way, the fact that both candidates in the second round of elections are radicals with populist agendas, truly shows that populism is not dead in LATAM. The fact that the Peruvian population chose the two most radical candidates from ten choices shows the same narrative the country and the continent have been living since colonial rule. Furthermore, by considering the aftermath of the 2021 Peruvian elections, muddled by numerous claims of fraud leading to uproar from both the left and right, it is crucial to understand that Peru represents a new polarized Latin America. With such a difficult reality at hand, we must strive for modern-day access to information, education, economic growth, and the strengthening of democracies to combat the populist tendencies that have limited the continent's potential for growth.

## Not all is lost; there is a future.

Although understanding Peru's 2021 Election and the possible rise of radical candidates throughout the region is worrisome, we must not catastrophize on the continent's fate. Considering that Pedro Castillo's victory is rejected by many, modern day access to information, education, and a growing understanding of the dangers of socialist populism must give us the confidence that Latin society will not fall into a spiral of empty words, but that it will rather reject them and continue the difficult path to growth.





# Book Review:

Dario Boyd

Latin America is a region with a complex past. Holder of the dubious honor of being the world's foremost populist's playpen, it is also often forgotten once one leaves the bounds of the American continent. *Forgotten Continent: History of the New Latin America*, the second edition of a book written by Michael Reid, an English journalist who has covered the region for decades (since 1982), makes that frequent forgetfulness front and center. It is literally on the title; Latin America is the forgotten continent. Even within the United States, the main country outside Latin America that pays attention to the region (alongside, to a lesser extent, Canada), the subcontinent is often only addressed in relation to the immigration debate, the drug debate, or its perception as a haven of failed leftist regimes, three discussions which do not leave the region in a good light.

Latin America is, as Reid puts it, “neither poor enough to attract pity and aid [like Africa], nor dangerous enough to excite strategic calculation [like the Middle East], nor was it growing fast enough economically to quicken boardroom pulses [like South and East Asia].” This quote is only one example of the analysis and thoughtfulness Reid puts into his work. While the world's amnesia towards Latin America is the first and possibly most important point posited by Reid, the book's actual thesis is that Latin America is stuck in a cycle of populism and demagoguery that leads to poor policy, especially on the economic front, which along with its weak institutions have stunted the region's potential growth.

Latin America is far more than just a lawless den of drugs or the progenitor of lazy immigrants (and for the record, it is neither); its problems are like this too. While the drug trade and the migratory brain drain are both symptoms of the disease, neither is the root cause. Reid, through his 39 years of covering Latin America and writing two editions of a book all about its problems, has found success in identifying the twin root causes and simmering down every other problem in Latin America to one or both of them: populism and institutional weakness, and through his explanation of them he manages to make this book a must-read for any Latin American.

In order to understand *Forgotten Continent*, it serves to explain the fundamental issue of Latin America that Reid proves in the book, though he never explicitly mentions it. It is its unworkable political systems and defective states. These systems are easy for populists to exploit and difficult to make work properly. Latin America has long been known as a bastion of populism, but a population susceptible to populism does not a populist's paradise make; both the United States and Europe have dealt with considerable populism throughout their histories, particularly in recent years, but both have remained or become rich countries by having political systems with safeguards against it, specifically by maintaining strong legislatures compared to a weaker president. Latin America, by comparison, tends to have very strong presidencies with few or no term limits and legislatures weakened by party infighting and a lack of any sort of public trust in them, being heralded by the population as centers of corruption. This leaves the state vulnerable to populist strongmen, of which Hugo Chávez is the most famous (or perhaps infamous) example. If that combination of a strong presidency and a weak and despised legislature sounds familiar, it is because it is a description of the German Weimar Republic, a failed democracy whose weaknesses famously led to the rise of the Nazi Party. Reid says as much of these weaknesses: “Latin America's awkward mix of presidentialism and PR [proportional representation] has contributed to a pattern in which presidents lack legislative majorities, stimulating conflict between the executive and legislatures that do not face the threat of dissolution that breaks gridlock in parliamentary systems.



# Forgotten Continent

All the while populism, often the easiest way to power, leads to poor policy. Well-meaning leaders cannot take action, say decreasing tariffs, often derided by economists as anti-helpful for economic growth, because protectionism is very popular among voters. Especially with public spending, it is difficult to convince politicians to take austerity measures when necessary; a study mentioned in *Forgotten Continent* showed a 1% increase in public spending increased a president's victory margin in their reelection campaign by 1.3%. Latin Americans applaud the populists and vote against those who might offer real reform.

State weakness and a tendency for populism to steamroll chances for reform are the root issues of Latin America's problems. However, *Forgotten Continent* is not written this way. Instead, it offers a chapter by chapter look at Latin American issues, and in every chapter Reid connects that specific problem to Latin America's inability to consistently conduct real, long-term change. Take the drug trade. Reid assesses this problem as being due to overinvestment in military forces to deal with rebel groups and drug cartels, when the better solution (as he judges it) would be to invest in police forces. Why stick with this policy? Because Latin America's countries are eternally gridlocked and cannot move the resources to do this. Other than introducing this conundrum of state weakness in the second chapter, almost imperceptibly, every chapter quietly reinforces the idea, some better than others.

The seventh chapter, which talks about the Venezuelan crisis, along with a section of the ninth chapter that focuses on education, are excellent examples of how Reid makes his point while making an entirely different point at the same time. Economists generally agree that the best way to foster economic growth and ensure a nation becomes a rich nation is via human capital, which is a measure of a person's education, skills, and health. The Venezuelan crisis is a great example of how populism leads politicians to enact economic programs that do not work along these lines of established and generally accepted ideas. Rather, the Chávez regime spent all its money on economic programs that just blindly subsidized everything and won over huge amounts of populist support, while also pocketing a large amount of this (note how Venezuelans cared very little about this, since economically things were amazing; in Latin America people only care about corruption if they already hate the government, since it is mostly just an excuse to hate the government, on the assumption that they stealing; those who like the government say that they may steal, but they get things done). Meanwhile nothing is done to make the Venezuelan people more productive; and inevitably when the price of oil went down, there was nothing to maintain government revenue high enough to fund all the subsidies, and without a large middle class to keep the economy in a good state everything fell apart. The section on education in the ninth chapter tells how this happened: poor education and poor healthcare means no human capital, which in the thirteenth and final chapter Reid admits to be the primary driver of economic growth past the stage of middle-income country (in short, without an increase in human capital, Latin America will remain stuck in its current level of economic development).

The genius of Reid's work is in how he manages to make a point many times without it being grating or annoying. It is very simple: he states the thesis at the beginning, during the second chapter, and once more during the eleventh chapter, after which he begins to talk of solutions and the conclusion. At no other point is the thesis brought to prominence. It is mentioned, and often; it appears during the section on education, when he explains the ousting of former Peruvian education minister Jaime Saavedra as an act of self-serving politicians, and during the Venezuela chapter when he lambasts the fragility and rot of chavismo and, to a lesser extent, puntofijismo, along with their susceptibility to populism. It is imperceptible and unnoticed; he puts together an explanation of an issue, offers evidence to support this view, and connects it to populism and state weakness, without it ever feeling repetitive. He always arrives at the same conclusion differently for every individual issue.

Reid thrives in this soft-spoken subtlety; he addresses a very heavy and oftentimes sad or outright depressing topic without ever getting emotional, maintaining a calmness that soothes one's nerves and keeps from a panic over the fact that things in Venezuela are hopelessly bad and people are starving in the streets of Caracas. This information requires a calm delivery; otherwise, an unwise overreaction might be had. Through the subtle and calm exposition of his thesis, Reid, like a well-versed and experienced lawyer, presents the evidence and makes his case. This mountain of evidence he has gathered over nearly four decades, attenuating him to the extremes of Latin American politics and allowing his matter-of-factual delivery. With his experience, Reid crafts the perfect blend of tone and style to bring forward his point without inciting panic or insult, and he brings forward a large amount of compelling evidence to prove that Latin America does, in fact, need to put down the populism and start taking up real reforms, reforms which will take time to accomplish, much to the not unjustifiably impatient annoyance of Latin America.

The most invaluable of Reid's efforts, however, comes within the second chapter. If all Latin Americans had to read but one chapter of *Forgotten Continent*, the second chapter would undoubtedly be it. Within this chapter, Reid takes on why populism is so successful in taking over the hearts of Latin America's poor: its sublime simplicity. Latin Americans suffer from being told untruths about their poverty: American imperialism, or that their wealth is stolen from them by corrupt politicians. Neither is the truth, or at least not the whole picture, but Latin Americans often believe in these the same way Americans believe in American exceptionalism: it is all they have ever been told, and they do not look for an alternative view. As Reid explains, American imperialism, while certainly detrimental, is not the primary reason as to why Latin America is in such a poor state, and while Latin America is indeed rich in natural resources, resource richness does not equal economic prosperity; otherwise, the Democratic Republic of the Congo would have an economy to make the rest of the world weep and Monaco would be hopelessly poor, and yet Monaco is very rich while the Congo is mired in a deadly civil war. Both of these myths, and many others like them, take away attention from the real problems of Latin America: a lack of human capital, weakness and mistrust of institutions, and most of all, populism. These myths, in fact, feed that last one: they provide talking points for populists, for example Hugo Chávez's denunciations of the United States, and often come with easy, one-step solutions to their problems that, whenever they are implemented, ultimately backfire horribly.

Reid goes out of his way to disprove these and bring in actual explanations of the current situation of Latin America. These myths are a big obstacle to combating populism in the region and are one of the main reasons Latin America has become the populist's paradise. Reid offers actual explanations, such as Latin America's inheriting Spanish colonial institutions (which, to put it mildly, were an over-centralized, inefficient, and extractive mess) and Latin America's strongly patrimonialist system (that where people serve their family and friend circles over society at large on a huge scale). It is important to note that these are meant to be taken together; Reid stresses the importance of the fact there is no one single explanation, but rather many, as it often is in life. Not enough Latin Americans know this, and the second chapter of *Forgotten Continent* is such an excellent explanation of one of Latin America's most fundamental issues that it alone ensures the book is a must-read for any Latin American who wants to know how to fix their beloved homeland.

Overall, *Forgotten Continent* oozes professionalism. It lacks a bit in the oomph department and can be a tad dull at times, but it more than makes for it with a litany of valuable information and sheer professionalism. Reid takes care to put his treasure trove of expertise to good use in the book as he provides immensely valuable information to its reader. If you do not think you can get through the whole book, at least read the second chapter, especially if you are Latin American, to inoculate yourself against the danger of populism. Even without a laugh or smile every second, the information in the book is too important to ignore. Reid has found the root causes of Latin America's problems, and the first step in fixing the problem is to know what the problem is. Read the book, and find the answer.

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# Book Review:

Maria Fernanda Del Rosario

Over time, people began to refer to Economics as a “dismal science,” for most books and lectures use boring principles to explain its concepts. However, *Naked Economics* is like no Economics book you might have ever read or any Economics lecture you might have ever heard. This best-selling book from Charles Wheelan’s *Naked* series takes a different approach to address the impact of economic principles on individuals’ day-to-day life. Charles Wheelan, a current lecturer at Dartmouth College, a former lecturer at the University of Chicago, and a former correspondent for *The Economist*, has also written many articles about economics and public policy for prestigious American newspapers. On this occasion, Wheelan writes *Naked Economics* to demonstrate the importance of understanding Economics to gain a deeper insight into the world, make better decisions, and understand why things happen the way they do. Demonstrating his expertise on the subject, *Naked Economics* is an easy-to-follow book that uses a clear language and addresses the most relevant subjects to engagingly introduce the reader to what is widely accepted as a complex science.

In each of this book’s chapters, Wheelan covers a different topic he considers pivotal to understand how our economy works. While quoting many economists and giving his opinion, Wheelan explains many subjects that range from trade and development to international economics, financial markets, human capital, and the governments’ role in the economy. Wheelan could summarize his teachings from *Naked Economics* in three big things countries must consider if they want their citizens to prosper. First, Wheelan emphasizes the importance of human capital to achieve economic growth. As he argues, investing in education makes us more innovative and efficient human beings, which increases a country’s productivity and individuals’ quality of life. While doing so, he stresses the idea of incentives as a tool to achieve development. As we live in a world where self-interested individuals seek their well-being, market economies can incentivize and reward those firms capable of constantly innovating and providing society the goods and services they want, whereas a command economy does the opposite.

Afterward, Wheelan points out how countries need effective institutions to achieve proper economic growth. A country with a corrupt government is set to fail, as corruption misdirects resources the state could invest in other things like education and infrastructure. Property rights are necessary to reduce the informal economy and increase taxation, which, if the government does properly, can improve social safety nets, public transportation, and public education. Wheelan furthermore reveals the dangers of excessive regulation and the way it impedes the competition necessary for firms to innovate. Finally, Wheelan highlights the importance of understanding the established economic principles to make nations grow. As part of the natural business cycle, recessions are inevitable, so humans must learn to live through painful times and accept painful economic policies governments implement to diminish the long-term effects of an economic recession. States that follow Wheelan’s three big things will achieve a rippling effect where economic growth will result in more economic growth.

As Wheelan says in this book’s introduction, many intellectuals overlook a subject crucial to every aspect of our lives, because complex principles wrap the mostly intuitive ideas from Economics. To prove this does not have to be the case, Wheelan avoids the use of intricate graphs and equations and, in its place, first introduces the different topics with simple examples so he can later build upon the subject after conveying a proper foundation to the idea. For instance, when introducing the reader to the concept of human capital, Wheelan uses a thought-provoking example. He creates a hypothetical situation where someone strips Bill Gates from all his assets, so he ends up on the streets without any of his possessions. Wheelan then argues, “even if [Bill Gates’] wealth were confiscated, other companies would snap [Gates] up as a consultant, a board member, a CEO, a motivational speaker.”

# *Naked Economics*

After using this example to show how “human capital is everything that remains after our tangible assets are removed,” the reader can understand that human capital includes all the skills a person has that no one can take away from them – such as education, charisma, health, and ambition – and make us more productive. Wheelan then proceeds to state that “the day will always be twenty-four hours long; the more we produce in those twenty-four hours the more we consume, either directly or by trading it away for other stuff.” This simple breakdown displays the correlation between the increase of productivity and a country’s gross domestic product (GDP) to a nation’s success without showing statistics or a formula to calculate a country’s GDP. Knowing that better-educated citizens are more productive and contribute more to a country, allows the reader to understand Wheelan’s arguments in the following chapters that hold that states should promote investments and expand property rights that allow people to have access to credit which incentivizes them to innovate and makes countries prosper. The use of this approach allows Wheelan to bring the, at times, abstract macroeconomic principles into a microeconomic level that makes understanding Economics much easier.

Instead of covering subjects only resonant to policymakers or economists, Wheelan uses this book to address important concepts relevant even to the average person, because all citizens must understand the functioning of the economy to not fall into the trap of populist messages. Wheelan’s explanations of the economy allow anyone to see the flaws of the presidential candidate Ross Perot’s argument, who believed “that if [the United States] opened [its] borders to free trade with Mexico, then millions of jobs would flee south of the border.” A person with even a basic understanding of the way market economies work would know that American workers would never lose a job they can do better than Mexican workers, because Americans have better education and capital that make them more productive. Moreover, citizens would also immediately stray from xenophobic beliefs who hold that an influx of immigrants would increase the unemployment rate, since they could recognize that “new workers must spend their earnings elsewhere in the economy, creating new demand for other products.” Individuals with enough economic awareness would certainly agree that in cases like this, “the economic pie gets bigger, not merely resliced.” Any person who lacks the economic literacy Wheelan transmits to the readers of *Naked Economics* thereby becomes a threat to democracy when he votes for politicians who practice clientelism and promote attractive but unsound economic policies. After reading *Naked Economics*, people gain a greater understanding of the economy, which makes them better-informed citizens who can make better decisions, vote for leaders with expertise in Economics, and understand the world surrounding them.

Throughout *Naked Economics*, Charles Wheelan refreshingly debunks the mistaken belief that Economics cannot be simple and captivating. In this book, he uses a very straightforward approach to explain the most important economic principles that we must understand to improve our lives. Even when this book does not focus on world powers like China with economic policies that contradict Wheelan’s three big things necessary on an economy for a country to be successful, it still clarifies everything people need to know about the market economy he argues is “a decent, if flawed, choice among many bad alternatives.” Whether you have an Economics degree or not, *Naked Economics* is a must-read that will help you understand significant real-life problems while at times even laughing with Wheelan’s many real-life examples.



# Cyber Governance: Taking Back the Internet

Cristina Gandasegui

**T**he Internet controls more than 44 zettabytes of data, generated by Internet users since its creation. That is the number 44, followed by twenty-one zeroes. Created some mere fifty years ago, the Internet has taken over the lives of billions of human beings and is the base of the twenty-first century's rapid development. Over half of the planet's population spends some part of their day online, yet it is still largely ignored and underutilized by powerful governments all around the world. Up until very recently, the idea of rejecting modernity and embracing the traditional was prevalent. This belief is still held by various conservative governments all around the world. Constant dismissal of cyber threats, however, has opened a new door for smaller third parties like independent hackers to wreak technological havoc inside an otherwise untouchable government or entity. Nowadays, many countries are investing billions of dollars into fortifying their presence in the cyberspace. A good example is China, which is arguably the current leader of the technological world. Other countries, like the United States, seem to be lagging behind. However, the question is not really who has more resources in their technological arsenal; it is who will succeed in unifying individual and governmental interests to find an effective balance that allows a country to use said assets correctly.

A state should balance the tensions between individual rights and government interests by embracing the power of social media and the cyberspace instead of shunning and demonizing it. It is important for a state to understand that regulating the Internet is almost—if not totally—impossible. There is no space for borders here; the Internet was created to be a free space. This is why governments must adapt to the new technological era and take advantage of it. By controlling who can access an individual's information, a government is protecting the right to privacy; said government, however, could still be allowed restricted and supervised access to this information in order to maintain order and security.

Countries like China limit the level of exposure their citizens receive from the outside world and have heavy restrictions regarding what information leaves the country. The United States prohibits the use of certain applications based in China over fears of American data being stolen, but it also has a very relaxed stance on the use of American citizens' private data on American soil. These two completely different approaches to "regulating" the cyberspace only succeed in generating general dissatisfaction with governments and creating more problems that are later difficult to control. Balance has always required compromise. It is imperative for governments to take an active stance on cyberspace policies which require the creation of new jobs and campaigns that ensure the spread of fact-checkers to curb the overwhelming amount of fake news outlets—without encroaching on Internet users' freedom of speech—and advocate against the use of firewalls that silence entire countries. It is time to stop choosing between the two approaches and adopt a new one that focuses on both problems and finds efficient solutions for all.

## **A Divided Internet**

Managing the Internet is no easy task. Governments from all over the world are tasked with ensuring their nation's safety is never compromised by the ever-reaching hands of the Internet while also protecting their citizens from smaller—yet equally important—threats like the spread of false information, identity theft, and online harassment. Yet some countries seem to value one responsibility more than the other. Governments that solely focus on a state's interests, like maintaining a regime's stability, for example, do so by encroaching on its citizens' right to freedom of expression and privacy.

The implications of having two completely different models of cyber governance are having to manage a divided Internet and all the consequences that stem from an extreme approach to managing it, be it civil unrest or political backlash. Finding a middle ground between these two approaches is simple, but it requires a compromise between all the parties involved—the government and the people, working together despite political differences.

.However, it is important to note that a government's responsibility is to protect an individual's rights. Both parties should have shared interests and goals. A government that fails to find a balance between protecting the state and protecting its citizens is setting itself up for failure in cyberspace, where cooperation is essential.

### **The Infinite Crumb Trail**

The ever-growing market for data and information poses a significant threat for nations in the twenty-first century. It has become incredibly easy for companies to sell information to data banks and marketing companies, which in turn sell the acquired data to other companies like insurance agencies, or worse, foreign governments. Social media companies make money by selling user data to marketing companies that then inject personalized ads into the platform to continue the cycle. Every click, "like," skip, and closed tab leaves a trail that might be invisible to the naked eye but glows bright green for hackers and anyone else who wishes to follow said trail and obtain information on a certain person or an entire demographic.

The idea of retaining one's privacy when browsing the Internet has become obsolete in this day and age. It is a small price to pay for virtually unlimited access to a world of information. User data is needed to keep the World Wide Web's sites up and running. The Internet learns from the information it receives every day. It is unrealistic and pointless to focus on the actual concept of data collection; this is inevitable. A government's focus should be regulating what this information is used for. Studying and keeping track of who acquires user data and what it is being used for not only allows governments to ensure sensitive information is not being used for nefarious reasons but also grants users the peace of mind that comes with knowing the collection of their personal data is being monitored and its uses are being regulated. Governments can then use this information to update their security databases, perform investigations on demographics and national interests, and even make plans for the country's future based on projections.

### **A Mutating Internet**

The influenza virus mutates constantly and develops new, more complicated strains very frequently. It requires lots of specialists to study and monitor it relentlessly. It has devastating consequences if left untreated, but there are many effective ways to control it and can even be used to create wonderful things, like treatments for other illnesses.

The Internet, curiously, shares all these traits with the flu. It is constantly changing and developing, and, if ignored, can be used to destroy political campaigns, companies, and even entire governments. It also has an incredible potential for good, but it must first be controlled and regulated by a team of specialists that devote their entire lives to studying it.

. The Internet, and technology in general, is not a problem that will go away on its own, no matter how hard one tries to ignore it. Governments and public organizations must learn to work hand in hand with the private sector—which, indisputably, has the upper hand—until it can regain its footing and begin to work efficiently by itself. Protecting a nation's cyberspace can be done, but it requires long-term dedication and cooperation.

### **A Garden of Distrust**

Some might argue, however, that governments are not competent enough to ensure the safety of their citizens' information. There is a growing sentiment of dissatisfaction towards many governments because of an unprecedented wave of information directed towards unsuspecting and credulous citizens. The sudden apparition of thousands of online news outlets—real or not—has created a clear line between those who fall prey to everything encountered on social media and those who have grown incredibly distrustful of everything they see. Governments used to be able to get away with scandals and rampant corruption in a pre-Internet world; social media, however, has introduced the idea of accountability for all, by all. It is now easier than ever for a citizen to monitor their government's spending and keep track of every scandal leaked to the press. It is also easier than ever for third parties to spread false information about a government to further sow the seeds of the already existing distrust.

This wariness deepens the feelings of resentment towards governments that people from all over the world already feel. The widening political divide does not help, either. We are facing an era of radicalization where political parties have stopped representing shared ideals; instead, they are becoming shared identities. Citizens of a certain political party might be reluctant or even entirely against working with a government of an opposing party. The Internet, ironically, plays an important role in widening the divide. It has given a platform to those dedicated to creating controversies and spreading manipulated—and very dangerous—information. What makes these controversies so believable is the precedent set by past governments to always overstep and fall back into corrupt ways.



### A Win-Win Opportunity

Governments are not doing a good job of trying to regain their citizens' trust. Laws that regulate the use of an Internet user's private information, however, could be an effective way to start. It is a relatively simple way of showing that a government cares about its citizens' interests, and it offers many benefits for the government itself, including control over sensitive information that could be used by foreign parties to damage the existing government. It also opens the door to new opportunities that involve the cooperation of not only opposing political parties but also the public and private sector. Prioritizing cybersecurity is imperative, however, as is more funding for the creation of new jobs and campaigns that not only regulate the spread of malicious information but also protect a user's right to freedom of speech. New privacy laws could also incentivize the creation of organizations entrusted with supervising a governments' use of citizens' data, offering some sort of peace of mind to more skeptical Internet users. Making the Internet a safer place must be a joint effort. Right now, we are standing on step zero, but it does not have to stay that way. It is time to make our governments work for us instead of against us, using the Internet as a tool to unify, not divide.

**#FAM  
AIP**

**“TENEMOS TANQUE”**

# Latin America's Systemic Machismo Culture

Victoria Mendoza

**T** *The self-sabotage cloaked as tradition that chains half of Latin Americans*

The era of gender equality has brought great benefits to women and men alike worldwide. In Latin America, specifically, this progress is visibly clear. However, so is the societal behavior that prevents it from succeeding further, as it has done in several other regions. Machismo, the Latin American cultural belief that men are superior to women, has proved to be a bump in the road towards progress.

The increase of several machismo-rooted practices in Latin America shows the strong prevalence of the patriarchy in our society, and the need for further meaningful progress regarding gender equality. The ideal of male dominance is so deeply intertwined within Latin American society and individuals, that machismo is seen as typical, when it should not be. The normalized Latin American sub-culture of machismo is a silent pandemic that plagues the region in general, on several scales, and needs to be dismantled for society to properly move forward.

## **Boys do not cry and girls do not work**

The most common repercussion that machismo poses, is on a personal and emotional level. In Latin America, toxic masculinity is unnecessarily celebrated. Men are taught that they must be the traditional manly man and hide their emotions to assert dominance over others. Moreover, piropos, or catcalls, are supposed to be taken as compliments. Instead of teaching men not to harass women, it is the other way around. Meanwhile, women are taught to sit still and comply with the traditional ideals of womanhood. These seemingly miniscule actions, also known as micro-machismos, have a catastrophic impact on women and on men. Men, on one hand, bottle up their emotions, whether these are sadness or rage, which results in aggressive behavior towards women. Furthermore, because of these engrained teachings, some women develop internalized machismo, even disregarding other women's emotions by telling them that they are exaggerating. These micro-machismos tend to be subtle, but unimaginably damaging because they engrain faulty ideas in the minds of individuals and are later reflected on a larger scale.

## **Less money, more problems**

Machismo culture is also reflected economically, taking the shape of the gender pay gap. Women are not being paid the same as men are, not because they are doing a worse job, but merely because they are women. Moreover, women are disregarded way too often for promotions and executive positions because they are deemed incapable of handling them. Another key factor worth noting is maternity. Because of maternity leave, and the idea that women are the sole caregivers, many companies do not hire women for important positions because they would have a months-long paid leave, and men would not. Paradoxically, even though women earn less than their male counterparts, they have to pay more for their products. Female-marketed products, on average, cost 7% more than male ones. This 7% is commonly referred to as the pink tax, because it is an invisible 'tax' women have to pay just for being women. These monetary disadvantages have more repercussions that one could ever imagine. Because of the wage gap, women have less money to spend and boost the economy. On a similar note, by not allowing women to reach executive positions as often and as easily as their male coworkers, we are wasting great potential and human capital because being a female does not make anyone less capable. So, instead of ensuring the success of their companies by disregarding women, executives are shooting themselves in the foot. Likewise, the pink tax discourages women from spending, which is never positive. The monetary disparities women face are some of the fibers in the rope holding Latin America back from total socioeconomic prosperity. They need to be cut.



### **The crime of the not-so-silent pandemic**

Abuse and femicide are crimes that reek of machoistic ideals. Sadly, these have long been present in society, especially in Latin America, which is the region that accounts for the most gender violence worldwide; Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, El Salvador, and Bolivia alone account for 81% of global cases. These machismo-rooted aggressions have been on the rise for a while, with gender violence increasing around 50% in the last decade. Moreover, COVID-19 has exploited and expanded these even further. The lockdowns placed everywhere have been vital to prevent the virus from further spreading, but they have left women and girls confined to their homes, putting them at a higher risk of domestic violence. These lockdowns also cut them off from decent education and staying in contact with others who might have helped them leave their painful situations. In remote communities, it is even harder to reach out for help, so girls and women are forced to live with their abusers. The escalation in gender violence, as mentioned previously, is a silent pandemic. While all eyes are, understandably, on the latest number of cases, equally prominent issues like the increase in gender violence are going largely unaddressed. Governments must take a much firmer stance against preventing and punishing gender violence. Femicide and abuse represent the worst possible forms of machismo, but they are also unimaginable crimes and must be treated as such.

### **The process of unlearning**

It is not all men, but it is most women. It is not all men, but you never know which man is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Women are at a disadvantage and many live as prisoners of the culture society has allowed to become far too normalized. It is of utmost importance to dismantle the problem from the root: machismo.

Although this will not be a trivial task, regional initiatives are starting to promote change. Movements like #NI-UNAMENOS are already creating more awareness specifically about gender-based violence and femicides across Latin America with viral anthems that place the blame where it is supposed to be, in exaggerated machismo and the aggressor. Creating awareness, on its own, will not solve the problem, but it will sure help. An act as simple as calling out a sexist comment that gets people thinking about their machoistic attitude can go a long way. Re-addressing the way societies, especially men, perceive gender roles with regional psychologist-led programs is also a magnificent way to embed significant change. To combat machismo everyone must work together because everyone is affected by it, regardless of gender, race, nationality, or identity. Latin America must not stay behind in the trend of substantial progress. Unlearning machismo and promoting programs and legislations that target it, are the only ways to end the injustices that most women suffer daily.



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