

# TWO WEEKS NOTICE: A LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS BLOG

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Greg Weeks

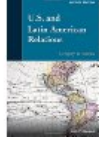
I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am also the editor of the academic journal The Latin Americanist.


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WEDNESDAY, JULY 01, 2015

## Attitudes Toward the Environment in Latin America

[There's a new AmericasBarometer article](#) from the Latin American Public Opinion Project on Latin American attitudes toward the environment (by Claire Evans, a doctoral student at Vanderbilt).

The report puts the post-materialism school of thought to the test and finds it does a poor job of explaining why so many individuals in the Latin America and Caribbean region express environmentally friendly attitudes. Socioeconomic status, measured by the wealth and education variables, has no effect on such attitudes in the pooled analysis for the LAC region. Age is also not a significant predictor of environmental attitudes. An individual's urban (versus rural) place of residence and gender do predict individuals' environmental attitudes, albeit by relatively small amounts. These results reveal a hole in our understanding of public opinion and the environment. In a region that is facing other difficulties, why is it that such a large portion of the population is willing to sacrifice much needed economic growth in order to ensure sustainability?

People of limited means are interested in the environment even though protecting it may not be beneficial to them personally in the short term. People in rural areas in particular see firsthand what the problems are.

This also means there is a reservoir of support for protecting the environment, which is something individual leaders have talked about, but also is an element in U.S.-Latin American relations. [Just yesterday Brazil and the U.S. pledged](#) to get to 20% renewable energy by 2030. There is room to broaden the discussion in campaigns, especially presidential ones, and gain political support by doing so.

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Posted by Greg Weeks at 9:35 AM   
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