

Mass Media and Politics in Latin America

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In Latin America, the mass media are sometimes referred to as a *cuarto poder*, or “fourth power,” to denote their potentially crucial role in safeguarding and deepening democracy.¹ By reporting on wrongdoings and malfeasance as well as achievements and good governance, the media can hold politicians accountable and help citizens make informed decisions about their choice of leaders. By giving voice to individuals, social movements, political parties, and interest groups, the media help determine who gets to participate in public discourse and influence the political agenda. Through their own decisions about what to cover and how to cover it, the media can also play a crucial independent role in shaping that agenda. Following Waisbord (2008), we can refer to these three pro-democratic actions of the mass media as their watchdog, gate-keeping, and agenda-setting functions.

This chapter explores politics and the mass media in the eight countries covered in detail in this volume, examining the degree to which they contribute to, or hinder, healthy democratic governance. The first section examines media concentration and ownership structures and their implications for the media’s gate-keeping function. Historical patterns of market concentration and ownership have changed little for Latin America’s mass media; a few media sources in each country boast a majority of viewers or listeners, and these outlets are typically controlled by wealthy families or individuals with conservative political leanings. Politicians themselves often become owners of the media, working the system to gain broadcasting concessions and then using them as political mouthpieces. The proliferation of low-power community media offers the possibility that new voices might gain access to the airwaves, but all too often, these broadcasters also fall under the sway of powerful politicians. On the whole, concentration of audience and ownership means that the Latin American mass media should continue to give voice primarily to those with political and economic power.

The second part of the chapter examines factors that influence the media's role as watchdog of democracy. Historically, patterns of media ownership, combined with conservative governments in many countries, meant that the media often colluded with politically like-minded presidents. More recently, the rise of a "new Left" in Latin America has brought to power several populist presidents who routinely clash with their countries' media owners. Where the media might have been complicit in prior abuses of executive power, they now aggressively denounce them. Yet the polarized political climate in these countries complicates the media's watchdog function—journalists are unlikely to investigate malfeasance on their own side of the political divide, and retaliation by authorities may silence some critical voices. Elsewhere, conflict between politicians and the press is rampant at the local level, where political bosses can eliminate potential watchdogs through their manipulation of the judicial system or control over local security forces. In such countries, media with national scope may exercise all the functions of a fourth power, but local media remain weak, intimidated, and subject to political control.

The final section of the chapter addresses the media's agenda-setting role by examining coverage of candidates in recent presidential elections. Historically, the media in Latin America were often markedly biased against left-wing candidates and openly favored conservative politicians. In Brazil, Mexico, and Chile, which had some of the most notorious patterns of bias in the past, electoral coverage of major left- and right-wing candidates is now quite even-handed. In countries with more polarized politics, however, substantial biases against left-wing politicians remain. Where populists have gained power, as in Venezuela and Bolivia, they have been able to level the playing field only by countering their negative portrayal in commercial media with an even more one-sided positive coverage in media outlets controlled by the state.

Extreme polarization of this sort means that the media, first and foremost, engage in partisan battles; informing the public is relegated to a secondary plane.

The focus of this chapter is on broadcast media, primarily television, which remains the most politically influential medium in the region. As shown in Table 1, television is present in more than 95% of homes in most countries, and it is citizens' primary sources of information about current events by a wide margin. Radio plays an important secondary role in some countries, particularly in Bolivia and Peru, where its penetration rates are somewhat higher. Newspapers also matter for political information—particularly in Venezuela, where their circulation rates are relatively high—and in some countries they play particularly important roles in breaking scandals and setting the political agenda. Where relevant, therefore, the chapter also examines trends in newspaper and radio.

<Table 1 about here>

Media Concentration and Ownership Structures

Historically, a major impediment to the mass media acting as a force for democracy in Latin America was the fact that relatively few voices were represented. In countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, control of multiple media outlets by a handful of conglomerates meant politicians only had to collude with a few major players to ensure overwhelmingly favorable coverage. Oligopolistic market structures limited competitive pressures, so media owners could safely hue to the wishes of politicians without fear of losing readers, listeners, or viewers. Concentrated media markets also boosted the media's influence on

public opinion. Where citizens across the political spectrum can choose from media espousing a variety of different perspectives, exposure tends to reinforce existing opinions. Where options are limited, media exposure is more likely to shift attitudes in one direction or another (Boas 2005; Lawson and McCann 2005).

Audience Share

Latin America's media markets have become less concentrated since the 1980s, when Mexico's Televisa and Brazil's TV Globo boasted more than 80% of the national television audience during prime time (Lima 1990; Lawson 2002), though they remain at least moderately concentrated in comparative perspective. Table 2 lists the major broadcast television networks and average share of viewers in seven of the eight countries covered in this volume, as well as in the United States and Canada.² For each country, audience data are used to compute the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), a measure of industry concentration that is obtained by squaring and summing the percentage share of each firm in a particular market. The HHI approaches zero at the low end and would be 10,000 for a perfect monopoly.

<Table 2 about here>

Compared to the United States and Canada, Latin American broadcast television markets range from moderately to highly concentrated. Chile's market structure is most similar to those of the U.S. and Canada; in each country, the leading network claims about a quarter of viewers. Elsewhere, the industry leader boasts a third to more than a half of all viewers and is typically

well ahead of its closest competitor. In both Colombia and Mexico, broadcast television is essentially a duopoly; the third most popular network has less than a 5% audience share. On the other hand, broadcast television markets in most countries have become less concentrated in recent years. Compared to the figures calculated by Hughes and Lawson (2005) using data from 2002, the HHIs of Mexico and Brazil have declined by 1419 and 667 points, respectively. These changes reflect the declining dominance of Televisa and TV Globo, though each network still comfortably leads its closest competitor by about 30 percentage points.

National markets for radio and newspapers are generally less concentrated, in part because there are lower barriers to entry (Waisbord 2008). Using data from 2004, Becerra and Mastrini (2009) found that radio was more competitive than broadcast television in each of these eight countries—sometimes quite significantly. In Mexico City, the HHI for radio in 2010 was approximately 2900, or two-thirds of the national figure for broadcast television.³ Newspaper markets are also less concentrated than television in most countries, though Chile stands as an important exception; the latter is essentially a duopoly dominated by the El Mercurio and COPESA groups (Becerra and Mastrini 2009).

The greater competitiveness of radio and newspaper markets in Latin America is mitigated by several factors. First, as noted above, these media serve as much less important sources of political information. In many countries, a competitive radio market essentially means multiple music options rather than different news perspectives. Second, cross-media ownership means that the major players in television are often represented in radio and newspapers, and vice versa. A number of dominant television networks, such as Mexico's Televisa and Colombia's RCN, started as radio broadcasters and still maintain significant holdings in this market. Other conglomerates, such as Globo in Brazil and Clarín in Argentina, began as

newspapers before diversifying into both radio and television. Finally, in some countries, television plays an important agenda-setting role for other media, so that the topics covered by a small number of dominant networks tend to be reflected in the coverage of many more newspapers and radio stations (Lawson 2008).

Ownership

The small number of networks dominating broadcast television in Latin America is only half of the concentration story; the ownership of these firms is also highly concentrated, with control typically exercised by a single family or individual. The predominant ownership pattern for broadcast television in Canada and the United States, in which the network's parent is a publicly traded corporation with no insider holding a controlling share, is uncommon in Latin America. As shown in Table 2, only three networks fall into this category. Of these, Mexico's Televisa has an ownership structure most similar to that of North American networks; its shares trade on its country's stock exchange (as well as in New York) and only a minority are controlled by the family of its president.⁴ The other two networks, Chilevisión and Argentina's Telefe, are owned by conglomerates that trade only on foreign exchanges, which effectively limits the weight of any home-country concerns in corporate governance. Several other parent companies (Argentina's Grupo Clarín and Mexico's Azteca Holdings) list a minority of shares on their countries' exchanges, though their founders or directors hold controlling stakes.

The vast majority of Latin America's broadcast television networks are subsidiaries of privately-held rather than publicly-traded corporations, which are often wholly-owned by a single family or individual. These include Brazil's TV Globo, RCN and Caracol in Colombia,

and Venevisión in Venezuela, all of which belong to family-owned conglomerates. Albavisión, property of Mexico's Ángel González, owns major television networks in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru, as well as Ecuador, Paraguay, Central America, and several Mexican states. Privately-held corporations such as these ensure that only a single voice is heard in corporate governance and, presumably, editorial decisions. González has openly admitted to using his media outlets to favor certain politicians, and journalists from his local stations in Mexico routinely toe the line (Hughes and Lawson 2004: 92-93). In addition, media conglomerates not traded on public exchanges are subject to few if any disclosure requirements, reducing transparency and making even basic information about their operations difficult to obtain. The owners of such firms also feel none of the market pressures that come from watching a share price plummet in response to media scandals. Most of Latin America's media moguls can act with an impunity that Rupert Murdoch would envy.

State-owned networks have a relatively minor presence in Latin America's television markets. Chile's Televisión Nacional, the country's most popular television network in 2010, is the major exception. Its strong audience share may be due to the fact that it operates in the same fashion as its privately-owned competitors, producing similar content and funding itself entirely through advertising revenues (González-Rodríguez 2008). State-owned television networks exist in each of the other countries, but only in Argentina and Venezuela do they have more than 5% market share. Rather than functioning according to a "public service" model, with educational objectives and a mandate for impartial journalism, state networks in Argentina, Bolivia, and Venezuela have been turned into partisan weapons in their presidents' repeated clashes with the private media (Hawkins 2003; Becerra and Mastrini 2010; Torrico and Sandoval 2011). In

Mexico, television stations owned by state governments have similarly become mouthpieces for whoever inhabits the governor's office (Hughes and Lawson 2004).

A number of Latin America's media moguls are politicians as well as businessmen. The partners in Argentina's América TV include Francisco de Narváez, a Peronist deputy, and José Luís Manzano, a former Peronist deputy and Minister of the Interior. In Bolivia, Unitel belongs to the family of Osvaldo Monasterio Añez, a former senator, while Red Uno is property of Ivo Kuljis Fuchtner, a vice presidential candidate in 1993, 1997, and 2002. The group of politician-owners was even larger in the recent past. Former Bolivian president Carlos Mesa Gisbert was the founder and a part-owner of Red PAT until 2007, including his years in executive office. Mesa's media ownership preceded his political ambitions, but the same cannot be said of Chilean President Sebastián Piñera, who acquired Chilevisión in April 2005, just before his first run for the presidency, and sold it only in October 2010, seven months after his inauguration. Media ownership by prominent politicians does not guarantee that they will use their influence improperly, but it certainly creates a strong temptation to do so.

At the regional and local level, politicians may be even more prominently represented among owners of the mass media, especially in large federal countries. In Brazil, commercial broadcasting licenses were routinely awarded free of charge to politicians and their families until competitive auctions began to be required in 1995 (Lima and Lopes 2007). As a result, at least 271 Brazilian politicians are partners or directors of state or local broadcast media (Donos da Mídia 2008). Among them are Fernando Collor, a senator and former president, and Roseana Sarney, a governor, former senator, and daughter of senator and former president José Sarney. The Collor and Sarney family conglomerates own radio stations, major newspapers, and the local affiliate networks of TV Globo in the states of Alagoas and Maranhão, respectively. In 2009,

Brazilian police recorded a conversation between José Sarney and his son in which they discussed using their television network and newspaper to attack one of Roseana's political opponents (Souza and Seligman 2009).

Community Media

A positive media ownership trend in many Latin American countries has been the proliferation of community broadcasting. Beginning in the 1990s and early 2000s, countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, and Bolivia established legal frameworks to regulate community radio and television (Murillo 2003; Lima and Lopes 2007; Lloreda 2007; Martín 2010). Stations are usually licensed to local civic associations and required to operate as non-profit entities, with advertising restricted or prohibited entirely. Broadcasting range is typically limited to the municipal or even neighborhood level. Community media have proliferated quite rapidly in some countries. There were 400 community radio and 34 community television stations in Venezuela as of 2008, and 2328 community radio stations in Brazil as of June 2009 (Moen 2009; Boas and Hidalgo 2011).

Community radio and television stations have a small but potentially important role to play in countering the domination of Latin American broadcasting by commercial interests. They can give voice to individuals, groups, and social and political agendas that would be unlikely to find space in mainstream broadcasting. They also can play an important role in informing citizens about local politics, which, outside of major cities, is unlikely to be covered by commercial media. In Brazil's primarily rural Northeast, for instance, local radio stations—many of them licensed as community broadcasters—are the principal source of information about the

doings of mayors and city council members, who might otherwise govern with much less public scrutiny (Lauría and González Rodríguez 2006).

Unfortunately, community broadcasters often fall under the sway of local or national politicians, functioning more as political mouthpieces than as authentic civic voices. In Brazil, half of all community radio stations licensed in Brazil from 1999 to 2005 had a local politician or major campaign donor among their directors (Lima and Lopes 2007). Local governing officials often leverage their connections to help get radio licenses approved. Boas and Hidalgo (2011) found that proposed community radio stations with ties to incumbent city council members are approved at twice the rate of those whose political sponsors lost the last election. Once a politically-controlled community radio station is up and running, it becomes a useful campaign tool. In Brazil's 2004 and 2008 municipal elections, city council candidates with ties to licensed community radio stations could expect a 17% higher vote share and 28% greater probability of winning (Boas and Hidalgo 2011).

In several other countries, community broadcast media tend to have ties to national governments. In Bolivia, community radio stations have received strong state support under the government of Evo Morales, calling into question whether they represent independent community voices. The vast majority of licensed Bolivian community radio stations are part of the National Network of Indigenous Radio Stations (*Red Nacional de Radios de los Pueblos Originarios*), which was developed in partnership with the state. The Bolivian government grants broadcasting licenses to the community but loans them the necessary equipment and trains each station's lead reporters. Stations essentially function as affiliates of the state-run Radio Patria Nueva; they are required to broadcast Patria Nueva newscasts at certain times and also send local dispatches to the national radio network (Martín 2010).

The government of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez has also taken an active interest in promoting community media. Though state support is less formalized than in Bolivia, the government has donated equipment and headquarters to some stations and also favors them by purchasing advertising time. From 2006 onward, funds in the national budget were specifically allocated for promoting community broadcasting. Stations are required to broadcast 70% locally-produced content, but they are also allowed to rebroadcast material from state media, and many of them spend a lot of time airing Chávez's speeches (Hawkins 2003; Lloreda 2007; Dinatale and Gallo 2009; Leary 2009; Moen 2009). More research is necessary to determine if political criteria are used to award community broadcasting licenses in Venezuela, or if the pro-government tilt of these stations reflects its use of leverage, rather than simply the strong public support for Chávez in poor communities. At the very least, it is clear that governing officials in multiple countries, from city council members to the president, make a serious effort to get even low-power community broadcasting outlets on their side.

In sum, concentration of the mass media in Latin America suggests that they will continue to give voice primarily to powerful politicians and leading economic interests rather than a wide range of actors in civil society. Broadcast television markets are highly concentrated, approaching duopolies in some countries. Concentration has lessened during the first decade of the 2000s, but those networks gaining market share are mostly similar in profile to the industry leaders that have ceded ground. Few parent corporations are publicly traded; most are owned outright by one or a few wealthy investors. Politicians have significant stakes in several national television networks and may be even more dominant at the local level. Latin America's commercial media, therefore, seem likely to represent the economic and political interests of a few wealthy, largely conservative owners. Community and state-owned broadcasters may fall

outside of the media moguls' sway, yet here too, there are signs that power and politics prevail. In particular, leftist presidents like Chávez and Morales have enlisted these outlets in their struggle against hostile commercial media.

Press-State Relations, “Left Turns,” and the Rule of Law

Patterns of media concentration may have changed little during the first decade of the 2000s, but Latin American politics has undoubtedly shifted in ways that should have implications for the traditionally cozy relationship between state authorities and the press. In the past, conservatively-inclined commercial media often coincided with conservative governments, facilitating collusion between the two. More recently, the “left turn” in Latin American politics has seen left-of-center presidents come to power in six of the eight countries covered in this volume—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela (Cameron and Hershberg 2010; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). Some of these presidents—most prominently, Chávez and Morales—not only champion economic policies that challenge media owners' class interests, but also aim to exert greater state control over the media themselves. In such countries, politicized journalism in the commercial media seems likely to produce conflict with national governments rather than collusion.

A second trend of relevance for press-state relations in Latin America is a general improvement in the rule of law at the national level, combined with ongoing weaknesses in “brown areas”—primarily rural zones where local political bosses exert undue influence over security forces and the judiciary (O'Donnell 1993). In present-day Latin America, it seems unlikely that a national government would resort to a systematic, extralegal campaign against

independent media, such as the bribery, surveillance, and intimidation of journalists carried out by Peru's National Intelligence Service (SIN) under Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s (Conaghan 2005).⁵ Though isolated incidents may occur, use of the legal system itself is a more likely weapon for presidents who want to silence critical media. In areas with weak rule of law dominated by local political bosses, however, outspoken journalists and media owners may be much more at risk of extralegal retribution by governments and security forces, as well as to abuses of the legal system via influence over local courts.

To examine recent trends in press-state relations in these eight Latin American countries, I catalogued and coded all separate, specific instances of government actions against the press mentioned in the annual Human Rights Report from the U.S. Department of State, Freedom of the Press survey from Freedom House, and Attacks on the Press survey from the Committee to Project Journalists. The coding scheme assigned each incident a score from 1 to 5 according to the degree to which it would likely silence critical media; police detaining a reporter on assignment would merit a 1, whereas permanently shutting down a media outlet would be a 5. I also distinguished whether the incident involved government officials and security forces at the national level versus the local level. After classifying each incident, I summed the individual scores to generate a "national" and "local" total for each country in each year.

Results from this analysis are presented in Figure 1, which graphs the scores for each country over the 2001-2009 period. Several trends are notable. Venezuela stands out in terms of the overall severity of government actions against the press, especially those taken by the national government. Countries also differ in terms of the level of government that most often clashes with the press. In Bolivia and Venezuela, national authorities take more severe action against the media; in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Peru, it is local governments that do so. To

some extent, this contrast is a product of government structure and country size: Bolivia has no subnational security forces, whereas Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico are all large federal systems with numerous subnational jurisdictions. Yet the high incidence of local government actions against the press also reflects significant weaknesses in the rule of law in the “brown areas” of these four countries.

Populists versus Media Moguls

In Latin American countries that have seen a more radical left come to power, relations between populist presidents and the commercial mass media have been highly conflictual.⁶ While left-wing leaders have occasionally cultivated friendly relations with certain media outlets and their owners, the more common pattern is all-out war between the two. Many commercial media outlets have abandoned all pretence of neutrality and openly taken the side of the political opposition, especially where right-wing and other opposition parties remain weak and incapable of mounting a serious electoral challenge. In return, populist presidents have targeted the media with a series of weapons. The first is use, and abuse, of the legal system. Regulatory agencies, backed up by a pliant judiciary, can charge media outlets with everything from tax evasion to airing prohibited content. New laws, such as Venezuela’s 2004 Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television, allow media to be shut down for offenses such as showing “disrespect toward legitimate institutions and authorities.” Even if rarely invoked, such laws can have a strong deterrent effect. Strategic allocation of state advertising, police action targeting critical journalists, and inflammatory rhetoric (carried by state broadcasters) against media owners and

reporters are additional weapons that populist presidents have used in their battles against the commercial media.

Conflict between a president and major private media outlets has been most intense in Venezuela. In the early 2000s, all major commercial television stations actively supported the political opposition to Hugo Chávez, who fought back with an array of questionable legal proceedings. In April 2002, commercial television networks gave extensive and often biased coverage to anti-government protests that preceded the unsuccessful coup attempt; Venevisión went so far as to broadcast edited footage falsely suggesting that Chávez supporters shot unarmed demonstrators. At the height of the crisis, Chávez responded by shutting down the signals of all four leading broadcasters. Commercial television stations continued their open support for the opposition over the next several years—for example, broadcasting public service messages urging people to join a general strike against the government in 2002–2003. In return, the leading networks were hit with a litany of charges, including nonpayment of taxes, transmitting prohibited content, and broadcasting on illegal frequencies. When an appeals court ruled in favor of Globovisión on the latter case, the court was shut down and its judges suspended (Hawkins 2003; Wilpert 2007; Dinatale and Gallo 2009).

In more recent years, Chávez's approach to the commercial media has discriminated between those that continue to support the opposition and those willing to adopt a more neutral stance. After Venevisión owner Gustavo Cisneros struck a truce with Chávez in 2004, the network eliminated its critical news and opinion shows, as did Televisión between 2004 and 2005 (Dinatale and Gallo 2009). From 2004 onward, no government actions against either network occurred. Instead, Chávez intensified his campaign against the two major networks that remained loyal to the opposition. In 2007, the government refused to renew the broadcasting license of

Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV), the leading network at the time. RCTV was forced to move to cable, and it was shut down entirely in 2010. For its part, Globovisión has been charged repeatedly with inciting violence against the government for such offenses as airing footage of the 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul. The government also moved to obtain a 20% ownership stake in Globovisión by confiscating the shares of an investor, Nelson Mezerhane, whose bank had been taken over by authorities.

Bolivia has also witnessed conflict between the government and critical media during the presidency of Evo Morales, though anti-press actions have stopped short of shutting down broadcasters or newspapers. Some moves against the press have involved use of the judicial system. In March 2009, for instance, the government sued newspaper *La Prensa* for slander after it implicated Morales and one of his ministers in a plan to smuggle contraband goods into Brazil. More common have been actions by security forces, especially against television network Unitel, whose owner Morales once declared an “enemy of the government.” Police intelligence agents have spied on Unitel’s news director, and an Army officer bombed a local Unitel television station in June 2008. In September 2009, police attacked and fired upon a Unitel reporter and cameraman while they were covering the arrest of a farm owner. Reporters from Red PAT, also critical of Morales, were assaulted by police and shot at while reporting on a kidnapping in November 2009.

Argentina’s Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has also taken action against critical commercial media, primarily those owned by the Clarín group. During the presidency of her husband Néstor Kirchner, relations with Clarín were quite friendly, and coverage of the government was generally positive. The relationship deteriorated after Fernández de Kirchner took office and announced increased taxes on soy exports in 2008, sparking a “farm war” that

involved a producers' strike and massive demonstrations. Fernández claimed that *Clarín's* coverage favored the farmers, and she began to lash out against the newspaper, going so far as to organize an anti-Clarín rally. In September 2009, tax agents conducted a raid of *Clarín's* offices, later claiming that the action was a mistake (Waisbord 2010). Other media also came under attack: Radio Continental, which had criticized the government during the farm war, saw its FM broadcasting license suspended. Though government actions against the press did not reach the severity of those in Venezuela or Bolivia, the atmosphere of polarization was similar.

While not reflected in Figure 1, the principal tool used by both Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to punish critical media and reward friendly media is the allocation of advertising revenues. State spending on advertising increased from \$5 million in 2002, the year before Kirchner took office, to \$47 million in 2006 and \$52 million in the first half of 2008 alone (Freedom House 2007, 2010). Critical media received a smaller allocation of this budget than would be suggested by their circulation or audience share, while friendly media benefited. In 2006, the pro-government *Página/12* (circulation 51,000 per day) received \$4.5 million in state advertising, while *La Nación* (circulation 187,000) received only \$2.8 million (Dinatale and Gallo 2009; Fernández 2007).

Apart from incidents in which Venezuelan, Bolivian, and Argentine officials targeted the press with concrete actions, rhetorical battles between presidents and the commercial media have created a climate in which government supporters frequently attack media installations or individual journalists while authorities do little to intervene. In the State Department, Freedom House, and Committee to Project Journalist reports, violent actions by mobs of protestors, or assaults and even murders for which a suspect was never charged, were more common than actions that could be attributed to state security forces or government officials. Frequently, such

attacks followed specific presidential invectives against the media, sometimes naming individual journalists or owners.

Populist attacks on critical media are not limited to left-wing presidents, as Peru's Alberto Fujimori amply demonstrated during the 1990s. Colombia's Álvaro Uribe has employed some of the same tactics as his leftist counterparts in an effort to silence critical journalists. During his presidency, Uribe referred to Gonzalo Guillén, Bogotá correspondent for Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*, as "a person who has persisted in trying to harm me," and he denounced Hollman Morris, invited by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to interview hostages, as an "accomplice to terror." Both received anonymous threats in the aftermath and had to leave the country for their safety. In 2010, an investigation revealed that agents from the state Administrative Department of Security (DAS) had been ordered to follow Morris and Daniel Coronell, another critical journalist, because Uribe was upset about their reporting.

A climate of conflict between populist presidents and the commercial media complicates their ability to serve as effective watchdogs of democracy. Some media will be intimidated by legal sanctions or actions taken by state security forces and will self-censor or abandon investigative and critical reporting entirely. Others may choose to remain silent because they have struck deals with populist governments and been spared the harassment directed at their competitors. Those that take up the mantle of opposition politics will pursue a watchdog function with vigor, but only in battles against a government they seek to defeat. Politicized watchdog journalism is unlikely to be credible to those who do not already support the opposition, and its practitioners will probably avoid investigating wrongdoings on their own side of the political divide.

Political Bosses versus the Press

In several countries where relations between presidents and major commercial media have been more harmonious, conflict still abounds at the local level, where powerful political bosses use their influence over the judiciary and security forces to intimidate and silence critical journalists and media outlets. One of the most common weapons consists of laws against defamation, slander, and libel. Thanks to statutes with roots in military regimes or even the colonial period, insulting the honor of public officials is a criminal offense in many countries (Lawson and Hughes 2005). Cases against journalists are prosecuted most frequently in local courts, where powerful mayors or governors may be able to ensure convictions, silencing investigations into their own malfeasance. State-sponsored violence against critical journalists and media owners, including murder and abduction, is also disturbingly common at the local level. Lethal violence perpetrated by non-state actors such as drug traffickers and criminal gangs (quite possibly with the complicity of local authorities) is an even more frequent occurrence where states fail to exert authority throughout their national territory.

In Brazil, judges routinely employ prior censorship to prevent the publication or airing of information that would defame public officials, typically in response to petitions from politicians with influence over local courts. In May 2010, for example, a São Paulo state court forced the *Diário do Grande ABC* to stop reporting on mismanagement of public school supplies after a complaint from the mayor of São Bernardo do Campo. Sometimes judges abuse the law to protect their own colleagues: in July 2009, the newspaper *A Tarde* in Salvador, Bahia was barred from reporting on allegations that an appeals court judge had sold sentences. Many examples of prior censorship target local or regional media, but some of Brazil's most prominent national

publications are also affected. In July 2001, a Rio de Janeiro judge banned *O Globo*, the city's leading newspaper, from printing the transcript of a phone conversation in which state governor Anthony Garotinho authorized a bribe.

Prior censorship is common only in Brazil, but defamation laws are used in many countries to punish journalists and media outlets after their stories are printed or aired. In November 2006, a court in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul sentenced the editor of newspaper *Correio do Estado* to ten months in prison for accusing the governor-elect of corruption during his previous term as mayor. In Mexico, after journalist Lydia Cacho published a book in 2005 that implicated a wealthy businessman in a child prostitution ring, he conspired with the governor of the state of Puebla to have her arrested and harassed by police. In January 2010, the editor of the newspaper *Nor Oriente*, based in Bagua, Peru, was sentenced to a year in prison for defamation after writing several articles on corruption in a local public school. As with prior censorship, abuse of defamation laws is not limited to smaller, regional media. In 2001 and 2002, defamation charges were filed against the president and publisher of *Reforma*, one of Mexico's City's leading newspapers, for reporting on city and state government corruption.

Most troubling are cases in which critical journalists have been killed or abducted in crimes linked to local government officials or security forces. Such events are most common in Brazil. In 2003 and 2004, politically outspoken radio hosts were murdered in Limoeiro do Norte, Ceará and Coronel Sapucaia, Mato Grosso do Sul; local mayors were later charged with both crimes. In May 2008, journalists from the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Dia* were kidnapped and tortured by a local police officer and accomplices after reporting on the control of local politics by criminal gangs in a Rio slum. Similar crimes have taken place in other countries. In 2004, Peruvian mayors in the towns of Yungay and Pucallpa were implicated in the murders of radio

journalists who had been investigating local corruption and government ties to drug traffickers. In 2003, a radio journalist in Barrancabermeja, Colombia was killed following his reports on local corruption; the city's mayor was eventually convicted of ordering the assassination. These murders and abductions come on top of numerous incidents in which reporters were assaulted by local security forces when attempting to cover politically sensitive issues or events.

In Colombia and Mexico, acts in which government officials are implicated are only a minority of cases in which lethal violence is used against local media. In parts of northern Mexico along the U.S. border, and in large swathes of the Colombian jungle, state security forces have little effective control over drug traffickers, paramilitaries, guerrillas, or criminal gangs. Journalists investigating the activities of these groups are routinely murdered in retaliation. Though their involvement rarely comes to light, it is likely that corrupt local authorities are complicit in many of these killings, especially when the topic of investigative reporting was government ties to armed non-state actors.

While most local government assaults on the media do not seem to follow any partisan logic, those in Argentina have primarily involved Peronists, mirroring the conflict at the national level. In 2001, after printing an insulting headline, newspaper *El Liberal* in Santiago del Estero province was subject to espionage by the Peronist-controlled provincial government, a lawsuit by the women's branch of the Peronist Party, and nonpayment of government advertising debts. In 2006, the Peronist mayor of Quilmes convinced federal regulators to revoke the licenses of two local radio stations. In September 2007, a court in Salta gave journalist Sergio Poma a suspended sentence for slander and barred him from reporting for one year after he called the province's Peronist governor "a crook of the worst kind." These and other incidents reflect the dominance of Peronist political machines in many parts of the country; they also suggest that conflict

between politicians and the media in Argentina cannot simply be attributed to the confrontational personality and governing style of president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

Assaults on the press by regional and local governments are likely to have an even more chilling effect on watchdog journalism than conflict between populist presidents and prominent national media. The small, local media that are most often targeted by political bosses have many fewer resources than national television networks based in major cities and owned by wealthy media moguls, so they are much less able to defend themselves. Moreover, they tend to be targeted precisely because of their investigations of local corruption, rather than ideologically-driven criticism of the government and its policies. Murders of local journalists and criminal defamation suits almost certainly have a strong deterrent effect on watchdog journalism, extending their impact well beyond those who were actually targeted.

Media Coverage of Recent Election Campaigns

If concentrated ownership makes it unlikely that the media will give voice to new actors, and conflict between governments and the press complicates or inhibits its watchdog function, what about the media's role in setting the political agenda and influencing citizens' choices about who should govern them? Historically, biased political coverage was the norm among Latin America's most influential mass media. The now-deceased former heads of Globo and Televisa, Roberto Marinho and Emilio Azcárraga, famously proclaimed that they had no qualms about using their media empires to influence their country's politics in ways that they saw fit (Miguel 2000: 69; Lawson 2002: 30). Yet generational changes in leadership, increased competition, the growing professionalization of journalism, and political democratization have all combined to

create strong incentives for more balanced political reporting by these and other media conglomerates in Latin America (Lawson 2002; Porto 2012). At the same time, bitter conflict with leftist presidents in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Argentina has encouraged the commercial media to defend their economic interests and also take up the mantle of opposition politics where right-wing political parties have been particularly weak.

Given these conflicting incentives, how has the media's coverage of politics evolved in Latin America during the first decade of the 2000s? This section draws on the results of content analyses of newspaper, radio, and television news coverage of selected presidential election campaigns (plus Venezuela's 2004 presidential recall and 2009 constitutional amendment referenda) in seven of the eight countries covered in this volume.⁷ Electoral coverage is an attractive focus because there is a relatively clear standard by which one can assess bias versus balance. Ideally, mass media should not tilt heavily one way or the other in their coverage of competing candidates for office. If strong editorial preferences do end up influencing the content of reporting, it is better than major outlets lean in different directions so that no single candidate is systematically disadvantaged by the media as a whole.

Table 3 presents a summary measure of the tone of coverage—positive versus negative—of major candidates in recent elections for which content analysis data are available. For most elections, “Net Positive Differential” is defined as the difference in percent net positive coverage (positive coverage minus negative coverage divided by total coverage) between the leading right- and left-wing candidates. A score greater than zero thus indicates bias in the direction that, knowing nothing else about the election, we would expect commercial media to lean. For Mexico's 2000 election and the two Argentine elections, net positive differential is the difference between the second-place candidate and the winner, with the latter less likely to receive positive

coverage. Where disaggregated data are available, the table also presents the standard deviation of net positive differential, a measure of the degree to which bias differed across major media outlets.

<Table 3 about here>

In several of the countries that historically had some of the most biased media coverage, reporting on major contenders in recent elections has been remarkably balanced. In Brazil, candidates of the left-wing Worker's Party (PT)—including Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a favored *bête noir* of the commercial media in the 1980s and 1990s—have received even-handed treatment in the 2000s. In 2002, the evening newscasts of TV Globo and TV Record both gave slightly more favorable coverage to Lula than to his right-wing opponent (Quenehen 2003). Four major newspapers leaned in somewhat different directions, but on balance, their coverage was also slightly more positive toward Lula (Doxa 2002). In 2006 and 2010, newspaper coverage tended to benefit the right-wing challenger rather than the PT candidate, but by similarly small margins (Doxa 2006; Massuchin, Tavares, and Nava 2011). More negative coverage of the PT—the party of the incumbent in both elections—likely reflected reporting on political scandals that came to light during each campaign rather than any systematic effort to hurt the Left's electoral chances.

In Mexico and Chile, similar transformations have taken place. Biases in Mexican television were legendary during the 1980s; Televisa once displayed images of Benito Mussolini and Fidel Castro next to videos of the ruling party's right- and left-wing opponents giving campaign speeches (Lawson 2002: 53). In the 2000 election, the two major television networks

leaned in different directions from one another, but on average their individual biases canceled out, as indicated by a net positive differential of nearly zero (Lawson and McCann 2005). Likewise, in 2006, campaign coverage on both radio and television did not strongly favor one side of the political spectrum, despite bitter ideological polarization between the two leading candidates in this election (IFE 2006). In Chile, the commercial media were strong supporters of the Pinochet regime in the 1980s and favored the dictator in their coverage of the 1988 plebiscite (Hirmas 1993; Tironi and Sunkel 2000). In the 2005-2006 presidential election, however, biases were either negligible or in the opposite direction of what one would expect. Newspaper and radio coverage of candidates in the second round of the election favored center-left candidate Michelle Bachelet over Piñera. Only television leaned toward Piñera, and by a negligible margin (COMUNICAN 2006).

While Brazil, Mexico, and Chile all illustrate positive trends in the media's reporting on presidential elections, countries with more ideologically polarized politics tell a different story. In Venezuela, the ongoing conflict between Chávez and the commercial media has been borne out in electoral coverage during the 2000s. On their own, the net positive differential figures presented in Table 3 do not suggest extremely biased coverage of Venezuela's 2004 recall referendum and 2009 constitutional amendment referendum—some types of media tended to favor the opposition, while others leaned toward the Chávez government. However, these scores are relatively close to zero only because the extreme pro-government slant of state media countered moderate pro-opposition bias in major commercial media. Net positive differentials for individual media outlets are as large as 98 for newspaper *El Universal* in 2004 and 96 for Globovisión in 2009. But these are offset by even more extreme scores for government-owned media such as *Diario Vea* (-160 in 2009) and VTV (-132 in 2009). The standard deviation of

scores for different media outlets, much larger than in Mexico or Brazil, testifies to the polarized coverage of each of these elections (Observatorio Global de Medios 2004, 2009).

The most extreme case of anti-Left bias is Bolivia. By the time of his second run for the presidency, Evo Morales had already earned the ire of commercial media, but he did not yet control any state-owned outlets. Television news coverage was thus overwhelmingly biased against him; only 1% of his coverage was positive, and only 2% of that devoted to his major opponent, Jorge “Tuto” Quiroga, was negative. Radio coverage was somewhat more balanced, but still favored Quiroga. Only newspapers, a relatively unimportant source of information for the mass public, treated the candidates in a roughly equal fashion (COMUNICAN 2005). In the 2009 election, evidence suggests a pattern similar to that of Venezuela: critical coverage of the Left in commercial media, along with an overwhelmingly positive treatment in the state-owned outlets that Morales’s government now controls.⁸ In television reporting, for instance, Unitel’s news broadcasts most often cited sources from the party of challenger Manfred Reyes Villa, while state-owned Bolivia TV cited sources from Morales’s party 51% of the time, and Radio Patria Nueva did so 80% of the time (ONADEM 2010).

To a lesser degree, Argentina presents evidence of the same sort of media biases as in Venezuela and Bolivia. In the 2007 election, major newspapers were, on average, completely evenhanded in their treatment of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and her major opponent Elisa Carrió (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina 2007). Néstor Kirchner’s strategy of cultivating a friendly relationship with major commercial media appears to have paid off during his wife’s first campaign. A different pattern was evident in coverage of the 2011 election, after the government-media relationship became politically polarized during Fernández de Kirchner’s first term. On balance, newspaper coverage leaned in her favor, but only because of

overwhelmingly positive coverage in two pro-government dailies, *Pagina/12* and *Tiempo Argentino* (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina 2011). The standard deviation of coverage across different newspapers, similar to that of Venezuelan television in 2004, testifies to this relatively high degree of polarization.

Peru also shows evidence of ideological bias in campaign coverage, though less severe than in Venezuela or Bolivia. On average, major newspapers, radio stations, and television stations all favored right-wing candidate Keiko Fujimori over leftist Ollanta Humala during the first round of the 2011 presidential election (Transparencia 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Bias may well have been even more severe during the bitterly fought second round, though comparable data are not available. Humala presented himself as a moderate social democrat in 2011, but in the 2006 election, he had run as a radical populist in the mold of Chávez or Morales, with frequent denunciations of the commercial mass media. Negative coverage of his candidacy thus reflects a similar polarization dynamic as in Venezuela and Bolivia.

What conclusions can one draw from these diverse cases of media coverage of recent presidential elections in Latin America? On the one hand, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile show that the mass media can be relatively balanced in their treatment of major candidates, even in countries where strong pro-establishment biases existed in the past. Political democratization, changes in media leadership, and increased competition and professionalism in journalism have all contributed to these outcomes, but so has the more moderate nature of the Left, at least in Chile and Brazil. Where left-wing candidates present little credible threat to the business interests of commercial media and the class interests of their owners, there are fewer incentives for biased coverage. The case of Mexico shows that more radical populist candidates, such as Andrés Manuel López Obrador in 2006, can also sometimes find fair treatment in Latin

America's commercial media.⁹ These results are good news for the media's agenda-setting function and its implications for democracy in Latin America.

On the other hand, in countries with a recent history of more ideologically polarized politics, including Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, and Peru, commercial media have not treated left- and right-wing candidates equally during presidential elections. At the extreme, in Bolivia's 2005 election, television coverage of Evo Morales was almost entirely negative. More radical left-wing candidates thus face significant barriers in winning elections in an era in which most voters follow politics through broadcast media. Those that succeed despite the odds, as Morales did in 2005, are likely to enter the presidency with a vendetta against the commercial broadcasters who discriminated against them during the campaign. Once in office, they may be able to level the mass media playing field, but only by turning state-owned outlets (or private media heavily dependent on state advertising) into political mouthpieces that are even more biased in their favor. In these cases, media coverage of elections reflects only partisan agendas rather than civic ones.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter underscores that collusion between national executives and the mass media in Latin America is largely a thing of the past. The concentration of media markets and media ownership have not changed significantly, but the political scenario underlying these cozy relations has definitely been transformed. Democratization has eliminated the military regimes that collaborated closely with conservative media in previous decades. In Brazil and Mexico, voters have elected and reelected parties that were historically the targets of

biased reporting. In Colombia, the presidencies of Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos have ended the domination of the Liberal and Conservative parties, to which the two leading media groups had extensive ties. In Bolivia and Venezuela, the rise of radical populists has largely quashed any prospects of friendly relations between the government and the commercial media. Some collusion still occurs, as demonstrated by the Kirchners' use of state advertising to cultivate media allies in Argentina, but it seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

Yet the decline of outright collusion between presidents and the press does not mean that the media have taken on the new role of a fourth power that contributes to democratic governance. Continued concentration of media markets and ownership, along with the politicization of state-owned media in many countries, mean that the media are most likely to give voice to those segments of society that currently hold economic or political power. The rise of community media offers the prospect of a counter-trend, but frequently even these small-scale broadcasters fall under the sway of powerful local or national politicians. In countries governed by the more radical of the "new Left" presidents, ongoing conflicts between authorities and commercial mass media are likely to deter some media outlets from exercising a watchdog function and encourage others to do so only when it serves their partisan interests. In countries with weak rule of law at the local level, political bosses' crackdowns on critical media should have an even more chilling effect on watchdog journalism.

News coverage of recent Latin American elections offers a partial silver lining to this assessment of the media's contribution to democracy in Latin America. The largely balanced treatment of major candidates in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico shows that the commercial media do not necessarily set the political agenda in a fashion that discriminates against the Left. Yet elsewhere, significant biases remain. In Venezuela and Bolivia, most commercial media have

essentially become partisan supporters of the opposition, and populist presidents have abandoned any public service pretensions with state media, dragging them into the fray as well. Argentina and Peru may also be in danger of falling into this vicious cycle of polarization between a left-leaning president and the privately-owned press.

The best hope for the future of democratic media in Latin America seems to lie in greater competition as well as greater scrutiny. The concentration of media markets has lessened in recent years as competitors have gained ground against historical industry leaders like TV Globo and Televisa. In Mexico and elsewhere, greater competition has played a key role in the decline of biased reporting (Tironi and Sunkel 2000; Lawson 2002). The slow but steady penetration of cable television is another positive development, especially since it carries international networks with less of a stake in domestic politics, such as CNN en Español. Greater scrutiny of the press also ensures that collusion and politicized reporting are more likely to be noticed, and denounced, than in the past. Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) has commissioned monitoring of news coverage of recent elections, and local non-governmental organizations or teams of foreign electoral observers regularly do the same in other countries. International organizations such as the Committee to Project Journalists and Reporters Without Borders help to publicize and denounce government actions against the press, especially those occurring far from national capitals that might otherwise remain unnoticed. Hopefully these trends will continue to play a role in transforming Latin America's mass media into true defenders of democracy.

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Notes

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¹ The more typical English rendering is “fourth estate,” a phrase attributed to Edmund Burke.

² Audience share data are from Nielsen (U.S.), AGB Nielsen (Venezuela), BBM (Canada), and IBOPE (all others), as cited in *Midia Dados Brasil 2011*; G2Mi 2011; Fuenzalida and Julio 2011; IBOPE Colombia 2008; AGB Nielsen 2010; Initiative 2009; Media Life 2011; and Television Bureau of Canada 2011. Audience share measurement via set-top boxes is not done in Bolivia. Bolivian networks listed in Table 2 are those mentioned as most-watched network by more than 5% of La Paz respondents in Radio Fides’s (2011) survey.

³ Calculated based on data in Grupo Radio Centro 2011: 24. National data for radio are not available.

⁴ The Azcárraga Trust owns 30% of voting shares (classes A and B) in Televisa, and 15.5% of all shares (<http://www.televisa.com/inversionistas-espanol/preguntas-frecuentes/160420/preguntas-frecuentes-televisa-inversionistas-espanol>, visited August 16, 2011).

⁵ The SIN’s extralegal actions include bombing a local television station, wiretapping journalists, and most notoriously, paying massive bribes to media owners in exchange for editorial control over political content. The legal system was also used, e.g., by stripping a critical television station owner of his Peruvian citizenship in order to divest him of his shares.

⁶ In this section, I refer to Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as populists based primarily on their rhetoric and political tactics. Typological schemes that look primarily at political organization tend to place them in different categories (e.g., Levitsky and Roberts 2011).

⁷ Comparisons among these individual studies should be taken with the caveat that they were conducted by a variety of scholars and monitoring organizations and employ different methodologies and samples of news content.

⁸ Data from the 2009 content analysis were not complete enough to compute the net positive differential.

⁹ Compared to his post-election political stance, López Obrador was much more moderate during the 2006 campaign, so in that sense he fits with the Chilean and Brazilian left-wing candidates.

Table 1: Media Penetration and Use as an Information Source

Country	Penetration (Percent)			Information Source (Percent)		
	Television	Radio	Newspaper	Television	Radio	Newspaper
Argentina	98.0	76.0	5.0	72.8	8.0	6.3
Bolivia	67.3	82.4	2.5	78.9	15.6	3.1
Brazil	94.0	91.4	6.2	73.8	2.4	10.4
Chile	99.8	95.0	5.9	78.5	2.3	6.5
Colombia	99.3	71.0	4.8	88.0	5.6	1.2
Mexico	98.0	57.0	6.8	82.4	4.6	5.2
Peru	75.0	82.0		78.3	11.0	6.4
Venezuela	98.0	66.0	10.5	64.3	1.0	26.5

NOTE: Penetration figures for television and radio are percent of homes owning the device, from *Midia Dados Brasil 2010* and Bolivia 2009. Newspaper penetration figures are average circulation per hundred adults, from World Association of Newspapers 2010. Information source figures, from the 2010 wave of the AmericasBarometer, are responses to the question “what is your main source of information about the country’s situation?”

Table 2: Audience Share and Ownership of Broadcast Television in the Americas

Network (Parent)	Audience (%)	Majority traded	Politician owned	Foreign owned	Network (Parent)	Audience (%)	Majority traded	Politician owned	Foreign owned
Argentina: HHI 2502					Mexico: HHI 4253				
Canal 13 (Grupo Clarín)	32				Televisa	57	√		
Telefe (Telefónica)	32	√		√	TV Azteca	28			
Canal 9 (Albavisión)	18			√	Peru: HHI 2350				
América TV	12		√		América (Plural TV)	37			
Canal 7 (State)	7				ATV (Albavisión)	23			√
Bolivia					Frecuencia Latina	19			
ATB					Global (Albavisión)	8			√
Unitel (Grupo Monasterio)				√	Panamericana (Telespectra)	7			
Red Uno (Grupo Kujlis)				√	Venezuela: HHI 2835				
Bolivisión (Albavisión)				√	Venevisión (Grupo Cisneros)	47			
Red PAT					Televén (Camero Comunic.)	22			
Brazil: HHI 2904					VTV (State)	7			
TV Globo	47				Globovisión	6			
TV Record	18				United States: HHI 1745				
SBT (Grupo Silvio Santos)	14				CBS (Nat'l Amusements)	25			
Bandeirantes	6				Fox (News Corporation)	19	√		√
Chile: HHI 2067					ABC (Disney)	19	√		
Televisión Nacional (State)	25				NBC (Comcast/GE)	16	√		
Megavisión (Grupo Claro)	24				Univisión (Broadcasting Media Partners)	7			
Chilevisión (Time Warner)	23	√		√	Canada: HHI 1700				
Canal 13 (Grupo Luksic/ Universidad Católica)	18				CTV (Bell Canada)	26	√		
La Red (Albavisión)	6			√	TVA (Quebecor)	17	√		
Colombia: HHI 3898					Global (Shaw Comm.)	15	√		
RCN (Grupo Ardila Lülle)	45				CBC (State)	13			
Caracol (Grupo Santo Domingo)	44				Radio Canada (State)	9			

NOTE: HHI = Herfindahl-Hirschman Index. Networks with more than 5% audience share are listed, but shares for all available networks were used to calculate the HHI. "Majority traded" means that the parent corporation is listed on a public stock exchange and insiders do not own more than 50% of all shares or all voting shares. Ownership data are based on annual reports, public disclosure data, and Internet research. See text for audience share data sources.

Figure 1: Government Actions Against the Media in Latin America

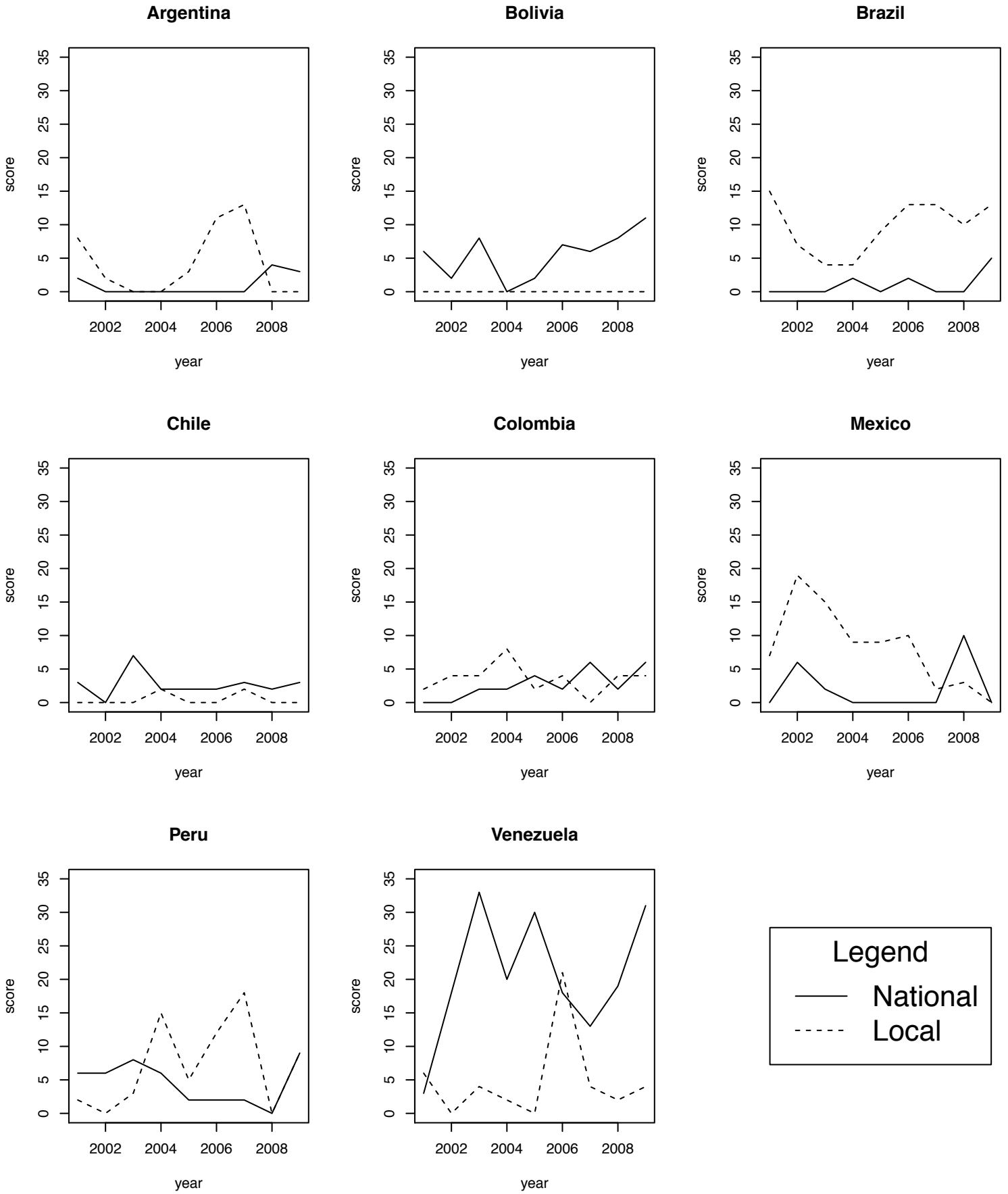


Table 3: Media Bias in Latin American Elections

Country	Year	Type of Media	Net Positive Differential	Standard Deviation
Brazil	2002	TV	-5.6	6.5
Brazil	2002	newspaper	-10.7	15.0
Brazil	2006	newspaper	13.6	19.0
Brazil	2010	newspaper	8.2	0.5
Mexico	2000	TV	2.0	23.3
Mexico	2006	radio	6.8	
Mexico	2006	TV	3.3	
Chile	2006	newspaper	-25.3	
Chile	2006	radio	-8.1	
Chile	2006	TV	5.0	
Venezuela	2004	newspaper	13.7	110.9
Venezuela	2004	radio	-20.8	104.2
Venezuela	2004	TV	20.0	62.0
Venezuela	2009	newspaper	-4.0	105.3
Venezuela	2009	TV	14.0	96.0
Bolivia	2005	newspaper	-3.0	
Bolivia	2005	radio	30.5	
Bolivia	2005	TV	164.0	
Argentina	2007	newspaper	0.0	
Argentina	2011	newspaper	-20.1	66.1
Peru	2011	newspaper	16.8	
Peru	2011	radio	18.0	
Peru	2011	TV	20.3	

NOTE: Net Positive Differential = (%positive_A - %negative_A) - (%positive_B - %negative_B). This is a weighted mean (by quantity of coverage) across stations; the standard deviation is based on the unweighted mean. Figures are author's calculations based on data sources cited in the main text. Venezuelan data score percentage of news sources that are pro-government, pro-opposition, or unaffiliated; partisan sources are assumed to speak 100% positively about their own side and 100% negatively about the other, while unaffiliated sources are assumed to be neutral. Data cover news content only, except Bolivia 2005, which also includes opinion programs and editorials. Local/regional media are excluded.