

## **Supplementary Materials: The Chávez Vote and the National Economy in Venezuela**

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### **1) Data, Variables, Bivariate Analysis**

The data used in this study is the 2010 survey of the AmericasBarometer carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).<sup>1</sup> LAPOP's Americasbarometer consists of a series of surveys conducted in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010 covering democratic values and behavior. The 2010 survey was carried out in 26 countries in North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean under the direction of Mitchell Seligson and through collaboration with the national teams for most of the countries involved in the study (LAPOP 2010). In Venezuela, the study was administered by the Centro de Estudios y Datos (CEDATOS), an Ecuadorian-based polling firm handling parts of LAPOP's cross-country fieldwork, through in-person interviews between January and February 2010 with a representative sample of 1500 individuals. LAPOP widely uses hand-held electronic systems to eliminate data collection and processing errors. Probability samples are designed and employed to ensure the representativeness of samples at the national and sub-national levels.

### The Dependent Variable: Intention to Vote for Hugo Chávez

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The 2010 LAPOP questionnaire included the usual barrage of questions on the socio-demographic and socioeconomic profile of the respondents, their ideological orientation, their opinion on various issues, and their evaluation of institutions, as well as who they voted for during the last election, their approval of Chávez's performance, and the candidate for whom they would vote if the election were to take place tomorrow.

It is this last variable that we have chosen to use in our study on the determinants of the presidential vote in Venezuela. This choice is easily explained. Many studies have questioned the validity of using reported vote for an election that has happened in the distant past (e.g., Himmelweit et al. 1978). This is the case for Venezuela, as its last presidential election was held in 2006. In addition, the approval rating is a timely measure of the approval of a political actor's performance. This measure is useful for examining the trends in public opinion and the political climate at a particular point in time, which can help us understand the factors at work behind the decision to vote for a particular candidate. The approval variable is used in the study at hand as an independent variable in order to capture, at least in part, the effect of Chávez's personal popularity on his electoral support.

In spite of its limitations, the variable measuring vote intention in favor of Hugo Chávez seems to be the best way to understand the nature of his support. Of course, this question is hypothetical, given the absence of opposition candidates declaring their candidacy for the next election. That said, the eventual candidature of Hugo Chávez in a presidential election was a real possibility during the 2009 constitutional reform, which would have opened the door to his candidature for the next presidential election. Hugo Chávez ran for office again in October 2012, in a presidential election campaign that very

much played as a referendum on his personality, performance, and policies. In that election he faced Henrique Capriles, the candidate who was selected by a coalition of the opposition parties eight months before. The wording of the question that we use is explicit in that it invites the respondent to express the intention to vote for the candidate from either the outgoing party or in favor of a candidate from another party. Finally, it is interesting to note that the percentage of respondents declaring an intention to vote for Chávez is slightly below 50% (48%), which is roughly the same amount of support given to the two constitutional reforms put forth by the Venezuelan leader during the referenda of 2007 and 2009 (49.3% and 54.9% respectively). Having about 50% of respondents express their intention to vote for Hugo Chávez in a hypothetical future election (he received 55.2% of the vote in the October 2012 election) seems to reflect the level of his core support and thus constitutes an interesting measure by which to examine the structure of his support.

### Model 1: The SES Variables

Several studies carried out in well-established democracies have shown that variables indicating socioeconomic status have less of an impact on vote choice nowadays (see notably Blais et al. 2002 for Canada, Clarke et al. 2009 for Great Britain, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008 for the United States and Nadeau et al. 2012 for France). However, we must consider whether a similar conclusion is applicable to a country like Venezuela. Some could argue that the situation in emerging democracies and transitional economies today shares traits with the situation in developed Western countries a few

decades ago, when socioeconomic status still played a significant role in structuring voter behavior (see notably Butler and Stokes 1969).

A few variables are suspected to be linked to support for Hugo Chávez. Respondents who are younger and were socialized into politics during the Chávez era are perhaps more likely to support him. Numerous studies, notably in France, have shown that males have a tendency to support authoritarian leaders (Nadeau et al. 2012). Religion has often been cited as a source of support for conservatives in Latin America. Thus, we can suppose that those who are more religious, particularly among Catholics, would be less drawn to Chávez. The geographic basis of Chávez's support is also examined with the help of a variable that distinguishes between respondents living in small towns, rural areas, and urban areas. The possible effect of race is examined with the help of a question asking if the respondents defined themselves as being "White or Spanish" in relation to others (i.e., "mixed, mulatto, or others", along with "blacks or indigenous"). Given Chávez's mixed ethno-racial background, we might expect him to receive greater support among the non-White/Spanish group. The socialist orientation of Chávez's policies leads us to believe that Venezuelans with higher education or incomes would be less inclined to support him. A respondent's employment status and employment sector could also play a role. Support for Chávez could be weaker among the unemployed and stronger among public sector workers who would be favored by his policies (on the link between employment sector and vote choice, see Nadeau et al. 2012; for more information on the aforementioned variables, see the codings at the end of this document).

#### Model 2: Adding Ideology and Party ID

The ideological positioning of the respondents is measured with the help of a question asking respondents to position themselves on an ideological scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means extreme-left and 10 means extreme-right. The exact wording of the question is as follows:

On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. One means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms “left” and “right” have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale?

The first thing to note with regard to this variable is the low level of non-response. In fact, barely 4.5% of respondents were unable to situate themselves on this scale, which is comparable to what is observed in most stable democracies. Thus, it seems that ideological positioning between left and right is a relatively well-known idea for Venezuelan voters, perhaps due to Hugo Chávez’s ideological rhetoric.

The second interesting finding concerns the distribution of these positions (see Table A1). The distribution of responses seems at first to signify a relative equilibrium between left and right, since 48% of respondents put themselves somewhere on the scale from 1 to 5 and 52% chose to place themselves somewhere between 6 and 10. That said, the fact that the modal category of the distribution was 5 (with 21% of respondents) leaves an element of doubt about the meaning of this choice, which could very well reflect the desire of the respondent to take refuge in the centre rather than defining themselves as leftist.

The link between the ideological position of the respondents and the level of support that Chávez received confirms the ambiguous nature of a value of 5 on this scale.

While this in principle represents a leftist positioning, the parity between the supporters and opponents of Chávez is striking in this category and is a stark contrast with the behavior of respondents in the neighbouring categories of 4 (clearly favorable with 71% support for Chávez) and 6 (clearly unfavorable with 33% support for Chávez). Apart from these limitations, the strength of the link between ideological position and vote choice is very strong, as underlined in the measures of association (Gamma = -.52 and Kendall's tau-b = -.35).

We also include in Model 2 a measure of party identification, in order mainly to control the relationships explored in later blocks – especially with respect to economic issues (the party ID coding is explained at the end of this document). As one would expect, partisan identification is strongly linked to vote choice (see Table A2) and so should serve as an important factor to take into account when estimating the actual impact of issues in the Venezuelan context.

### Model 3: Adding Issues

Studies on the determinants of the vote in Latin America (see notably Domínguez and McCann 1995; Echegaray 2005; Weyland 2000, 2003) have identified a certain number of issues that have a significant influence on political behavior in this region. This list includes corruption, crime, poverty and inequality, respect for individual rights, and the economic situation. Thus, we must keep in mind the effect of all these issue dimensions if we want to adequately measure the specific effect of the economy on vote choice.

Tables A3 thru A6 illustrate the relationship between variables related to certain key issues and vote choice. Table A3 shows that the perception that corruption is a problem in Venezuela is very widespread and also shows that support for Chávez diminishes substantially (falling to 36%) among those who believe that the problem is particularly severe. The problem of crime also seems to be endemic for most Venezuelans (see Table A4). Close to 75% of them believe that this problem is a large threat to the future of their country. Support for the outgoing president falls about 20 percentage points (from 61% to 43%) in relation to those who believe that crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life.

Inequality in the distribution of income is at the heart of political debate in Latin America. The data in Table A5 confirm this, since they show that 3 Venezuelans out of 5 either strongly support or very strongly support the idea of redistributing wealth to bridge the gap between rich and poor. They chose categories 6 and 7 on a scale going from complete disapproval to complete approval of this policy. The link between public opinion on this question and support for Hugo Chávez is nonetheless clear, as shown by the measures of association (Gamma of .69 and tau-b of .48; for issues of corruption and crime, these values are .43 and .26, and .34 and .15, respectively).

The strength of the link between the issue of redistribution of wealth and vote choice in Venezuela is not surprising, given Hugo Chávez's egalitarian discourse. However, this discourse also takes on authoritarian inclination, which can feed into worries over respect for individual rights. The data in Table A6 show that almost one Venezuelan in 4 (24%) believes that these rights are not at all protected and that in this group, support for Hugo Chávez falls to 19%. The relationship between the perceptions

of protection of rights and support for the Venezuelan president is very clear, as support for Hugo Chávez among those who believe that these rights are being respected reaches 88%. The measures of association observed – Gamma of .69 and tau-b of .48 – show as strong an association as in the case of income inequality. The issues of respect for rights and narrowing of inequalities thus seem to be two questions that clearly distinguish Hugo Chávez’s supporters from his opponents.

What of the effect of the economic situation on support for Chávez? This question is examined in Tables A7 and A8. The former presents a classic measure used in studies on economic voting, which is the perception of the evolution of the economy as a whole over the last year (see Kiewiet 1983; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981). The data show that these evaluations were largely negative at the time of the survey: while 44% of respondents believed that their country’s economy worsened over the past year, only 18% believed the opposite (38% believed that the economic situation remained largely the same). The strength of the relationship between economic perceptions and vote choice is apparent. Among those respondents who had a negative opinion on the economy, support for Hugo Chávez fell to 18%, while it reached 91% among those who had the opposite opinion. The measures of association, Gamma and tau-b at .82 and .54 respectively, also confirm the strength of this link.

The survey was carried out at a time when several economies were still affected by the economic crisis started two years earlier by the crumbling of the US financial markets. Therefore, it is interesting in this context to see if Venezuelans believed that their country was still in crisis and if they assigned blame for it to their president. The results of Table A8 show that a little less than half of the respondents (47%) believed that

their country was undergoing a severe economic crisis and that support for Hugo Chávez was barely 24% for respondents in this category. The strength of the measures of association, Gamma of  $-.76$  and tau-b of  $-.46$ , does not leave any doubt over the link between this variable and vote choice. It is possible to hypothesize that the relationship will be even stronger among those who believe that the Venezuelan president was somehow responsible for the crisis. Without surprise, support for Hugo Chávez falls to 3% among those who believe both that the Venezuelan economy is in crisis and that the president is the cause (37% of respondents).

The variables examined in this section aimed to measure the general impact of issues, and the economy in particular, on support for Hugo Chávez. The next goal is to see if perceptions of the economy have a significant influence on support for Chávez when the effect of other variables and other issues examined until now is taken into account in a multivariate context (for this analysis, see the Main Text). Given the well-specified character of the model used, such a conclusion would be reassuring in confirming the existence of significant economic voting in Venezuela. The inclusion of a variable measuring Hugo Chávez's approval rating makes this test even more necessary (see the following section).

#### Model 4: Adding Approval Rating

The last dimension that is added to the model of support for President Chávez is a variable measuring approval of his performance. This variable also serves to measure the effect of his personal popularity on his electoral support. The data in Table A9 first show that Venezuelans are split over the performance of their president: 36% of them think his

performance is good, 35% think his performance is bad (or very bad), and 29% think that it is neither good nor bad. The relationship between approval and vote choice is extremely strong: 97% of respondents having a negative opinion of Chávez's performance would support another candidate, while 96% of those having a favorable opinion express the intention of supporting Chávez. The measures of association between the two variables are telling: the Gamma approaches .95 while the tau-b is at .68. Such values could lead to the conclusion that support and vote choice are variables that are too close to each other for the former to be included in a model for explaining the latter. That being said, its addition into the model plays a double role. First, it plays the role of a control variable. If the effect of economic perceptions on vote choice remains in spite of the inclusion of this variable, it will be possible to say that the notion of a significant economic vote rests on very solid grounds. Second, this variable provides an indication of the effect of Chávez's personal popularity on his support beyond the factors considered until this point.

(See the Main Text for the results from the multivariate, block-recursive regression analysis.)

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## 2) Variable Codings

**Vote** : If the next presidential elections were being held this week, respondents would vote for the incumbent candidate or party (coded 1), or for a candidate of a party different from the current administration (coded 0).

**Age** : Continuous variable.

**Gender** : Coded 1 for male, 0 for female.

**Religion** : Catholics attending religious services at least once a month coded 1; Catholics attending religious services less than once a month coded 0.67; other religions coded 0.33; no religion or agnostic coded 0.

**Education** : Zero to six years of schooling, equivalent to primary school, are coded 0; seven to eleven years of schooling, equivalent to high school, are coded .5; 12 years of schooling and more, equivalent to all post-secondary education, are coded 1.

**Region** : Coded 1 when respondent is from a small city or a rural area, 0 otherwise.

**Race** : Coded 0 when respondents self-declared White or Spanish, and 1 otherwise.

**Income** : Total monthly income of the respondent's household divided in quintiles, where the lowest income is coded 0 and the highest is coded 1.

**Unemployment** : Coded 1 when respondent actively looking for a job, 0 otherwise.

**Public sector workers** : Coded 1 when respondent is a salaried employee of the government or an independent state-owned enterprise, 0 otherwise.

**Ideology** : Self-placement on a ten-point scale of ideology where 0 is most to the left and 1 most to the right.

**Party ID** : Party identification based on responses to the following two questions: "Do you currently identify with a political party?" and "Which political party do you identify with?". Coded 1 when respondent names either the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupamaro, the Partido Comunista Venezolano, or the Partido Patria Para Todos; coded 0 when respondent names another party; coded .5 if respondent answers 'no' to the first question.

**Corruption** : Responses to the question "Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is "very common" (coded 0), "common" (0.33), "uncommon" (0.67) or "very uncommon" (1).

**Crime:** Response to the question: “Speaking of the country in general, how much do you think that the level of crime that we have now represents a threat to our future well-being?” Coded 0 for “very much”, and 1 for “somewhat”, “little” or “none”.

**Inequality** : Agreement with the statement “the Venezuelan government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor” on a seven-point scale from 0 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Missing observations are coded .5.

**Protection of rights** : Response to the question “to what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of Venezuela?” Coded on a seven-point scale from 0 (not at all) to 1 (a lot). Missing observations are coded .5.

**Economy:** Response to the question “Do you think that the country’s economic situation is better than, the same or worse than it was 12 months ago ?” Coded 0 for “worse”, .5 for “same” and 1 for “better”. Missing observations are coded .5.

**Economic crisis** : Coded 1 when respondent believes his country is suffering “a very serious economic crisis”, 0 otherwise.

**Economic responsibility** : Coded 1 when responded believes “the current administration” is to blame for the current economic crisis, 0 otherwise.

**Crisis X Responsibility** : Interactive variable of Crisis X Responsibility.

**Approval** : Response to the question “Speaking in general of the current administration, how would rate the job performance of President Hugo Chávez ?” Coded 0 for “very bad”, .25 for “bad”, .50 for neither good nor bad”, .75 for “good” and 1 for “very good”.

**Supplementary Tables (A1 to A9)**

**Table A1. Percentage support according to ideology, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>Left</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Right</b>
Vote for Chávez	73	97	85	71	51	33	24	33	47	19
Vote for another candidate	27	3	15	29	49	67	76	67	53	81
%	9	4	8	6	21	13	11	10	5	13
N	74	33	67	45	166	103	84	78	43	102

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 168.22$ ; Gamma =  $-.52 (.04)$ ; Kendall's tau-b =  $-.35 (.03)$   
 Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ .  
 Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A2. Percentage support according to party identification, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>Opposition party</b>	<b>No party identification</b>	<b>Incumbent party</b>
Vote for Chávez	10	68	96
Vote for another candidate	90	32	4
%	16	53	31
N	134	434	253

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 358.4$ ; Gamma =  $.91 (.02)$ ; Kendall's tau-b =  $.61 (.02)$   
 Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ .  
 Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A3. Percentage support according to perception of corruption, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>Very common</b>	<b>Common</b>	<b>Uncommon</b>	<b>Very uncommon</b>
Vote for Chávez	36	58	69	71
Vote for another candidate	64	42	31	29
%	54	32	12	2
N	374	226	85	14

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 50.06$ ; Gamma =  $.43 (.06)$ ; Kendall's tau-b =  $.26 (.03)$   
 Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ .  
 Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A4. Percentage support according to perception of criminality, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	Very much	Somewhat /Little / None
Vote for Chávez	43	61
Vote for another candidate	57	39
%		
N	598	212

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 19.3$ ; Gamma = .34 (.07); Kendall's tau-b = .15 (.04)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A5. Percentage support according to perceptions of inequality, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Vote for Chávez	17	13	33	44	49	54	55
Vote for another candidate	83	87	67	56	51	46	45
%	5	3	7	15	10	17	43
N	41	23	57	122	82	140	356

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 259.0$ ; Gamma = .69 (.03); Kendall's tau-b = .48 (.02)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A6. Percentage support according to perceptions of basic rights protection, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	Not at all						A lot
Vote for Chávez	19	13	36	49	65	85	88
Vote for another candidate	81	87	64	51	35	15	12
%	24	11	11	16	11	12	15
N	201	90	92	134	88	95	121

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 259.0$ ; Gamma = .69 (.03); Kendall's tau-b = .48 (.02)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A7. Percentage support according to sociotropic retrospective perceptions of the economy, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>Worse</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Better</b>
Vote for Chávez	18	62	91
Vote for another candidate	82	38	9
%	44	38	18
N	362	311	148

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 261.6$ ; Gamma = .82 (.03); Kendall's tau-b = .54 (.03)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A8. Percentage support according to perceptions of economic crisis, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>We are suffering a very serious economic crisis</b>	<b>Other responses</b>
Vote for Chávez	24	70
Vote for another candidate	76	30
%	47	53
N	389	432

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 171.79$ ; Gamma = -.76 (.03); Kendall's tau-b = -.46 (.03)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.

**Table A9. Percentage support according to perceptions of the president's job performance, Venezuelan presidential elections, 2010.**

	<b>Very bad</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neither good nor bad</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Vote for Chávez	3	3	42	94	98
Vote for another candidate	97	97	58	6	2
%	17	18	29	22	14
N	139	145	238	181	114

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 504.1$ ; Gamma = .95 (.01); Kendall's tau-b = .68 (.01)

Source: The AmericasBarometer 2010 by LAPOP. Only the P value is indicated for Pearson's  $\chi^2$ . Asymptotic standard errors are indicated in parentheses for gamma and Kendall's tau-b.