2. Chapter Two

Economic Freedom or Populist Peril: Lessons for Argentina

Kevin Grier and Robin Grier

1. Current Events in Argentina

Argentina has long been characterized by colorful, populist leaders,[1] but few have entered the national political stage with the flamboyance of Javier Milei.[2] Previously a university lecturer and radio host, Milei established an "ultra-conservative libertarian party" called Freedom Advances in 2021 and was elected a deputy in the lower house of the legislature.[3] He is a self-described anarcho-capitalist libertarian and ran for president promising to slash Argentina's high inflation, in part by getting rid of the Central Bank and replacing the peso with the US dollar. His language is fiercely anti-establishment ("For me the state is an enemy, as are the politicians who live off it")[4] and he has real antipathy towards traditional Argentine politics, arguing "Let it all blow up, let the economy blow up, and take this entire garbage political caste down with it" (Bergengruen, 2024). Not only did Milei win the Argentine Presidency at the end of 2023, but he also views his mission as a blueprint for other developing countries wishing to become wealthy.[5]

When you get beyond his colorful language and sometimes crass imagery, three things become clear: He wants to be a reformer, he is at least a little bit of a pop-

1 Take Carlos Menem, for example, who was President of Argentina from 1989 until 1999: "When an Italian motorcycle company gave him a $100,000 red Ferrari, Menem at first rejected advice to give it back, famously declaring, 'The Ferrari is mine, mine, mine!' (It was later sold at public auction.) Menem also relished his reputation as a Southern Cone Valentino. He kicked his first wife, Zulema Yoma, out of the presidential palace and later married Cecilia Bolocco, a Chilean TV celebrity and former Miss Universe who was 35 years his junior. He publicly flirted with actresses and belly dancers, performed the tango on television, and mused aloud about forming a nearly all-female Cabinet" (Otis, 2021).

2 Bergengruen (2024) writes "But none of his counterparts is quite like Milei, with his volcanic temper, mad scientist's bearing—he claims not to comb his wild mop of hair because the "invisible hand of the market" does it for him—and messianic streak."

3 This was NPR's assessment (Kahn, 2023). It is not clear that Milei would describe himself as conservative. He ran for a parliamentary seat in a populist manner as well. He promised voters that he would raffle off his salary to voters who deserved to get their money back from a corrupt and tainted political system. He was true to his word and as of February 2023, he had already raffled more than seven million pesos. Sedano (2022) and Ámbito Financiero (2023).

4 Buenos Aires Times (2023).

5 In Bergengruen (2024), Milei argues that "Argentina will become a model for how to transform a country into a prosperous nation. I have no doubt." The author pointed out that "others do."

ulist, and he appears to be in a big hurry![6] Since taking office on December 10, 2023, Milei has rapidly implemented a series of significant reforms aimed at transforming Argentina's economy and reducing the role of the state. One of his first major actions was devaluing the Argentine peso by more than 50% to narrow the gap between the official and market exchange rates (Reuters, 2023). This move was part of his broader strategy to combat the country's severe inflation and economic instability.

Milei also declared a state of emergency in the national energy sector, leading to a reduction in energy subsidies and a review of tariffs for electric power and natural gas services. He issued an emergency decree on December 20, 2023, which included over 350 deregulation measures across various sectors such as healthcare, housing, and land ownership (Reuters, 2023). This decree facilitated the privatization of state-owned enterprises and aimed to cut down government spending drastically.

In terms of labor reforms, Milei introduced changes to extend the job probation period, reduce severance compensation, and allow dismissals for striking workers (Heath, 2023). However, these reforms faced legal challenges and were eventually suspended by the courts (Hall, 2023). Nonetheless, Milei's administration announced plans to dismiss 70,000 government employees as part of his austerity drive (Genoux, 2023).[7]

In this chapter, we review the literatures on the economic effects of both policy reform and populism and formulate some unsolicited policy advice. Specifically, we believe the evidence warrants encouraging Milei to strongly pursue liberal reforms, back away from populist tendencies, and not to be afraid of doing things quickly. Let us start by discussing the efficacy of economic policy reforms.

2. The "Washington Consensus" works!

Liberalization reforms, like lowering inflation, reducing deficits, reducing the state's manipulation of exchange rates, and opening up to trade are often referred to as a package called the "Washington Consensus." There is a very popular view, held by

6 Milei told supporters that the country was in a "critical situation" and that "half measures" were not sufficient. He went on to state that: "The model of decadence has come to an end. There's no going back," he told the crowd. "We have monumental problems ahead. Inflation, lack of work, and poverty" Kahn (2023).

7 Milei's use of unilateral decrees shows his desire to get things done quickly and a disdain for the traditional legislative processes. This rapid pace of reform has sparked significant controversy and opposition, both within the government and among the public. Grier and Grier (2021) find that sustained liberalizations are the types of reform that matter for income. Using decrees to pass an agenda usually means the reforms lack broad-based support, which is helpful for them to be sustainable.

some famous economists, that this package is a failure. For example, in a 2006 article with over 2000 citations, Dani Rodrik wrote, "It is fair to say that nobody really believes in the Washington Consensus anymore. The debate now is not over whether the Washington Consensus is dead or alive, but over what will replace it." The reader may or may not be surprised to learn that this article did not present any actual evidence against the effectiveness of traditional economic policy reform's ability to raise incomes.

And, as it turns out, there is actually quite a bit of evidence that Washington Consensus-style policy reform does consistently raise national incomes! For example, Billmeier and Nannicini (2013) examine the effects of economic liberalization on real GDP per capita in 30 cases of economic liberalization that occurred between 1963 and 1994. Billmeier and Nannicini use an updated version of an index created by Sachs and Warner (1995) which defines an economy as closed if any of the following five conditions are true: "average tariff rates of 40% of more, nontariff barriers covering 40% or more of trade, a socialist economic system, a black market exchange rate that is depreciated by 20% or more relative to the official exchange rate, on average, during the 1970s or 1980s, and a state monopoly on major exports."[8] From this, we can see that liberalization, defined here as a country going from having one or more of the five conditions to none of the five, is focused on removing trade barriers. Billmeier and Nannicini's results are mixed. They report that liberalizations before 1990 "had a generally positive effect (on real GDP per capita)," but later cases (which amount to about one third of their sample) "had no significant impact" (2013). However, Billmeier and Nannicini do not provide any sort of overall or average effect of liberalizations for their entire sample.[9]

Your intrepid authors (Grier and Grier 2021) provide an overall average effect of reforms on real per-capita GDP. They use the index published in the Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom of the World (EFW) and code a reform when that index jumps by at least one standard deviation over a five-year period. The EFW is measuring a lot more than just trade. It includes five main categories: size of government, legal system and property rights, sound money, freedom to trade internationally, and regulation. Thus, this measure of reform is more broad-based than the trade-centric measure used by Billmeier and Nannicini. Grier and Grier find 49 cases of these

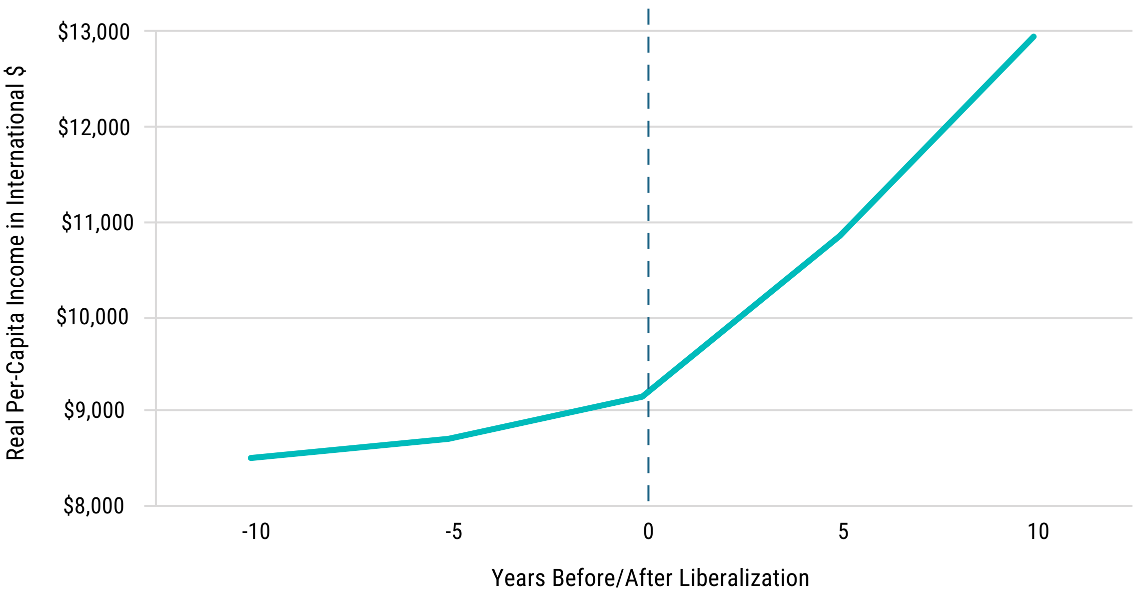
8 The quote is from Wacziarg and Welch (2008), who extend Sachs and Warner's analysis.
9 For an excellent review of the literature on trade reform and growth, see Irwin (2024).

generalized reforms occurring between 1975 and 2000, 12 of which overlap with Billmeier and Nannicini's cases.[10]

Grier and Grier find that, on average, reform leaves a country around 10% richer after five years and 16% richer after 10 years. One simple way to see the effect of the reform is to average the 49 cases together over a 20-year window of 10 years before and 10 years after reform and calculate the evolution of their average GDP level.

Figure 2.1 below shows that the average real per-capita income in the treated units rises gradually from about \$8,500 to \$9,000 before the treatment; after the treatment, income rises sharply, increasing to \$13,000 after 10 years.[11]

Figure 2.1: Average Real Per-Capita Income Before and After Liberalization



Source: Grier and Grier, 2021.

One question often asked of us (frequently stated as a fact or accusation) is whether this increased average real income simply accrued to the rich. Callais and Young (2023) address this question using the Grier and Grier methodology (they study the same 49 cases as we do) but apply it to each decile in the income distribution in the treated countries instead of just the average. The decile income data come from Lahoti, Jayadev, and Reddy (2016). They find that jumps in economic freedom lead to significant income gains in all 10 deciles! Interestingly, the effects appear to be the largest at the

10 Specifically, Uganda, Ghana, Chile, Zambia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Egypt, Mali, Philippines, Niger, Guinea Bissau, and Indonesia.

11 Marco Marrazzo and Alessio Terzi (2017) use a different reform index and fewer cases (22) but find a significant six percent increase in GDP after 10 years using synthetic control.

bottom and the top of the distribution (the increases for the sixth, seventh, and eighth deciles are a bit smaller than the others). This finding shows that reform does not just benefit the rich.

3. Anti-corruption reform works!

Beyond the Washington Consensus, another type of reform worth considering is reducing corruption. Corruption is not a component of the Fraser Institute's EFW index. [12] Pavlik, Grier, and Grier (2023) use a methodology similar to that of Grier and Grier (2021) to study the effects of jumps in the control of corruption on real GDP per capita. They find only 27 cases of such reform in a sample of 120 countries over 30 years, but the reforms have been, on average, successful in raising incomes.[13] Specifically, they find that countries that reformed corruption have incomes slightly over 20% higher 10 years after the reforms than what would be predicted by their counterfactuals.[14] As in Grier and Grier (2021), Pavlik, Grier, and Grier (2023) calculate average income levels before and after the reforms. As figure 2.2 shows below, the average real per-capita income in the 10 years before reform starts at around $7,500. It rises slowly in the pre-treatment period, reaching an average of about $9,000. After the reform, income rises much more quickly, to an average of almost $14,000 ten years post-treatment.

In sum, recent work has shown that broad-based economic liberalization reliably raises national incomes and that the gains are broadly shared throughout the income distribution of the reforming country. Further, reducing corruption can significantly raise incomes. Milei made fighting corruption a key pillar of his campaign, but he has not yet proposed or enacted any concrete reforms on this issue.[15] We thus urge President Milei to focus his energy on policies that will raise economic freedom and reduce corruption.

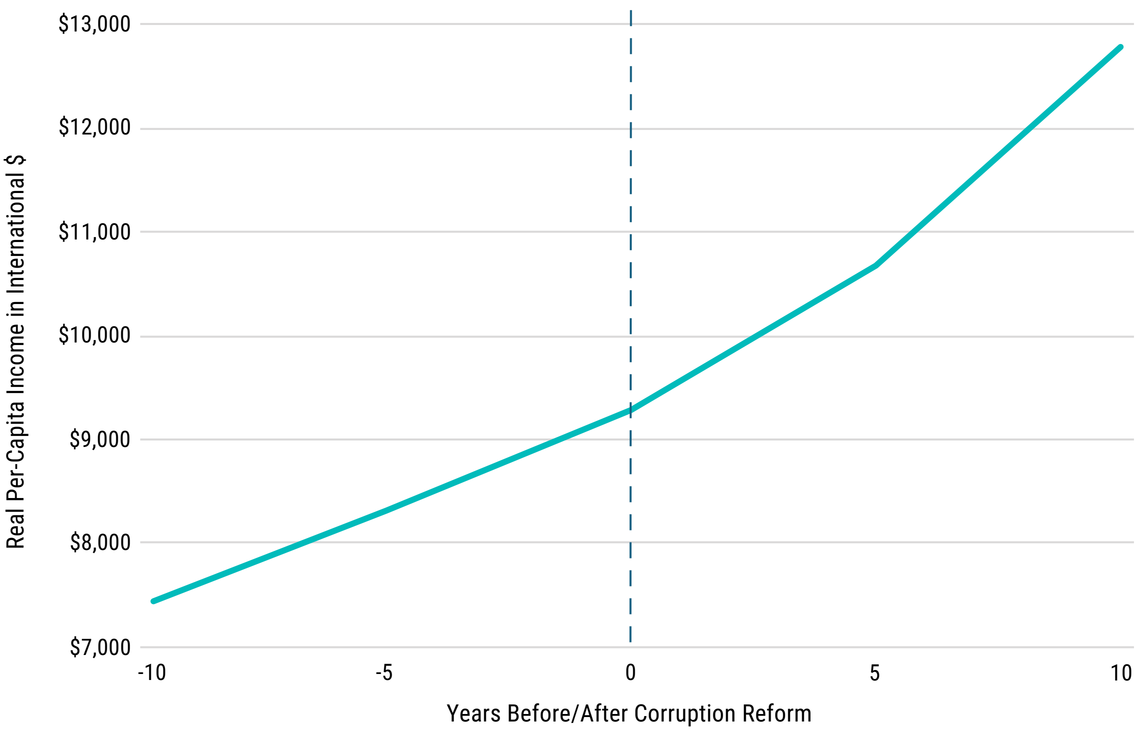
12 Corruption is not a component of the index for two reasons. First, corruption and economic freedom are conceptually distinct concepts. Corruption is typically defined as the use of power or public resources for private gain. Economic freedom is the ability to make economic decisions free of limitations imposed by others. Second, many hypothesize that corruption might be an outcome of economic freedom, and we would not be able to study that if, by construction, corruption was included as a component of economic freedom.

13 One might wonder if there is double counting between jumps in EFW and jumps in the control of corruption, but Pavlik, Grier, and Grier report only two of their 27 cases also experienced a jump in EFW.

14 Pavlik and Callais (forthcoming) examine the effect of these same reform cases on income distribution and find that the benefits are concentrated in the middle class.

15 He has made some moves that make voters question his commitment to fighting corruption, see the Associated Press (2024).

Figure 2.2: Average Per-Capita Income Before and After Corruption Reform



Source: Pavlik, Grier, and Grier, 2023.

4. Does the speed of reform matter?

When it comes to reform, one hotly debated issue is the pace at which the reforms should occur. Generally speaking, the conventional wisdom is that reforms should be gradual, that "shock therapy" is bad for the economy. Joseph Stiglitz, for example, argued that reform in the 1990s was done way too quickly and that countries often sequenced reforms in non-optimal ways.[16]

However, not all academics agree. Lawson and Lawson (2020) examine the 77 countries that had liberalized the most since 1970. They measure the comprehensiveness of reform as well as the speed and find that countries which liberalized faster grew faster on average than slow reformers. An emphasis on sequencing and the gradual introduction of reform also ignores the crucial role of politics. Economist Sebastian Edwards (2003), an early advocate of proper sequencing, recounts the following story about meeting Vaclav Klaus in 1991:

> When I met him in Prague, he said: "Oh, you are the 'sequencing' professor…" and then he added, "you got it all wrong. There is not such a thing as

16 See Edwards (2003).

> an optimal sequence. We should do as much as we can, as fast as we can." When I asked him what were the bases of his recommendation, he simply said, "politics, politics. . ."[17]

Take the case of Georgia (the country). Lawson, Grier, and Absher (2019) show that incredibly rapid reforms can largely work. They study the Rose Revolution in Georgia where former Soviet autocratic leader, Eduard Shevardnadze was peacefully deposed at the end of 2003 and newly elected president Mikheil Saakashvili and his economic minister and right-hand man, Kakha Bendukidze sought to liberalize the country.

The case of Georgia is especially relevant for Milei and Argentina, as many of the reforms are similar to those proposed by Milei, and the pace was unprecedently rapid. Lawson, Grier, and Absher (2019) describe the Georgian reform process as follows:

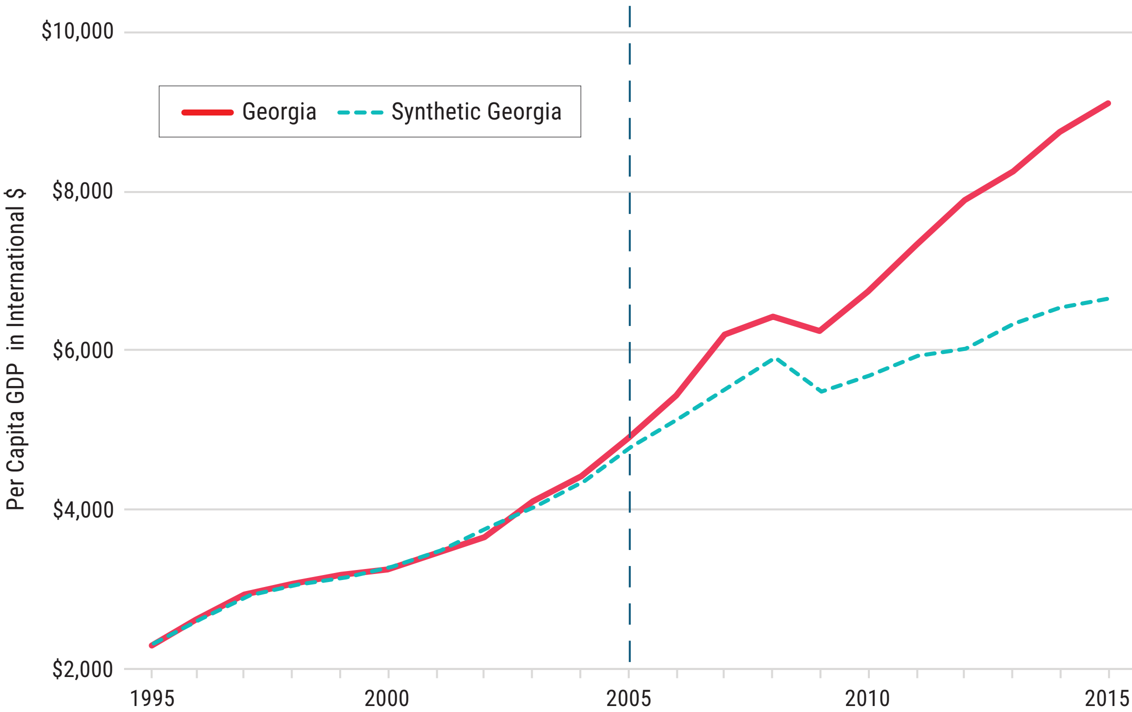
> Major tax reforms included both reducing the levels and number of taxes. The income tax was initially set at a flat 12 percent but was later combined with the payroll tax at a 20 percent flat rate. Privatization of vast amounts of state-owned assets was achieved mainly through open and transparent highest-bidder auctions with very little apparent favoritism. The new labour code was only a few pages long and offered few guarantees to workers; unions, though perfectly legal, were given no special legal status—this of course was a major departure from the old Soviet system. Interestingly, Georgia abolished anti-monopoly laws while simultaneously opening to external trade as most goods can be imported tariff free. The so-called 'de-bureaucratization' efforts resulted in 95 percent reductions in executive branch staffing and the elimination of 6 entire ministries and 18 agencies. To combat corruption at the local level, Saakashvili's government shocked the nation by firing the nation's entire police force, some 30,000 officers.

This passage makes clear the similarities between the Georgia reforms and Milei's plans for Argentina. While Georgia and Argentina clearly have different economic, political, and cultural histories, the results of Georgian reform should be encouraging for Argentina. Lawson, Grier, and Absher plot real per-capita income in Georgia and synthetic Georgia both before and after reform. Income is almost identical between

17 Edwards (2003: 254) writes that "Stiglitz is critical of Klaus's 'rapid and simultaneous' reform strategy, but his criticism fails to address the political economy concerns that at the time worried Klaus and other pioneer reformers in Central and Eastern Europe."

the two before liberalization. After reform, Georgia consistently and significantly outpaces its synthetic counterpart. Figure 2.3 below shows that Georgian reforms have raised real per-capita GDP by almost a third after a decade, compared to what we might expect from its synthetic counterfactual.[18]

Figure 2.3: Trends in Real Per-Capita GDP—Georgia and Synthetic Georgia



Note: The solid line is the time series for Georgia. The dashed lines is the series for its synthetic counterpart. The years to the left of the vertical line are the pre-treatment years which are used in determining the synthetic control. The vertical line is the year 2004, the first year of the Rose Revolution treatment that we are studying. The gap between the solid and dashed lines to the right of the vertical line is our estimated causal effect of the Rose Revolution reforms.

Source: Source: Lawson, Grier, and Absher, 2019.

When it comes to the effects of the speed of reforms, more generality can be found in Kantorowicz and Spruk (2024). They study 24 transition economies and classify them by the speed and durability of their reforms. They then estimate the average effect of different reform types on national incomes. For our purposes, the relevant comparison is between what they find for rapid (big bang) reform countries vs. gradual reform countries. They find that big-bang reforms significantly raise national income while gradual reforms do not.[19]

These results, combined with the results that Lawson, Grier, and Absher show for Georgia, are encouraging for the Argentine case.

18 See the appendix for more details on how synthetic control is implemented.
19 See panels A and D of their figure 6 on page 2347.

5. The dark side of populism

So far, we are finding evidence that supports comprehensive policy and corruption reforms, even when implemented at a rapid pace. But let us now consider the darker side of the Milei phenomenon: his populist appeal.

Populism is a highly contested term that can mean different things in different fields. Here we follow what many political scientists use as a definition: a candidate with a political ideology that makes a sharp distinction between "the people" and "the elite." Note that populism does not align with any particular political ideology: there are populists on the left and the right. The former is characterized as being moral and good, while the latter is typically depicted as corrupt and self-serving. Populists typically depict "the elite" as comprising the political, economic, cultural, and media establishments, accusing them of prioritizing their own interests, as well as those of other groups like large corporations, foreign countries, or immigrants, over the interests of "the people."[20] Not surprisingly, populist movements are frequently led by charismatic figures who present themselves as the true voice of "the people."

Müller (2017) argues that anti-pluralism is central to understanding populism; populists exclude others on two levels: within party politics, they present themselves as the only legitimate representatives, and within society, they exclude those who do not conform to their symbolic construction of "the real people."

Milei exemplifies many of these characteristics. Both as a candidate and as president, he has taken aim at the political establishment, referring to the state as an enemy and politicians as parasitic. For instance, in referring to the Argentine state, he claimed "For me the state is an enemy, as are the politicians who live off it." He went on to demonize other politicians: "Micky Mouse is the aspiration of every Argentine politician because he is a disgusting rodent whom everybody loves."[21]

Like many successful populists, Milei is also extremely charismatic and combative.[22] He claims to speak directly to the frustrations of ordinary Argentinians about issues like inflation, poverty, and insecurity and has promised voters radical

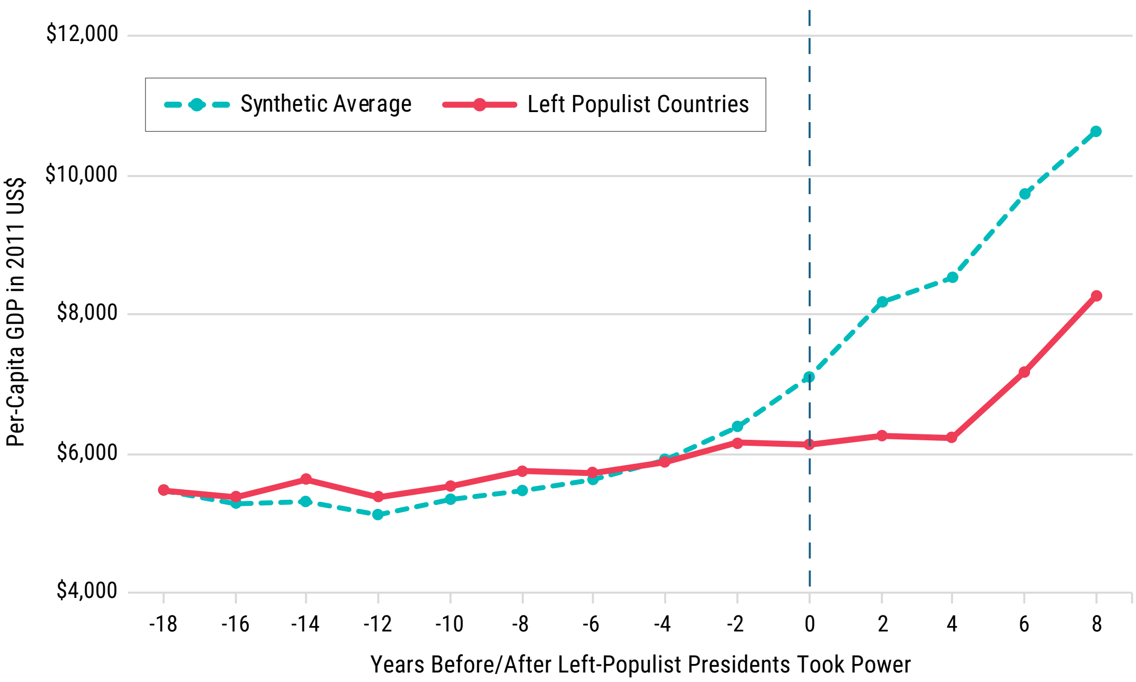
---

20 See Celico and Rode (2023) for a good discussion of populism and economic freedom.
21 All the Milei quotes in this section are from Buenos Aires Times (2023).
22 When asked who he would choose as his Economics Minister, Milei replied: "Somebody as orthodox and as fond of the chainsaw as me."

change. These promises, given Argentina's severe economic problems, including hyperinflation and rising poverty, have resonated strongly with voters.[23]

Absher, Grier, and Grier (2020) study the economic effects of durable left populism in Latin America. They find these types of regimes create a significant income penalty for the affected countries, with no corresponding trade-off of better health outcomes or less inequality. Left populism is bad! More specifically, figure 2.4 plots the average real per-capita income before and after left-populist presidents took power in four Latin American countries (Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua), demonstrating that there is a sharp change after treatment. In the 18 years before those presidents took power, average income tracked the synthetic counterfactual closely. In the eight years after they were sworn in, average real per-capita income consistently and significantly underperformed the synthetic. On average, these left populist leaders (Ortega, Chavez, Morales, Correa) left their countries over 20% poorer than they otherwise would have been.

Figure 2.4: Trends in Income—Left Populists and Synthetic Income



Source: Absher, Grier, and Grier, 2020.

23 Inflation has been a persistent problem in post-WWII Argentina. From January 2022 until Milei took the presidency at the end of 2023, inflation rose from a little over five percent per month to more than 25% per month (Lo Bianco, 2024).

One might want to argue that Milei is not a left-populist, but rather a right-populist. Well, Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2023) show in a global sample that (1) on average, populist regimes of any type carry around a 15% income penalty and (2) this goes explicitly for right-populists as well.

6. Conclusion

The novelty of Milei's presidency lies in the fusion of libertarian economics with a populist style, a combination that has not been widely seen in the region. His approach, which combines rapid economic liberalization with an intense distrust of the state, could yield significant short-term gains. While popular opinion often praises gradual reform, the Georgian example demonstrates that sometimes rapid liberalization works well.

However, as we discuss above, populism—whether from the left or the right—is often harmful to growth. If Milei wants to bring lasting benefits to the Argentine economy, it is crucial that he tempers his populist rhetoric and focuses on building broad-based support for his reforms. This includes implementing anti-corruption measures and ensuring that his policies are not just top-down decrees but are supported by a stable political base. Sustainable reform, underpinned by strong institutions, is more likely to result in enduring economic benefits and prevent the economic crises that typically undermine other populist regimes.

In sum, Milei's challenge is to exploit the transformative potential of his libertarian agenda while also avoiding the destructive tendencies often associated with populism. His presidency, in a sense, represents an experiment in whether radical liberalization can be effectively implemented and sustained by increasing general political support for the program.

Appendix: Behind the pretty pictures

In our work, and indeed all the work cited in this chapter, the intent is to uncover a causal effect of the policies under study. In order to do that, we must go beyond correlations and consider explicitly what would have happened in a country or countries in the absence of the policy being studied. This "what would have happened" is called the counterfactual, and the research described in this chapter explicitly sets out counterfactual scenarios to measure the effect of the policy. The outcome, minus the counterfactual outcome, gives the causal effect of the policy. Ideally, we would like to observe the same country at the same time with and without the policy being studied, but this is obviously impossible.[24] The challenge then is to impute a counterfactual outcome in a convincing way.

One way this is done in the papers discussed here is via matching. This method tries to find a counterfactual outcome based on a country or small group of countries that are as similar as possible to the treated country (i.e., the country getting the policy we are studying). For example, Grier and Grier (2021) use covariates like the investment rate, lagged EFW index scores, the Polity2 score (a measure of democracy), a human capital index, the share of government consumption in GDP, the ratio of exports to GDP, and the inflation rate, to identify a country that is as similar as possible to each liberalizing country on these dimensions.[25] The effect of liberalization for each unit (called the treatment) is simply the difference in a particular outcome between the treated country and its match counterfactual. However, since we cannot match on unobservables, we and the other matching papers discussed here follow An and Winship (2017) and take the difference of the outcome variable and compute the treatment effect as the difference between the differences. This nets out any time invariant unobserved difference between the treated and its matched control.

The other method used in the literature we review is synthetic control (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2003). Here the researcher picks a set of potential control units and a set of covariates to match on. The algorithm then chooses a weighted average of the control units that mimic the behavior of the outcome variable in the pre-treatment period AND matches the treated unit on the values of the chosen covariates. Covariates that are more important in determining the outcome get more weight in the matching process. Once the weights are determined using the pre-treatment data, the treatment period counterfactual is given by the sum of the weights times the treatment period outcome in the control units.

As an example, Lawson, Grier, and Absher (2019) study the effect of the Rose Revolution reforms on the economy of Georgia. They choose Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia,

24 Sometimes we can get close, as in the case of North and South Korea!

25 Using a single country as the counterfactual is called "nearest neighbor" matching. There are other methods that use more than one unit as the counterfactual. Grier and Grier (2021) discuss the available options.

Samoa, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan as the potential control units.

For covariates to match on, they use % Urban, Investment, Life Expectancy, Military Spending, Inflation, and Exports/GDP (along with two lags of the outcome variable, real per-capita GDP). The estimated synthetic control for Georgia's GDP consists of 23% Armenia, 21% Bosnia, 54% Moldova, and 2% Tajikistan. As is clear from the figure presented in the main text, the estimated synthetic control for Georgia tracks actual Georgia very closely in the pretreatment period, but the two diverge sharply after the Rose Revolution with Georgia significantly outperforming its synthetic counterfactual. In general terms, the longer the pretreatment period and the better the pretreatment fit, the more confidence we can have that the synthetic control model is accurately estimating the causal effect of the treatment being studied.

REFERENCES

Abadie, Alberto, and Javier Gardeazabal (2003). The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country. *American Economic Review* 93, 1 (March): 113–132.

Absher, Samuel, Kevin Grier, and Robin Grier (2020). The Economic Consequences of Durable Left-Populist Regimes in Latin America. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 177 (September): 787–817.

Ámbito Financiero (2023, February 11). Javier Milei volvió a sortear su sueldo: cuál es la cifra y cómo anotarse.

An, Weihua, and Christopher Winship (2017). Causal Inference in Panel Data with Application to Estimating Race-of-Interviewer Effects in the General Social Survey. *Sociological Methods & Research* 46, 1 (January), 68–102.

The Associated Press (2024, June 21) Argentina President Milei promises to quash corruption, then shocks with his Supreme Court pick. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/argentina-milei-judge-lijo-ethics-corruption-rcna158255>, as of August 15, 2024.

Bergengruen, Vera (2024, May 23). Javier Milei's Radical Plan to Transform Argentina. *Time Magazine.* <https://time.com/6980600/javier-milei-argentina-interview/>, as of August 16, 2024.

Billmeier, Andreas, and Tommaso Nannicini (2013). Assessing Economic Liberalization Episodes: A Synthetic Control Approach. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 95, 3 (July): 983–1001.

Buenos Aires Times (2023, August 21). Javier Milei and his beliefs – in his own words. <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/javier-milei-and-his-beliefs-in-his-own-words.phtml>, as of August 15, 2024.

Callais, Justin T., and Andrew T. Young (2023). A Rising Tide that Lifts all Boats: An Analysis of Economic Freedom and Inequality Using Matching Methods. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 51, 3 (September): 744–777.

Celico, Andrea, and Martin Rode (2023). Populism, Majority Rule, and Economic Freedom. In *Economic Freedom of the World.* Fraser Institute. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/populism-majority-rule-and-economic-freedom>, as of August 15, 2024.

Edwards, Sebastian (2003). Review of Joseph E. Stiglitz's Globalization and its Discontents (WW Norton, New York and London). *Journal of Development Economics* 70, 1 (February): 252–257.

Funke, Manuel, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch (2023). Populist Leaders and the Economy. *American Economic Review* 113, 12 (December): 3249–3288.

Genoux, Flora (2023, December 21). Milei unveils series of austerity measures as thousands take to the streets. *Le Monde.* <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/12/21/milei-unveils-series-of-austerity-measures-as-thousands-take-to-the-streets_6364410_4.html>, as of August 15, 2024.

Grier, Kevin, and Norman Maynard (2016). The Economic Consequences of Hugo Chavez: A Synthetic Control Analysis. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 125 (May): 1–21.

Grier, Kevin, and Robin Grier (2021). The Washington Consensus Works: Causal Effects of Reform, 1970-2015. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 49, 1 (March): 59–72.

Hall, Katarina (2023, December 29). Milei Brings His Chainsaw to Argentina's Regulatory State. *Reason.* <https://reason.com/2023/12/29/milei-brings-his-chainsaw-to-argentinas-regulatory-state/>, as of August 15, 2024.

Heath, Maximilian (2023, December 21) Argentina's Milei signs decree to boost exports, deregulation. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/argentinas-milei-signs-decree-boost-exports-deregulation-2023-12-21/>, as of August 15, 2024.

Irwin, Douglas A. (2024, April 25). Does Trade Reform Promote Economic Growth? A Review of Recent Evidence. *The World Bank Research Observer.*

Kahn, Carrie (2023, November 19) Javier Milei, a radical libertarian populist, elected president of Argentina. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/19/1214092698/javier-milei-a-radical-libertarian-populist-elected-president-of-argentina>, as of August 15, 2024.

Kantorowicz, Jaroslaw, and Rok Spruk (2024). Using Synthetic Control Method to Estimate the Growth Effects of Economic Liberalisation: Evidence from Transition Economies. *The World Economy* 47, 6 (June): 2332–2360.

Lahoti, Rahul, Arjun Jayadev, Sanjay G. Reddy (2016). The Global Consumption and Income Project (GCIP): An Overview. *Journal of Globalization and Development* 7, 1 (January): 61–108.

Lawson, Kerianne N., and Robert A. Lawson (2020). Economic Liberalizations Around the World Since 1970: Shock Therapy Versus Gradualism. *Cato Journal* 40, 3 (Fall): 665–83.

Lawson, Robert, Kevin Grier, and Samuel Absher (2019). You Say You Want a (Rose) Revolution? The Effects of Georgia's 2004 Market Reforms. *Economics of Transition and Institutional Change,* 27(1), 301–323.

Lo Bianco, Miguel (2024, June 13). Argentina inflation falls in May for fifth straight month. Reuters.

Marrazzo, Pasquale Marco, and Alessio Terzi. (2017). Wide-Reaching Structural Reforms and Growth: A Cross-Country Synthetic Control Approach. CID Research Fellow and Graduate Student Working Paper Series 2017.82, Harvard University, April 2017.

Müller, Jan-Werner. 2017. *What is Populism?* Penguin UK.

Otis, John (2021, February 14). Carlos Menem, flamboyant Argentine president who tried to tame inflation, dies at 90 [Obituaries]. *Washington Post.* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/carlos-menem-dead/2021/02/14/8e074ea0-6ed9-11eb-b8a9-b9467510f0fe_story.html>, as of August 16, 2024.

Pavlik, Jamie Bologna, Robin M. Grier, and Kevin B. Grier (2023). Two Birds with One Stone: Reducing corruption raises national income. *Social Science Quarterly* 104, 4 (July): 406–422.

Pavlik, Jamie Bologna, and Callais, Justin (forthcoming). Good for the Goose, Bad for the Gander? Corruption and Income Inequality. *Southern Economic Journal.*

Reuters (2023, December 20) First protests in Argentina as groups react to Milei austerity plan. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/first-protests-expected-argentina-groups-react-milei-austerity-plan-2023-12-20/>, as of August 15, 2024.

Rodrik, Dani (2006). Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion? A Review of the World Bank's Economic Growth in the 1990s: Learning from a Decade of Reform. *Journal of Economic Literature* 44, 4 (December): 973–987.

Sachs, Jeffrey D., and Andrew Warner (1995). Economic Reform and the Process of Global Integration. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 1 (January): 1–118.

Sedano, Rodrigo (2022, January 14). Polémica en Argentina: el diputado ultraconservador Milei sortea públicamente su sueldo. *France 24.*

Wacziarg, Romain, and Karen Horn Welch (2008). Trade Liberalization and Growth: New Evidence. *The World Bank Economic Review* 22, 2 (June): 187–231.