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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

**The Life of the Party:
Grassroots Activists and Mass Partisanship in Latin America**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Cameron James Sells

Committee in charge:

Professor Scott Desposato, Chair
Professor Richard Feinberg
Professor Karen Ferree
Professor Seth Hill
Professor Simeon Nichter

2020

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The dissertation of Cameron James Sells is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

DEDICATION

To my parents, Jim and Karen

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**The Life of the Party:
Grassroots Activists and Mass Partisanship in Latin America**

by

Cameron James Sells

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Scott Desposato, Chair

This dissertation argues that low-level party activists are the primary tool that Latin American political parties use to forge and maintain other voters partisan loyalties. Through their year-round grassroots party work, activists pull their network peers into the party, tailor their party's image to each community's particular political tastes, and mediate the flow of political information through their social networks. Consequently, parties are more likely to attract new partisan supporters and hold onto their partisans during moments of crisis in communities where they have a dense network of local activists and strong grassroots party organizations.

I test this argument using a mixed-methods research design that combines historical

analyses of the development of parties across the region, field research on contemporary grassroots party activism in Chile and Uruguay, and quantitative analyses based on both historical and contemporary data on local party organizations and mass party identification. Chapters 1 through 3 develop a theoretical framework about the relationship between party leaders, party activists, social networks, and ordinary voters. Chapters 4 through 7 trace the historical development of Latin American parties from the 19th century to the present. These chapters demonstrate that the way that Latin American parties organized themselves at the grassroots level in different periods explains the rise and decline of mass partisanship over the last two centuries and the wide variation in the fates of different parties in each period. Chapters 8 and 9 use spatial analysis and social network analysis to test the effect of party activists on the partisanship of the other voters in their communities.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Resilience of Partisanship in Latin America

Miguel¹ is hardly a stereotypical partisan of the left-wing Chilean political party Democratic Revolution. He is an Evangelical Christian who grew up in a right-leaning household, though he was not very political himself. “I was always a fairly bad citizen,” he told me. “I rarely voted, and I did not pay much attention to politics.” Unlike most of Democratic Revolution’s base, Miguel never attended university, and he barely followed the 2011 students protests that led to the party’s founding the following year. He is also older and less affluent than most of the party’s rank-and-file members. He admits that when he heard about Democratic Revolution for the first time, he assumed that it was just a fringe movement that mostly consisted of privileged university students with whom he had little in common. But Miguel’s view of Democratic Revolution began to change in 2016, shortly after a young man from his church, Felipe, joined the party and started campaigning for it in their neighborhood. “I liked how excited he was about it,” Miguel explained, “and I liked how he was talking about it, in a language that emphasized ‘rights’ above all else.” Miguel grew closer to Democratic Revolution over the following months. He voted for one of its

¹All names of interview subjects in this dissertation have been changed in order to protect their anonymity. Personal interview, Santiago, December 2017.

city council candidates in Chile's 2016 municipal elections, and at Felipe's urging, he formally joined the party in early 2017. While Miguel does not participate in party activities on a regular basis, he says that Democratic Revolution is the first party that he has ever thought of as "his party."

Miguel's "conversion" illustrates something that is intuitively obvious to many voters, but is often neglected by Political Science research on political parties: our perceptions of a political party are informed by our social relationships with the party's "low-level" actors, such as its grassroots activists, members, and ordinary partisans. These social relationships help determine the sort of information that we hear about the party, the "face" that we attach to it, and the social groups that we associate with it. These things, in turn, affect how we think of the party in relation to ourselves and whether we are able to identify with it.

This dissertation is about how Latin American parties attract, hold, and lose their partisan supporters. While most recent work on the subject has focused on how the actions of party elites in office shape voters' perceptions of their party (Seawright 2012; Roberts 2014; Lupu 2016), this dissertation emphasizes the social nature of partisanship. The central assumption behind my argument is that a voter's partisanship is rooted in their personal social networks: voters form and update their opinions about a party by observing not only how its politicians behave in public office, but also what other people in their community say about it and whether they seem to support it or oppose it (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007). I demonstrate that party activists like Felipe are the primary tool that parties use to shape the partisan composition of a social network or community. By sending their activists into a community, or by recruiting community leaders to become party activists, new parties like Democratic Revolution can broaden their base of support and attract the partisan loyalties of voters who were previously indifferent or even opposed to the party. Likewise, by keeping their activists involved in grassroots party work on a year-round basis, established parties can reinforce the partisan identities of their supporters and stabilize these identities during moments of crisis.

Consequently, a party's ability to gain and retain mass partisans depends on the size and breadth of its network of grassroots party activists and its success at keeping its activists mobilized.

Partisanship is a voter's psychological attachment to a political party. It is distinct from behavioral manifestations of the voter's political support, such as their party registration or vote-choice on election day, though partisanship is often believed to be the single most important factor that shapes a voter's voting decisions (Campbell et al. 1960). Partisanship is also distinct from a voter's ideology or policy references, though once again, a voter's partisanship may influence their policy positions (Carsey and Layman 2006; Levendusky 2010; Samuels and Zucco 2014a). A partisan is a partisan of a particular party not because they vote for it, formally join it, or agree with it, but because they identify with it on a psychological or emotional level and see the party or its base as a "good fit" for their self-image (Green, Palmquist, and Shickler 2002; Lupu 2016).

In the Latin American context, partisan attachments sometimes correspond to political groupings other than electoral political parties. In this dissertation, the objects of partisan attachments include not only formal organizations that are legally-recognized as "parties" such as the Workers' Party in Brazil or the Republican Party of the United States, but also stable alliances between smaller parties, such as the *Concertación* in Chile; political organizations that are currently legally proscribed or prohibited from competing in elections, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the Mesa of Democratic Unity in Venezuela; major factions that are organized on a long-term basis within a larger party, such as *Batllismo* in Uruguay's Colorado Party; and diffuse movements that have a common political identity but whose component parts routinely compete against each other in elections, such as Peronism in Argentina between 2003 and 2019. A single voter may have multiple, interlocking, overlapping, and potentially competing partisan identities, and the relative salience of these identities may shift over time.

Partisanship structures politics. At the individual level, it exerts a powerful influence over a voter's vote-choice, policy preferences, and the way that he processes political information (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Lupu 2015; Samuels and Zucco

2014a). At the macro level, partisanship is a source of stability and predictability in the electoral competition between parties (Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg 2000). Despite partisanship's increasingly negative connotation in the contemporary United States, political scientists have long regarded mass partisanship as a prerequisite for an institutionalized party system and a consolidated democracy (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Rose and Mishler 1998; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Dalton and Weldon 2007).

Over the last thirty years, several of Latin America's major political parties have lost most of their partisan supporters. Moreover, the set of parties that have experienced severe declines in partisanship includes not only centuries-old "traditional parties" like the Liberal Party of Colombia or the Colorado Party of Uruguay, but also newer, more-ideological parties like the PRD of Mexico. In explaining how partisan attachments form and endure, this dissertation will have to address the question of why many parties across Latin America are struggling to hold onto their partisans today.

However, one of the ways in which this dissertation differs from previous work on partisanship in Latin America is that it also looks back much further than just the 1980s. In addition to explaining the latest wave of declines in partisanship, this dissertation seeks to explain the longer-term trajectory of partisanship over the last century. Throughout much of the 20th century, Latin American parties greatly *over-performed* the expectations of classical Political Science theory regarding the breadth and intensity of their support in the mass electorate. While Latin American traditional parties are often regarded as elite-controlled, ideologically-loose, and personalistic vehicles that have shallow roots in society (Archer 1990; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Weyland 1999), many of these parties nevertheless managed to capture the partisan loyalties of large segments of society and retain their loyalties through decades of political instability, economic crises and military dictatorships. The puzzle of partisanship in Latin America is not simply that some parties are losing their partisans now, but also that these parties were able to acquire so many partisans in the first place and hold onto their loyalties for so long.

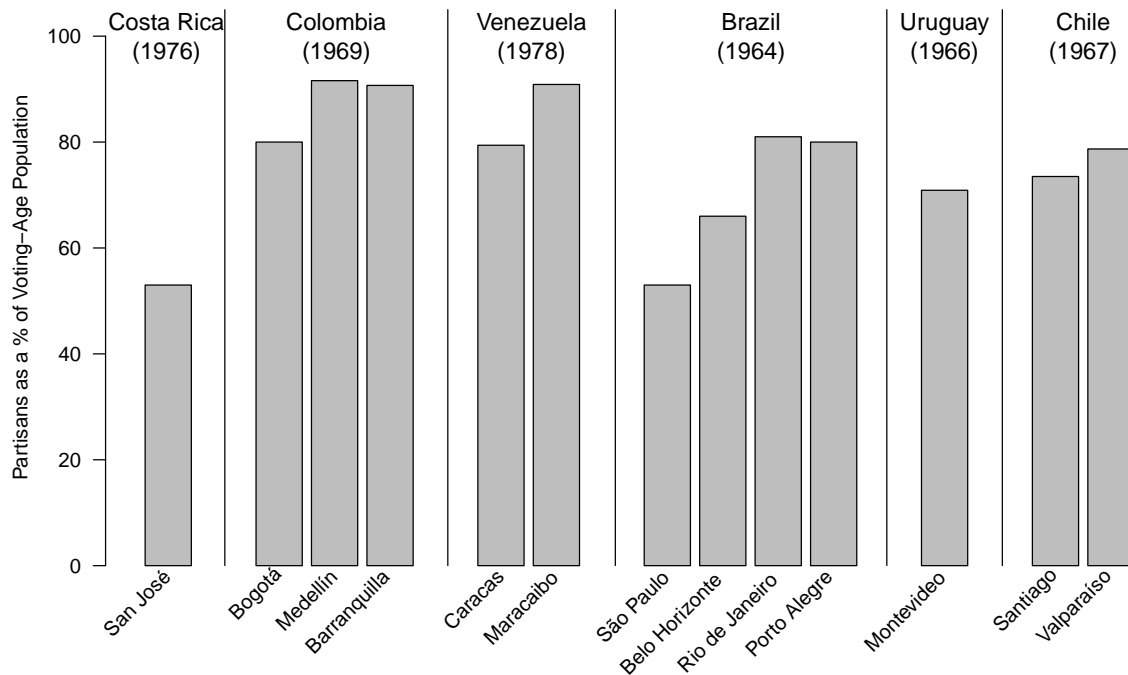


Figure 1.1: Rates of Party Identification in Latin America’s Mid-20th Century Democracies.
Sources: Costa Rica: CENOP; Colombia: IOP; Venezuela: Gallup; Brazil: IBOPE surveys reported in Lavareda (1991); Uruguay: Gallup; Chile: CEDOP

The Literature

Early models of partisanship held that partisan identities were rooted in other social identities and cleavages. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argued that Europe’s party systems were grounded on a series of geographical, religious, ethnic and class cleavages, and political parties emerged to represent well-defined social groups. Voters whose salient social identities were represented by a single party would tend to identify with that party, while partisan identities would be weaker among “conflicted” or “cross-pressured” voters whose social identities were represented by several different parties (Powell 1976). Although social cleavage models have been used to explain changes in Latin America’s party systems (Dix 1989; Coopedge 1997; Ostiguy 1998, 2009; Van Dyck 2016), relatively few major Latin American parties had clear-cut, homogeneous social bases (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Instead, the typical Latin American

political party drew support from all socioeconomic classes, regions, and races. Ethnic parties were rare in the region until the end of the 20th century (Van Cott 2005), and in sharp contrast to political elites in countries such as the United States and South Africa, political elites in Latin America often consciously *avoided* politicizing racial cleavages (Lieberman 2003). If party competition along strong social cleavages is necessary for high levels of party identification, it is puzzling that Latin America's heterogeneous, multi-class, and multi-racial parties were ever able to develop significant mass partisan support.

Another influential approach draws a link between social modernization and the decline of partisanship. Dalton (2000) identifies a series of structural transformations in Western societies that have made partisanship less useful to voters. Better-educated electorates became sophisticated enough to make voting decisions on their own, and they no longer needed to rely on a heuristic like partisanship in order to decide how to vote. Meanwhile, the advent of the mass media campaigning made politics increasingly candidate-centered and personalistic, and this made party labels less relevant for voting decisions (Garzia 2014). Similar social changes have occurred in Latin America, and modernization explanations have made some headway in the Latin American parties literature (Rial 1995; Sanchez 2007). Yet this approach provides only a partial explanation for Latin America's partisan declines. Structural changes such as economic development and the rise of mass media campaigning were largely constant across the region in the late 20th century, and they are therefore unable to account for the wide variation in the fates of different Latin American traditional political parties in the 1990s and 2000s.

A third approach links party identification to the performance of political parties in office. Fiorina (1981) models partisanship as a "running tally" of voters' retrospective evaluations of political parties' performance in office, and MacKuen, Erikson and Stimson (1989) show that changes in macropartisanship in the United States over time follow fluctuations in economic performance, at least in the short term. Retrospective approaches to partisanship have been common in the Latin American literature, as well. Baker, Sokhey, Ames and Renno (2016) find

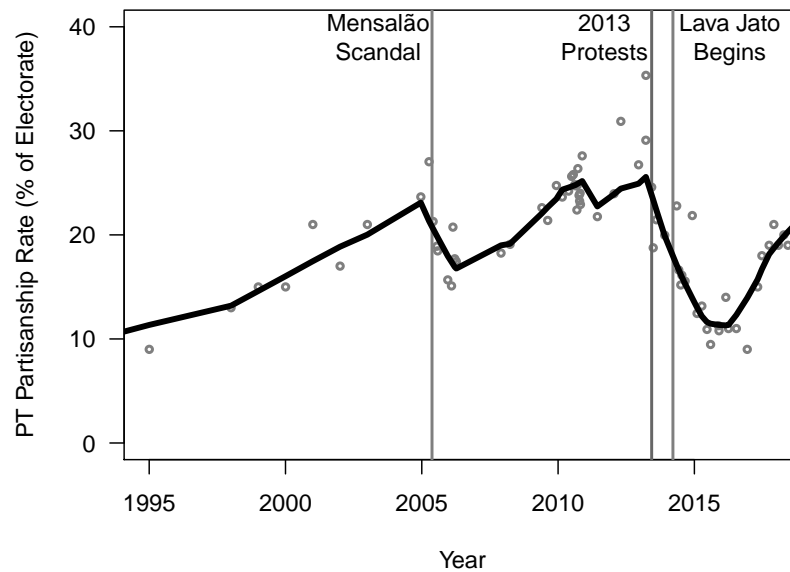


Figure 1.2: Party Identification with Brazil’s Workers’ Party (PT). *Source:* Datafolha

that party identification with the Workers’ Party (PT) in the 2000s was closely linked to voters’ evaluations of president Lula’s performance in office, and they note that the PT experienced a sharp drop in party identification due to the party’s Mensalão scandal in 2005. Similarly, Seawright (2012) argues that corruption scandals were the main cause of the rapid collapse of party identification with parties like Peru’s APRA and Venezuela’s Democratic Action. Using a vignette survey experiment design, Winters and Weitz-Shapiro (2015) find that prompting voters to see a party as corrupt can make them less likely to identify with it, and in other work they find that Brazil’s 2013 anti-corruption protests contributed to the decline in PT partisanship in the mid-2010s (Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2014).

Empirically, corruption scandals and economic crises are good predictors of month-to-month shifts in the share of the electorate that identifies with the governing party, but it is less clear that these short-term fluctuations are useful for explaining the long-term trends in party

identification that are the subject of this dissertation. In some cases, the effects of scandals and poor performance were remarkably short-lived. For example, Figure 1.2 shows that levels of party identification with the PT quickly recovered after the party's Mensalão scandal in 2005 and its Lava Jato scandal in 2015. It seems sensible to expect that a party's scandals and failures in office would lead the party to lose partisans. But it remains unclear why these reputational crises led to a permanent erosion of party identification with parties like Venezuela's Democratic Action but only temporary drops in party identification with parties like Brazil's PT.

Dissatisfaction with European and American explanations of partisanship has led some Latin Americanists to turn to Latin America's own history to account for the region's trends in partisanship. One of the most influential approaches to understanding Latin American parties traces the rise of 20th century parties' mass bases to a specific moment in each country's political development: the incorporation of the organized labor movement into the political system. In their seminal work on Latin American party systems, Collier and Collier (1991) argue that elites' decisions about how to legalize, legitimize, and co-opt the labor movement in the early 20th century left behind an institutional legacy that continued to structure Latin American politics throughout the subsequent decades. One important part of this institutional legacy was the rise of formidable socialist and populist "labor-based parties" that mobilized the working class by forging long-term ties to labor unions. This stable representation of working class interests enabled these parties to develop deep and durable partisan loyalties among the popular classes (Roberts 2014). However, economic and political changes in the late 20th made these relationships between parties and the labor movement harder to sustain, and labor-based parties that failed to transition to an alternative linkage strategy eventually fell into decline (Levitsky 2003).

This approach is an attractive one for explaining the dynamics of partisanship in Latin America because it accounts for the origins of partisan loyalties, the stability of party identification in the mid-20th century, and the high variation in the fates of Latin American parties at the end of that century. Yet labor-based parties constitute only a small share of the broader universe

of Latin American parties that developed significant mass partisan support. This explanation offers less guidance for understanding how other Latin American parties—such as elite-founded conservative parties—managed to win partisans among the working class.

Another set of Latin Americanist explanations for the decline in partisanship emphasizes the destabilizing effects of the region’s late 20th century market reforms on ideological competition between parties. In several countries, the economic reforms were initiated by presidents who had specifically campaigned *against* these same reforms in the last election, and this “policy-switching” undermined democratic accountability and disrupted the traditional patterns of programmatic electoral competition in the region (Stokes 2001). Roberts (2014) argues that the ideological inconsistency of historically left-of-center parties triggered partisan dealignments in several Latin American countries by eliminating the ideological variation between parties and leaving working-class and left-leaning voters without any major party to represent their interests. Similarly, Lupu (2016) argues that several left-wing parties destroyed their party brands by enacting right-wing economic reforms in the 1980s and ’90s, and he shows that voters’ partisan attachments to these parties grew weaker now that the voters no longer had any reason to prefer one party over its competitors.

This ideology-based approach provides a clear explanation for why declines of party identification began in the 1990s, and it is particularly compelling in cases like Venezuela, where the major parties collapsed just a few years after egregious policy-switching. Lupu’s argument is especially powerful because it rests on well-defined individual-level mechanisms that are generalizable to other cases and time-periods. Under his approach, party identification is rooted in a “party brand,” or image of the stereotypical partisan, and a voter identifies with a party when their image of the party aligns with their conception of their self (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). A party’s ideological inconsistency over time or its ideological convergence with its competitors can damage these partisan loyalties by changing voters’ images of the party or by leaving them confused about what the party really stands for (Lupu 2016).

However, these ideology-based explanations of partisanship are not entirely satisfying. Under the logic of this approach, it seems perverse that in two of the clearest instances of policy-switching, Argentina and Costa Rica, the ideologically-consistent center-right parties suffered the steepest losses of partisan support, while the historically-statist parties that broke their campaign promises and unexpectedly led the market reforms held onto most of their partisans well into the 2000s. Nor is it clear why declines in partisanship have also occurred in party systems like that of Chile, where the two major political blocs have remained ideologically-distinct and ideologically-consistent since the late 1980s. Roberts' framework predicted partisan stabilization in the seven Latin American countries where the reforms were initiated by right-wing parties and opposed by left-wing parties,² yet in all seven of these cases, at least one of the country's three major parties has lost most of its partisan support since the reform process began. In general, this approach is better at explaining declines in partisanship that occurred during the 1990s, but it struggles to explain many of the declines that have continued since the 2000s.

A final approach—and the one with which this dissertation is most closely aligned—has called attention to the importance of local party organizations. Van Dyck (2014b) and Samuels and Zucco (2018) show that Brazil's PT attracted voters and partisans at a faster rate in the municipalities where it had a local party office, while Poertner (Forthcoming) shows that linkages between parties and civil society organizations have helped several other Latin American leftist parties attract partisan support. Similarly, Auyero (2001) and Levitsky (2003) argue that the neighborhood party organizations of Argentina's Peronist party helped the party hold onto its working-class base even after it diluted its ties to organized labor and embraced Neoliberalism. However, it remains unclear *why* and *how* local party organizations affect voters' partisanship. Nor is it clear whether these arguments are relevant to other types of Latin American parties. Van Dyck (2014a), Samuels and Zucco (2018), and Poertner (Forthcoming) focus on a similar breed of relatively-young left-wing party that has strong roots in civil society, and Samuels and Zucco

²These countries were Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile.

(2018) find that local party organizations do not have the same effect on partisan attachments to other Brazilian parties.

Three Puzzles of Partisanship in Latin America

These explanations offer a useful starting point for understanding the dynamics of mass partisanship in Latin America and beyond, and their predictions are consistent with the experiences of many parties. However, there are three broader patterns in the rise and eventual decline of Latin American partisanship that are especially puzzling in light of our previous understandings about the causes of partisan change. A first puzzle concerns the origins of mass partisan attachments: in many Latin American countries, the rise of mass partisanship predated the formation of ideological, labor-based parties by several generations, and contrary to the predictions of most of these theories, the region's early elite-founded parties were quite successful at gaining and maintaining the partisan loyalties of working-class voters. A second puzzle is the surprising stability of partisan attachments in mid-20th century Latin America: relatively few Latin American parties experienced sustained declines in partisan support between the 1940s and 1970s, even though these parties often committed many of the same offenses such as policy-switching and corruption scandals that have been blamed for the breakdown of partisanship in the 1990s. The third puzzle is the wide variation in Latin American parties' partisan trajectories since the 1990s, both across parties and across space. Not every Latin American traditional party has lost a significant share of partisans. Moreover, many parties that did experience steep drops in partisan support were often able to hold onto most of their partisans in particular municipalities or regions of their countries. Since previous theories of partisan change have focused on national-level and party-level explanatory variables, they do not offer clear explanations for why partisan attachments to the same party should decline faster in some localities compared to others.

Puzzle 1: The Large Partisan Bases of Traditional Parties

In several Latin American countries, the parties that had the largest bases of mass partisan support in the mid-20th century were not labor-based parties, but rather a much older breed of party that was born out of the power-struggles between elites in the mid-19th century, during the first few decades after Independence. Yet the existing approaches to partisanship are nearly unanimous in their predictions that this type of “elite-founded” party would struggle to grow and maintain mass partisan support. Even in cases where these parties had been forged along social or policy cleavages that mattered outside of elite circles, those cleavages had largely lost their relevance to ordinary voters by the mid-20th century (Roberts 2014, 108). The elite-founded traditional parties were often rife with corruption, and they presided over repeated economic failures in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. These parties were more likely to repress organized labor than align themselves with it, and the few traditional parties that led the political incorporation of the labor movement in their countries chose to keep the labor movement at arms-length and refused to establish long-term ties with unions (Collier and Collier 1991). Finally, these parties often lacked a well-defined brand based on their policy positions. There were few ideological differences between one elite-founded party and its competitor, and because these parties often contained a diverse range of internal factions that spanned the ideological spectrum, the party’s policy positions could shift quite rapidly from election to election, as different factions gained and then lost control over the party leadership positions.

The case of the party system of the United States shows that it is hardly exceptional that parties founded in the mid-19th century should have broad partisan bases by the 20th century. However, the origins and development of Latin America’s early elite-founded parties differ from the American case in several important respects. First, suffrage was expanded much earlier in the United States than in most of Latin America. Most white men in the United States had the right to vote by the mid-19th century, and the Democratic and Republican parties were organized as “mass parties” from the moment of their foundation (Aldrich 2011; Cohen et al. 2008). By contrast, most

of Latin America's elite-founded parties grew up during a period when suffrage was restricted to literate, property-owning men who rarely exceeded 5% of the national population, and most elections in 19th century Latin America were so fraudulent that they were not a meaningful way for elites to contest power. As a result, Latin America's elite-founded parties faced very little immediate pressure to incorporate middle-class and lower-class citizens into their ranks. For much of the 19th century, these parties remained loosely-organized cliques of elites that lacked a permanent extra-parliamentary organization and were held together mostly by family ties and elite social clubs.

Second, compared to the United States, Latin American electoral systems imposed much lower barriers to entry for new parties by the early 20th century. Majoritarian electoral rules for congressional and presidential elections in the United States gave new political actors and interest groups strong incentives to work within the established parties. But majoritarian electoral rules in Latin American congressional elections had been weakened by the end of the 19th century and eliminated altogether by the mid-20th century (Wills-Otero 2009). As was the case in continental Europe, Latin America's electoral systems made it possible for the "popular classes" to form electorally-viable parties of their own. It is thus all the more surprising that Latin America's elite-founded parties often out-performed their newer socialist and populist rivals at winning mass partisan loyalties after suffrage was expanded.

How did Latin America's early elite-founded parties acquire their mass partisan support? Why did traditional parties in countries like Colombia and Uruguay transform from small clubs of elites into broad-based mass parties? And why did traditional parties in countries like Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela fail to transform?

Puzzle 2: Partisan Stability in the Mid-20th Century

Corruption scandals, poor economic performance, and elite ideological inconsistency were common features of Latin American politics throughout the 20th century, and these patterns

were especially prevalent in Latin America's mid-20th century democracies. While the rise of broadcast television may have made scandals more salient over the last few decades, Latin American voters already cared deeply about corruption by the 1950s and 1960s. Corruption posed such a grave threat to the legitimacy of Uruguay's democracy in the early 1960s that nearly all of the country's leading politicians felt that it was necessary to campaign on deep political reform in the 1966 general election (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:416). The former military dictator Carlos Ibáñez won Chile's 1952 presidential election in a landslide on an anti-corruption platform, and the symbol of his campaign was the broom—an allusion to his promise to “sweep away” Chile's corrupt political class (Schnake 2004, 115). Economic crises and poor economic performance were also quite common in Latin America during this period, and parties were routinely voted out of office when they failed to bring inflation under control. Moreover, Latin American parties were often ideologically inconsistent throughout the mid-20th century; politicians and parties frequently altered their policy positions in response to changing political winds, and competing parties campaigned on nearly identical platforms. Survey data from this period suggests that even in ideologically-polarized party systems like the Chilean party system in the 1960s, voters were often confused or uncertain about what their parties stood for and whom they represented.³

However, this misbehavior by elites rarely triggered large-scale declines of party identification prior to the 1980s. If corruption scandals, poor performance and ideological inconsistency were responsible for the decline of partisanship in the 1990s and 2000s, why did they not have the same effect during earlier decades? What stabilized Latin American partisanship through the parties' numerous reputational crises in the mid-20th century? And why did party identification become less resilient by the 1980s?

³In a 1958 survey of Santiago voters, only slightly more than half of the sample associated the campaign slogan “higher wages for workers” with the Communist and Socialist parties, even though this had been a staple of the Marxist parties' campaigns for over a generation. In a 1967 survey fielded during a period of particularly intense party competition along social class lines, less than half of the sample believed that “the poor” and “the working class” were more likely to identify with the Communist and Socialist parties compared to Chile's centrist and right-wing parties (CEDOP survey # 23).

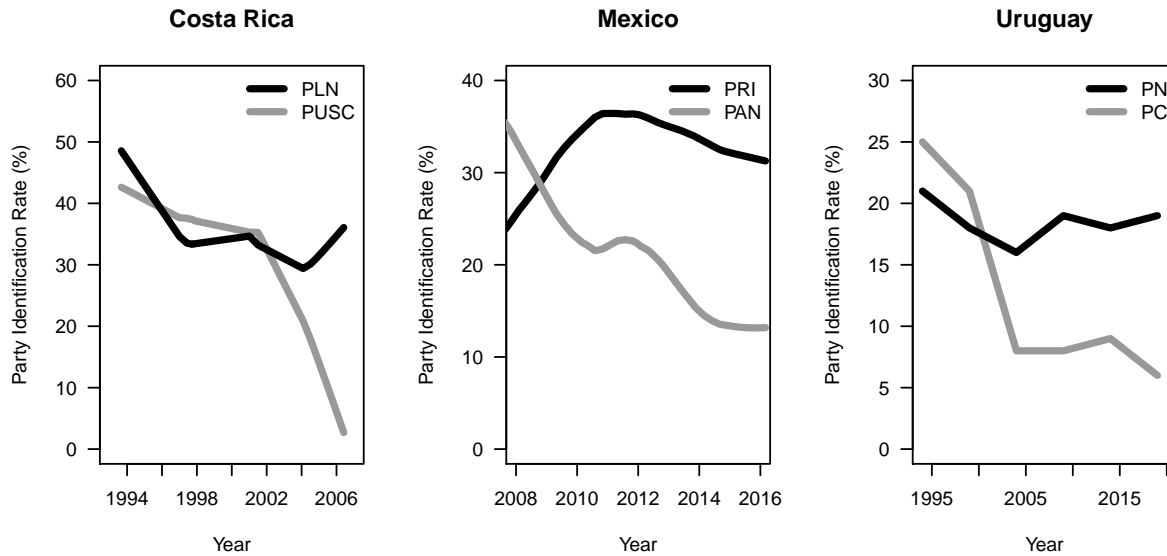


Figure 1.3: Asymmetric Declines of Partisanship. *Note:* This figure shows loess curves for the party identification rates of the two major “traditional parties” in Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Mexico. *Source:* Costa Rica: CID-Gallup; Uruguay: Equipos Consultores; Mexico: ISA.

Puzzle 3: The Uneven Decline of Partisanship

Although several Latin American parties have faced steep declines in party identification since the late 20th century, other parties have maintained high levels of partisan support. Moreover, we often observe wide variation in the fates of different parties even when we look within the same party system. Figure 1.3 shows levels of party identification with the traditional parties of Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Mexico. While party identification with the PUSC, the Colorado Party, and the PAN declined rapidly, their traditional rivals, the PLN, the National Party, and the PRI held or even expanded their share of partisans during this same period. This within-country variation in partisan trajectories suggests that the recent declines in partisanship in Latin America are not merely the result of large, structural changes, such as modernization or the rise of mass media campaigning. Structuralist approaches might help account for why parties have grown weaker in recent years, but since they focus on independent variables at the country level, they are not particularly useful for explaining why some parties have lost their partisans while other

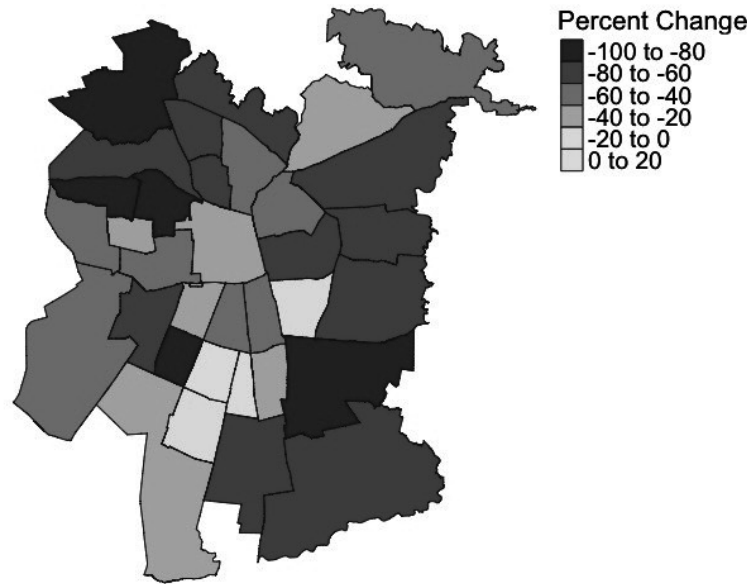


Figure 1.4: Percent Change in Concertación Identification Between 2000 and 2010, by Commune of Gran Santiago (MRP Estimates)

parties within the same country did not.

Approaches that focus on national party brands are better-equipped to account for cross-party variation in partisan trajectories, but they struggle to explain variation in partisanship below the party level.⁴ If these explanations are correct that drops in partisanship are triggered by negative shocks to a party’s national-level reputation or brand, then we should expect that parties that experience brand crises should lose their partisans at roughly the same rate across each part of the country. Instead, we often see considerable subnational variation in the speed and severity of declines in partisan attachments to the same party. Traditional parties such as Uruguay’s Colorado Party or Argentina’s Radical Civic Union have lost a significant share of their partisans over all, but they have managed to maintain high levels of party identification in particular municipalities or regions of their countries. Trajectories in party identification can

⁴Performance-based approaches could be adapted to apply at the local level. For example, Winters and Weitz-Shapiro (2015) test the effect of corruption scandals on partisanship in Brazil using a vignette that refers specifically to corruption in municipal governments. However, as I will show in Chapter 8, partisan trajectories often vary widely even between different neighborhoods of the same municipality.

even vary across different parts of the same metropolitan area. Figure 1.4 shows multilevel regression and post-stratification (MRP) estimates of the percent change in party identification with Chile's *Concertación* between 2000 and 2010, across different municipalities in the Santiago metropolitan area. While the *Concertación's* partisan base was wiped out in the municipalities of Eastern and Northern Santiago, it held steady in other municipalities, particularly in Southern Santiago. What explains this subnational variation in the decline of partisan attachments to a given party? If declines in partisanship are triggered by national-level factors, why are parties' bases of partisan support sometimes more resilient in some localities compared to others?

The Argument

This dissertation argues that low-level party activists are the key to understanding the rise, decline, and survival of mass partisanship in Latin America. Through their day-to-day grassroots party work, these activists forge and maintain the partisan identities of the other voters who inhabit their social networks and communities. Consequently, parties are more likely to grow their partisan support over time and hold onto their partisans during moments of crisis in communities where they have an established network of local activists and strong grassroots party organizations. I show that the long-term trajectories in Latin American partisanship and the variation across different parties during each period were functions of the way that parties were organized on the ground and their success at recruiting grassroots party activists.

Latin American traditional parties began incorporating lower class activists into their formal party organizations on a permanent basis during the second half of the 19th century, and this helped these parties broaden their bases of partisan support. As suffrage expanded during the first half of the 20th century, these activists pulled recently-enfranchised voters into the traditional parties and reinforced their partisan loyalties in the face of the economic crises and breakdowns of democracy. However, many parties chose to demobilize their activist networks

in the late 20th century, after the state and economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s deprived these parties of the patronage resources that they had traditionally relied on to incentivize their activists. This weakening of parties' grassroots organizations has made Latin American voters' partisan attachments less stable and more vulnerable to elite-driven reputational shocks, such as corruption scandals. Contemporary Latin American parties have been able to maintain high rates of party identification over the long term only in the places where they found another way to keep their party activists mobilized.

Party Activists and the Social Nature of Partisanship

This dissertation agrees with previous research that partisanship is a type of social identity rooted in the party's "image" or "brand" in the eyes of the voters (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Gerber, Huber, and Washington 2010; Seawright 2012; Lupu 2016), but it discards this literature's assumption that voters form their party image primarily by observing the actions of a party's elite politicians. Partisan identities are often the product of social influence, communication, and interaction. Voters "learn" their partisanship by observing the partisanship of their friends, co-workers, neighbors, and relatives. The party loyalties of a voter's network peers provide cues about which party someone like the voter should support (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995), and they also constrain or bias the political information that reaches the voter through everyday conversations with their peers (Carlson 2018).

While voters do not ignore the actions of the party's politicians, they weigh this elite-supplied information against the typically more-abundant socially-supplied information in their networks. This is one of the reasons why voters are able to be passionate partisans of political parties that routinely enact policies that are against the voters' own interests or are repeatedly engulfed in corruption scandals. When a voter's partisanship is reinforced by their social relationships with other partisans of the same party, their awareness of the missteps by party elites may have only a minor effect on their opinion of the party. The social nature of partisanship also helps

explain why partisans of the same party often disagree about what their party really stands for and whom it represents. To the extent that voters' sources of political information are decentralized across many different actors, a party can project multiple, potentially-contradictory images to different groups of voters.

Grassroots party activists wield a disproportionate amount of influence over the partisan composition of their social networks due to their hybrid status as party actors who nevertheless inhabit the same communities where ordinary voters live. Because the activists are party actors, they emit an especially focused and well-informed partisan signal. Moreover, unlike most ordinary voters, the activists actively *seek* to persuade their peers to support their party. Because party activists are long-term members of the voters' communities, their partisanship is especially relevant for the voters' own partisan decisions. As the public face of their party in their communities, the activists can also help tailor the party's messages and image to the community's own political tastes by emphasizing the aspects of their party that are likely to appeal to their peers.

Political parties turn voters into partisans and hold onto the partisans that they already have by strategically using their low-level activists to infiltrate, maintain, and reshape preexisting social networks. New parties attract partisan support by recruiting well-connected activists who are able to mobilize their network peers into the party (Samuels and Zucco 2018). Established parties use a similar strategy to expand or transform their bases of partisan support. By recruiting activists who are engaged in particular communities or pursue particular policy issues, the party can prompt voters to revise their beliefs about what the party stands for or whom it represents, and this in turn can make the party more appealing to voters who once viewed it with hostility (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Thachil 2016). Party activists are also a source of partisan stability during moments of crisis for the party. In particular, party activists help anchor voters' partisan identities in the face of elite-driven shocks to their party's image, such as corruption scandals and policy-switching. The activists provide an alternative face of the party that is untainted by the

elites' mistakes, and this makes it easier for the party's partisans to shrug off the scandal and continue identifying with their party.

Explaining Party Activism

In order to grow and maintain its partisan support, a party must keep its activists engaged in grassroots party work over the long term. Although parties are sometimes able to entice their supporters into becoming temporary activists for a single election campaign simply by invoking the party's ideological platform or the monstrosity of its opposition, parties must employ other strategies in order to keep their activists mobilized after the election is over. Most parties do this by offering their activists two broad types of selective incentives: "patronage" resources and a "voice" in party decisions.

In this dissertation, the term *patronage* refers to material resources that parties offer to their activists in exchange for their party work. One of the most important types of patronage resources are *patronage jobs*, or positions in the government or public sector that are used to recruit and reward party activists. Patronage jobs were ideally-suited for motivating party activists over the long term because they provided the activist a continuous stream of material benefits and gave the activists a direct, material stake in the party's electoral success (Oliveros 2013). Moreover, providing patronage jobs to activists was nearly costless to the party itself since the activists' salaries would be paid by the taxpayer, not the party. Patronage jobs also helped parties broaden their activist bases because they freed lower-class activists from their other economic commitments and enabled them to devote more hours each day to their grassroots party work.

However, reliance on patronage poses several problems for parties as well. Patronage resources are not available to every party, and a party's access to patronage is usually contingent on its inclusion in the country's governing coalition. Opposition parties can rarely match the incumbent's patronage resources, and this puts them at a severe disadvantage relative to incumbents. Moreover, the overt use of public resources for partisan purposes is unpopular among

voters, and by the late 20th century, incumbent parties in several Latin American countries came under political pressure to relinquish their access to patronage by enacting civil service reforms. Another drawback of patronage-based incentives is that activists who are motivated primarily by material benefits may develop relatively shallow loyalties to their party. This may make the activists less effective at spreading the party's partisan support through their communities, and it also makes them more willing to desert the party if it ever loses its monopoly on public sector jobs.

Parties that do not have access to patronage often attempt to motivate their activists using the party's ideology instead (Shefter 1994). Yet ideology alone is usually insufficient for keeping party activists mobilized over the long term, especially after the party has come to power and must confront the realities of enacting its program into policy. Ideology-based incentives suffer from the same free-riding problems as other public goods. A potential activist may genuinely prefer one party's platform over that of its opponent. But she knows that whether or not she works for the party as an activist will have a minimal impact on its electoral success. She also knows that if her preferred party does win power, she will reap the benefits of policies that are closer to her ideal point regardless of whether or not she helped the party win office. Another limitation of ideology-based incentives is that while party elites can craft the party's platform in ways that make it more appealing to policy-seeking activists, these policy promises are unlikely to be credible to the activists to the extent that the party's platform differs from the set of policies that the party elites would *prefer* to enact. Latin American presidents have a long history of promising one policy during the campaign, and then enacting the opposite policy upon coming to power (Stokes 2001; Lupu 2016). Few policy-seeking activists would be willing to work for a party if they suspect that the party will turn around and betray them once the election is over.

Parties can mitigate the free-riding problems and credibility problems inherent in ideology-based incentives by establishing internal decision-making institutions that give party activists a *voice* in their party's programmatic, strategic, and administrative decisions. One advantage of

voice-based incentives is that they are a form of selective incentive: activists have a say in the party's decisions only to the extent that they incur the costs associated with year-round party work. Granting the activists a voice in the party's decisions can also help the party elites "tie their hands" and credibly commit to pursuing policies that would normally be against their interests. By allowing their activists to participate in the party's decision-making processes, party elites relinquish some control over their party to the activists and free themselves from the temptation of renegeing on their policy promises. This, in turn, makes it possible for the activists themselves to help craft the party's agenda and use the party to pursue their own policy goals. Finally, unlike patronage-based incentives, parties can supply voice-based incentives to their activists even when the party is in the opposition.

Yet granting the activists a voice in the party also entails significant risks for the party elites. The activists may be less concerned with the party's immediate electoral success and more willing to push the party to extreme policy positions that would cost it electoral support in the short term. If the party does manage to win the election, the activists might use their influence within the party to pursue policies that are against the elites' own interests. Moreover, even small institutional concessions to the activists may spiral out of the elites' control if the activists use their voice in the party to press for deeper changes to the party's structure. Over time, the activists might even grow strong enough to oust the party elites from their own party.

When a party grants its activists a meaningful voice in party decisions, it is no longer appropriate to think of the party as a unitary actor that has a single ideological position, identity, or core constituency. As I show in the following chapters, many of Latin America's most successful parties in the 20th century were heterogeneous and far from harmonious coalitions that united elite patrons, office-seeking politicians, policy-seeking activists, large landowners, urban industrialists, factory workers, peasants, conservatives, populists, and socialists all under the same banner. These diverse actors typically found ways to cooperate long enough to get through a given election campaign, but they were also in constant conflict with each other over the questions of what their

party was going to be and whose interests it was going to serve. While some political scientists see these internal conflicts as a liability for parties (Coppedge 1994; Grynviski 2006; Lupu 2016), this dissertation sees them as a source of parties' vibrancy and durability. The fact that the party's identity and future were never settled questions encouraged party elites and party activists alike to continue fighting for their party even after the election was won. Latin American parties' heterogeneous composition also broadened their appeal and allowed them to attract a wide range of different constituencies.

Parties and the State

A party's proximity to the state has an ambiguous effect on the likelihood that it will develop a strong grassroots party organization. On the one hand, the state is the most abundant source of patronage resources that parties can use to recruit and reward their activists and mobilize mass support (Shefter 1994; Geddes 1994; Grindle 2012; Kopecký and Mair 2012). On the other hand, secure access to state resources may weaken political elites' incentives for party-building by making a strong party organization unnecessary for their future electoral success (Panebianco 1988; Shefter 1994; Hale 2006; Van Dyck 2014a; Ziblatt 2017). If incumbent elites can hold onto power through electoral fraud or by using state resources to purchase electoral support, they may be able to get by with a very minimalistic party organization that has few activists and little presence in society.

This dissertation argues that whether access to state resources encourages or hinders party-building depends on the stage in the party's life-cycle: while having secure access to patronage can deter infant parties from engaging in concerted party-building, patronage resources are a valuable party-building tool for older, more-institutionalized parties that have already completed the difficult work of establishing a cohesive party organization. I concur with Shefter (1994), Van Dyck (2014a), and Ziblatt (2017) that the decisions that a party makes during its "formative period" can have a lasting impact on its structure, strategies, and identity, and parties that spend

their early years in the opposition are more likely to develop strong organizations. For example, I show in Chapter 4 that opposition elites in 19th century Latin America were much more likely to engage in serious party-building compared to incumbent elites. However, I disagree with Shefter's assumption that opposition parties that develop strong organizations and mobilize support on the basis of their ideology are less likely to rely on patronage upon coming to power (Shefter 1994, 32-34). On the contrary, many of the Latin American parties that have used patronage most effectively for party-building were ideological parties that Shefter would have classified as "externally-mobilized" parties, such as the Socialist and Communist parties of Chile, or Democratic Action in Venezuela (Martz 1966; Valenzuela 1977; Drake 1978).

The effect of the state on party-building also depends on the nature of the state itself, and this can vary widely across time. This dissertation treats the evolution of the Latin American state as the primary structural cause that explains why Latin American parties developed the way that they did. In the early 19th century, Latin American states were almost uniformly weak, and incumbent governments were frequently toppled through armed conflicts that were usually fought along party lines. Under these conditions, Latin American parties had weak incentives for party-building because a party's access to power hinged on its military capabilities rather than the strength of its electoral organizations. By the end of the 19th century, several Latin American countries had developed relatively strong, authoritarian states. While these states were not particularly resource-rich, incumbent parties could nevertheless hold onto power through electoral fraud and coercion, and they continued to have weak incentives to invest in party-building. On the other hand, now that they could no longer realistically seize power through force, opposition parties began developing grassroots party organizations to help them compete in elections that were stacked in favor of the incumbent. In the middle of the 20th century, the Latin American state grew in size as governments throughout the region adopted import substitution industrialization (ISI) as their principal economic development strategy. Patronage resources became more abundant than ever, and incumbent parties that had already developed

strong grassroots organizations used this patronage to expand their activist networks and manage their internal conflicts. However, the Latin American state shrank during the economic and state reforms of the late 20th century, as governments sold off state-owned enterprises, reduced the size of the state bureaucracy, and enacted new civil service reforms that severed parties' grasp on patronage resources. This had a demobilizing effect on Latin American grassroots party organizations that was only partially mitigated by the endurance of patronage resources at the subnational level.

Testable Implications

I will test this argument by focusing on areas of theoretical difference that separate my argument from the most-compelling prior approaches to partisanship in Latin America: the view that voters' partisanship is rooted in the actions of the party's elite politicians (Seawright 2012; Roberts 2014; Lupu 2016); and the view that voters' partisanship is rooted in the party's linkages to organized interests, such as labor unions (Collier and Collier 1991; Levitsky 2003; Roberts 2014).

When do parties acquire partisans?

One set of hypotheses concerns the conditions under which parties are likely to attract partisans. If my theory is correct, then we should observe that parties are more likely to expand their bases of partisan support when they organize on the basis of activist-based, grassroots party organizations.

A first implication is that non-ideological parties that have few stable ties to organized interests may still be able to attract partisan support as long as they are able to recruit a sufficient number of grassroots party activists. I test this hypothesis in Chapter 4 by analyzing the rise of mass partisan loyalties to Latin America's early traditional parties, which were founded by

elites in the 19th century. I show that elite-founded parties that incorporated lower-class activists into their organizations on a permanent basis were more likely to gain partisan support over the subsequent decades. On the other hand, parties that declined to mobilize lower-class activists or isolated them from their formal party organization usually failed to attract significant partisan support.

A second implication is that even ideological and labor-based parties may struggle to attract partisans unless they also have an activist-based, territorial party organization. I test this hypothesis in Chapter 5 by comparing the fates of different 20th century socialist parties. While some of these parties adopted a “pure” labor-based strategy, others chose to supplement their linkages to organized labor with territorial party activism. I find that these ideological parties were rarely able to grow their partisan bases on the basis of their ideologies and labor linkages alone. Instead, they developed broad partisan support only to the extent that they organized outside of the union halls by establishing networks of neighborhood-level party organizations.

When do parties lose partisans, and when do they hold onto them?

Another set of implications deals with the conditions under which parties are able to hold onto their partisan support over the long term. My argument does not deny that party elites’ ideological inconsistency and corruption scandals can make it harder for voters to identify with the party, but it does suggest that the importance of these elite-driven shocks depends on the strength of the party’s local organizations: parties are more immune to these reputational shocks when they operate strong grassroots party organizations that reinforce voters’ partisan identities. Consequently, a well-organized party would be able to face repeated scandals and still retain most of its partisans, while a weakly-organized party might suffer large drops in partisan support upon even relatively minor infractions.

Subnational Variation

Subnational variation in partisanship is another useful area of testable difference between my approach and previous approaches. Theories of partisan change that focus mainly on national-level factors do not offer any clear reason for why trajectories in partisanship would vary across different parts of the same country. By contrast, my theory predicts that partisan trajectories would vary at the subnational level to the extent that the strength of a party's grassroots party organizations also varies across different localities. First, parties should attract new partisans at a faster rate in the municipalities and neighborhoods where they have stronger territorial organizations and activist networks. Second, parties should also be more likely to hold onto their partisans during corruption scandals and other brand crises in the municipalities and neighborhoods where they have a stronger party organization.

The Role of Social Networks

A final area of theoretical difference concerns the mechanism itself. In Chapter 2, I develop a social network theory that explains how the presence of party activists in a social network affects the partisanship of other voters in that network. If this theory is correct, then we should observe that voters are more likely to identify with a party when they have social ties to that party's activists, even after controlling for their ideological preferences. Moreover, changes in the activist composition of a social network—such as the arrival or demobilization of party activists—should have a corresponding effect on the party identification of other members of that network.

Case-Selection

The analyses in this dissertation will focus on political parties in Chile and Uruguay from the 19th century to the present. I chose these countries for two reasons. First, they are

both countries where historical data on political parties is particularly well-preserved, and this allows me to extend my analysis beyond the mid- to late-20th century parties and events that have been the focus of most recent research on Latin America political parties. Second, these countries offer a tight “most-similar cases” design. Their similar histories, levels of economic development, culture, and social structure help me rule out alternative explanations for their trends in party organization and mass partisanship over time. At the same time, these cases also exhibit substantial variation on my independent variables.

Chile and Uruguay’s political trajectories moved in lock-step throughout the 20th century. Both countries entered the 20th century as oligarchic proto-democracies that maintained tight restrictions on suffrage. After a brief period of authoritarian rule, democracy was restored and deepened, and Chile and Uruguay became the first Latin American countries to sustain more than twenty consecutive years of “full” democratic rule. In the 1940s, both countries had progressive, reformist governments that originated within the traditional parties and presided over rapid economic growth that was spurred on by their Import Substitution Industrialization development strategies. However, economic crises in the 1950s enabled the political Right to regain power in both countries in 1958, and a period of intense polarization and political violence followed in the 1960s. Both countries’ democracies finally broke down in 1973, and they were replaced by “bureaucratic-authoritarian” military dictatorships that banned party activity and repressed leftist and centrist parties. In the 1980s, Chile and Uruguay’s military regimes called popular referenda on continuing military rule, and the dictatorships’ defeats in these referenda triggered a series of negotiations between the regime and pro-democracy party leaders that culminated in the restoration of democracy. Since the 1990s, electoral competition in both countries has revolved around two multi-party and ideologically-distinct blocs on the ideological Left and Right.

Despite these historical similarities, parties in Chile and Uruguay adopted contrasting political strategies for recruiting activists and mobilizing mass support. These differences are analytically useful because they lead to variation on my main independent variable. While

some 19th century, elite-founded parties in both countries eventually incorporated activists into their organizations, this process got underway in Chile as early as the 1860s, but it did not begin in Uruguay until the 1910s and 1920s. However, the alliances between party elites and activists proved more durable in Uruguay than in Chile. Both the Radical Party of Chile and the Colorado Party of Uruguay experienced internal conflicts between their left-wing and right-wing factions in the mid-20th century, but these conflicts had different long-term consequences for the parties: the Radical Party's factional power-struggles eventually ripped the party apart, while the Colorado Party managed these conflicts by channeling its factional competition away from the party organization and into electoral politics. The more-ideological, activist-founded parties that emerged in these countries in the early 20th century also adopted different strategies for mobilizing support: Uruguay's Marxist parties adopted a pure labor-based organizational strategy, while Chile's Marxist parties diversified their organizational strategies by supplementing union linkages with territorial activism. In the late 20th century, both countries developed broad and stable left-of-center multi-party alliances that contained socialist parties, Christian democratic parties, and progressive elements that had descended from these countries' 19th century elite-founded parties, but these alliances have very different relationships with their grassroots bases. Chile's *Concertación* curtailed the voice of party activists in party decisions and centralized decision-making powers in the hands of senior party leaders, and this has exacerbated the demobilization of the *Concertación's* activist base. By contrast, Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* greatly expanded its activists' influence in party decisions in the 1990s, and this has helped the alliance maintain one of the strongest and most active grassroots party organizations in contemporary Latin America.

Although Chilean and Uruguayan parties are the primary focus of my analyses, my argument applies to a wide range of parties in other Latin American countries as well. I strengthen the external validity of my analyses in two ways. First, while my historical chapters focus on parties in Chile and Uruguay, I also illustrate how similar processes played out in other Latin American countries. Second, I replicate several of my quantitative analyses across four countries:

Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Brazil. Unlike most South American countries, Mexico did not have any democratic experience prior to 2000, and it is one of Latin America's youngest democracies. Brazil had approximately two decades of democratic experience in the mid-20th century, but the 1964-1985 military dictatorship eliminated most traces of the country's earlier party system, and the party system had to be rebuilt almost from scratch during the 1980s. As a result, Brazil's party system is much less institutionalized than the party systems of Chile and Uruguay. Mexico and Brazil also have a lower level of economic development compared to Chile and Uruguay. By replicating my quantitative analyses on data from Mexico and Brazil, I demonstrate that the social logic behind my argument applies not only in affluent, well-established democracies like Chile and Uruguay, but also in younger democracies and weaker party systems in poorer countries.

Plan of the Dissertation

The next two chapters elaborate on my theory. Chapter 2 develops the micro-foundations of my argument by developing a social network model of partisanship. This chapter highlights the role that grassroots activists play in forging and maintaining the partisan composition of their social networks, and it explains how this social network framework builds on and improves on existing approaches to understanding partisanship and party organization. Chapter 3 models the strategic interaction between party elites and activists, and it generates several testable predictions about the conditions under which party elites are willing to grant their activists influence in the party's decisions.

The second section of the dissertation traces the historical development of Latin America's political parties. Chapter 4 covers the first century after Independence, and it analyzes the transformation of Latin American elite-founded parties into mass parties and the establishment of internal party institutions that granted low-level activists a voice in party decisions. This chapter demonstrates that elites were willing to share power with their activists only in cases where the

state-building process had preserved electoral competition between rival parties. It also shows that opposition elites were much more likely to incorporate activists into their parties, compared to incumbent elites.

Chapter 5 looks at how parties used their activists and grassroots organizations to develop, expand, and maintain mass partisan loyalties during Latin America's "Era of Mass Politics" from the 1940s to the 1970s. This chapter shows that older, elite-founded parties and newer socialist and populist parties converged on very similar grassroots organizational strategies for winning the partisan loyalties of recently-enfranchised voters. This chapter also traces the growing internal tensions within Latin American parties during this period, and it shows how parties used their patronage resources to mitigate the political risks that strong grassroots party organizations posed for party elites.

Chapters 6 and 7 analyze the uneven decline of partisanship in Latin America over the last three decades. Chapter 6 focuses on the consequences of the state reforms of the 1990s and early 2000s, and it shows that while these reforms triggered a demobilization of activist participation overall, some parties slowed or reversed this demobilization by finding new patronage resources at the local level. This chapter uses individual-level public employment data from Chile and individual-level party membership data and survey data from across the region to test each link of the causal chain that runs from patronage to mass party identification.

Chapter 7 investigates how contemporary parties can use voice-based incentives to maintain their activist bases in the absence of patronage. This chapter centers on a comparison between the two left-of-center, multiparty coalitions that have dominated Chilean and Uruguayan politics over the last few decades: Chile's *Concertación* and Uruguay's *Frente Amplio*. Although both coalitions were tightly controlled by a small group of senior party leaders during their transitions back to democracy in the 1980s, I show that these cases diverged during the 1990s. By the end of that decade, the leaders of the *Concertación* had insulated themselves from activist pressure and all but eliminated their activists' role in party decisions. Meanwhile, the *Frente Amplio*

moved in the opposite direction, and it gave its activist an unprecedented level of influence in the alliance's decisions. Due to these contrasting approaches to activist voice, the *Frente Amplio* was able to maintain a highly mobilized activist base and high rates of party identification, while the *Concertación* struggled to hold onto its activists and partisans after the early 2000s.

The final section of this dissertation uses contemporary large-N data from Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Brazil to test the social contagion mechanism behind my argument. Chapter 8 focuses on the link between party activists and changes in partisanship at the neighborhood level, and it draws on novel subnational data on local party organizations. Chapter 9 zooms in to the individual level and examines how party activists in these four countries disseminate and maintain partisan attachments through several different types of social networks, including discussant networks, social media networks, family networks, and students networks.

Chapter 2

Social Networks, Party Activists, and Partisan Change

Partisanship is a type of social identity that is rooted in a voter's stereotype or "image" of a party and the voter's belief about whether that stereotype resembles their self-image (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Gerber, Huber, and Washington 2010; Seawright 2012; Lupu 2016; Samuels and Zucco 2018). Like most social identities, partisan identities can evolve over time as changes in the party (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Lupu 2016) or changes in voter's own life (Hobbs 2019) prompt them to revise their party image and self-image. Recent research on partisanship in Latin America has attributed changes in party images and mass party identification to the behavior of the party's elite politicians, especially the policies that they enact, their performance in office, and their corruption scandals (Seawright 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2015; Baker, Sokhey, Ames, and Renno 2016; Lupu 2016; Samuels and Zucco 2018). However, politicians are not the only type of party actor that voters look to when they form their beliefs about a party.

My argument builds from the premise that voters form and update their partisan attachments by observing the partisanship and political behavior of the other people in their social

networks. The party identification of the friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members that a voter interacts with on a routine basis offers the voter first-hand, relevant, and nearly costless information about what type of person supports a given party and whether someone like the voter could identify with that party. Although even ordinary voters can shape other voters' party images and partisan attachments, some types of citizens wield more influence than others over the partisanship of their social networks. Low-level party activists are especially effective at driving partisan change in a network due to their large number of network ties ("high degree centrality") and their hybrid status as both a party actor and a member of the voters' own community. The main implication that I examine in the remainder of this dissertation is that a party's ability to attract new partisans and hold onto the partisans that it already has depends on how the party is organized at the grassroots level. In particular, it is easier for a party to attract and keep partisans in social networks or communities where that party has a high density of grassroots party activists.

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of the individual-level mechanisms that serve as a foundation for the rest of the dissertation. I begin with a general discussion of the role of social networks and party activists in the formation of mass partisan identities. I then illustrate these mechanisms in greater detail through a formal model in which voters look to the partisanship of the other voters in their social networks when forming their own opinions of a party. Next, I elaborate on why the unique network position of party activists gives this type of party actor a greater amount of influence over the partisanship of the rest of the network. Finally, I explain how my activist-network framework relates to two other frameworks that are often used to understand Latin American party politics: clientelistic brokerage and interest organizations.

Partisanship in a Network Setting

Voters do not form their opinions about a their political parties in isolation from each other. They learn about the party by chatting with their peers about current events, by observing

which parties the people around them seem to support, and by taking note of the work that the party's activists do and neglect to do in their community (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague 2004; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007). For the majority of voters who have neither the interest nor the time to keep up with day-to-day political developments, this socially-supplied information is the most abundant source of evidence upon which they base their mental "image" of the party, or their intuition about "who" a party is and whom it represents. When voters attach labels such as "conservative," "elitist," "blue-collar," "rural," "extremist," or "honest" to a political party, they often base these judgments on their personal experiences with the party's supporters and their perceptions of the partisan cleavages that exist in their own social network and their broader community.

By shaping the voter's image of the party, the partisanship of a voter's network peers can also affect the likelihood that the voter will identify with the party. There are several mechanisms through which shocks to one voter's partisanship can spread to other voters in their social network. A first mechanism is that boundedly-rational voters may use the partisanship of their friends and neighbors as a heuristic for which party they should support (Downs 1957; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007). If a voter observes that the people in his social circle overwhelmingly identify with the same party, that would serve as a strong signal that he should identify with that party as well. On the other hand, if he observes that his network contains a mix of partisans from many different parties or Independents who do not identify with any party at all, it would be less obvious which party he should support. A second mechanism is persuasion (Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague 2004). Passionate partisans may actively attempt to convince or pressure their friends to support their party. Even if these friends are not entirely swayed by their peer's arguments, they may still prefer to bring their own partisanship into alignment with the partisanship of the rest of their social network in order to avoid jeopardizing their friendships. A third mechanism is partisan bias in political communication (Ahn, Huckfeldt, Mayer, and Ryan 2014; Carlson 2018). A voter's partisanship may distort or color the political information that they

transmit to their peers, and this can make these peers more likely to receive information that casts the party in a favorable light. Even if a voter attempts to take the party's policies or performance in power into account when forming their partisan judgments, the partisan composition of the voter's network may filter out certain pieces of information and influence the way that the voter interprets the information that reaches him.

Although even ordinary voters can affect the partisanship of the other voters in their networks, certain types of voters wield a greater influence over the partisan composition of the network. First, voters differ in the size of their personal networks. Voters who have a larger number of direct network ties are able to communicate with a larger portion of the network simultaneously. All else equal, the influence of a network member over the broader network increases with the number of direct ties that link them to other members of the network.

Second, political influence and information do not always flow both ways along a dyad between two network peers, and a voter can provide political information to a friend without relying on that same friend for her own information. A voter's influence depends not only on her number of network ties, but also on the "direction" of these ties. "Political experts" who supply political information to their peers are likely to have a greater partisan influence compared to voters who merely receive information from others (Ahn, Huckfeldt, Mayer, and Ryan 2014).

Third, some voters are more open than others about their political preferences. While many voters carefully mask their partisanship in order to avoid unpleasant arguments with peers who disagree with them, others broadcast their partisan preferences even to relative strangers by striking up political conversations on the bus, wearing partisan symbols on their clothing, or hanging the party's flag from their apartment balcony. The more open a voter is about her partisanship, the easier it will be for her peers to take her partisanship into account when they make their own partisan judgments.

Fourth, a voter's different relationships may not be equally relevant to the voter's own politics. One of the reasons why the partisan composition of a voter's network is often informative

for her own partisan judgments is because people tend to form close relationships with other people who share their preferences, interests, and backgrounds. Yet many voters still maintain deep relationships with people who have different preferences, values, status, or personalities. While these relationships may be meaningful to the voter, the partisanship of a friend or acquaintance that the voter sees as different from herself is likely to carry less information about which party the voter herself should support. In party systems that are even loosely based on class lines, horizontal relationships between relative equals are likely to be more relevant to the voter's partisanship than vertical relationships between superiors and subordinates. If the voter recognizes that her own interests are at odds with the interests of a superior like a boss or a landlord, her knowledge that her superior supports a given party could even make her less likely to support it.

Party activists are one of the few types of political actors who has each of the characteristics that increase a person's influence over the partisan composition of their social network. Compared to ordinary voters, party activists are more likely to have large personal networks, supply political information to their peers, and actively broadcast their partisanship to the people around them. Compared to party elites, party activists are more likely to be embedded in the same communities that the party seeks to mobilize, and they are more likely to have horizontal relationships with the other voters in those communities. The horizontal nature of these relationships makes it easier for other voters to see the activist as an equal whose partisan preferences could be informative of which party they should support. Although most voters exert at least some amount of influence on the partisanship of their peers, the unique network position of the party activist gives her a greater capacity to shift her network's partisanship away from its equilibrium value or stabilize the partisanship of the network in the face of shocks to the party's reputation.

A Social Network Model of Partisanship

I illustrate network-based partisan contagion more formally using a model that combines features of Bayesian models of party identification (Grynaviski 2006; Bullock 2009; Lupu 2016) with recent “quasi-Bayesian” models of learning in social networks (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Jadbabaie et al. 2012). After presenting the baseline I model, I then use this model to examine the way that a social network mediates the effects of two types of shocks: the recruitment of a party activist by a new political party, and a brand crisis or corruption scandal in an established party that damages its reputation. This model suggests that the presence of low-level party activists in a social network can both help new parties attract partisan supporters and help established parties retain the partisans that they already have in the face of negative shocks to the party’s national-level reputation.

Baseline Model

A community of K citizens inhabit a static, directed social network summarized by the adjacency matrix $\mathbf{A}_{K \times K}$, where $a_{ij} = 1$ if individual i receives political information directly from j , and $a_{ij} = 0$ otherwise. Citizen i ’s *partisanship* in period t , or $\hat{\mu}_i^t$, is the mean of i ’s posterior belief about the degree to which he resembles party Ω . Higher values of $\hat{\mu}_i^t$ indicate that i believes that he is a “better fit” for party Ω ’s “partisan group,” and that he identifies more strongly with the party (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). For simplicity, I assume that every citizen in the community has the same “true” resemblance to the party (μ), though this model could easily be extended to incorporate heterogeneity between different citizens. Like the voters in the Bayesian updating models by Grynaviski (2006), Bullock (2009), and Lupu (2016), these citizens receive a stream of information about the party, they attempt to update their beliefs about the degree to which they resemble the party using Bayes’ Rule, and they begin with normally-distributed prior partisan beliefs. Unlike voters in these earlier models, the citizens in my model also take into

account the partisanship of their direct network peers when they update their beliefs about the party.

In each period, each citizen observes an informative signal of party Ω 's "true nature" from the distribution $y_i^t \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$, where μ is the true degree of resemblance between the citizen and the party. This informative signal represents actions taken by the party's senior politicians that citizens hear about through media reports. In each period, the citizens also observe the posterior partisanship from the previous period of the other citizens in the network who directly supply them with political information (their "network peers"). Every citizen receives political information and partisan signals from at least one other citizen in the network. Because this community is homogeneous, the citizens reason that if the party is a good fit for their network peers, it would be a good fit for them as well, and they believe that the partisanship of their peers is informative of whether they should identify with the party. However, the citizens are ignorant of the broader structure of the network and they are unable to take into account the way that the same socially-supplied information is repeated in multiple periods, or the way that their peers' prior beliefs influence their posterior partisanship attachments. Instead, they (incorrectly) treat each observation of their peer's partisanship as a new and independent draw from the distribution $N(\mu, \sigma)$. The citizens are also unable to discriminate between different sources of political information, and prior to updating their partisanship, they pool together all of the political information that they received during that period (from both the media and their social network) as the weighted average $\rho_i(y_i^t) + (1 - \rho_i)\left(\frac{\sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij}\hat{\mu}_j^{t-1}}{\sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij}}\right)$, where ρ_i is the relative weight that the citizen attaches to the media reports, and $\frac{\sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij}\hat{\mu}_j^{t-1}}{\sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij}}$ is the mean of the partisanship in the previous period of the citizen's direct network peers. Low values of ρ_i indicate that the citizen relies more heavily on his social network than on the media for his political information. After pooling together this information, the citizen then uses this average to update his posterior partisan attachment to Ω as if this average represented an independent draw from $N(\mu, \sigma)$.

The posterior partisanship of citizen i after t periods is

$$\hat{\mu}_i^t = \frac{k_i^0 \mu_i^0 + (t) \bar{y}_i^t}{k_i^0 + t}$$

where μ_i^0 is the mean of i 's prior partisan attachment to Ω , k_i^0 is the precision of that prior, and \bar{y}_i^t is the “running tally” of all of the media and social observations that i has received up to and including period t . This “running tally” of observations through period t can be expressed as

$$\bar{y}_i^t = \rho_i \left(\frac{\sum_{s=1}^t y_i^s}{t} \right) + (1 - \rho_i) \left(\frac{\sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij} \mu_j^0 + \sum_{s=1}^{t-1} \sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij} \hat{\mu}_j^s}{t \sum_{j=1}^K a_{ij}} \right)$$

In other words, a citizen's partisanship at a given point in time is a weighted average of his prior partisan attachment to the party (μ_i^0), the series of media reports about the party's elite politicians (y_i) that he receives, and the lagged partisanship of the rest of his social network.

If $\rho_i = 1$, the citizen completely disregards his socially-supplied information, and he updates his partisan attachments in the same manner as the Bayesian voters in the models by Grynaviski (2006) and Lupu (2016). If $\rho_i < 1$, the citizen is a “quasi-Bayesian” whose posterior partisanship is biased by the partisanship of the rest of his immediate social network. Over the long term, the citizens' partisanship will converge to μ , but over the medium term, citizens will tend to bring their own partisanship into alignment with the partisanship of their peers. The intuition is that if a citizen recognizes that his close friends and relatives identify with a party much more strongly than he does, he would conclude that he might have misjudged the party, and he would grow closer to it as a result. If the citizen already agrees with his peers about the party, the partisanship of the social network will “anchor” the citizen's partisanship and lead him to exhibit greater partisan stability over time compared to the voters in “pure Bayesian” models of partisanship.

Because citizens' partisan attachments will eventually converge to μ even when they rely heavily on socially-supplied information, social networks may seem to be an unnecessary

complication that adds little to earlier, more-parsimonious Bayesian models of partisanship. In order to demonstrate the value of taking into account the partisanship of a citizen's network peers, I now consider two extensions of this model that represent the two "critical periods" in a party's life-cycle that have been the focus of most recent research on partisanship in Latin America: the formation of partisan attachments to a new party (Samuels and Zucco 2018; Poertner Forthcoming), and the breakdown of partisan attachments to an established party during brand crises or corruption scandals (Seawright 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2015, Lupu 2016).

Extension 1: The Formation of a New Party

Infant political parties face several obstacles that hinder their development of mass partisan support. On the one hand, they are unlikely to have the same resources, visibility, and media access that established parties use to communicate with voters (Van Dyck 2014a), and they often have to rely on "word of mouth" mechanisms to attract new supporters (Samuels and Zucco 2018). On the other hand, unless the party was born with a broad base of popular support, the party may not have enough supporters in most communities to grow through social network mechanisms. Instead, the party may become locked in a low-partisanship equilibrium: because most voters do not know anyone who supports this party, they conclude that it is a minor, fringe party and they decide not to support it, either. One of the most effective ways that infant parties can break out of this trap is by recruiting activists among centrally-located members of the network and using these activists to "pull" other members of the network into the party.

In this extension of the model, I assume that Ω is a new party that has not yet won elected office. Because Ω is still a minor actor on the political scene, it is rarely mentioned in the news, and citizens receive only a trickle of media-based information about the party, represented by a ρ_i close to zero. For simplicity, I assume that the citizens have an identical prior partisan attachment to Ω represented by μ^0 , where $\mu^0 < \mu$, which means that the citizens start out more hostile to the party than they would be if they were perfectly-informed about its "true nature." In a network

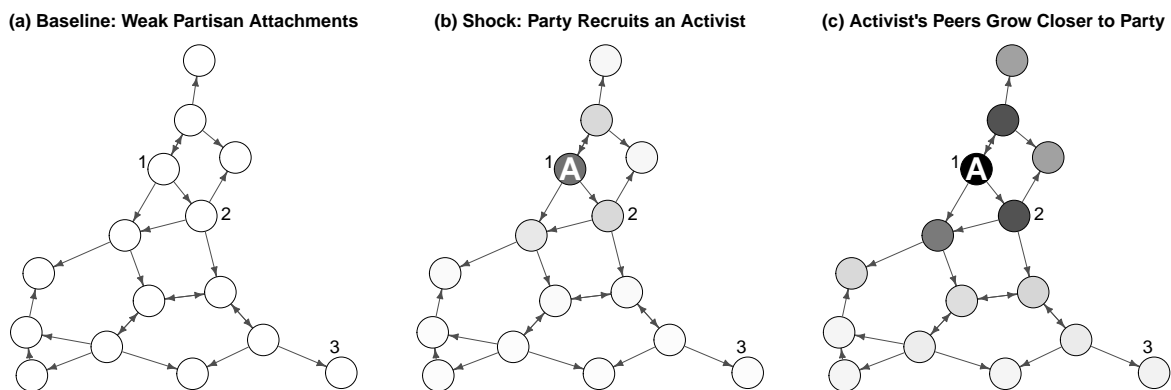


Figure 2.1: Partisan Composition of the Network Before and After Activist Recruitment

setting, a community’s antipathy to a party is self-reinforcing: the citizens do not know much about this party, but they observe that nobody else in their social circle seems to like it, either, and this confirms their prior suspicion that they have nothing in common with this party. As long as ρ_i is greater than zero, the citizens will still receive *some* information about the party from outside of their social network, and this outside information will gradually pull their posterior partisanship toward μ . But because ρ_i is small and most of the citizens’ information about the party comes from network peers who are opposed to it, this convergence toward μ is likely to be extremely slow.

Now suppose that at time t_R , party Ω successfully recruits one of the members of the community to be a party activist. By participating in the party’s weekly activities and developing personal relationships with the party’s founders, the Activist soon learns that she has more in common with the party than she had initially assumed. In all subsequent periods, she disregards the information about Ω supplied by her poorly-informed network peers in her original community and she updates her beliefs about the party solely on the basis her first-hand experience with the party’s other activists and aspiring politicians, meaning that $\rho_{Activist} = 1$. The Activist’s sudden exposure to a barrage of new information that casts the party in a more-favorable light leads her to develop a stronger partisan attachment toward Ω , and her posterior partisanship begins to

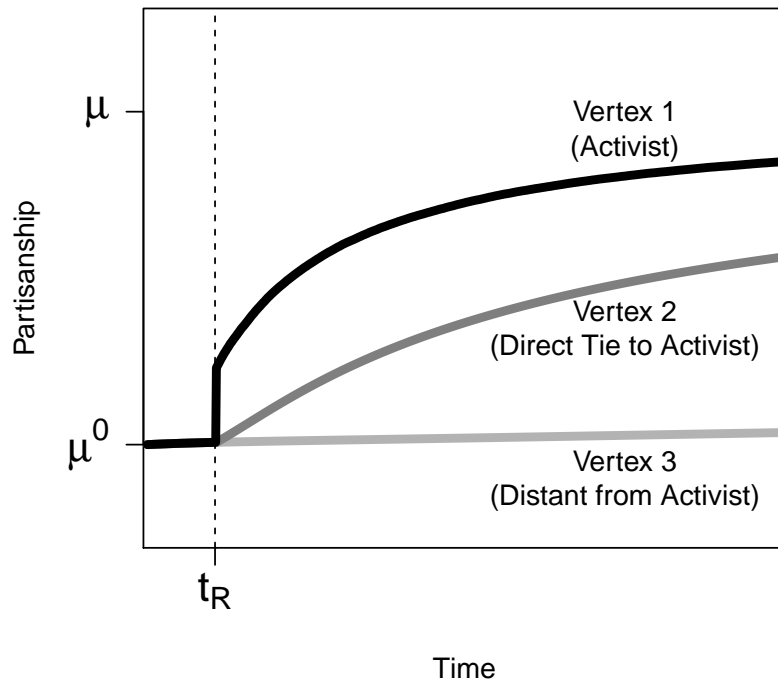


Figure 2.2: The Effect of Activist Recruitment on Partisanship, by Social Distance to Activist

converge to μ at a much faster rate.

As Figure 2.1 shows, the recruitment of even a single activist into the party can have a far-reaching effect on the partisanship of the rest of the network. As the Activist grows closer to Ω , her network peers begin to reevaluate the party as well. Although they do not know the party’s founders personally, they do know the Activist, and they reason that any party that she could support cannot be so bad. Now that they can attach a familiar face to the party, it becomes easier for the Activist’s peers to see the party as “one of them” rather than as an outsider that has nothing to do with their community, and the Activist’s peers start to identify with Ω more strongly. This changes the way that their own network peers see the party, and even members of the network who do not know the Activist personally start to grow closer to her party.

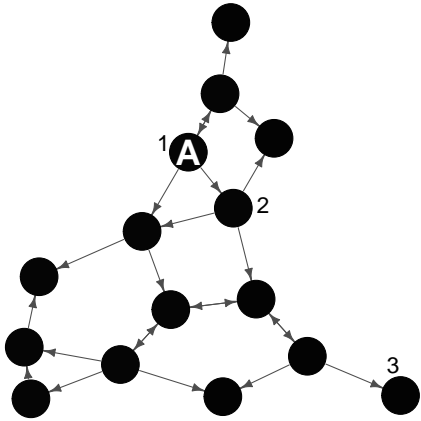
However, Figure 2.1 also suggests that these stronger partisan attachments to Ω will spread unevenly through the network. The effect of the Activist's recruitment on each citizen's partisanship diminishes with the social distance between that citizen and the Activist. Although the citizens close to the Activist are soon converted to the party's cause, citizens who are only distantly connected to the Activist are able to retain their antipathy toward the party because the people that *they* know have not yet changed their minds about the party. Figure 2.2 shows the posterior partisanship over time for the three vertexes labeled in Figure 2.1. While Vertex 2 warms to the party after the Activist is recruited at time t_R , Vertex 3's attachment to the party is barely affected by the Activist's recruitment.

Extension 2: Reputational Crises in Established Parties

In addition to helping their party attract new supporters, party activists can also stabilize or reinforce the partisanship of the supporters that the party already has. The stabilizing effect of the party activists may be redundant in a network whose members already overwhelmingly support the activist's party, but it can become critical for the party's partisan survival in the network during national-level crises that damage the party's reputation, such as corruption scandals or policy-switching. A party activist's own partisanship may be relatively immune to these types of shocks. As a local expert in her party, the activist's partisanship is grounded in her first-hand experiences with the party, and she is unlikely to shed their partisan loyalties simply because other members of her community have ceased to identify with it. Nor is she likely to be greatly influenced by media reports that now cast the party in a negative light, since as a "party insider," she has her own sources of privileged information about what is really going on within the party. The stability of the activists' own partisanship during the reputational crisis can help anchor the partisanship of the rest of the network.

In this extension, the network starts out in a high-partisanship equilibrium. Each citizen's partisan attachment to Ω is already close to μ , and this partisan attachment is reinforced both by

(a) Baseline: Strong Partisan Attachments



(b) Shock: Brand Crisis Damages Party's Reputation

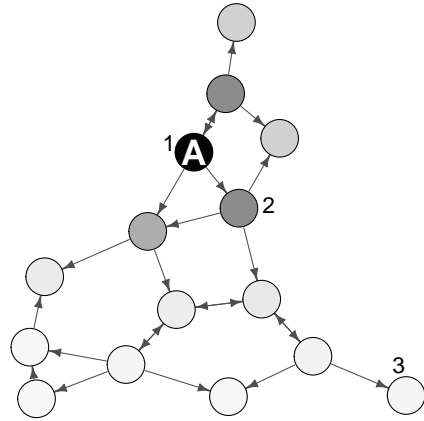


Figure 2.3: Partisan Composition of the Network Before and After a Scandal

Ω 's strong support in the rest of the network, and by the stream of media reports about Ω that the citizens receive in each period. However, at time t_c , the party's leading politician is implicated in a major corruption scandal that damages the party's reputation. Media coverage of Ω becomes harshly critical of the party, and in all subsequent periods, the citizen's media reports about the party are drawn from the distribution $y_i^t \sim N(\mu - \beta, \sigma)$, where $\beta > 0$ represents the damage to the party's reputation caused by the scandal. The scandal makes it more difficult for the citizens to see Ω as similar to themselves, and their partisan attachments to the party grow weaker over time.

Nevertheless, as Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show, some citizens may be less affected by the scandal than others. Because Vertex 1 is still a party activist, she continues to base her opinion about the party on her first-hand experiences with the party's politicians and other activists rather than on the sensational media coverage. From her perspective, Ω is still the same party that it always was, even if its leader is now disgraced. Her stream of observations about the party's nature is unaffected by the scandal, and these observations continue to come from the distribution $y_{Activist}^t \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$.

On the other hand, Vertex 3's faith in the party is shaken by the scandal. Unlike the Activist, Vertex 3 forms his opinion of the party based on what the media and his network

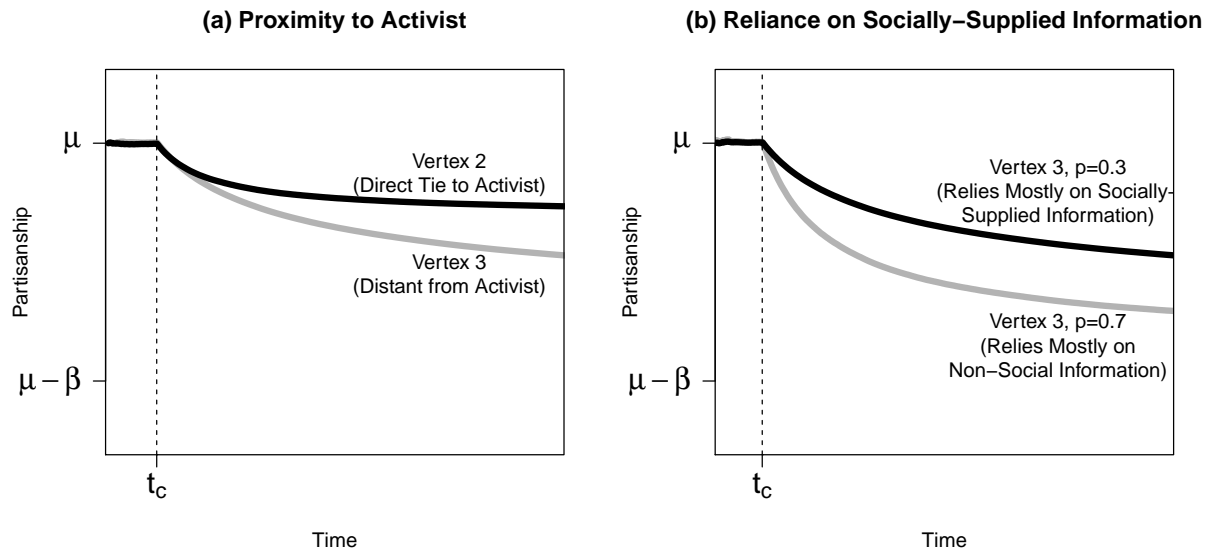


Figure 2.4: The Effect of a Scandal on Partisanship, by Social Distance to Activist and Degree of Reliance on Socially-Supplied Information

peers say about it. Nearly every evening, he is bombarded with news reports about the party's corruption, and the media's negative tone prompts him to revise his opinion about the party. Moreover, his socially-supplied information confirms his growing suspicion that he no longer has anything in common with the party. The only member of the network who supplies Vertex 3 with political information has turned against the party as well, and this makes it even easier for Vertex 3 to stop identifying with Ω .

A more-interesting case is the one represented by Vertex 2. The media's coverage of the party is at odds with both his prior beliefs about the party and his socially-supplied information. He is disgusted by the scandal, but he also sees that his close friend, Vertex 1 still supports the party as if nothing has happened. This contradictory information leads Vertex 2 to react less drastically to the scandal compared to Vertex 3. His partisan attachment to Ω weakens after the scandal, but he drifts away from the party more slowly than most other members of the network because his partisanship is anchored by his relationship with Vertex 1 and her continued support for the party.

Implications

These examples imply that the way that a voter's partisanship changes over time can depend on the presence of party activists in their social network, and their relationships with those activists. At the individual level, voters who have direct social ties to party activists are likely to begin identifying with the activist's party earlier than voters who are more socially-distant. Voters who are socially-proximate to activists are also less likely to abandon their partisanship during moments of crisis for the party. At the network or community level, the party's partisan support will grow at a faster rate among the population and survive longer during reputation crises if the party has a higher density of activists in the network.

Moreover, changes in the activist composition of the network can lead to subsequent shifts in the partisanship of the other members of the network. The arrival of new activists or the recruitment of respected community leaders into the party can have a cascading effect on the rest of the network that makes other members of the community more likely to see the party as similar to themselves. The effects of activist demobilization are more subtle. The departure of activists from the party may have only a very limited effect on the partisanship of the rest of the community if the network is already close to its partisan equilibrium and voters' partisan attachments are reinforced by their social ties to other partisans. However, the demobilization of the party's activists can leave the network especially vulnerable to future shocks to the party's reputation. If the party's activists stand by their party during its brand crisis, the party may be able to hold onto some of its partisans and recover its lost supporters when the crisis is over. But if the party activists walk out of the party or stay home, their departure could aggravate the effects of the crisis by signaling to the rest of the community that the party is truly irredeemable.

Why Activists Matter

Party activists are not the only type of voter who can influence the partisanship of other members of the network. Nevertheless, most party activists share several characteristics that make them uniquely effective at driving partisan change in their networks. First, activists are usually centrally-located in their community's network, and this enables them to influence many other voters simultaneously. Second, activists are party loyalists, and their long-term relationship with their party sharpens their own political views and allows them to emit a clear and consistent partisan signal to their peers. Third, party activists are more likely than other types of party actors to be full members of the same communities that they seek to mobilize. This encourages the voters to see the activist as a peer whose partisanship is informative of which party someone like them could support. The interaction of these three characteristics—and particularly the activist's hybrid status as both a “party animal” and a “pillar of the community”—makes the activist a relatable public face of the party in their community that the party can use to tailor its image to the community's own preferences.

Activists are centrally-located in the network

The type of people who become party activists tend to be better-connected than the average voter. Political parties go out of their way to recruit activists who are already involved in a variety of civil society and neighborhood organizations because these activists bring with them well-developed network ties that they can use to mobilize their peers into the party (Samuels and Zucco 2018). In social networks parlance, most party activists have a *high degree centrality*, which means that they have direct connections to many other members of the network. These network ties are a valuable asset for a party because they enable the activist to influence a large number of other voters simultaneously. Moreover, activists are adept at leveraging their preexisting social relationships to expand the party's support through the network. Because the

party activists initiate political conversations with the *intention* of changing their peers' minds about politics, their political communications are more focused and more strategic than the typical political conversation between friends or relatives. The activists' political communication is also likely to be *asymmetric*, which means that political influence mostly flows in one direction along a network tie: the activists influence their peers to a much greater extent than their peers influence the activists (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004). This asymmetry is a necessary condition for the spread of new or initially unpopular opinions through a social network because it allows the activists to influence people that they might disagree with without abandoning or watering down their own viewpoint.

Activists have a long-term relationship with their party

Another important characteristic of party activists is their long-term involvement with their party. At a minimum, party activists support the same party in election after election and routinely work on the party's electoral campaigns. Many activists go much further and remain involved in party activities throughout the year. Even when there is no election in sight, they still attend weekly party meetings, organize barbecues or rallies to commemorate important party anniversaries, and pass out pamphlets at street fairs on the weekend. As an activist from Uruguay's National Party described his day-to-day work,

We aren't always campaigning, but we are always working. We are constantly meeting with our neighbors, or organizing ideological conferences. We hold plenaries each month, where politicians come and converse with the people who show up. They tell us what they are doing at the legislative level. They consult us, and we give them ideas. And we work territorially. We hold periodic meetings in each neighborhood where we chat about things, about what we can do to solve peoples problems. The next election is still two years away, but we have so much work to do now. (National Party activist, Uruguay, October, 2017)

This long-term, "high-intensity participation" (Whiteley and Seyd 2002) has several implications for the activist's proselytizing work in their community. First, it anchors the activist's

own partisan attachment and political views. This helps the activists articulate a clear political message in their conversations with voters, and it also helps them withstand living in networks or neighborhoods that are currently opposed to their party without losing faith or revising their own beliefs. Second, the activists' intimate involvement with the party makes them an expert in their party's affairs who can speak with authority on the party's behalf. Third, by investing so much time and energy into the party, the activists develop a personal stake in the party that makes them reluctant to abandon it during moments of crisis. While politicians who see the party in mostly instrumental terms might jump ship once the party no longer appears to be a viable tool for attaining office, the low-level activists may choose to stay and try to fight for their party. For the activists, the party is not solely a tool for self-advancement, but also a core part of their own identity and a source of friendships that they have built up through years of party work. Fourth, the activists' year-round involvement in the life of the party can form part of the "party image" or "brand" that the party seeks to project to potential supporters. When voters see party activists conversing outside their base unit before their weekly meeting or staffing a party booth on a plaza, they see a party that is much greater than the small number of elite politicians at the top of the party hierarchy. Especially during moments of crisis for the party, the activists' visible grassroots party work can help stabilize voters' perceptions of the party by reassuring them that the party is still the same organization that it was before the scandal or brand crisis.

Activists are embedded in the same communities that they seek to mobilize

The third key to the activists' partisan influence is their deep involvement in the voters' own daily lives. The ideal activist is not just a party operative, but also a friendly neighbor, a trusted co-worker, or a beloved uncle who has developed intimate personal relationships with the voters that he seeks to influence. These relationships serve several functions for the activist and the party. First, they help the activist gather privileged information about the voters' needs, anxieties, and preferences. Second, they enable the activist to speak to the voters in a language

that they will understand and tailor the party's message to the voters' own concerns. Third, they encourage the voters to see the activist as a peer whose partisanship is indicative of which party they themselves should support. Fourth, and relatedly, they allow the voters to attach a friendly and familiar face to the party that is likely to be more appealing and relatable than the face presented by the party's politicians and elite leaders (Calvo and Murillo 2019).

Activists do not transform voters into partisans simply through one-off interactions that take place during an election campaign. Instead, they change the voters' opinions about their party slowly, through hundreds of political and non-political conversations that take place outside of the campaign season, often over the course of years. Several of the activists that I interviewed suggested that this day-to-day neighborhood work was their most important responsibility as a party activist.

The street is where we win voters away from the *Frente Amplio*. We do it by meeting with our neighbors, by talking to them, and by showing them that the political reality in this country is not always what the *Frenteampelistas* say it is. (National Party activist, Uruguay, September, 2017)

We meet with voters face to face, because that is the only way to get to know them, or perhaps calm them when they are angry, or bring them good news, or understand what they really want from the party. Sometimes the media gives people the wrong idea about our party, but by meeting with our neighbors and talking to them in person, we are able to sort it out and start to solve their problems together. (*Frente Amplio* activist, Uruguay, October, 2017)

You have to show up again and again. You have to involve yourself in their lives and maintain the relationships that you have built, because that is how you win their trust. I do not really care whether they vote for us in November. This is about a much larger process of politicization, and it begins when we show up and show them that we care about them. (Democratic Revolution activist, Chile, October, 2017)

The territorial model of party organization rests on this type of neighborhood work. Under this model, a party is organized on the ground through a network of base units, party clubs, committees, cells, and local offices in each neighborhood or community. The activists who form these base units are responsible for representing the party in a specific geographic area,

sometimes no larger than a couple of city blocks. By specializing in such a narrow territory, they can develop local expertise and form personal relationships with voters, and this in turn helps the activist mobilize votes on election day and maintain the party's ties to its supporters outside of the campaign season. The following chapters of this dissertation will show that Latin American parties' adoption of this labor-intensive, activist-centered territorial model in the late 19th and early 20th centuries helped these parties capture voters' partisan loyalties, while the decline of this organizational model in the late 20th century is responsible for the high partisan instability that many Latin American parties have experienced in recent decades.

Party Activists and Brokers

In Latin America, party activists sometimes serve as what the clientelism literature refers to as “brokers” (Stokes et al. 2013). Yet despite the empirical overlap between activists and brokers, it is important not to conflate these two terms. *Brokers* are intermediaries who mobilize support on behalf of a party by using the party's resources to attend to the day-to-day needs of a group of voters, or “clients.” Brokerage often involves *clientelism*, which is a contingent exchange of benefits for political support (Nichter 2018). While clientelistic brokerage can be an effective way for party activists to control preexisting social networks or strengthen their network ties to voters, not all party activists engage in clientelism (Calvo and Murillo 2019). Similarly, as Holland and Palmer-Rubin (2015) remind us, not all brokers are party activists.

In Table 2.1, I adapt the typology of brokers developed by Holland and Palmer-Rubin (2015), but I adjust their dimensions and terminology slightly. Although most brokers maintain long-term relationships with their clients, brokers differ in whether they are connected to the clients through vertical or semi-horizontal relationships. The former are elites who stand above the community that they seek to mobilize, while the latter are embedded in their clients' community. A second dimension that distinguishes different types of brokers is the duration of their relationship

Table 2.1: Typology of Brokerage Strategies

		Is the Broker a Member of the Party?	
		Yes	No
Is the Broker's Relationship with the Clients Vertical or Semi-Horizontal?	Vertical	<p>Politician Brokerage</p> <p><i>Example:</i> A mayor in Brazil who leveraged his large personal following to get elected and now rewards his supporters by giving them preferential access to municipal services</p>	<p>Patrimonial Brokerage</p> <p><i>Example:</i> A large landowner in early 20th century Chile who instructs his <i>inquilinos</i> (peons) to vote for the party of his choosing</p>
	Semi-Horizontal	<p>Activist Brokerage</p> <p><i>Example:</i> A Christian Democratic militant in Santiago in the 1960s who represents her party in her <i>población</i> (shantytown) and uses her party connections to solve problems in her community</p>	<p>Market Brokerage</p> <p><i>Example:</i> A neighborhood leader in Peru who coordinates the votes of his friends and neighbors behind the party that makes him the best offer</p>

with the political party. Some brokers are affiliated with the same party over the course of decades, while other brokers engage with the party only through short-term, one-off transactions. As Figure 2.5 shows, these differences imply very different forms of party organization. Under the *Activist Brokerage* model, the party maintains a long-term, physical presence in the voters' community in the form of the party activists who serve as the public face of the party and use the party's resources to solve the voters' everyday problems. Under the *Politician Brokerage* model, the relationship between the voters and the party is instead mediated by an elite politician who is not a member of the voters' community; due to the inherent inequality between the politician broker and his clients, the clients' relationship to the broker's party is likely to be more distant and potentially more coercive. The voter-party relationship is even more distant under the *Patrimonial Brokerage* and *Market Brokerage* models because these types of brokers do not have a long-term relationship with the party; since the clientelistic transaction is negotiated solely between the party and the broker, most of the voters may not even come into direct contact with any representative of the party that they are voting for.

These differences also have important implications for the likelihood that the broker will

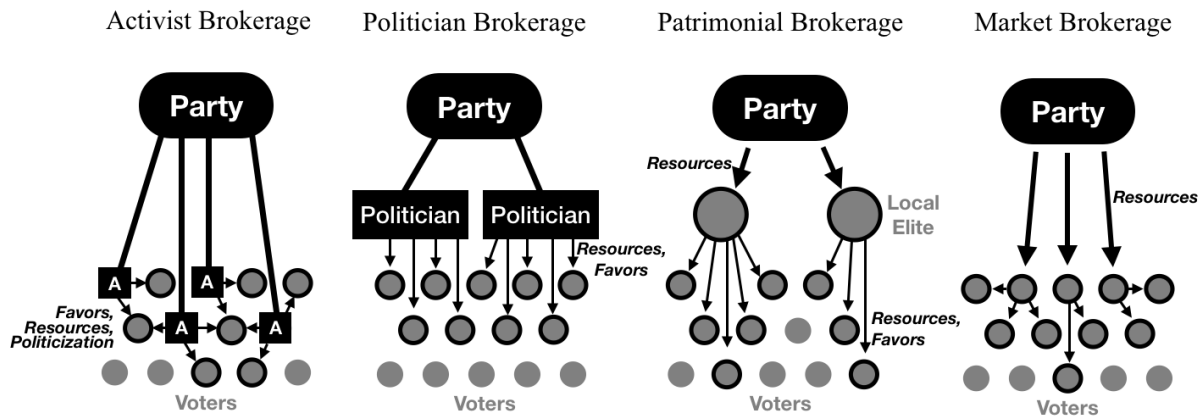


Figure 2.5: Illustration of Brokerage Models

be able to mobilize voters' *partisan loyalties* in addition to their votes. *Activist Brokers* have the greatest influence over their clients' partisanship because they alone have the three characteristics that enable an actor to drive partisan change in a network: network centrality, stable party loyalties, and embeddedness in the voters' community. While the other three types of brokers usually share the activist's central position in a social network, they lack one or both of the other two characteristics. Because *Politician Brokers* are elite party members who maintain unequal, vertical relationships with their clients, the clients are unlikely to see them as peers whose partisanship is indicative of which party someone like them could identify with. As non-party actors, *Patrimonial Brokers* and *Market Brokers* may not even have a partisan attachment that they could transmit to their clients, and their tendency to switch their support between different parties in each election makes it unlikely that their clients will form any sort of deep, psychological attachment to the parties that they are instructed to vote for. While any competent broker is able to get her clients to vote for a party, only *Activist Brokers* are likely to convince their clients to identify with that party as well.

Why, then, would parties ever rely on the brokerage services of non-activists? A central pillar of this dissertation's argument that will be developed in greater detail in the next chapter is that party activists are often a liability for their party. First, activists are more likely than other

brokers to seek to influence what the party stands for and whom it represents. A party may struggle to recruit activists unless it gives them some amount of voice in party decisions, but activists who have a voice in party decisions may push the party's ideological position away from the median voter and make it more difficult for the party to win votes through programmatic strategies. Second, like the "Hybrid Brokers" in Holland and Palmer-Rubin's typology, *Activist Brokers* are likely to develop divided loyalties between the party and the community that make them less-reliable than other types of brokers. Third, *Activist Brokerage* is especially labor-intensive and inefficient. Due to the semi-horizontal nature of activist-voter relationships, some voters in the network may develop "redundant" relationships with multiple activists. This means that the marginal activist would bring in fewer *new* votes compared to a *Politician* or *Patrimonial Broker* whose personal network was the same size as that of the activist. Fourth, *Activist Brokerage* offers the party less flexibility compared to other models. Under the *Patrimonial*, *Market*, and even the *Politician Brokerage* models, a rising party can quickly absorb large blocs of voters, and it can just as easily shed them when the party can no longer afford them or no longer needs them (Novaes 2018). It takes the party a longer amount of time to recruit or train a competent *Activist Broker*, and at least in the short term, it may be more difficult for the party to get rid of activists that it no longer wants.

A Note on Terminology

Although Political Scientists sometimes use the terms "brokerage," "clientelism," and "patronage" interchangeably, this dissertation maintains a distinction between these concepts. Both brokerage and clientelism concern how the party relates to individual voters. *Brokerage* is a political mobilization strategy in which the party relies on intermediaries to attend to voters' daily needs and bring them to the polls on election day. *Clientelism* refers to a *contingent* exchange of material benefits for political support between parties and voters. Brokerage does not always imply clientelism. It is possible for brokers to do favors for voters without making the favors

contingent on their political support, and in such cases, this brokerage would not be considered a form of clientelism.

Following the framework developed by Stokes et al. (2013), this dissertation will use the term *patronage* to refer specifically to a party's use of material benefits to recruit and reward its *activists* and formal members (as opposed to its ordinary voters or partisans). The difference between clientelism and patronage hinges on who the target is: if the party is purchasing the political participation of an ordinary voter, then it is clientelism; but if the party is incentivizing the participation of an activist, then it is patronage.

These distinctions will become especially relevant in Chapter 5, when I pinpoint how 20th century Latin American parties used state resources to attract and maintain voters' partisan loyalties. I find that parties from across the ideological spectrum used *patronage* to maintain their activist networks, and these party activists drew voters into the party's orbit by practicing forms of *brokerage* that often fell short of *clientelism*. These distinctions will also be important in Chapter 6, when I evaluate how the state reforms of the late 20th century affected Latin American parties. I find that these reforms reduced the prevalence of *patronage*, but they did not necessarily reduce the prevalence of *clientelism*. Even after *patronage* ceased to be a viable strategy for mobilizing activists, some parties continued to rely on *clientelism* to mobilize voters by shifting their activists' *brokerage* responsibilities onto non-activist brokers.

Party Activists and Interest Organizations

Previous work on 20th century Latin American parties has emphasized the important political and electoral roles played by interest organizations and civic organizations, such as labor unions, indigenous movements, shantytown organizations, neighborhood committees, churches, and soccer clubs. Much of this research sees organizations as tools that parties use to incorporate voters into the political system (Collier and Collier 1991), mobilize and control working class

voters (Davis 1989), buy votes (Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015), and forge partisan cleavages and identities (Collier and Collier 1991; Roberts 2014; Poertner Forthcoming). Moreover, one of the most compelling prior explanations for the decline of Latin American parties in the late 20th century attributes this pattern to transformations in the relationship between parties and organizations during the 1980s and 1990s (Levitsky 2003; Collier and Handlin 2009).

In the framework of this dissertation, interest and civic organizations are an extremely well-structured and durable type of social network. Organizations are valuable prizes for political parties because a party that has achieved a hegemonic status within an organization can use the organization's resources, infrastructure, and networks to mobilize its members in elections. However, members of an organization do not automatically identify with the party that their organization supports, not even when the organization maintains a long-term affiliation with a single political party. Like any other social network, organizations shape voters' *partisan* loyalties only when the party has activists and preexisting partisans within the organization's ranks.

When most of an organization's activists are also party activists from the same party, the organization can be a powerful tool for partisan socialization. One of the reasons why the Argentine labor movement was able to sustain the Peronist identity during the party's lengthy proscription was because Peronist activists had already seized control over the unions and ousted rival Communist and Socialist labor activists from their leadership positions by the early 1950s (McGuire 1997; Levitsky 2003). "Externally-organized" parties that were founded by particular organizations or social movements such as the MAS in Bolivia are often able to attain a similar hegemonic status in their founding organizations.

However, parties that have long-term ties to an organization or maintain large numbers of party activists within the organization's ranks may still fail to capture the partisan loyalties of most of the organization's members. First, if the party gained control over the organization by co-opting its leaders rather than by recruiting its grassroots activists into the party, the organization is likely to have many of the same limitations as other hierarchical networks: most of the organization's

rank-and-file members would have very little contact with the party's "true believers," and the party actors that they do know would likely be their superiors rather than their peers. For example, in mid-20th century Mexico, the PRI used its centralized control over interest organizations to mobilize votes, yet it struggled to develop a deeper partisan identity among the organizations' members comparable to the Peronist identity in the Argentine labor movement (Davis 1989).

Second, the party's activists within an organization may face competition from the activists of other parties. For example, most labor and neighborhood organizations in Chile in the 1960s tended to be battlegrounds of party competition rather than unitary actors that were subservient to a single party. The diversity of activists within these organizations encouraged a similar diversity of party identification among the organizations' members.

Third, a single voter may have overlapping affiliations with multiple organizations, and these organizations might be dominated by different parties. Moreover, a voter's organizational membership may form only a small piece of their broader identity as a person. For example, while Marxist parties dominated Uruguay's labor movement by the 1960s, most union members continued to identify with Uruguay's centrist traditional parties due to the traditional parties' dominance over neighborhood-level politics (Buchanan 2008, 68).

Conclusion

This chapter has developed a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between party activists and the partisan attachments of the broader electorate. I began with a general discussion of the spread of partisanship through social networks. I then highlighted the role that low-level party activists play in forging and maintaining partisan identities in these networks. Finally, I outlined how activist-based strategies differ from other brokerage and organizational strategies that parties can use to mobilize electoral support.

In the next few chapters, the attention of the dissertation will shift away from the relation-

ship between voters and party activists, and towards the interactions between party activists and party elites. Nevertheless, the grassroots organizational work that these activists do in their social networks and communities is essential for understanding the constraints and opportunities that the activists and elites faced, and how their decisions ultimately affected the mass party identification of the broader electorate. The organizational changes that take place in many Latin American traditional parties in Chapter 4 fundamentally transform the way that parties relate to lower and middle-class citizens. As parties reach out beyond narrow elite circles and incorporate low-level activists into their organizations, the parties start to maintain a permanent presence in mass social networks for the first time. The presence of party activists changes the way that voters see the parties and helps ordinary voters identify with the traditional parties. The activists' grassroots work intensifies in Chapter 5 as the activists push their way into new social networks that parties previously ignored and fight activists from rival parties for control over networks that they once took for granted. However, activists start to disappear from their networks in Chapters 6 and 7, and this demobilization deprives the parties of one of the most important resources that they used to sustain mass partisan attachments in these networks.

Chapters 8 and 9 leave the party elites behind and revisit the relationship between party activists and ordinary voters. In these chapters, I test the mechanisms outlined in this theoretical chapter using subnational data and social network data. I show that the presence of early activists in a social network or community helps a new political party attract partisan supporters. I also show that the presence of activists makes mass partisan attachments to a party more resilient during crises that damage its national-level reputation.

Chapter 3

How Parties Motivate Their Activists

The previous chapter presented a theoretical framework about the relationship between party activists and the other voters in their communities. The present chapter turns to the relationship between the activists and party elites. One of the central themes of this dissertation is that party activists are both an asset and a liability for their parties. On the one hand, they are political allies of the party's politicians who help the politicians mobilize votes and partisans. On the other hand, they are also autonomous actors whose goals may differ from those of the party's elites, and they may not always have the politicians' short-term electoral interests at heart. I begin this chapter by discussing the reasons why activists choose to work for a party over the long term. I then examine the conditions under which party elites are willing to surrender some control over their party to their activists for the sake of keeping the activists mobilized.

Why Do Activists Work for a Party?

Process Incentives

The most fundamental reason why many activists participate in a party is because they find pleasure in their work. Political participation is a source of entertainment, catharsis, and a

sense of agency (Tullock 1971; Wood 2003). Party work can also form the basis of an activists' social life and life-long friendships with fellow activists. Yet while these intrinsic benefits of party participation are important to activists, they are less useful for explaining variation in levels and intensity of activism across parties or across time. Nor are they particularly helpful for understanding why activists choose to get involved in a *political party* in particular, rather than any of the countless other civil society organizations in their community that provide similar process benefits (Whitely and Seyd 2002). In this dissertation, I will treat process incentives as a constant that provides a baseline endowment of party activists even to exhausted and decaying parties. But since parties have only limited control over the supply of process incentives, they are unlikely to form a central part of a party's mobilization strategies.

Ideology and Policies

One particular advantage of working for a political party is that parties are a tool that policy-seeking activists and interest groups can use to contest political office and enact their preferred policies through the formal political institutions (Cohen et al. 2008). Moreover, parties have some control over the extent to which they supply this type of ideological or policy-based incentive to their activists. By staking out a clear and distinct position on the issues and embracing positions that are currently under-supplied by other parties in the system, a party can make itself more attractive to policy-seeking activists who wish to use the party to pursue the policies that they prefer.

However, even if we set aside the obvious collective action problems on behalf of the activists, along with the commitment problem on behalf of the party, policy-based incentives are a problematic way to keep an activist base permanently mobilized. Ideologically-motivated party activism is often thermostatic in nature. It is easiest for parties to use promises of political change to recruit activists when the party is currently in the opposition and the incumbent government is pursuing policies that the activists find abhorrent. In these cases, the party might find a large

supply of potential activists who are outraged enough to contribute their free time to a party that promises to make everything better as soon as it wins back power. Yet these promises are unlikely to be enough to *sustain* the activists' participation after it wins office and must confront the realities of governing. Even for parties like the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay—which is one of the contemporary Latin American parties that has been most successful at maintaining a permanently-mobilized activist base—winning power can have a demobilizing effect on party activism:

In 2005, when we assumed power at the national level, activism in the *Frente* began to lose its energy. Many of our comrades who had the longest record in grassroots activism took up responsibilities in the new government. At the same time, other activists became tired and stopped working. Unfortunately, there was a perception that now that we controlled the government, political change was supposed to happen through the government institutions rather than through our popular movement. We became more passive. ... I also think some of our activists are disappointed that we were not able to accomplish more after we won power. It is difficult to inspire people to contribute to a project of change when you have already held power for twelve years. (*Frente Amplio* activist, Uruguay, September, 2017)

This thermostatic nature of party activism can be healthy for democracy, as it fosters the regular alternation of parties in power by weakening incumbent parties and galvanizing the political opposition (Schumpeter 1942). Moreover, if the party is primarily focused on winning the election in the short term, it may not even care if its activists stop working after the election is over. But if the party is long-sighted enough that it wants to keep its activist mobilized even after it comes to power, it will have to find some other way to motivate its activists once it can no longer offer them mere promises of political change.

Patronage

One of the most common ways that parties recruit new activists and keep their veteran activists mobilized over the long term is by offering them *patronage*—a term that this dissertation will take to mean material selective incentives that a party provides to its members and activists in

exchange for their participation in party activities. Patronage resources can take a variety of forms, including privileged access to health-care, education, and government services; access to social insurance and problem-solving services provided by the party organization; and employment in either the public or private sector. However, in most Latin American countries in the 20th century, the most abundant and strategically important type of patronage resource was public sector jobs.

There are several complementarities between party activism and patronage jobs. First, because public sector jobs provide a continuous stream of material benefits to the employees who hold them, they help free the activists from their other economic commitments and allow them to devote additional hours to organizing on behalf of their party. This is especially important if the party hopes to retain working-class activists who might otherwise be unable to afford to devote a significant amount of time to party work. Second, patronage jobs can reduce agency loss between parties and their local activists. They strengthen the hand of party leaders, and they also give the activists themselves a direct, material stake in their party's electoral success that aligns their incentives with the party's electoral interests (Oliveros 2013). Third, because even low-level civil servants can influence the implementation of policies on the ground, it can be risky for the incumbent party to grant these positions to swing voters who are unlikely to remain loyal to the party over the long term. By filling these positions with its own activists, the incumbent party ensures that loyalists will control the key veto points that could obstruct policy-implementation and service-provision (Scherlis 2010; Grindle 2012).

In most political systems, incumbent parties have greater access to patronage resources compared to opposition parties. By holding executive office, a party is better-able to get its activists appointed to government jobs or channel other types of state resources into the party organization. For this reason, patronage can help cut against the thermostatic nature of ideologically-motivated activist participation: when patronage resources are abundant, incumbent parties that are no longer able to motivate activists through policy promises may be able to use their greater access to patronage to *keep* their activists working for the party after the election is won. In these

cases, a party's transition from the opposition into the government would have two, countervailing effects on activist participation: incumbency makes it harder for the party to rely on ideological or policy-based incentives to motivate its activists, but easier to resort to patronage incentives.

One of the most common assumptions in the literature on political parties is that incumbency status not only affects a party's ability to supply patronage to its activists at a given point in time, but also affects whether the party will continue to rely on patronage in the future. In his classic on the relationship between parties and the state, Shefter (1994) argues that whether or not a party held power during its formative period has a lasting effect on the party organization, and "externally-mobilized" parties that formed outside of power are less likely to rely on patronage even after patronage resources become available to them. I find limited support for the latter half of this hypothesis, and as I will show in the subsequent chapters, many of Latin America's externally-mobilized socialist and populist parties had no qualms about relying on patronage upon coming to power. However, I do concur with the part of Shefter's argument that suggests that a party's incumbency status during its formative years can affect how the party develops over time. In particular, I find that parties that spend their early years in the opposition are more likely to adopt internal decision-making institutions that offer their activists a meaningful *voice* in party decisions.

Voice

When a party lacks sufficient access to patronage, an alternative way to keep its activist base mobilized is by granting the activists a voice in party decisions such as candidate-selection, the crafting of the party's platform, and even day-to-day administration of the party organization. In the process, the party's leaders and politicians relinquish some control over the party, and they grant their activists institutional tools that they can use to put pressure on the party leaders or pursue their own policy objectives. A major advantage of voice-based incentives over patronage-based incentives is that voice-based incentives are available to a party regardless of its incumbency

status. However, voice-based incentives also entail far greater risks for the party. When activists have influence over the party's strategies or policy platforms, the activists may be in a position to force the party to extreme positions that are unpopular with voters. Over the long term, the activists may even try to challenge the party's leaders for control over the party.

Activist voice can function as a type of process incentive, but unlike other process incentives, parties can take steps to increase its supply. Perez, Piñeiro, and Rosenblatt (2019) argue that the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay keeps its activist based mobilized by using its inclusive internal decision-making rules to foster a sense of political efficacy among its activists. Using a survey experiment, they show that activists are willing to devote more hours to party work when they perceive that their work can influence party decisions.

Activist voice is also closely related to ideological incentives. A party's decision to grant its activists influence over party decisions can serve as a credible commitment by party leaders to pursue policies that are popular among the activists but potentially unpopular among the broader electorate. In light of Latin American parties' long history of abandoning their campaign promises after coming to power (Stokes 2001; Lupu 2016), activists would have good reason to be skeptical of their politicians' pledges to deliver on unpopular policies unless they were also accompanied by institutional mechanisms that would help the activists hold the party's politicians accountable. When these accountability mechanisms exist, the politicians' temptation to renege on their policy bargains may even *encourage* activist participation since the activists would be more likely to detect and sanction the politicians' betrayal if they remained mobilized even after the election.

Plausibility Check

This discussion suggests that parties keep their activists mobilized over the long term by offering them either patronage benefits or a voice in the party's decisions. If this is true, then we might expect that parties that offer their activists greater amounts of patronage or voice would have more-mobilized activist bases. I verify whether this is plausible using cross-sectional

party-level data from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project, an expert survey that coded parties on a variety of dimensions, including their organization and political strategies. I operationalize activist mobilization using an index based on three questions that ask about the extent to which the party maintains a permanent activist-based organizational presence in society.¹ I measure the extent to which the party relies on patronage using a question that asks about whether the party gives its supporters preferential access to public employment. Finally, I measure activist voice using a question about whether rank-and-file party members are involved in candidate-selection decisions.² Using the subset of the data for Latin America, I estimate the regression model

$$ActivistMobilization_{cp} = \eta_c + \beta_1 Patronage_{cp} + \beta_2 Voice_{cp} + \beta_3 Extremism_{cp} + \varepsilon_{cp}$$

η_c are country fixed effects, while $Extremism_{cp}$ is the party's ideological distance from the average ideology of all of the parties in that same party system.

Figure 3.1 depicts partial regression plots based on the results of this model. There is a very strong and positive relationship between activist mobilization and activist voice, which means that Latin American parties that involve their activists in candidate-selection decisions are also more likely to have activists who participate in other types of grassroots party work throughout the year. There is a somewhat weaker but positive relationship between patronage

¹These questions are (1) “Do the following parties or their individual candidates maintain offices and paid staff at the local or municipal-level? If yes, are these offices and staff permanent or only during national elections?”; (2) “Do the following parties local organizations maintain a permanent social and community presence by holding social events for local party members or sustaining ancillary social groups such as party youth movements, party cooperatives, or athletic clubs?”; and (3) “Do the following parties have local intermediaries (e.g. neighborhood leaders, local notables, religious leaders) who operate in local constituencies on the parties behalf, and perform a variety of important tasks such as maintaining contact with large groups of voters, organizing electoral support and voter turnout, and distributing party resources to voters and supporters?”

²This question is “In Parliamentary or Congressional elections, do the following parties enable simple rank-and-file party members to select the nominees of the party for electoral legislative office, for example through primary elections, caucuses, or mail ballots?” I consider activist voice to be higher in parties that allow their ordinary members to select candidates, and lower in parties in which candidate-selection is controlled by party leaders or incumbent politicians.

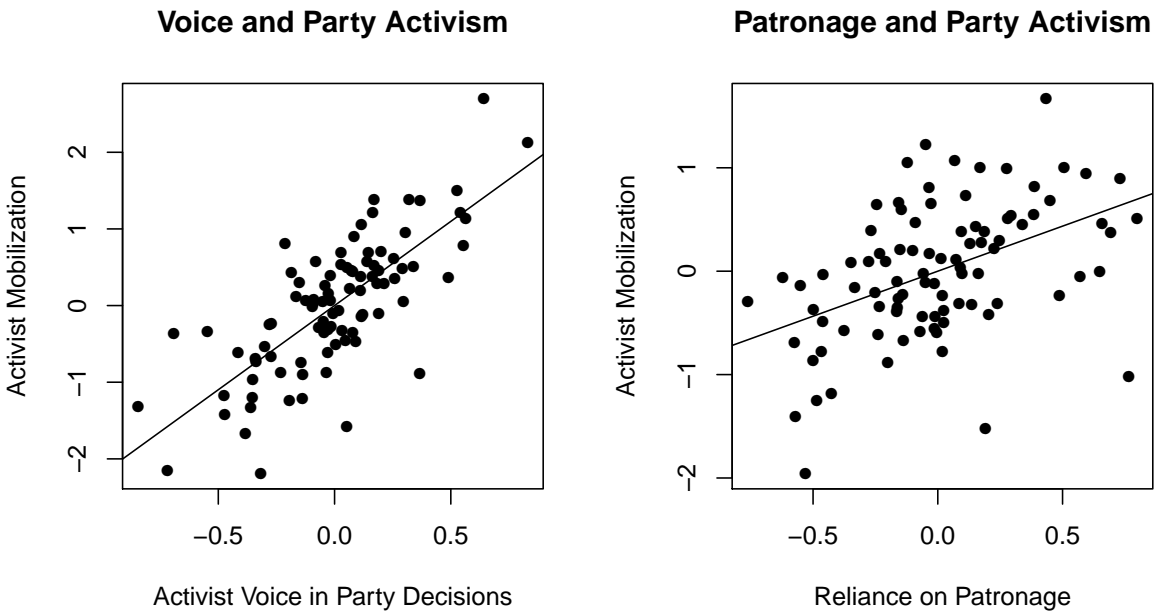


Figure 3.1: Voice, Patronage, and Party Activism in Latin American Parties (Partial Regression Plots)

and activist mobilization. These results are purely correlational, and they are intended merely as suggestive evidence or a “plausibility check” of whether the assumptions behind this chapter’s framework accord with the patterns that we actually see in Latin America. I will test the effect of patronage and voice on activist participation more-rigorously in Chapters 6 and 7.

When Do Party Leaders Give Activists a Voice?

The two most important tools that parties can use to keep their activists mobilized over the long term are patronage and voice. Motivating activists through patronage poses relatively few risks for party leaders and politicians, and I assume that parties will always take advantage of the patronage resources that are available to them. However, motivating activists through voice can entail grave risks for the party leaders, and it is not obvious that doing so is always in their interests. In the remainder of this chapter, I endogenize the degree of voice that activists wield

within their party's decisions by modeling both the activists' decision to work for the party, and the party elites' decision about how much influence they will relinquish to their activists.

Like the influential model of party activism developed by Aldrich (1983), my model is a spatial model in which the ideological position of a party is endogenously determined by the set of activists who choose to participate in or work for that party. The most important way in which my model differs from previous spatial models of party activism is that I give the party's politicians or elites complete control over the *extent* to which the party's ideology will be affected by its activists. The party elites can allow the activists to shape the party's ideology by granting them a voice in party decisions, but they can also choose to cut the activists out of party decisions and decide the party's policy positions unilaterally. The main question of interest is *under what conditions would a party elite grant the activists a meaningful voice in party decisions that might allow the activists to pull the party's ideological position away from the party elite's own ideal point?*

Overview of the Model

This model has two types of decision-making actors: a party Elite, who must decide how much (if any) voice his party's activists will wield in party decisions; and a set of potential party Activists with heterogeneous policy preferences who must decide whether or not they are going to work for the Elite's party. I model their decisions through a two-period election game. At the beginning of the first period, the Elite founds a political party (Ω) in order to gain or retain elected office. In the process of drawing up the party's statutes, the Elite also decides how much voice (v) the party's Activists will have in party decisions. This decision is locked-in throughout the remainder of the game. In each period, potential party Activists decide whether or not to work for party Ω 's election campaign based on (1) the amount of patronage benefits that the party is able to offer them in the current period, and (2) whether they agree with the party's policy positions. An election is held at the end of each period, and the probability that the Elite wins

office is an increasing function of the share of potential Activists who work for the party, and a decreasing function of the party's ideological extremism. The Elite's utility depends on his rents from holding elected office (β) and the policy that is implemented after the election. If the Elite's party wins the election, it implements the policy position that it ran on in the election. If it loses the election, then the Elite's Opponent will implement its preferred policy. For simplicity, I assume that the Opponent is a centrist party that always implements the policy $x_O = 0$. Without loss of generality, I also assume that the Elite's ideal point is positive ($x_E > 0$). If the Elite begins the game in office, the initial policy status quo is the Elite's ideal point: $SQ_1 = x_E$. If the Elite begins the game in the opposition, then $SQ_1 = x_O = 0$.

The party's ideological position (x_Ω) during a given period is the weighted average $x_\Omega = vx^* + (1 - v)x_E$, where x^* is the ideal point of the most-extreme activist who works for the party and x_E is the ideal point of the Elite. If $v > 0$, then the Activists have some say over the party's campaign platform and the policies it will implement if it wins the election. If $v = 0$, then the Elite makes all party decisions unilaterally, and the party's ideological position is simply the Elite's ideal point, x_E . If no activists work for party Ω , then $x_\Omega = x_E$, regardless of the value of v . Setting v to be greater than zero enables the Elite to make his party more attractive to potential activists, but this comes at the cost of committing the Elite to pursuing policies that may be quite distant from his own ideal point

The Activists' Participation Decision

Because the party's likelihood of victory is a probabilistic function of the activists' collective campaign labor and each activist's individual contribution is too small to alter the party's chances of victory on its own, the outcome of the election does not factor into the activists' decision about whether to work for the party. Instead, the activists base their decision solely on the expressive utility that they would gain from working for the party, the material benefits that the party gives them to thank them for their hard work, and the opportunity costs of participating.

Table 3.1: Glossary of Terms in the Model

Ω	The party founded by the Elite
x_E	The Elite's ideal point
x_Ω	The ideological position of the Elite's party
x_O	The ideal point of the Elite's Opponent
x_i	The ideal point of potential party Activist i
x^*	The ideal point of the right-most (most-extreme) Activist who works for the party
x_{min}	The ideal point of the left-most Activist who works for the party
SQ	The policy status quo
β	The Elite's rents from winning elected office
b	The material patronage benefits enjoyed by Activists in the incumbent party
c	The participation cost or opportunity cost incurred by the Activists if they participate
v	The amount of voice that the Activists have in party decisions
S_A	The share of potential party Activists who work for Party Ω
δ	The Elite's discount factor
$p(v)$	The probability that Ω wins the election, as a function of v

The activists' expressive utility depends on two factors: (1) the difference between the activist's ideal point and the policy status quo ($x_i - SQ$) and (2) the squared distance between the activist's ideal point and the party's policy position in the campaign ($(x_i - x_\Omega)^2$). The intuition behind the first factor is that activists who are more ideologically-extreme relative to the status quo are more outraged about the way things are going in their country, and thus gain more fulfillment from working for a political project that seeks to move the country in the direction that they prefer. The intuition behind the second factor is that activists dislike working for parties that are ideologically-distant from their personal views. An ideologically-extreme activist may be able to hold her nose and work for a moderate sell-out, but the dissonance between her views and the party's views will subtract from the expressive enjoyment that she experiences from working for "the cause."

If the activist chooses to work for the party, she will incur an opportunity cost, c . If Ω is in power at the time of the election campaign, the activists who work for the party will also receive an excludable and non-rival material benefit, b . This material benefit can be thought of as a public-sector patronage job that the ruling party can conjure into existence in sufficient numbers

to compensate all of its activists. If the party is in the opposition, the activists do not receive any material benefits. Putting all of this together, the activist's utility from working for the party is

$$U_i(\textit{Work}) = x_i - SQ - (x_i - x_\Omega)^2 + b - c$$

If the activist declines to work for the party, she incurs no costs and receives no expressive or material benefits ($U_i(\textit{Home}) = 0$).

If $v > 0$, then the party's ideological position (x_Ω) is endogenously determined by the set of activists who decide to work for the party. This means that whether a given activist is willing to work for the party also depends in part on which other activists are already working for it. As x_Ω moves to the right, more right-wing activists enter the party, and their entry pushes x_Ω even further to the right. At the same time, more-moderate activists who believe that the party has grown too extreme cease working for the party. As long as $v < 1$, x_Ω will still be anchored to x_E , and the party's ideological drift will end when the party's most-extreme activist is indifferent between working for the party and staying home:

$$\begin{aligned} U^*(\textit{Work}) &= x^* - SQ - (x^* - x_\Omega)^2 + b - c \\ &= x^* - SQ - (x^* - (vx^* + (1-v)x_E))^2 + b - c \\ &= 0 = U^*(\textit{Home}) \end{aligned}$$

Solving for x^* , the equilibrium ideal point of the party's most-extreme activist is

$$x^* = \frac{\sqrt{4(b-c)(v-1)^2 + 4x_E(v-1)^2 - 4(SQ)(v-1)^2 + 1} + 2x_E(v-1)^2 + 1}{2(v-1)^2}$$

A real solution exists only if

$$b - c \geq \frac{4(SQ)(v-1)^2 - 4x_E(v-1)^2 - 1}{4(v-1)^2}$$

If this inequality does not hold, then no Activists are willing to work for party Ω . Assuming that at least one Activist works for the party, then potential Activists whose ideal points are more-moderate (less-positive) than x^* are willing to work for the party as long as

$$x_i \geq \frac{1}{2}(-\sqrt{4(b-c) + 4(vx^* + (1-v)x_E) - 4(SQ) + 1} + 2(vx^* + (1-v)x_E) + 1) = x_{min}$$

Given these bounds, the share of potential activists who end up working for Ω in a given period's campaign can be expressed by the integral

$$S_A = \int_{x_{min}}^{x^*} f(x) dx$$

where $f(x)$ is the density function of the Activists' ideal points. In what follows, I assume that the potential Activists' ideal points are normally-distributed and centered at zero.

The Determinants of Activist Participation

Before I turn to the Elite's decision about how much voice to grant to the Activists, it is convenient to pause and take stock of the comparative statics implied by the previous equations in order to assess how well they align with the activist motivations that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. I now examine how Activist participation (S_A) varies with the amount of patronage enjoyed by incumbent activists (b), the incumbency status of the Elite's party (which affects SQ and b), the ideal point of the Elite (x_E), and the amount of voice granted to the Activists (v).

Patronage (b): All else equal, an increase in the patronage benefits offered by the incumbent party (b) always increases the share of potential activists who are willing to work for the party.

Incumbency Status: A party's move from opposition into government has two, countervailing effects on activists' incentives to work for the party. First, the party gains access to patronage

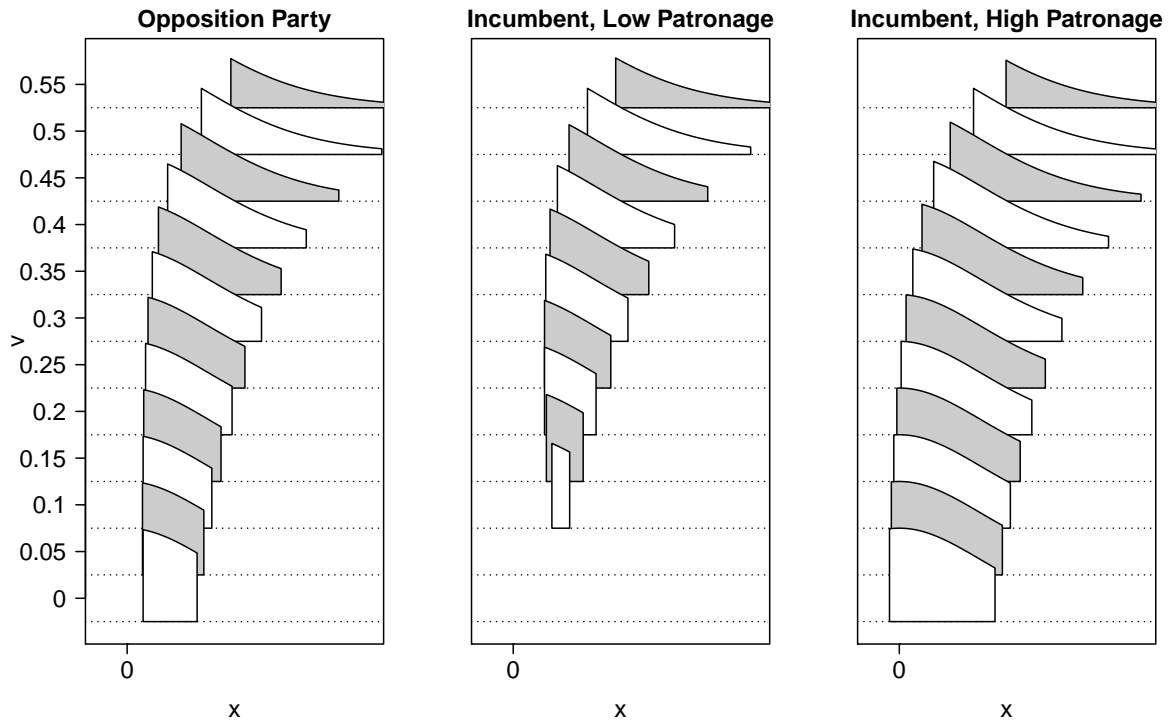


Figure 3.2: Activist Participation, Incumbency Status, and the Abundance of Patronage.

Note: The area of the ridges represents the portion of the distribution of potential activists who chose to work for the party, for different values of activist voice (v). The x -axis represents the ideal points of the potential activists, which were assumed to be normally-distributed and centered at zero.

resources that it can use to reward its activists, and this encourages greater participation in the next period. Second, the party enacts its platform into policy, and this has a demobilizing effect on activist participation because it tempers the activists' outrage over the status quo. Which of these two effects prevails depends on the magnitude of the patronage benefits that incumbent activists can access (b), and the party's extremism at the time of the last election (x_Ω). Clearly, the patronage effect is more likely to prevail as b increases. A party becomes more vulnerable to the demobilization effect as the distance between its platform and its competitor's platform increases because parties in a more-polarized party system are likely to enact more-drastic changes to the status quo.

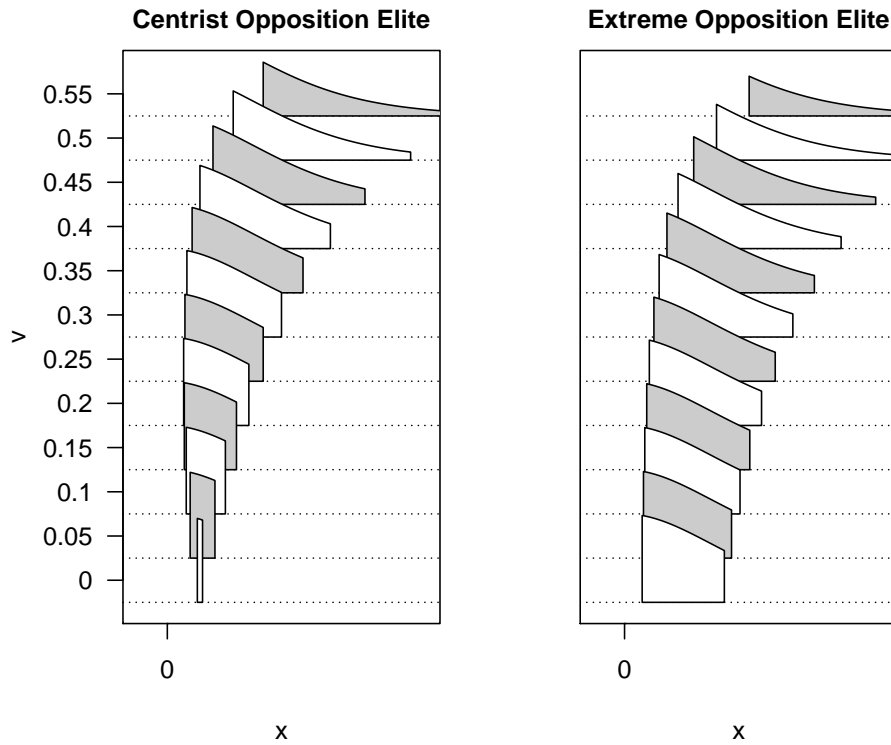


Figure 3.3: Activist Participation and the Ideological Extremism of the Party Elite.

Note: The area of the ridges represents the portion of the distribution of potential activists who chose to work for the party, for different values of activist voice (v). The x-axis represents the ideal points of the potential activists, which were assumed to be normally-distributed and centered at zero.

Extremism of the Party Elites (x_E): There is a non-monotonic relationship between the ideological extremism of the Elite, x_E , and the share of activists who work for the Elite's party. As x_E increases from zero, Party Ω becomes more ideologically distinct from its competitor. This makes the party more attractive to activists whose ideal point is greater than zero. Because more-extreme potential activists already have a higher propensity to participate (due to the $x_i - SQ$ term in their utility function), the number of extreme activists that the party gains may initially exceed the number of moderate activists that the party loses; in this case, increases in x_E would increase activist participation in the aggregate. However, because the activists' ideal points are normally distributed and centered on the ideological center and there are fewer potential activists

on the tails of the distribution, there will eventually come a point where additional increases in x_E would *decrease* aggregate activist participation in the party.

Activist Voice (v): For a similar reason, there is also a non-monotonic relationship between the amount of voice that the Elite grants to the Activists and the share of potential Activists who work for the party. Increasing v above zero makes Party Ω more ideologically-distinct from its competitor. As was the case with increases in x_E , this may help the party attract larger numbers of policy-seeking activists. Eventually, however, additional increases in v will lead the party to drift so far to the fringe of the ideological spectrum that none but the most-extreme activists will be willing to work for it.

The consequences of a given increase in activist voice also depend on the nature of the political party itself, such as its incumbency status and the ideological preferences of its leaders. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 are ridgeplots that represent the set of potential activists who decide to work for Party Ω for different values of v and different party characteristics. In Figure 3.2, a modest increase in v helps an opposition party recruit more activists, and it has a similar effect for an incumbent party that lacks access to patronage resources. In fact, in this example, an incumbent party in a low-patronage environment is not able to recruit *any* activists unless it grants them some voice in the party. By contrast, increases in v have a smaller impact on participation for the incumbent party in a high-patronage environment because the party is able to mobilize a large share of activists even for low values of v . Similarly, in Figure 3.3, activist participation is more sensitive to the value of v if the opposition Elite is centrist rather than ideologically-extreme. The intuition for this is that increases in v allow a centrist Elite to make his party more ideological, by committing him to implementing policies that are far from his own ideal point. This sort of commitment is unnecessary for an extreme Elite because his party's ideological position would still be far from zero even if v is low.

Figure 3.4 illustrates the relationship between activist participation and activist voice for

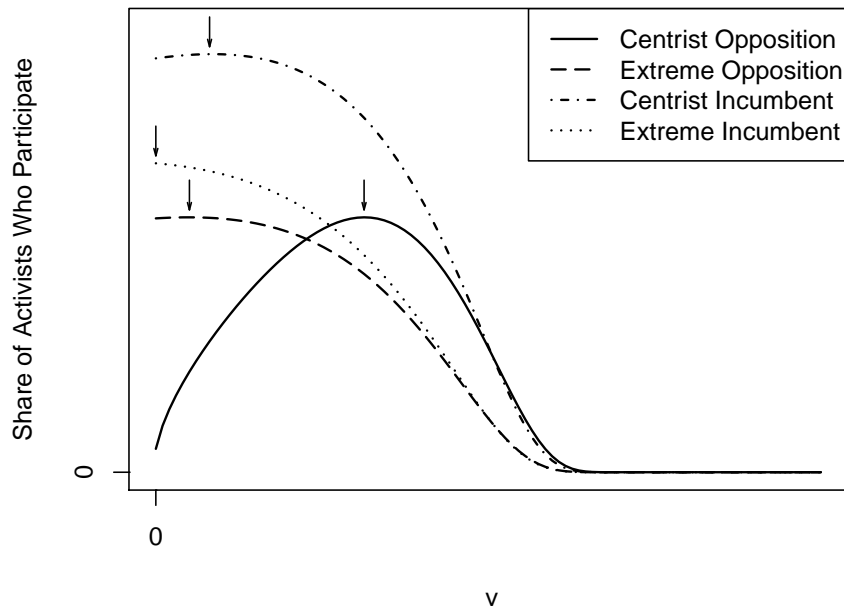


Figure 3.4: Activist Participation and Activist Voice, by Incumbency and Elite Extremism.
Note: The vertical arrows indicate the level of v that maximizes activist participation for each type of party.

parties with four different types of Elites, who vary on their ideological extremeness and incumbency status. The vertical arrows represent the level of v that maximizes activist participation for that political party. The participation-maximizing level of activist voice is highest for the party founded by a centrist opposition Elite. Working for a centrist opposition party is not very appealing to policy-seeking and patronage-motivated activists. The only way that an opposition party headed by centrist Elites can attract levels of activist participation on par with the other three types of parties is by granting its Activists a significant voice in party decisions, which enables the Activists to make the party more ideologically extreme. By contrast, the participation-maximizing level of v is much closer to zero for the other three types of parties. The incumbent parties are able to mobilize large shares of activists through patronage alone, while a party headed by an extreme opposition Elite can appeal to potential activists on ideological grounds. In each of these

four cases, Activist participation eventually converges to zero for high values of v .

The Elite's Power-Sharing Decision

I now endogenize v , or the level of voice that Activists exercise in Party Ω 's internal decisions. The Elite is able to set v only once, at the very beginning of the game. In choosing v , the Elite must anticipate how this decision will affect election outcomes and policy outcomes not only in the current period, but also in future periods.

The Elite derives utility from two sources: the material benefits that he receives if and only if his party wins the election (β), and the policy that is enacted after the election. During a given period t , E 's expected utility as a function of v is

$$\begin{aligned} U_E^t(v) &= P(v)\beta - P(v)(x_E - x_\Omega)^2 - (1 - P(v))x_E^2 \\ &= P(v)\beta - P(v)(x_E - vX^*(v) - (1 - v)x_E)^2 - (1 - P(v))x_E^2 \end{aligned}$$

where $P(v)$ is the probability that Party Ω wins the election for a given value of v , and $X^*(v)$ is the ideal point of the party's most-extreme activist. The $P(v)\beta$ term represents the expected value of the material benefits from winning office. The expression $-P(v)(x_E - vX^*(v) - (1 - v)x_E)^2$ represents the Elite's disutility when his own party enacts policies that are distant from his ideal point, while the $-(1 - P(v))x_E^2$ term represents the Elite's disutility when his Opponent enacts policies that are distant from his ideal point.

I model the probability of winning the election as

$$P(v) = C(S_A(v), x_\Omega(v))$$

where C is an increasing function of $S_A(v)$ (activist participation as a function of v) but a decreasing function $x_\Omega(v)$ (the party's ideological position as a function of v). That is, an increase in the

share of activists who work for the party increases Ω 's chances of victory, while shifts in the party's campaign position away from the median voter decrease the party's chances of victory.³

When the Elite selects v , he maximizes his expected utility across both periods of the game:

$$U_E(v) = U'_E(v) + \delta(P'(v)U''_E(v) + (1 - P'(v))U'''_E(v))$$

$U'_E(v)$ is the Elite's payoff during the first period. $U''_E(v)$ is his payoff during the second period if he wins the election held at the end of the first period, while $U'''_E(v)$ is his utility in the second period if he loses that election. $P'(v)$ is the probability that his party wins the first election, and δ is the Elite's discount factor.

The Determinants of Activist Voice

In order to maximize $U_E(v)$, the Elite must weigh several considerations. He faces a trade-off between election outcomes and policy outcomes during each period: setting v to be greater than zero may boost the party's chances of winning the election by helping the party attract more activists, but it also means that the policy that the party implements upon coming to power will differ from the Elite's own policy preference. He also faces a trade-off between winning the election in the first period and winning it in the second period. By increasing v and making his party more ideologically-distinct from its competitor, an opposition Elite may boost his chances of winning power. But as the party becomes more extreme, it also becomes more vulnerable to the demobilization effect of incumbency on activist participation, which will hurt the party's chances of retaining power in the second election.

Elite's Incumbency Status in the First Period: As long as the incumbent party enjoys privileged access to patronage resources, an Elite who begins the game in the opposition is more likely

³In the figures shown below, I model C as the probit function, $\Phi(\alpha_1 S_A(v) - \alpha_2 x_\Omega(v))$, where $\alpha_1 > 0$ and $\alpha_2 > 0$. The model's results are robust to alternative (monotonically-increasing) functional forms

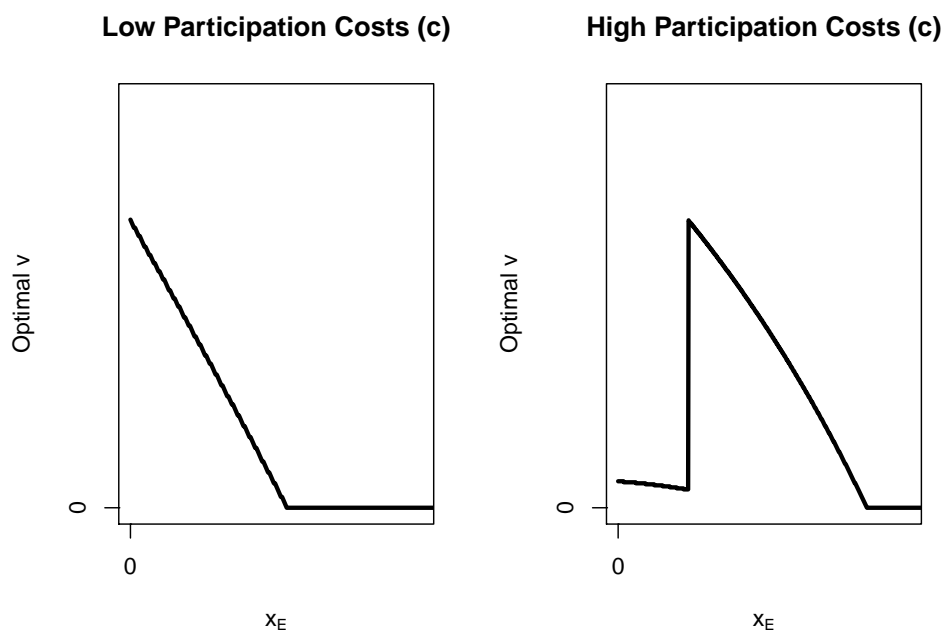


Figure 3.5: Elite Ideology, Activist Participation Costs, and Activist Voice.
Note: This figure shows the level of activist voice (v) that maximizes the Elite's utility across both periods of the game, as a function of the Elite's ideal point.

to grant high levels of voice to the Activists compared to an Elite who begins the game in office. An opposition Elite who does not have access to patronage in the first period is more dependent on granting Activists a voice in the party in order to win power in the first election. On the other hand, a party that starts out in office may be able to recruit sufficient activists through patronage alone, and increasing v above zero would provide little additional participation in the first election campaign.

Extremism of the Elite (x_E): The optimal level of v generally decreases as the extremism of the Elite increases. As was discussed in the previous section, parties founded by extreme Elites have a lower participation-maximizing level of v . Granting greater voice to the Activists is most-useful for centrist Elites who would struggle to attract Activists on the basis of their policy preferences alone. The main exception to this pattern occurs when the Activists' participation

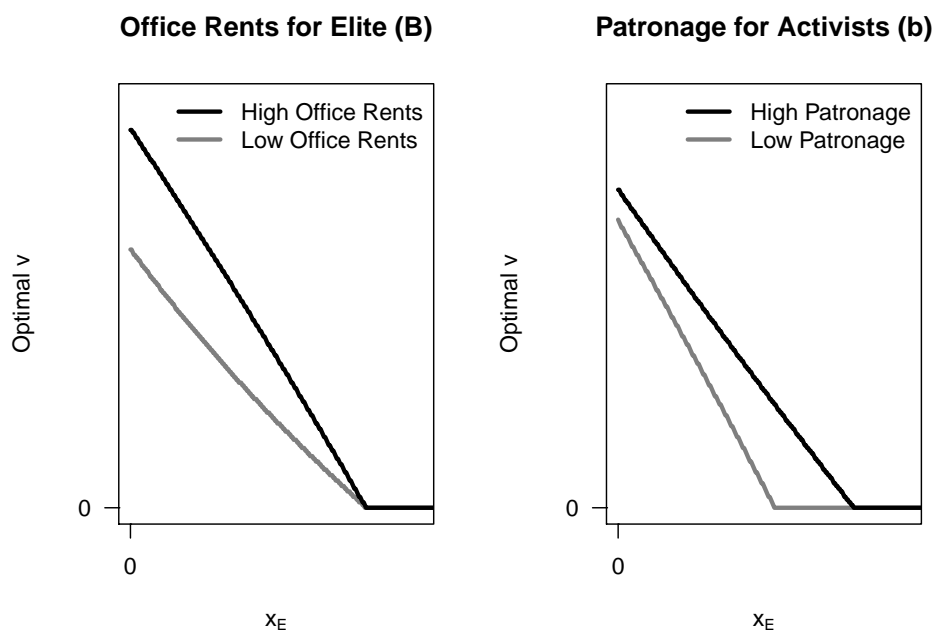


Figure 3.6: Office Rents, Patronage, and Activist Voice.

Note: This figure shows the level of activist voice (v) that maximizes the Elite's utility across both periods of the game, as a function of the Elite's ideal point.

cost (c) is extremely high. In this case, it may take such a large value of v to induce Activists to work for a centrist Elite that the Elite would be better off by setting v equal to zero and forgoing Activist participation altogether.

Office Rents for the Elite (β): A larger value of the Elite's rents from holding office increases the optimal level of v . The Elite's ability to extract more rents from the state helps compensate for the ideological cost that he incurs by allowing the Activists to push the party's position away from his own ideal point. Consequently, as β grows, the Elite becomes willing to tolerate greater Activist participation and a more-extreme x_Ω for the sake of winning office.

Patronage Benefits for the Activists (b): A greater value of patronage benefits for the Activists increases the optimal level of v . Just as greater office rents (β) mitigate the ideological cost that

the Elite incurs by increasing v , a greater availability of patronage (b) mitigates the Elite's electoral costs. In particular, high values of b help party Ω *hold onto power* in the second period by counteracting both the second-period demobilizing effect of moving the policy status quo closer to x_Ω , and the electoral cost associated with advocating policies that are distant from the preferences of the median voter. Under conditions of abundant patronage, the Elite might be better off by doing everything that he can to win the first election (even if that means setting v to a relatively high value) because if he manages to win that first election, the patronage resources that his party holds will help it "coast" to victory in the second election. On the other hand, when patronage resource are scarce, an Elite who selects a high value of v may set his party up for failure in future elections by making the party too extreme to win the second election. Thus, while patronage (b) and voice (v) are *substitutes* from the point of view of the Activists, they are *complements* from the point of view of the Elite. Put bluntly, it is the possibility that the Elite will be able to rely on patronage in the future that makes him willing to risk giving his activists a voice in party decisions today. As we will see in Chapter 5, this helps explain why many of the Latin American parties that had the most-secure access to patronage in the mid-20th century (such as the Colorado Party of Uruguay and the Radical Party of Chile) also tended to be the most internally-democratic.

Looking Ahead

The model developed in this chapter offers several testable implications about the behavior of party elites and party activists. A first set of hypotheses concerns the conditions under which elites are willing to share power within their parties with low-level activists. This model suggests that elites are more likely to establish these power-sharing arrangements when they are in the opposition. I test this hypothesis in the next chapter by tracing the transformation of the elite-founded parties in Chile and Uruguay in the late 19th century. I show that opposition elites in

these countries opened up their parties to activists largely as a last resort, after the state had grown so powerful that out-elites could no longer hope to seize power through force. By giving activists a voice in party decisions, opposition elites were able to recruit policy-seeking activists to participate in their campaigns, and this served as an important counterweight to the resource and institutional advantages enjoyed by incumbent parties during this period.

A second set of hypotheses concern the new tensions that emerge after this alliance between opposition elites and activists finally propels the party into power. The model predicts that the process of enacting the party's platform into policy will have a demobilizing effect on ideologically-motivated activists, though the party may be able to mitigate this demobilization to some extent by compensating its activists with patronage. It also suggests that the internal power-sharing arrangements that allow an opposition party to win power may become a political liability for the party over the longer term. If the elites are able to renege on the bargain with activists, they will significantly curtail activist voice in the party once the party has won power. If the elites cannot alter the bargain and activists retain too much voice in the party, then they face the risk that the activists will use the party to pursue policies that are against the elites' interests. I examine these tensions in Chapter 5, which covers the era of mass politics in the mid-20th century.

A third set of hypotheses suggests that activist participation will be less sustainable when incumbent parties can no longer compensate their activists with patronage. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze the political consequences of the reduction of patronage resources in Latin American national-level governments at the end of the 20th century. The model suggests two specific mechanisms through which the disappearance of patronage could decrease activist participation. First, the loss of patronage might affect party activism directly, by denying parties one of the key tools that they used to incentivize their activists. Second, the loss of patronage can affect the party indirectly, by making party elites less willing to give their activists a voice in party decisions. I test the former hypothesis in Chapter 6, and I examine the latter hypothesis in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4

The Transformation of the Traditional Parties

I begin the empirical section of this dissertation by examining how and why several early Latin American parties transformed themselves from loose networks of elites into well-organized mass parties by the early 20th century. I argue that this transformation was spearheaded by opposition elites who enlisted the support of middle- and lower-class activists in order to help them compete against incumbents who enjoyed both resource advantages and institutional advantages. Because the opposition elites could rarely outbid the incumbents with offers of patronage, they instead chose to specialize in recruiting policy-seeking activists who were willing to make a long-term investment in working for an opposition party that promised to enact their preferred policies once it won high office. However, the opposition elites' policy promises were often far from credible, and in the rare instances when opposition parties did win power through elections, they invariably attempted to walk back their promises to the activists. In order to convince policy-seeking activists to take on the risks associated with working for an opposition party, the opposition elites had to back up their policy promises with institutional changes in the party structure that tied the elites' hands and guaranteed the activists a permanent

role in the party's decision-making processes. By incorporating activists into their formal party structures, these opposition parties developed strong grassroots party organizations that helped them mobilize mass support upon the expansion of suffrage. Yet empowering activists from the popular classes also entailed grave risks for the elites, and they were willing to accept these risks only when non-electoral paths to power were no longer available. For most of the 19th century, the main deterrent to party-building was state weakness: as long as the state remained so weak that opposition parties could realistically seize power through force, opposition elites did not need activists or electoral party organizations in order to contest power.

Although these organizational transformations may seem historically remote, they are critical for this dissertation's argument and the analyses in the following chapters. First, these early traditional parties are "least likely cases" for the development of mass party organizations and mass partisan support, and this helps me rule out several alternative explanations. For example, while the account offered by Collier and Collier (1991) centers around the incorporation of organized labor in the first half of the 20th century, I show that the transformation of "elite-founded" parties into mass parties was already well underway in countries like Chile and Colombia more than a generation before the first labor unions were founded. Similarly, the "remoteness" of these changes allows me to address the concern that the opposition elites were actually focused on attracting voters rather than activists. In most cases, these transformations began at a time when suffrage was still very limited and a party's electoral success hinged on the intensity of its core base of support rather than the breadth of its vote base. In order to survive in the fraudulent electoral environment of the late 19th century, opposition parties needed committed activists who were willing to risk imprisonment and even death for the sake of helping their party compete in elections that were rigged in favor of the incumbent.

Second, these cases provide a good illustration of the logic outlined in Chapter 3. In particular, they highlight the dilemmas and challenges faced by elites and activists alike as they considered working together to pursue their shared goals. Policy-seeking activists might be

willing to help opposition elites win power in exchange for the policies that they prefer, but they are also wary of being betrayed by their elite allies after the election is over, and they may need guarantees that they will be able to hold their politicians accountable after their party wins power. Opposition elites might be willing to cede power in their parties to the activists in order to make their policy promises more credible, but they are also nervous that this process will eventually spiral out of their control. In most cases, policy-seeking activists were reluctant to invest in opposition parties that denied them a voice in party decisions, while opposition elites were willing to offer their activists a voice only as a last resort, when they were unable to recruit campaign workers through less-costly means.

Third, the transformations described in this chapter had lasting consequences for political parties. As we will see in Chapter 5, the elite-founded parties that transformed into mass organizations were well-positioned to benefit from the expansion of suffrage and the onset of mass democracy in the 20th century. The institutional reforms that guaranteed the activists a voice in party decisions also proved quite durable over time, as party elites could not easily reverse these reforms without ripping the party apart. This contributed to the bitter factional conflicts that many parties faced in the mid-20th century, as party activists used their parties' relatively democratic decision-making institutions to push for even deeper changes in the party's policy platform or internal structure.

I begin this chapter with a brief sketch of what Latin America's first political parties looked like in the middle of the 19th century, before their transformation began. Next, I illustrate the transformation process in Chile and Uruguay in detail. Then I extend the analysis to other countries in Latin America. Finally, I show how these organizational changes helped the transformed parties broaden their base of support, and I address the most compelling alternative explanations for the rise in mass partisan attachments to Latin America's 19th century parties.

Party Politics in the 19th Century

Two-party systems took root in most Latin American countries by the middle of the 19th century. The consolidation of these two-party systems was driven largely by institutional factors and electoral considerations. In particular, the majoritarian electoral systems that were used in most 19th century congressional elections for president and congress encouraged elite factions to merge together into two large blocs, so as to avoid splitting their votes across too many candidates (Valenzuela 1996; Valenzuela 2012). Many of these early party systems were also reinforced by elite ideological cleavages over issues like the relationship between the central government and provincial governments and the relationship between the Church and the state (Mahoney 2001; Monteón 2010).

These early Latin American parties resembled the 19th century European “cadre party,” with the qualification that the elite “cadres” that built Latin America’s traditional parties tended to consist not only of economic elites and notables in congress, but also military leaders or *caudillos* from relatively humble backgrounds. Few Latin American parties operated permanent, extra-parliamentary party organizations prior to the 1870s. Instead, these parties were essentially informal networks of politicians, military leaders, local warlords, landowners, and businessmen who were linked by overlapping familial ties, common ideological affinities, and shared affiliations with social and political clubs (Lewis 1993). The *caudillos* held a dominant position in many of these early parties, especially during periods of civil war between rival parties (Pivel Devoto 1994; Sabato et al. 2011).

Although these parties were organized and directed by elites, they also depended on mass participation. During the run-up to elections, candidates and elite political clubs recruited lower-class campaign workers for tasks like coordinating the party’s voters and distributing ballots (Valenzuela 1996; Collier 2003; Sanders 2004). On the day of the election itself, campaign workers from rival parties would battle each other for control over the plazas, schools and parish

churches where voting took place, and the side that won control over polling place would often be able to choose which votes would get counted (Sabato 2001; Muecke 2004). When the election was over, the party that lost might mobilize its campaign workers onto the streets to protest the result, while the winning party would organize counter-demonstrations to defend its victory (Posada Carbó 1995). Parties also recruited lower-class citizens to fight in Latin America's many partisan civil wars throughout the 19th century. However, Latin American party elites were also careful to insulate their nascent parties from pressure from their allies in the popular classes. Even in the late 19th century, when Latin American parties started to develop formal structures including a permanent party directory, the political clubs that lower-class campaign workers organized during the campaign were often kept separate from the party's formal organization (Muecke 2004), and they would be dissolved as soon as the campaign was finished (Alonso 2000; Salazar 1990). The campaign workers were recruited primarily through personalistic and clientelistic ties to the party elites, and promises of patronage jobs after the election was over (Archer 1990; Salazar 1990; Lewis 1993; Muecke 2004).

One factor that stunted the organizational growth of Latin America's early parties was the significant incumbency advantage during this period. Incumbent parties in the 19th century enjoyed a large resource advantage over their rivals because they could use their control over the distribution jobs in the civil service to employ their campaign workers at public expense (Graham 1990; Horowitz 2008; Sabato et al. 2011; Martz 2017), and coerce civil servants, policemen, and soldiers into doing campaign labor on the party's behalf (Vanger 1963; Collier 2003). Incumbent parties also controlled the electoral machinery due to the fact that elections were typically overseen by local officials who were appointed by the incumbent government, and this enabled incumbent parties to engage in electoral fraud or even annul the election as a last resort. Control over the electoral process also allowed the incumbent party to intimidate opposition voters with electoral violence (Salazar Mora 1990; Posada Carbó 1995). Due to these advantages, Latin American incumbent parties almost never lost power through an election

in the 19th century, and this electoral security greatly weakened their incentives to invest in party-building.

Another factor that discouraged party-building was the weakness of the early Latin American state. While incumbent parties rarely lost elections, incumbents were routinely overthrown through armed uprisings and revolutions led by opposition elites. With the exception of Paraguay and Bolivia, which did not develop political parties until the end of the 19th century, every Latin American country experienced multiple civil wars along party lines by the 1880s, and more than 40 of these conflicts resulted in the transfer of executive power from one party to its opponent. These partisan civil wars shortened the incumbent party's time horizon and encouraged incumbent and opposition elites alike to invest their resources in their partisan armies rather than electoral organizations; while electoral organizations might boost the party's chances of winning the election, they were close to irrelevant in the civil wars that ultimately determined which party would hold office. Partisan civil wars also reinforced the hierarchical, militaristic structure of the early parties and strengthened the position of *caudillos* at the expense of civilian politicians. As I will show in this chapter, Latin American opposition parties started taking electoral organizing seriously only after their state became strong enough that opposition elites could no longer seize power through force.

Party Transformation in Chile and Uruguay

In this section, I analyze the transformation of Chile and Uruguay's traditional parties into mass parties. The main purpose of this section is to illustrate the *process* through which elites incorporated activists into their party organizations, and show how state weakness and incumbency status blunted their incentives to do so. While some parties in both countries eventually transformed into mass parties, this process began nearly half a century earlier in Chile compared to Uruguay. I argue that this difference in the timing of party transformation was driven

by the different speeds at which the Chilean and Uruguayan states consolidated during the 19th century, which in turn shaped the opposition elites' incentives to invest in electoral party-building.

Chile and Uruguay's Early Party Systems

The early party systems in Chile and Uruguay progressed through a similar series of stages. In the first half of the 19th century, the various elite factions that had emerged during the Wars of Independence and the post-colonial power-struggles gradually merged into two major parties in each country. The Chilean businessman Diego Portales founded the Conservative Party in the late 1820s by uniting several political, military, and business groups that opposed the incumbent liberal government and sought to preserve most aspects of the precolonial political and social order, including the privileges of the Church and commercial monopolies. In the 1840s, Chile's opposition factions joined with a dissident Conservative faction to form the Liberal party (Collier 2003). Uruguay's two-party system began to take shape shortly before the country's first presidential election in 1830, which was a contest between two rival generals who had fought in the Wars of Independence from Spain and Brazil: Juan Antonio Lavalleja and Fructoso Rivera. While Lavalleja and Rivera's personalistic military followings were based in Uruguay's Interior, both generals secured the backing of different elite groups in Montevideo: Lavalleja won the support of a large segment of the business elite in Montevideo that favored a closer diplomatic alignment with Argentina, while Rivera was supported by a group of urban elites and officials who had collaborated with the Portuguese-Brazilian occupation of Uruguay in the 1820s. Rivera's faction eventually became Uruguay's Colorado Party, while a large segment of Lavalleja's following developed into the Blanco Party (Pivel Devoto 1994; Maiztegui Casas 2005).

Beginning in the 1850s, political elites in Chile and Uruguay attempted to merge the two parties together into a single political bloc that was known as "The Fusion" in both countries. In Chile, the Fusion was motivated primarily by the Conservatives and Liberals' shared opposition

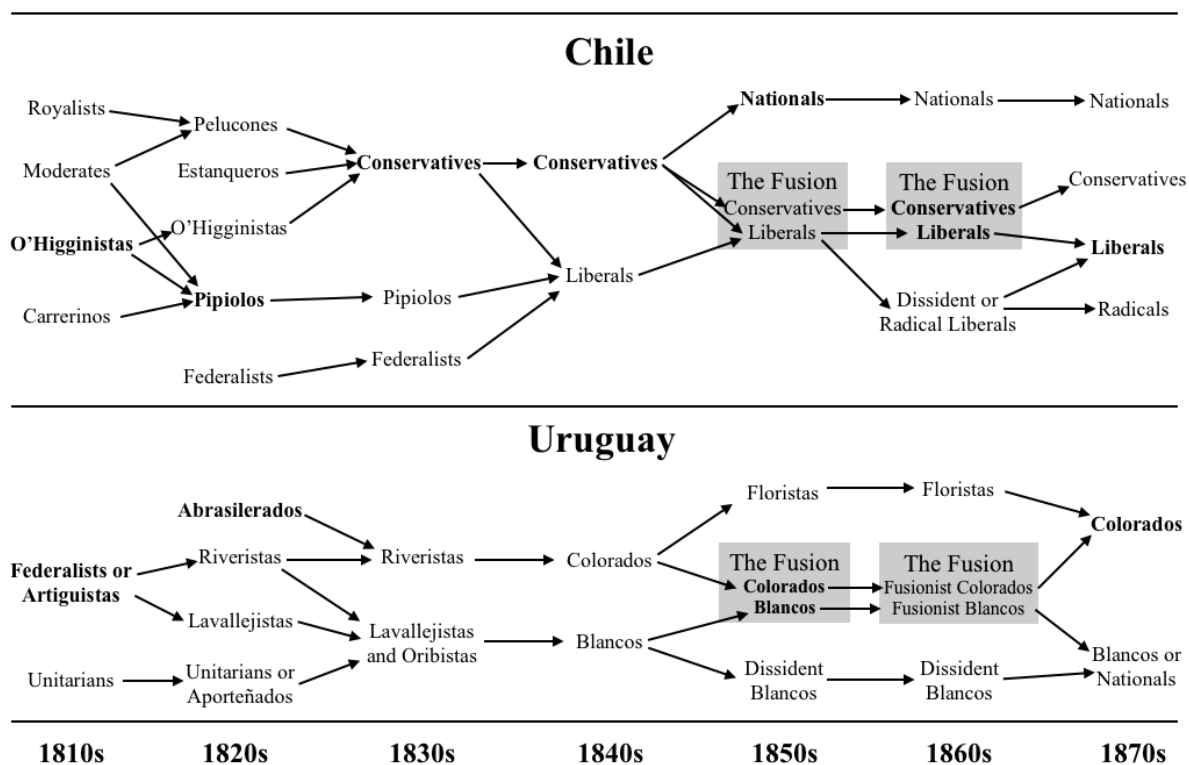


Figure 4.1: The Evolution of the Early Chilean and Uruguayan Party Systems.

Note: The incumbent or politically-dominant parties or factions are indicated in boldface.

Sources: Collier (2003), Pivel Devoto (1994), and Maiztegui Casas (2005)

to the incumbent president Manuel Montt, who had recently defected from the Conservative Party (Collier 2003). In Uruguay, the Fusion was a post-conflict power-sharing arrangement that emerged at the end of Uruguay’s lengthy 1836-1852 partisan civil war (Pivel Devoto 1994; Maiztegui Casas 2005). In both countries, the Fusions were generally embraced by elites in the capital, but opposed by regional elites. The overthrow of Uruguay’s fusion by a dissident Colorado faction resulted in the reestablishment of Uruguay’s two-party system, while the unraveling of Chile’s Fusion led to the emergence of a multi-party system with four major parties.

State-Building in Chile and Uruguay

Chile was the first Latin American country to develop a strong and centralized state. Chile's geography and the weakness of its northern neighbors helped shield the country from foreign intervention in its early civil wars, and these conflicts were largely over by the end of the 1820s, with the victory of Diego Portales' Conservative Party. With their grip on power secure, the Conservative Party's leaders were free to launch the first successful state-building project in the region. Over the following decade, the military was subordinated to the presidency and purged of officers who had backed the defeated liberal government, the powers of the presidency were greatly expanded, and the provincial governments lost most of their autonomy (Faundez 2007). By the 1840s, the Conservative regime stood little risk of being overthrown. While Manuel Montt's government faced a Liberal-backed uprising in 1851 and a Fusion-backed uprising in 1859, both uprisings were suppressed in a matter of months. The incumbent government's victory in 1859 was particularly striking since the Conservative Party had already split by that point, and the rebels were backed by the bulk of both the Liberal and Conservative parties, the Church hierarchy, several provincial governments, many of the country's wealthiest landowners, and large segments of the urban lower and middle classes (Collier 2003). Montt's easy victories in these conflicts appear to have convinced Chile's political opposition to abandon non-electoral paths to power, and Chile did not experience another partisan civil war after 1859.¹

The Uruguayan state remained one of the weakest in Latin America until the early 20th century. Uruguay's post-Independence civil wars were prolonged by the intervention of not only Argentina and Brazil, but also Britain and France. The rise of the post-conflict Fusionist government led to only a brief respite in Uruguay's conflicts, and the Fusion was eventually overthrown by regional *caudillos* who had retained substantial personalistic military followings. Between 1851 and 1876, Uruguay cycled through eighteen separate presidencies as

¹Chile's final civil war in 1891 was a conflict between the executive and legislative branches of government rather than a conflict between opposing parties.

rival *caudillos* took turns riding down to Montevideo and overthrowing the incumbent government. The Montevideo-based military dictatorships of the 1870s and 1880s managed to secure a period of relative peace, but this came at the cost of ceding autonomy to local *caudillos* in the Interior, which was ultimately counterproductive for state-building. Even by the end of the 19th century, the Uruguayan state remained so weak that Blanco rebels were still able to rely on armed uprisings to extract political concessions from the Colorado government in Montevideo (Lopez-Alves 1993; Pivel Devoto 1994; Maiztegui Casas 2005).

The Opposition Parties

The parties that were out of power in the late 19th century had the strongest incentives to incorporate lower and middle-class activists into their ranks in order to compensate for their resource disadvantages relative to the incumbent party. However, granting the activists a voice in party decisions also carried grave risks for the opposition elites, and the elites were willing to make these concessions only when non-electoral paths to power were no longer viable, and only when the opposition elites lacked alternative means of compensating their activists. These conditions were present in Chile during the second half of the 19th century due to early consolidation of the Chilean state. However, these conditions emerged much more slowly in Uruguay, where elite-led party revolutions continued to be a viable opposition strategy until the 20th century. Chile's opposition parties were among the first parties in Latin America to grant their activists a meaningful voice in party decisions, while Uruguay's main opposition party was tightly controlled by the party elites until after the party renounced its revolutionary strategy and turned to electoral organizing in the 1910s.

The Radical Party of Chile

The evolution of the Chilean Radical Party's grassroots party organizations was closely tied to the party's incumbency status in the late 19th century. The Radical Party began involv-

ing middle class and lower class activists in its candidate-selection decisions shortly after its emergence as a dissident faction of Chile's Liberal Party in the 1860s. However, the activists' voice was limited to the local level, as the Radical movement did not yet have a coherent national party structure. The Radical elites showed little interest in further party-building after they joined Chile's national governing coalition in 1874, but the movement's grassroots activists became more important for its electoral survival after the Radicals' return to opposition status in the late 1880s. In 1888, the Radicals finally established a formal national party structure that greatly strengthened the voice of the party's activists in its internal decision-making processes.

During its early years, the Radical movement was led by the Matta and Gallo families. These elite families were two of the wealthiest "mining families" in Chile, and both had been allies of the Conservative president Manuel Montt in the early 1850s (Collier 2003, 198). By the end of the 1850s, however, the Matta and Gallo families had drifted into the Liberal opposition to Montt's government, and they played a leading role in the failed revolution of 1859. The arrest of the Matta brothers and Angel Gallo at the end of 1858 was one of the events that precipitated the rebellion. Pedro León Gallo soon became one of the most prominent rebel military leaders, and he managed to capture and hold the city of Copiapó for nearly five months before he was forced to retreat into Argentina (Zeitlin 1984; Collier 2003). The failure of this elite-led revolution appears to have convinced the Matta and Gallo families and their allies that further rebellions would be counterproductive. They never again attempted to overthrow the incumbent government through force, and after they returned from exile in 1862, they focused their attention on electoral organizing.

In December, 1863, the Matta and Gallo brothers convened an "electoral assembly" in Copiapó that sanctioned Pedro León Gallo and Manuel Antonio Matta's candidacies for the congressional seats that they had held before the 1859 rebellion. Over the following months, the brothers and their collaborators founded similar assemblies in the cities of Santiago, La Serena, and Ancud (Garcia 1990; Sepulveda 1993; Gazmuri 1999). Unlike the short-lived electoral

organizations that the Conservative and Liberal parties had operated since the 1830s, the Radical electoral assemblies were explicitly open to members of the popular classes, and the activists who attend their meetings were granted the right to participate in many of the assembly's most important decisions, including candidate-selection and the crafting of its policy platform. The early assembly meetings were held in public places. While the right to vote in the candidate-selection process was restricted to registered voters, anyone in attendance had the right to speak during the meetings. In addition to selecting candidates, the members of the assemblies were also charged with writing the campaign program, and the assembly statutes required the candidates to accept the program as a condition for accepting the assembly's nomination. Many of these early assemblies were likely under the control of the elite politicians who had helped found them, but they still gave members of the popular classes a level of voice in party decisions that was unprecedented in Chile during this period. Over time, the assemblies grew more independent from the politicians in their districts, and they soon remained organized on a permanent basis, including during non-election years (Heise 1982; Barr-Melej. 2001).

The electoral assemblies performed a variety of functions in the Radical movement during the 1860s and early 1870s. Most importantly, they organized the movement's electoral campaigns in their districts and coordinated electoral work such as ballot distribution. This organizational work was especially important for the Radical movement's survival during the 1867 election, when the Fusionist government's political machine systematically intervened against Radical candidates. The Fusion controlled the voting and vote-counting processes to such an extent that it was able to resort to fraud or simply annul election results that favored the opposition. However, it was also costly for the incumbent coalition to resort to such heavy-handed tactics, and strong local organizations like the assemblies helped the Radical movement stand its ground in the post-election disputes that followed. For example, after the opposition unexpectedly won the district of Linares in 1870 and the Fusionist government annulled the election, the Radical assemblies shepherded their voters into the district from neighboring provinces so that they could

vote in the upcoming by-election (Toro 1994). When that by-election failed to produce a clear result, the congress supposedly decided to seat both slates of candidates (Heise 1982).

The assemblies also played a role in selecting candidates and crafting the candidates' policy program. The assemblies' candidate-selection function was critical for the movement's electoral success because it helped coordinate the opposition and prevented the nomination of too many opposition candidates in the same district. The assemblies' role in selecting candidates and crafting their platforms also served as a symbolic form of compensation for the assembly activists who carried out the candidates' organizational work. While these platforms stood little chance of being enacted while the movement remained in the opposition, the open and participatory manner in which the platforms were crafted helped establish the principle that the Radical politicians would be accountable to their local party organizations rather than the other way around. Each of these motives are evident in the justification of the assemblies offered by the Radical politician Manuel Recabarren, who went on to win a seat in the district of Illapel in 1864:

Overcome the electoral interference of the incumbent government, which has always intervened to impede the free election of representatives; unify the Liberal Party [*sic*] in the selection of candidates...so as to prevent the dispersion of its votes; eliminate any pretext for armed revolution and preclude the civil wars that have discredited republican America; ... ensure that the elected candidates understand that they owe their seat in congress and the honor that comes with it to the people who nominated them, and not to any cabinet minister. That is what the electoral Assembly means.²

Over the long run, the assemblies gave the Radical movement a distinct political identity. The democratic nature of the assembly meetings, the centrality of policy issues in the assemblies' deliberations, and the institutionalized role of mass activists in assembly decisions all served to bind together the various Radical assemblies and distinguish their movement from the personalistic Fusion. The assemblies and the diverse backgrounds of the activists who participated in them also helped the movement communicate to the wider public, and Radicalism became a well-established cultural phenomenon decades before it became a formally-organized national political

²“La Asamblea Electoral y la Fusión: ¿Que Significan?” *La Voz de Chile*, January 6, 1864.

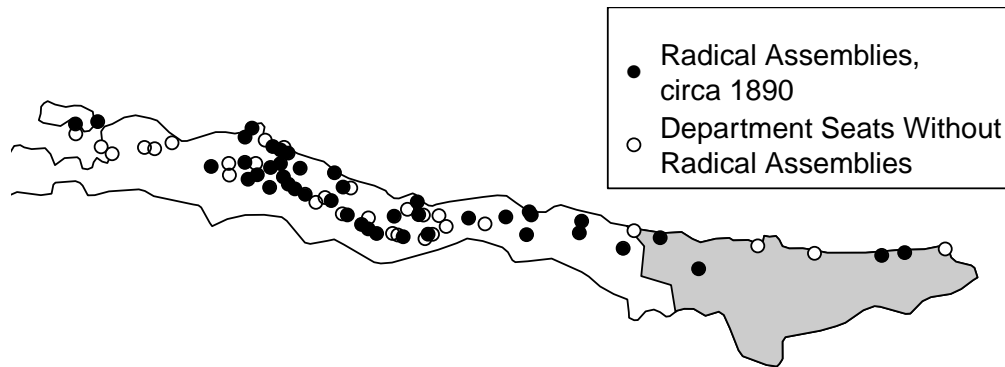


Figure 4.2: Radical Party Assemblies in Chile, circa 1890. *Note:* This map depicts the locations of the assemblies that sent delegates to the Radical Party’s first National Convention in 1888. The gray shaded region on the right of the map represents the territory that Chile annexed in 1884, following the War of the Pacific.

party (Garcia 1990, 138; Gazmuri 1999; Barr-Melej 2001).

The Radical movement had no national organization above the assembly level until the late 1880s. Instead, the movement was structured as a confederation of local assemblies that were loosely united under the leadership of Manuel Antonio Matta (Sepulveda 1993). Although Matta was theoretically accountable to his local assembly in Copiapó, he made most of the movement’s strategic decisions by himself, with little input from the assemblies or even other Radical politicians. Pedro León Gallo and the other Radical politicians were reportedly caught by surprise when Matta negotiated the Radical movement’s entry into the cabinet during a secret meeting with Liberal president Errazuriz in 1874 (Sepulveda 1993, 50). The Radicals’ participation in the Liberal-led government over the following decade weakened the movement’s

incentives for further party-building: now that the Radicals were partners in the governing coalition, the government machine no longer intervened against Radical candidates, and the electoral assemblies became less essential for the movement's electoral success. Although the assemblies continued to function during this period, they were less visible and likely less influential than they had been during the movement's first decade (Sepulveda 1993).

The assemblies regained their central role in the movement when the Radicals re-entered the opposition in the late 1880s. During the 1885 congressional election, when the Radicals were nominally still part of the governing coalition, the Liberal presidential candidate Balmaceda directed the Liberal political machine against the Radical movement and unseated two-fifths of the Radical members of congress. After the Radicals formally withdrew from the cabinet the following year, the movement faced the prospect of an imminent electoral defeat at the hands of an incumbent political machine that was even better-organized than it had been in the 1860s. In order to mitigate this electoral crisis and reinvigorate its activist base, the Radical leadership chose to grant the assembly activists an unprecedented level of influence in the movement's decision-making processes. A few months before the next elections in 1888, the movement held its first national convention in which it reaffirmed its separation from the Liberal Party, established a formal party structure, and ceded to the local assemblies greater control over the new party organization. In place of the personalistic leadership of politicians like Matta, the national party would now be directed by a Central Council that was directly elected by the members of the local assemblies. Moreover, the party's key national programmatic and strategic decisions would now be made by a national convention comprised of delegates from the assemblies (Espejo 1912; Remmer 1984).

These relatively democratic internal party institutions gave the Radical Party an advantage over rival parties at recruiting policy-seeking activists. In the 1890s, the party enjoyed an influx of middle-class activists who were attracted by the opportunity to influence the party through the local assemblies and use the party to advance their own political goals. Urban professionals

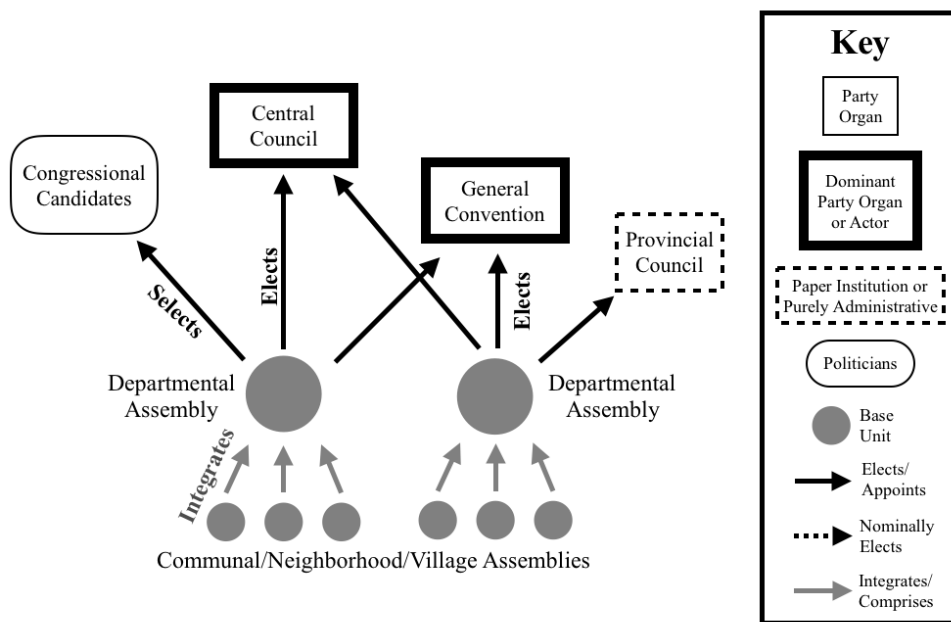


Figure 4.3: Structure of the Radical Party of Chile, circa 1890. *Source:* Heisse (1982) and Sepulveda (1993).

in particular thrived in the Radical assemblies due to their skills at oratory, and several of these activists leveraged their popularity in their local assemblies to rise through the party’s ranks into the Radical Convention and even the Congress. The party’s new activists were also involved in other civil society organizations, and with the party’s blessing, they founded Radical-affiliated night schools for workers and mutual aid societies that extended the party’s reach into working-class neighborhoods. These activists soon transformed the party’s image in the electorate; by the beginning of the 20th century, the Radical Party had ceased to be merely the party of the provincial elite, and its party brand was now strongly associated with the urban middle class, especially teachers, physicians, firemen, and journalists (Barr-Melej 2001; Arrate and Rojas 2003, 46-49). These transformations put the Radical Party in an ideal position to benefit from the growth of the urban electorate in the early 20th century, and in the 1921 legislative elections, the Radicals finally surpassed the Liberals as Chile’s largest party in terms of votes (Heisse 1982).

The National Party (Blanco Party) of Uruguay

Uruguay's Fusion was overthrown for the final time in 1865, and the Blanco Party (later renamed the National Party) spent most of the following 100 years in the opposition. Unlike Radical elites in Chile, however, the Blanco leaders in Uruguay did very little to strengthen their party's electoral organizations before the end of the 19th century, and they did not grant their activists a significant role in party decision-making until the 1920s. The primary reason for this delay was the weakness of the Uruguayan state, which preserved the Blanco elites' confidence that they would be able to retake power through force. The Blancos embraced electoral organizing only after 1904, when the party's military defeat and the death of its most popular leader convinced the surviving party leadership that elite-led, partisan revolutions were no longer a viable way to gain power.

The Blanco Party that emerged from the 1836-1851 civil war was a broad alliance of several different elite groups in both Montevideo and the Interior. The party's rural elite consisted of the *caudillos* or warlords who had led the Blanco armies during the civil wars of the 1830s and 1840s. Most of these *caudillos* were large land-owners and ranchers, and several of them crafted large personalistic followings through patron-client relationships with local peons and small ranchers. The party's urban elite included Montevideo-based patricians, lawyers, merchants, and intellectuals (Pivel Devoto 1994).

Uruguay's extreme political instability in the 19th century encouraged the Blanco leaders to invest in their military capacity instead of electoral party organizations. Although the Blanco Party's armies were rarely strong enough to topple Colorado governments, they were often able to extract political concessions from the Colorado presidents. For example, after the Blanco revolution in 1872, the Colorado Party agreed to an informal institution known as Co-participation, which divvied up Uruguay's departmental governments between the two parties and guaranteed the Blanco Party relative autonomy from Montevideo within the departments that it controlled

(Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:31).³ Although the Blanco *caudillos* relied on non-elites to fight in these civil wars, the partisan conflicts did not lead the Blanco Party's leaders to enlist the support of policy-seeking activists. Before the 1890s, the revolutionary leaders recruited men into their armies mostly through material selective incentives and coercion, and a large share of the recruits were either foreign mercenaries or peons who worked on the *caudillos'* ranches. Moreover, with the exception of the partisan civil wars in 1872, 1897, and 1904, most of the *caudillo*-led revolutionary armies were quite small and they rarely numbered more than 1,500 men (Lopez-Alves 1993).

Blanco elites continued to have weak incentives for party-building after the establishment of Co-participation in 1872. The power-sharing agreement gave the Blanco Party control over elections in four of Uruguay's departments, and this allowed the party to win a minority of seats in congress through localized fraud (Peluas 2004, 62). The Blanco Party had no need for electoral party organizations in the departments that it controlled, and it generally did not compete seriously in the departments that remained under the control of the Colorados. Elections were initially more-competitive in Montevideo, and liberal intellectuals from both parties founded several political clubs in 1872, including the National Club that gave the Blanco Party its current name (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 31). However, these clubs remained primarily under the control of urban patricians, and they were soon sidelined from Montevideo politics under the military dictatorships of the 1870s and 1880s (Pivel Devoto 1994; Diez 1994).

Moreover, even by the late 19th century, the Uruguayan state was still so weak that Blanco elites could still reasonably hope to take power through force, or at least extract greater concessions from the Colorado government in Montevideo. When Co-participation began to unravel after the transition back to civilian rule in the 1890s, the Blanco *caudillo* Aparicio Saravia launched

³Since the department chiefs were charged with overseeing elections in their jurisdictions, it was expected that each party would always win elections in the departments that it controlled. This had the effect of guaranteeing the Blanco Party stable congressional representation. Moreover, because Uruguay's president was still indirectly elected by the congress, this also meant that the Blanco Party would have some influence over which Colorado politician would be chosen as president.

another revolution that forced the Colorados to renew the power-sharing arrangement. Blanco politicians and intellectuals founded several party clubs in various Montevideo neighborhoods and small towns in the Interior during the 1890s, but Peluas (2004, 21) suggests that these clubs had a primarily military motive, as an excuse for Blancos to meet and organize the next revolution.

The turning point for the National (Blanco) Party's organizational development was the party's defeat in Uruguay's 1903-1904 civil war, which resulted in Saravia's death. This defeat had several consequences that set the National Party on the path to becoming a mass-based electoral party. The Colorado government's decisive victory enabled the government to conclude Uruguay's state-building process by ending Co-participation and reestablishing the Montevideo government's monopoly on the use of force in the departments of the Interior. The war also discredited the Blanco *caudillos* and helped convince the party's civilian leaders that the Uruguayan state was now strong enough that elite-led party revolutions stood little chance of success (Vanger 1980). Blanco *caudillos* attempted their final revolution in 1910, but unlike in 1903, this time the rebels received little support from the National Party establishment (Lindahl 1962, 23).

In the early 1910s, several Blanco political entrepreneurs in both the Interior and Montevideo led an intense campaign to reorganize the party on the basis of mass participation and wrestle control over the National Party away from its abstentionist elite leadership in Montevideo. The most important of these organizational projects was led by Luis Alberto de Herrera, a wealthy landowner who had fought in the civil wars of 1897 and 1904, but who was now one of the party's most vocal proponents of electoral organizing. Between 1910 and 1913, he constructed a broad network of local activists in the Interior that helped mobilize the rural poor into the National Party. Herrera's rural party-building was complimented by similar party-building efforts in Montevideo undertaken by the Blanco lawyer Lorenzo Carnelli, who organized a left-leaning populist faction based in the capital. Both the Herrerista movement and Carnelli's "Radical Blanco" movement were elite-led factions, but they offered lower and middle-class activists new opportunities for

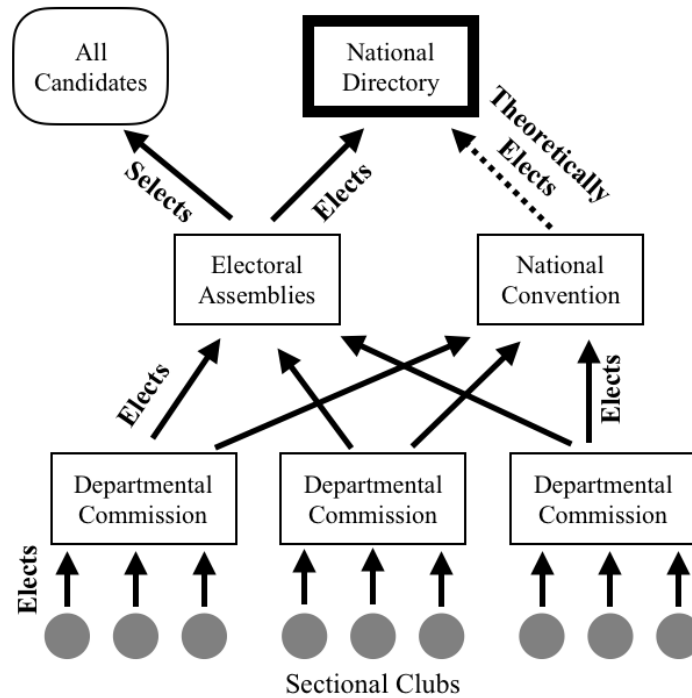


Figure 4.4: Structure of the National Party of Uruguay, circa 1920. *Source:* Lindahl (1962).

advancement within the party ranks. These factions also placed a much greater emphasis on issues such as workers’ rights and income redistribution compared to the National Party of the 1890s (Lindahl 1962; Reyes 1989; Abal and Ezcurra 2005).

The results of the 1916 Constituent Assembly election vindicated these efforts to reorient the National Party towards electoral politics. The party used its new network of party clubs to organize its first nation-wide election campaign directed at the mass electorate. Although the Colorado Party continued to wield the patronage resources that came with incumbency, the National Party won a plurality of the vote and controlled enough seats in the new assembly to deny Batlle’s Colorado movement majority control over the assembly (Lindahl 1962; Vanger 1963). This electoral success helped lock in the party’s new mass-electoral orientation, and it also marked the end of the dominance of the Montevideo-based patricians over the National Party leadership (Reyes 1989).

After the 1916 election, the National Party rewarded its activists by granting them a formal role in electing the party's leadership. The activist-led party clubs at the town and neighborhood levels were given the responsibility of electing the party's departmental commissions. These local bodies would then elect the members of the party's National Convention and the temporary Electoral Assemblies that were convened to select the party's candidates and elect its National Directory (Lindahl 1962). Despite its slow start in the 19th century, by the 1920s the National Party had become a well-organized mass-based party whose leadership was at least nominally accountable to the activists' grassroots political clubs.

The Conservative Party of Chile

The Conservative Party of Chile withdrew from its alliance with the Liberal Party in 1872 and spent most of the next two decades in the opposition. Like several Conservative Parties in Europe at the time (Kalyvas 1996), Chile's Conservative Party welcomed the participation of lay Catholic activists in its electoral campaigns, and the party rewarded its activists by granting them the right to participate in the party's national conventions. However, Conservative activists never attained the same degree of influence in party decisions that their Radical counterparts enjoyed, and they were generally excluded from the party's highest decision-making bodies. The Conservative Party was able to get away with limiting the voice of its activists because it benefited from several structural advantages that guaranteed the party a stable source of votes well into the 20th century.

During the 1870s, the Conservative Party went through several institutional reforms that strengthened the party organization and helped prepare it for a life in the opposition. The Conservative Party became the first Chilean political party to develop a centrally-controlled, national-level party organization (Heisse 1982). At the local level, the Conservatives emulated the Radical Party's grassroots organizational model and constructed a network of local assemblies that were charged with selecting the district's local and congressional candidates. By evoking the

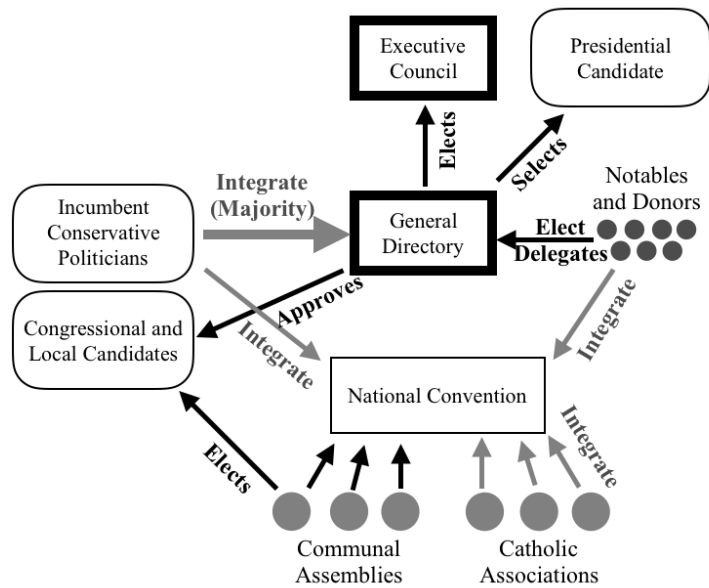


Figure 4.5: Structure of the Conservative Party of Chile, circa 1900. *Source:* Heisse (1982).

party’s religious identity and portraying the Conservative Party as the sole defender of the Church against the Liberal government’s secular reforms, the Conservatives also mobilized a formidable network of Catholic base organizations, associations, fraternities, clubs, and mutual aid societies. While most of these organizations were formally autonomous from the party, they supplied the party with a committed, multi-class activist base that carried out many of the same organizational functions that the local assemblies performed for the Radical Party (Andes 2014).

The party leadership granted these Catholic activists a limited voice in the party through the national conventions that nominally approved the party’s program. While most of the convention’s delegates were elected by the party’s local assemblies, the party explicitly opened its 1901 convention to activists who held leadership positions in Catholic base organizations. However, the Conservative elites denied the activists access to the party’s permanent leadership bodies, and the party developed a two-tiered system that reserved membership in the highest decision-making bodies for its wealthy notables and politicians. The party leadership also retained a veto over the convention’s decisions, and this limited the convention’s influence over the party’s

policy positions. The party's activists could raise new issues and place them onto the party's agenda, and they eventually succeed at pushing the party to the left on economic issues in the early 20th century (Diaz 2000). But the activists' formal role in the party remained carefully confined to the party's largely powerless convention (Heisse 1982).

Part of the reason why the Conservative leadership felt that it was unnecessary to give the Catholic base organizations a meaningful voice in the party's leadership bodies was because the party already had a "captive" supply of votes that made the Catholic organizations less critical for its electoral success. The Conservative Party contained many of the country's wealthiest landowners, and especially after control over elections was decentralized in the 1890s, these landowners often oversaw elections on their own estates and coerced their peasants (*inquilinos*) to vote for the party (Heise 1982; Baland and Robinson 2012). The Conservative Party also enjoyed a monopoly on the Catholic vote since Chile's other three major parties were ideologically liberal and anti-clerical. Moreover, Catholic base activists who were dissatisfied with their limited influence in the Conservative Party had few political alternatives because the Church hierarchy routinely quashed attempts by Catholic activists to organize outside of the Conservative Party (Andes 2014).

However, each of these structural advantages began to erode during the 1910s and 1920s. While the practice of forcing peasants to vote for the landowner's party continued until the 1950s, urbanization in the early 20th century reduced the size of the captive Conservative vote in rural areas (Heise 1982). Moreover, the party lost its main institutional ally when the Church conceded defeat in the conflict over the separation of Church and State in the 1920s and undercut the Conservative Party's hard-line position by negotiating with the Liberal President Arturo Alessandri (Smith 1982). The Church also ended its opposition to the formation of new Catholic parties, and it encouraged lay Catholics to direct their activism into non-partisan organizations (Fleet and Smith 1997, 39).

The Conservative Party's remaining activists tried to take advantage of their leadership's

weakened position by demanding a greater voice in party decisions. The party's 1925 convention in Valparaíso attempted to democratize and decentralize the party's structure, and it approved new party statutes that limited the influence of the politicians in the party's leadership bodies and gave the local assemblies the power to elect most of the members of the General Directory. However, the party's elites were still unwilling to relinquish their veto over party decisions, and they ended up reversing most of these institutional reforms in 1929. This reversal demoralized the party's activist base, and in the early 1930s, many of these activists flooded into non-partisan Catholic organizations, while a few attempted to organize new Catholic parties of their own (Brahm 2016).

The Governing Parties

Incumbent elites had much weaker incentives for party-building. Their secure access to state resources allowed them to recruit campaign workers mainly through patronage-based incentives. Moreover, incumbents could usually win elections even without strong party organizations, thanks to their control over the electoral machinery and their ability to perpetrate electoral fraud as a last resort. As a result, most Latin American incumbent parties remained organizationally underdeveloped relative to opposition parties.

The Liberal Party of Chile

The Liberal Party was the Chilean party that spent the longest amount of time in executive office between 1862 and 1924. This secure incumbency status discouraged the Liberal elites from adopting the activist-based organizational strategies employed by their Radical and Conservative rivals. Although the party eventually developed a network of local party assemblies based on the Radical Party's model, these party organizations were dominated by elite politicians, and the party's campaign workers had little weight in party decisions in practice.

The Liberal Party remained loosely organized during its period of political dominance from the 1860s to the 1880s, and the brokers and agents who organized its campaigns had no

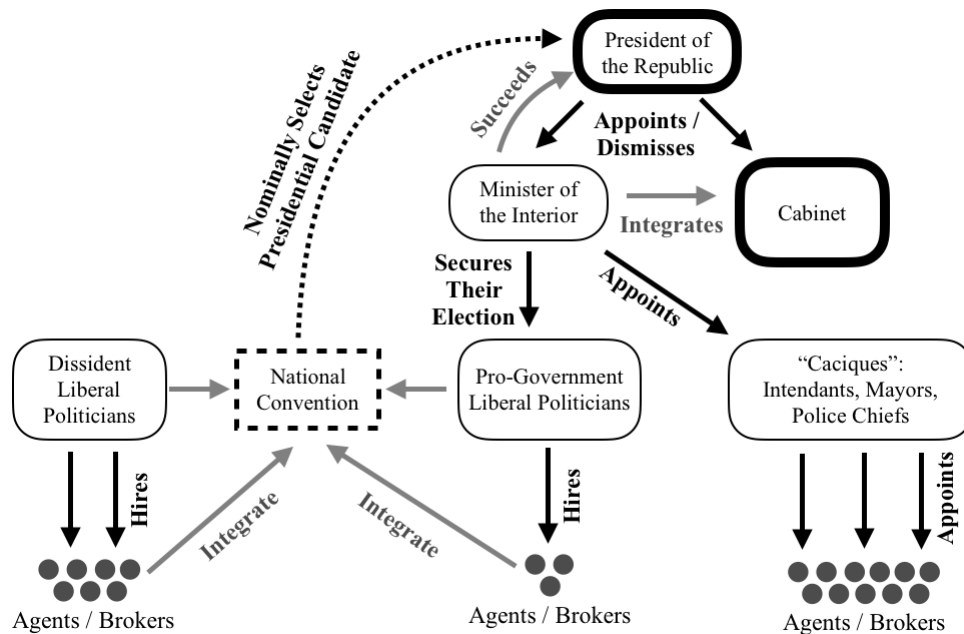


Figure 4.6: Structure of the Liberal Party of Chile, circa 1880. *Source:* Heisse (1982)

real voice in party decisions. In the late 19th century, the Liberal Party was effectively a political machine under the control of the President and the Minister of Interior, and it continued many of the same heavy-handed electioneering tactics that its Conservative predecessors had used in the mid-19th century. The Minister of the Interior appointed personal allies to the national and local offices that were responsible for organizing and overseeing the election process. During election campaigns, he would then call upon these officials to intervene in favor of pro-government candidates by engaging in electoral violence and electoral fraud. The Liberal presidents Santa Maria and Balmaceda had both used their control over elections as Minister of the Interior to secure their own succession to the presidency in 1881 and 1886, respectively (Heise 1982, 71).

The Liberal Party lost its ability to manufacture election outcomes after the overthrow of President Balmaceda by the congress in 1890, but it retained a dominant position in Chilean politics under the “Parliamentary Republic” that lasted until 1924. As a large centrist party, the Liberal Party was an indispensable coalition partner that could expect to be included in most of

the short-lived multi-party cabinets that governed Chile during this period. Moreover, the Liberal Party's ideological heterogeneity allowed it to align itself simultaneously with both the Radical Party to its left and the Conservative Party to its right. All but one of the presidents from 1896 to 1924 were members of either the mainstream Liberal Party or its Balmacedista offshoot, and in most presidential elections, *both* of the major presidential candidates were from different factions of the Liberal Party (Heise 1982; Remmer 1984).

Because of the party's secure hold on elected office in the early 20th century, Liberal leaders faced no electoral pressure to include mass activists in the party's decision-making process. The party's Balmacedista faction, the Liberal Democratic Party, eventually built a fairly strong and disciplined party organization, but it remained tightly controlled by the party elite (Remmer 1984). Similarly, the mainstream Liberal Party attempted to develop a system of local assemblies in the 1910s, but these organizations were quickly captured by individual Liberal politicians and they never attained much influence in the party's decisions. Although large numbers of middle-class activists were elected to the party's 1919 convention, the party's fractionalized nature during this period prevented these activists from exerting much influence over the rest of the party. When the convention approved a populist platform, much of the party's establishment simply walked out of the convention and organized a fierce campaign against the presidential candidate that the convention had nominated (Heise 1982, 182). Despite the Liberal Party's growing reliance on middle-class campaign workers in the early 20th century, the party remained a weakly-institutionalized and elite-dominated organization that relied heavily on state resources to compensate its campaign workers.

The National Party of Chile

Like the Liberal Party, the National Party founded by President Manuel Montt in the late 1850s was represented in most of Chile's governing coalitions. During its brief period in the political opposition in the 1860s, the National Party had started to develop a system of local

assemblies similar to the Radical assemblies. However, the party abandoned this organizational strategy when it entered the Liberal-led governing coalition in the mid-1870s, and it remained a loosely-organized, personalistic clique for the remainder of its existence as a political force. Compared to the Radicals, the Nationals were a more-reliable coalition partner for the Liberal presidents due to their prior governing experience during Montt's presidency and their ideological proximity to the Liberal establishment. The Nationals remained in the cabinet even after the Radical Party returned to the opposition in the late 1880s, and by the end of the 19th century, the National Party was so closely aligned with the Liberal establishment that it had become practically just another faction of the Liberal Party (Remmer 1984).

The Colorado Party of Uruguay

The Colorado Party stands out as one of the only Latin American incumbent parties that transformed into a mass organization during the early 20th century. By the mid-1920s, Colorado activists had even gained the right to participate in the party's candidate-selection decisions and much of its day-to-day management and administration. Although this transformation may seem to be at odds with this chapter's argument that incumbent elites were unlikely to incorporate mass activists into their party organizations, the Colorado case is actually quite consistent with the mechanisms behind my argument. The impetus for the Colorado Party's conversion into a mass party came solely from its Batllista faction, which was excluded from power during the 1890s, when the transformation began. The Batllista leaders lost interest in continuing this transformation once they gained power in the early 1900s, and the Batllistas returned to grassroots party-building only after their fall from power in 1917.

Like Chile's Liberal Party, the Colorado Party of the late 19th century was organized as a political machine that was under the tight control of the incumbent president (Pivel Devoto 1994, 2:384; Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:56). As I discussed above, party elites in Uruguay faced no electoral pressure to align themselves with policy-seeking activists because the Co-participation

agreement between the Colorado and National parties had limited electoral competition and allowed both parties to monopolize politics at the local level. This lack of electoral competition was compounded by the National Party's outright abstention from most elections in the 1890s. Moreover, as the party that controlled Uruguay's presidency, the Colorado Party could use the resources of the state to purchase votes and coerce policemen to get out the Colorado vote (Vanger 1963, 176; Vanger 2010, 86).

The first serious attempt to incorporate mass activists into the Colorado Party was organized by a faction of the party that was excluded from power in the late 19th century. From the newspaper *El Día*, the dissident Colorado leader José Batlle y Ordóñez called for the creation of "a grand party, a truly popular party organized in such a manner that all of its members, even those from the most humble social or political position, can exercise their rights on a regular basis."⁴ Batlle proposed a democratization of the Colorado party structure and the reorganization of the party on the basis of neighborhood-level party clubs that would elect delegates to the party's convention and organize the party's election campaigns on the ground (Lindahl 1962, 40; Caetano 2011, 81; Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:77). After the party's 1892 convention rejected this proposal, the Batllistas organized a network of party clubs on their own initiative, and they used these clubs to mobilize protests against the government of Colorado president Juan Idiarte Borda. Although the Colorado establishment declined to grant the clubs a role in the party's decision-making process, the Batllista clubs nevertheless contributed to Batlle's rise to power within the party. After one of Batlle's followers assassinated President Idirate in 1897, the Batllista clubs helped the next president, Cuestas, stage a power-grab within the party by mobilizing their supporters onto the streets in support of Cuestas and in opposition to the Colorado establishment. Cuestas rewarded Batlle for his faction's assistance in this power-struggle by promoting him to both the presidency of the Colorado Party and the presidency of the Senate (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:95).

Batlle demonstrated little interest in grassroots party-building after he succeeded Cuestas

⁴Quoted in Caetano (2011, 81).

to the Presidency of the Republic in 1903. Although Batlle formalized the role of the existing neighborhood clubs in the party decision-making process, this reorganization of the party appears to have been mostly an attempt by Batlle to consolidate his control over the party organization, rather than a sincere effort to give low-level activists a voice in party decisions. The party's departmental conventions nominally drew up candidate lists for congress, but Batlle maintained an informal veto over candidate-selection (Vanger 1963, 176). The party clubs continued to be organized on a merely temporary basis, and most clubs were reopened only during elections and party conventions. The clubs were usually dominated by individual elite politicians, and their meetings were often heavily scripted in advance (Vanger 1963, 101). Turnout at the party's 1905 internal elections was so low that many of the clubs in Montevideo failed to meet quorum, and the party leadership reportedly had to lure its club activists to a second election by holding large barbecues at the polling places (Vanger 1963, 214-215).

While Batlle did little to strengthen his party's grassroots organizations during his presidencies, he did attempt to mobilize working-class voters into the Colorado Party by enacting progressive legislation from above. The president leveraged his political capital to push through an ambitious series of economic and social reforms designed to reduce social tension and undercut Uruguay's Marxist and anarchist movements (Barran and Nahum 1986, 2:38-41). These reforms included the establishment of an eight-hour workday, the creation of a social security program, and the nationalization of some private monopolies (Vanger 1963). Batlle also attempted to lock in these reforms by expanding suffrage to include illiterate voters, and by reforming the constitution to replace the presidency with a nine-person executive council that would be dominated by politicians from his faction (Vanger 1980, 160).⁵

However, Batlle's strategy of mobilizing mass support from above began to unravel when his faction failed to win a majority of seats in the 1916 constituent assembly elections—Uruguay's first elections held under full male suffrage. The immediate consequence of this electoral defeat

⁵Since only one seat on the council would open up each year, Batlle's political opponents would have to win multiple consecutive elections in order to gain a majority on the body.

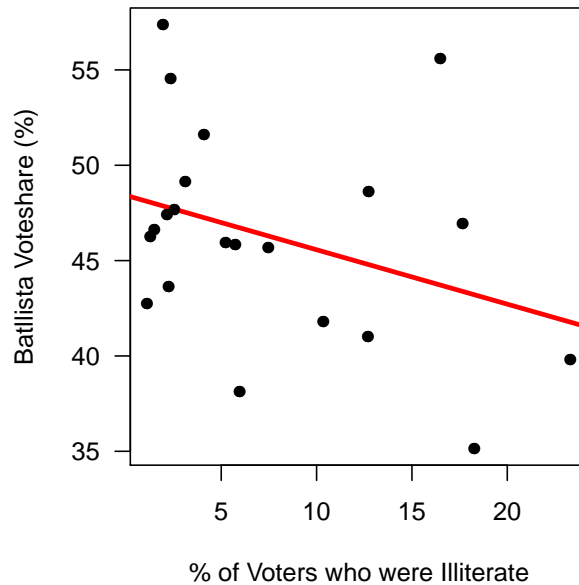


Figure 4.7: Illiteracy and the Batllista Voteshare in the 1916 Elections, by Montevideo Precinct.
Source: Nahum (2007)

was that Batlle’s faction lacked sufficient seats in the constituent assembly to push through the institutional changes that would have helped lock in the social and economic reforms. The defeat also cast doubt on the central premise behind Batlle’s mass mobilization strategy because it showed that lower-class voters would not automatically support a party simply because it implemented policies that were in their interests. Figure 4.7 depicts the relationship between the Batllista faction’s precinct-level voteshare and the illiteracy rate in the precinct, which is a proxy for its socioeconomic status.⁶ There is a weak, negative relationship between electoral support for Batlle’s faction and illiteracy, which implies that Batllista electoral support was actually strongest among the more-affluent neighborhoods of Montevideo. In the aftermath of the 1916 election, several of Batlle’s allies in the Colorado Party abandoned the Batllista faction and founded personalistic factions of their own. Even Batlle’s hand-picked successor as president, Feliciano Viera, publicly broke with him, announced that the social reform process was at an

⁶Precinct-level data on illiteracy is available for 1916 because literate and illiterate voters were kept on separate voter registries at the time of this election.

end, and formed a new cabinet that excluded the Batllistas (Caetano 1993; Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:188).

In the years following his faction's fall from power, Batlle turned to his activist supporters in an attempt to salvage the reforms of his earlier presidencies. During the run-up to the 1919 congressional elections, Batlle founded the Batllista Colorado Party, an autonomous party organization that would still pool its votes with the rest of the Colorado Party. In the editorials of *El Día*, he also promised to grant his activists a greater voice in the new party organization:

From the neighborhood club to the highest national authority, all of the organs of the party must be directly elected, by proportional representation with a secret ballot. The Colorado electorate shall choose its own authorities—free from the influence of intermediaries.⁷

Until now, everything has been decided in secret meetings, without input from the party. But from now on, the people themselves shall take part in the debates within the party... The masses, so shamefully treated, are sincere, active, and impartial, and they shall make their views known without constraints or imposed discipline. It is these masses who shall comprise the clubs, the instruments of the party's power, action, and sovereignty. It is these masses who shall determine the party's positions and secure Colorado majorities at the polls.⁸

The heart of the new Batllista Colorado Party was its National Convention, which consisted of national-level Batllista politicians, members of the party's National Commission, and approximately 1,500 delegates elected by the 3,000 members of the Departmental Commissions, who in turn were directly elected by the activist-run neighborhood clubs. The vast majority of the 1,500 delegates to the National Convention were neighborhood activists who had risen through the party clubs. Moreover, unlike the conventions of most other Latin American parties at the time, which met only once every couple of years, the Batllista Convention was organized on a permanent basis, and it met almost weekly starting in 1922. The party's nominal executive organs soon became mere administrative bodies, and the Convention itself took over most of the party's day-to-day management (Lindahl 1962; Vanger 2010, 264-270; Alonso 2014).

⁷*El Día*, March 14, 1919. Quoted in Alonso (2014).

⁸*El Día*, May 15, 1919. Quoted in Alonso (2014).

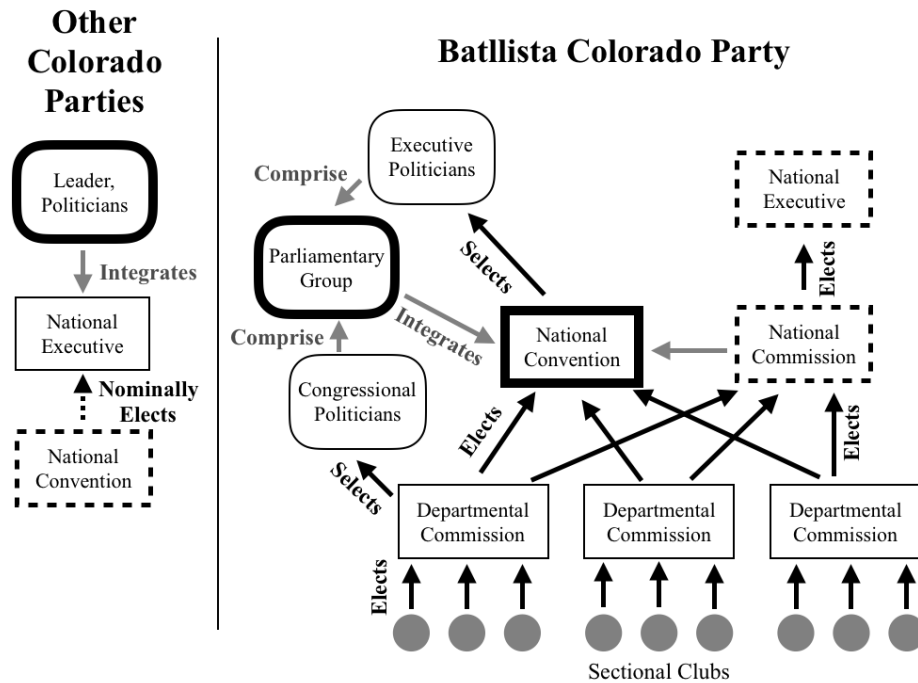


Figure 4.8: Structure of the Colorado Parties of Uruguay, circa 1920. *Source:* Lindahl (1962) and Vanger (2010)

Batlle remained the Batllista Colorado Party’s *de facto* leader until his death in 1929, and he regularly attended Convention meetings and intervened in many of the Convention’s decisions. However, the Batllista Convention was not a mere rubber-stamp body. Even ordinary convention delegates debated with Batlle and the party’s other elite politicians on the convention floor (Vanger 2010, 270). At one convention meeting, a delegate stood up and reproached Batlle in his presence for his controversial habit of fighting pistol duels against prominent politicians from the National Party. Nor did the Convention always fall in line behind the party establishment on key votes. For example, in 1922, the Convention voted down a pact that the Batllista elite politicians had negotiated with the other Colorado factions (Lindahl 1962, 69).

The Batllistas did not regain full control over Uruguay’s government until the 1940s. Nevertheless, the reorganization of the Batllista movement into a mass party helped the movement bounce back from its electoral defeat in 1916 and protect most of Batlle’s reforms in the 1920s.

It is unlikely that this party reorganization would have taken place if the Batllistas had won the 1916 election and carried out the constitutional changes that Batlle had wanted. Like the Chilean Radical elites in the late 1880s, Batlle turned to mass activists largely out of desperation, and he offered them a greater voice in his party only when his movement no longer enjoyed the electoral advantages that came with incumbency status. Moreover, these organizational changes remained largely confined to Batlle's segment of the Colorado Party. Neighborhood party clubs continued to have little voice in the decisions of the other factions of the Colorado Party, which had maintained a secure lock on the central government's patronage resources throughout the 1920s (Lindahl 1962, 105).

Party Transformation in Comparative Perspective

Several parties in other Latin American countries underwent similar changes in the late 19th century. As was the case in Chile and Uruguay, the extent and timing of the transformations of these traditional parties into mass parties were functions of their incumbency status and the fate of their countries' state-building projects. First, incumbent parties had little need for party-building, and most of the region's early party-building efforts were instead led by opposition elites. Second, successful state-building was close to a necessary condition for party-building. As long as the state remained so weak that the incumbent government could be ousted from power through force, opposition elites were better off investing their scarce resources in their military capacity instead of electoral party organizations. In general, opposition elites turned to electoral organizing only after they were convinced that party revolutions were no longer a viable option for gaining power.

Figure 4.9 illustrates the effects of Latin America's state-building projects on partisan conflict by depicting the number of successful elite-led party revolutions in the countries that had developed a two-party system by 1850. This figure shows that party revolutions became

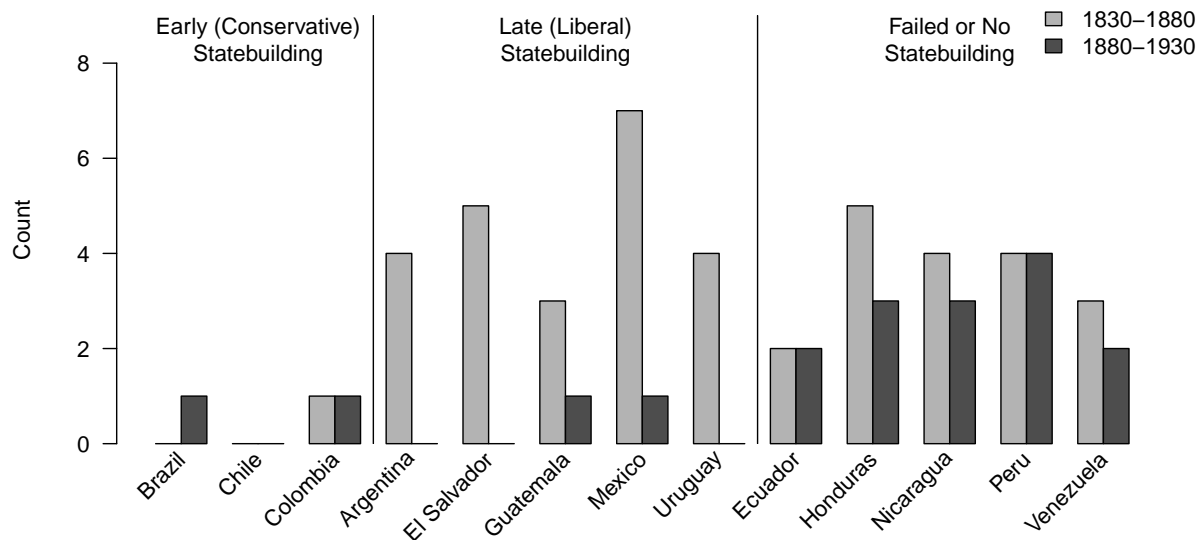


Figure 4.9: Successful Elite-Led Party Revolutions in Latin America, 1830 to 1930

considerably less likely to succeed after the state had consolidated.⁹ Successful party revolutions were rare in the countries that participated in the first wave of state-building, centered around the 1840s. Successful party revolutions were initially quite common in the countries that participated in the second wave of state-building centered around the 1870s, but they became extremely rare in these countries by the 1880s. However, successful party revolutions remained common well into the early 20th century in the countries where state-building failed or was never attempted.

However, while state-building made it harder for opposition elites to seize power through force, this did not always lead them to turn to electoral organizing. State-building encouraged party-building only in cases when the state-building process preserved competition between two or more electorally-viable parties, and this in turn was closely linked to the ideological visions

⁹I code a party revolution as “successful” if it produced a transfer of the presidency from one political party to another; for Brazil (which had a parliamentary system until 1889), I use transfers in the premiership; for Argentina (which did not have a national head of state prior to 1854), I use transfers in the governorship of Buenos Aires province, which usually managed the foreign relations of Argentina’s other provinces. I exclude non-partisan civil wars, military coups, and conflicts that pitted one faction of a party against another faction from the same party.

Table 4.1: Latin America’s 19th Century State-Building Projects

Country	Type	Period	Fate of State-Building Project	# of Viable Parties in the Aftermath
Mexico	Conservative	1830s-1840s	Failed	2
Colombia	Conservative	1840s	Partially Reversed (1860s)	2
Ecuador	Conservative	1850s-1860s	Failed	2
Brazil	Conservative	1840s-1850s	Partially Reversed (1890s)	2
Chile	Conservative	1830s-1840s	Succeeded	2→4
Mexico	Liberal	1850s-1870s	Succeeded	1
Guatemala	Liberal	1870s	Succeeded	1
El Salvador	Liberal	1870s	Succeeded	1
Honduras	Liberal	1870s-1880s	Failed	0→2
Costa Rica	Liberal	1870s	Succeeded	1
Peru	Liberal	1870s	Failed	1
Argentina	Liberal	1860s-1870s	Succeeded	1→2
Uruguay	Liberal	1870s-1900s	Succeeded	2
Paraguay	Patrimonial	1840s-1860s	Partially Reversed (1870s)	0→2
Nicaragua	None			
Venezuela	None			
Bolivia	None			

behind the state-building reforms. The “conservative” state-building projects undertaken in the first half of the 19th century had a minimal effect on the party system, and they tended to result in intense but unequal electoral competition between parties. By contrast, the “liberal” state-building projects in the second half of the 19th century undermined the basis for party competition and contributed to the emergence of hegemonic party systems.

Conservative state-building was narrowly focused on restoring the political stability of Latin America’s earlier Colonial period. Conservative state-builders sought to enhance the coercive capacity and administrative capacity of the post-colonial state, centralize administration and policy-making in the national-level government, create a strong national executive, weaken regional power-brokers, and disband private armies (Faundez 2007). These reforms tended to strengthen the incumbent party’s grip on power, but they did not favor Conservative parties in particular. For example, when Chile’s Liberal Party finally gained the presidency in the 1870s, it benefited from the strong coercive and administrative capacity that it had inherited from its

Conservative predecessors. Despite the authoritarian vision behind these reforms, conservative state-building did not destroy the opposition parties. Instead, the reforms led opposition parties to turn away from revolutionary strategies and rely on party-building and electoral organizing to gain power.

Liberal state-building involved a much deeper social and economic transformation. In addition to modernizing the state and professionalizing the military, the liberal state-builders also undertook several social and economic reforms that eliminated the privileges of the Church, secularized the education system, abolished indigenous and communal land tenure, and reoriented the national economy towards the production of agricultural exports goods. In countries that had a Liberal-Conservative two-party system, these reforms tended to undermine the economic bases of the Conservative parties. Conservative elites were exiled and dispossessed of their property, while their two most important political allies, the Church and the indigenous communities, saw their lands confiscated and sold to large export producers (Monteón 2010). The Conservative parties of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador ceased to be viable political forces by the late 1870s, and political power in these countries was monopolized by hegemonic Liberal parties that came to be dominated by military leaders.¹⁰

Following other comparative historical research in Latin America (Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2010; Roberts 2014), I organize this analysis by country groups that are based on the countries' starting or "antecedent conditions," which are summarized in Table 4.2. Antecedent conditions define the constraints that decision-makers face and the range of possible choices, but they are not sufficient for explaining where each case ends up in the end (Capoccia 2015, 151). Instead, the purpose of the analysis is to show that the decisions made by political leaders and other key actors cause countries with similar antecedent conditions to spin off onto different paths. These decisions are the main explanatory variables of interest in historical institutional analysis,

¹⁰The consequences of the liberal reforms for party competition were more innocuous in Argentina and Uruguay, where the early party system was not based on the Liberal-Conservative cleavage that structured party politics in the rest of the region.

Table 4.2: Antecedent Conditions: Post-Colonial Politics in Latin America

Country	Viceroyalty	Colonial State Type	Post-Colonial Political System	Parties in 1850
Mexico	New Spain	Administrative Center	Early consolidation of a two-party system	Liberal, Conservative
Guatemala	New Spain	Autonomous		Liberal, Conservative
Honduras	New Spain	Subordinate		Liberal, Conservative
El Salvador	New Spain	Subordinate		Liberal, Conservative
Nicaragua	New Spain	Subordinate		Liberal, Conservative
Colombia	New Grenada	Administrative Center		Liberal, Conservative
Venezuela	New Grenada	Autonomous		Liberal, Conservative
Ecuador	New Grenada	Subordinate		Liberal, Conservative
Costa Rica	New Spain	Subordinate	Early consolidation of a one-party system	Liberal
Panama	New Grenada	Subordinate		(Liberal)
Peru	Peru	Administrative Center	Late consolidation of a dominant-party system	Liberal, Conservative
Argentina	La Plata	Administrative Center		Federalist, Unitarian
Bolivia	La Plata	Subordinate	Late emergence of political parties	None
Paraguay	La Plata	Subordinate		None
Chile	Peru	Frontier	Fractured two-party system	Liberal, Conservative
Uruguay	La Plata	Frontier		Blanco, Colorado
Brazil	Brazil	Administrative Center	Parliamentary monarchy	Liberal, Conservative

while the institutional legacies that the decisions leave behind are the main outcome variables. In this case, the most relevant decisions are the incumbent elites' decisions about whether and how to strengthen the state, and the opposition elites' decisions about whether to respond to state-building with violence, electoral organizing, or abstention from politics. The dependent variables of interest are the degree to which elite-founded parties in these countries incorporated lower and middle-class activists into their ranks, and the degree to which the parties attracted mass support.

Early Two-Party Systems: Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela

Two-party competition between Liberal and Conservative parties took root within a few decades after Independence in most of the countries that grew out of the colonial viceroyalties of New Granada and New Spain. The Liberal and Conservative parties in Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador emerged after the break-up of Gran Colombia in 1830, though they originated from

political factions that formed during the Wars of Independence. The Conservatives in these countries were generally followers of Simon Bolívar, while many of the Liberals were regional elites and *caudillos* who had opposed Bolívar's centralist politics (Delpar 1981, 3; Bushnell 1993, 93). The Liberal and Conservative parties of Central America solidified under the Federal Republic of Central America, and they survived the collapse of the union in 1838 (Mahoney 2001).

Colombia was the only country in this group where conservative state-building was even mildly successful, and it was also the country whose party development most closely matches the patterns that occurred in Chile. From 1837 to 1849, Colombia was ruled by a succession of Conservative governments that attempted to create a strong, centralized, and authoritarian state along the lines of the Portalian state in Chile. Liberal *caudillos* rose up in opposition to these reforms in the late 1830s in a conflict known as the War of the Supremes, and the Conservatives' victory enabled the government to supplant several of these *caudillos* and consolidate these early state-building reforms.

The Colombian Liberal opposition turned to electoral organizing and grassroots party-building during the aftermath of its military defeat. Shortly before the 1849 presidential election, the Liberal elites recruited party activists among the urban artisans and the free Afro-Colombian population along the Pacific coast, and they institutionalized the role of the activists within the party by setting up a network of "democratic societies" throughout the country. These societies remained mobilized after the Liberal candidate José Hilario López won the presidency in 1849, and they helped the party's activists not only defend the new Liberal government against the Conservative opposition, but also pressure the government to follow through on its campaign promises (Jaramillo 1976; Vega 1990; Bushnell 1993, 111; Sanders 2004). When López attempted to backtrack on his promise to abolish slavery, Afro-Colombian Liberal activists used their democratic societies to agitate for abolition. In Cauca, Liberal activists even organized an uprising against the plantation owners of the region (Sanders 2004, 98). After several unsuccessful

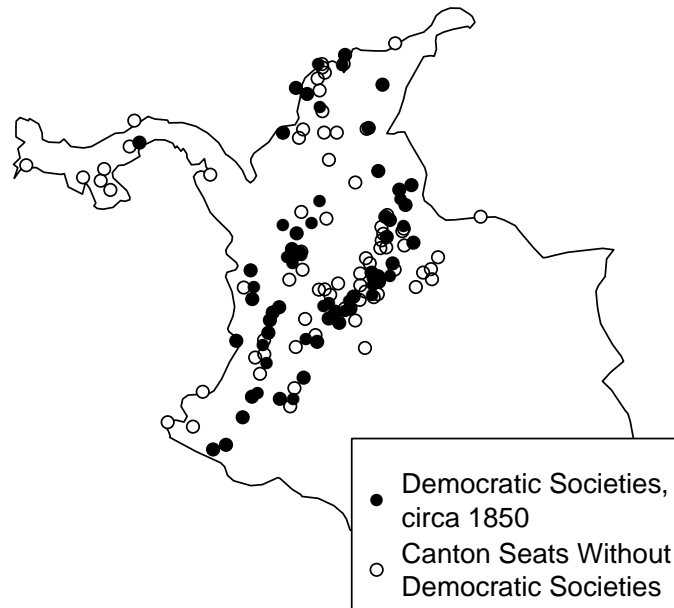


Figure 4.10: Liberal Party Democratic Societies in Colombia, circa 1850. *Source:* Vega (1990)

attempts to retake power through force in the 1860s, the Conservative Party decided to emulate the Liberal Party’s organizational strategy in the 1870s. The Conservatives constructed their own network of “Catholic societies,” and they also enlisted parish priests to proselytize on their behalf and organize the party’s campaigns on the ground (Sanders 2004, 150-154; Deas 1996).

Strong states emerged more slowly in Mexico and Central America. Conservative governments in Guatemala and El Salvador did little to strengthen their states before they fell from power in the 1870s. Mexican Conservatives attempted to establish a centralized state in 1836, but their reforms provoked a wave of separatist uprisings in both the North and the South, and their state-building project was interrupted by the war with the United States in the 1840s. In

each of these three countries, the most enduring episodes of state-building occurred under Liberal governments in the second half of the 19th century, after the Conservative Parties had been defeated on the battlefield (Hale 1989; Mahoney 2001).

Unlike conservative state-building in Chile and Colombia, liberal state-building in Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador did not lead to the emergence of electoral competition because the liberal state-building reforms were accompanied by anticlerical and structural reforms that undermined the institutional and economic base of the Conservative opposition. The Conservative Parties in Mexico and El Salvador vanished by the end of the 1870s (Hale 1989, 22; Mahoney 2001, 115), and many Mexican Conservative elites were eventually co-opted into the Liberal Party (Hale 1989, 136). Guatemalan Conservatives briefly attempted to mobilize middle and lower class activists into the Unionist Party in 1920, and the new party organized mass demonstrations that forced the Liberal president from power. However, the transitional government was overthrown in a coup a year later, and the Unionist Party was suppressed before it had a chance to consolidate into a viable opposition party (Kit 1993). Meanwhile, the Liberal Parties in these countries became hegemonic parties that were quickly dominated by the military leaders who had helped them seize power. Faced with little organized political opposition, these Liberal parties had no electoral incentive to enlist the support of mass activists. Shortly before Mexico's 1880 election, some Mexican Liberals considered organizing a formal party structure modeled on the Republican and Democratic parties of the United States, but the organizing convention was ultimately canceled due to a lack of interest from the party's politicians (Hale 1989).

Parties also remained weakly-organized in countries where state-building failed or never got off the ground. Elites in Venezuela and Nicaragua made few concerted attempts to consolidate their states prior the 1890s, and party revolutions remained a common occurrence in both countries well into the 20th century (Lopez-Alves 2000, 201). The most sustained state-building efforts in these countries in the early 20th century were led by military strongmen who used their reforms to stamp out the remnants of the 19th century parties and establish personalistic dictatorships

(Lopez-Alves 2000; Ewell 1984, 29). State-building projects got underway under Conservative governments in Ecuador in the 1860s, but these reforms proved even less enduring than the state-building efforts that had occurred in Colombia (Ayala 1978, 122). During a brief period of electoral competition in the 1880s, Ecuador's Liberal and Conservative parties attempted to reorganize themselves as mass parties by establishing formal party structures that gave party base units representation in the party conventions. However, Ecuador's traditional parties appear to have abandoned these organizational efforts after a successful Liberal revolution against the Conservative government in 1895 revealed that elite-led party revolutions were still a viable way for opposition elites to gain power (Ayala 1978). The Ecuadorian Liberal and Conservative parties retained congressional representation until the late 20th century, but they never acquired the deep bases of mass support that their Colombian sister parties had developed by the 1880s.

Honduras was the only Central American country in this group whose elite-founded parties developed broad mass support during the 20th century, but this occurred only after the country's original two party system collapsed. While the Honduran state remained quite weak until the late 20th century, repeated military interventions by the United States on behalf of incumbent governments produced occasional periods of enforced political stability that encouraged opposition elites to turn to electoral organizing. Honduras' original two parties had dissipated at the end of the 19th century, but they were soon replaced by several short-lived personalistic parties. Although most of these parties organized only intermittently before elections, two of these organizations eventually transformed into well-organized mass-based parties. The party that eventually came to be known as the National Party of Honduras led this transformation during the 1919 election campaign by establishing a nation-wide network of party clubs and by recruiting teachers, artisans and shopkeepers into its organization on a wide scale. The National Party was eventually co-opted by the dictator Tiburcio Carias during the 1930s, but it continued to offer middle-class activists opportunities for political advancement, and it remained a formidable

political force upon the reemergence of electoral competition in the 1950s (Dodd 2005). The other party that underwent a similar transformation was an organization that named itself the Liberal Party, after the 19th century party. Although the new Liberal Party was initially dominated by *caudillos*, it chose to open its doors to middle-class activists in the 1920s, in an attempt to compete with the rising National Party. The Liberal Party attracted a younger generation of nationalist and socialist activists who were inspired by the Mexican Revolution, and these activists pushed the party to the left on economic issues. Although the party was banned and most of its leaders were imprisoned or exiled under the Carias dictatorship, Liberal activists who stayed in Honduras helped organize the popular resistance to the dictatorship and strengthened their party's ties to the working class (Euraque 1996).

Early One-Party Systems: Panama and Costa Rica

Two-party systems failed to take root in Costa Rica and Panama until the mid-20th century. The Conservative Parties had been especially weak in both regions back when they were still part of the Federal Republic of Central America and Colombia, respectively, and the Liberal Parties became hegemonic parties almost immediately after their countries became independent states. However, these parties inherited different organizational legacies from their pre-independence ancestors in Central America and Colombia. Panama did not become independent from Colombia until 1903, more than half a century after the Colombian Liberal Party began its transformation into a mass-based party. As a result, when Panama gained its independence, the Panamanian Liberals already had a strong party organization and widespread partisan support among the lower and middle classes (Delpar 1981). Panama's Liberal Party was virtually unchallenged in elections until the 1930s, and it remained the dominant force in Panamanian politics until the 1950s.

The Central American Liberal Party was still a cadre party when Costa Rica gained its independence in 1838, and the Costa Rican Liberals faced no immediate electoral pressure to broaden their base of support. Instead, the first attempts to organize mass parties in Costa Rica

came from the Catholic opposition to the Liberal government. Shortly before the 1889 election, the Church helped organize a new party called the Constitutionalist Party in an effort to roll back the Liberals' anticlerical reforms. In order to compete against the Liberal incumbents, the Constitutionalist Party reached out to lay Catholic activists and artisans to run its campaign. The party also gave its lower-class activists a nominal role in crafting the party platform, and an artisan even occupied a seat on the party's executive committee. However, the Constitutionlists broke off their alliance with the activists shortly after they won the election. In an apparent attempt to prevent these activists from using the party to pressure the new government, the president-elect formally dissolved the party and reportedly told his campaign workers "Go home, your mission is completed; high politics is reserved for men of state" (Salazar Mora 1990, 142).

The Costa Rican Liberals' fall from power led to a period of violent but generally-competitive elections. Most of the dozens of new parties that formed over the following decades remained short-lived personalistic organizations that disappeared immediately after the election was over, but a few parties organized on a permanent basis and incorporated mass activists into their decision-making process. In the 1900s, the Republican Party built a strong party organization rooted in a network of local party clubs that included artisan and peasant activists, and it won two successive presidential elections in 1910 and 1914 on a platform of democratizing Costa Rica's political system. Unlike the Constitutionlists, the Republicans kept their party clubs mobilized after their rise to power, and they used these local party organizations to dispense patronage and pull new supporters into the party. The party was forced underground after its president was removed from office in a coup, but its offshoot, the National Republican Party, went on to become Costa Rica's dominant party during the 1930s and 1940s (Lehoucq and Molina 2002; Salazar Mora 1995).

Late Dominant Party Systems: Argentina and Peru

Argentina and Peru had started to develop two-party systems during the decades after Independence, but both party systems had disappeared by the end of the 1860s (Sabato 2001; Sabato et al. 2011; Aguila 2013). The Argentine Federalists and Unitarians and the Peruvian Liberals and Conservatives never became much more than loose alliances of military officers and *caudillos*, and they struggled to transition to electoral politics after the civil wars ended.¹¹ Starting in the 1870s, political power in both countries was monopolized by new elite parties that emerged during the liberal state-building period: the Civilista Party in Peru and the National Autonomist Party in Argentina. While these new parties were led by businessmen who had ties to the growing export sector, both parties also welcomed other elites into their ranks, including large landowners, merchants, bankers, and provincial elites (Rock 1975; Remmer 1984; Muecke 2004). However, neither party succeeded at co-opting all elite opposition, and by the early 20th century, both parties faced strong challenges from elite-led opposition parties.

As was the case in the Central American countries that had developed hegemonic party systems in the aftermath of the liberal state-building period, the Civilista and National Autonomist parties' electoral dominance in the late 19th century discouraged them from incorporating mass activists into the party on a permanent basis. The Civilistas had mobilized lower-class campaign workers in the 1871 election that brought the party to power, but it carefully excluded these activists from the party's formal organization and relied mostly on patronage to reward the activists after it won the presidency (Muecke 2004). The National Autonomist Party developed into a political machine that used a combination of patronage, electoral fraud, and federal interventions against provincial governments to maintain control over most elected offices. The National Autonomist leader Roque Sáenz Peña attempted to reorganize the party as a mass-based

¹¹The Liberals and Conservatives of Peru were such diffuse and unstable alliances that the historical literature on Peru does not usually refer to them as "parties." Instead, they are often described as "bands," "factions," or simply "*los liberales*" and "*los conservadores*" (Aguila 2013). Similarly, the Argentine Federalists and Unitarians did not think of themselves as "parties" (Sabato et al. 2011, 94),

conservative party in the 1910s, but the party never developed a significant activist base, and its electoral support collapsed after it lost control over state resources in 1916 (Rock 1975; Remmer 1984).

Opposition elites in Peru and Argentina had stronger incentives to align themselves with middle and lower class activists, but differences in the strength of their respective states led them to adopt contrasting strategies for mobilizing mass support. The state-building process that had begun in Peru in the 1860s and continued under the Civilistas in the 1870s suffered a major setback when Peru lost the War of the Pacific against Chile and the Chilean Army occupied Lima for nearly three years. Peru's military defeat triggered a civil war between two rival governments, and this conflict was followed by a decade of political and economic instability. Even by the early 20th century, the Peruvian state was still so fragile that armed uprisings against the incumbent government remained a viable path to power for elite opposition parties. The elite-led Democratic Party organized a successful revolution against the incumbent military president in 1895 and governed for four years before passing power back to the Civilistas. During the 1912 election, the Democratic Party mayor of Lima, Guillermo Billinghurst, organized a mass uprising in the capital. His supporters destroyed several polling places and ultimately frightened the Civilista-controlled Congress into annulling the election and handing the presidency over to Billinghurst. Due to the relative ease with which the party's elites pulled off these uprisings, these elites had little need for a permanent, grassroots party organization, and they instead relied on personalistic linkages and populist appeals to mobilize mass participation in their uprisings (Gonzalez 2005; Salinas 2014).

State-building was more enduring in Argentina, and armed uprisings ceased to be a viable way for opposition elites to gain power by the 1880s. President Bartolomé Mitre had used Argentina's 1860s war against Paraguay to consolidate the powers of the central government at the expense of the remaining Federalist *caudillos* in the provinces, and Mitre's state-building project continued under his successors, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Nicolás Avellaneda. In 1890, Mitre orchestrated a revolutionary uprising in Buenos Aires in an attempt to regain power,

but the military crushed the uprising within a couple of days. The following year, a group of opposition elites who had participated in Mitre's 1890 Revolution formed the Radical Civic Union. The Radicals tried again to seize power through force in 1893 and 1905, but these revolutions failed as well. After 1905, the Radical Civic Union renounced its revolutionary strategy and turned to grassroots party-building. Over the next few years, the party's clandestine network of local cells transformed into a strong, nation-wide party organization, and the party welcomed large numbers of middle-class activists into its ranks. The Radicals began competing in elections in 1912, and they finally won Argentina's presidency in 1916 (Rock 1975; Alonso 2000).

Delayed Party Formation: Bolivia and Paraguay

Bolivia and Paraguay differed from the rest of Spanish America in that they did not develop parties until the end of the 19th century, after they had experienced demoralizing military defeats that cost them a large portion of their national territory. Bolivia's post-war political instability discouraged its new Liberal and Conservative parties from investing in building strong party organizations, and neither party made any attempt to mobilize Bolivia's large but still disenfranchised indigenous population. As Klein (1969) describes the political climate in Bolivia after it lost the War of the Pacific against Chile, "violence...became the inevitable tool for forcing an alternation of parties in power, and eventually all 'out' parties sought a revolutionary solution" (Klein 1969, 26). Bolivia's Conservative Party was overthrown by the Liberal Party in 1899, which in turn was overthrown by the Republican Party in 1920. From 1930 until 1952, Bolivia cycled between short-lived one-party dictatorships and military dictatorships. While some of these elite-founded parties began to attract middle-class support by the late 1930s, only the left-leaning Revolutionary Nationalist Movement managed to establish an enduring mass party organization (Klein 1969). Like most of their predecessors, the Revolutionary Nationalists rose to power in 1952 through a revolution rather than through an election.

By contrast, Paraguay's elite-founded Colorado and Liberal parties transformed into mass

parties by the early 20th century, and they are still the dominant forces in Paraguayan politics today. Paraguay's post-war political climate differed from that of Bolivia in several respects. First, Paraguay's personalistic dictators had overseen a moderately successful state-building project beginning in the 1840s, which centered on developing a strong military that could protect the country from its much larger neighbors (Lopez-Alves 2000). While the Paraguayan state's administrative capacity was greatly weakened by the country's military defeat by Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, its coercive apparatus remained intact. Many Paraguayan presidents continued to be overthrown in military coups well into the mid-20th century, but the coups usually resulted in the transfer of power between different factions of the same party, and Paraguay experienced relatively few partisan civil wars between its nascent Colorado and Liberal parties. Second, the Paraguayan state was bankrupt by the large war debts it incurred during its conflict with Argentina and Brazil; this reduced the incumbency advantage in the late 19th century by limiting the supply of patronage available to the governing party. Third, unlike most Latin American elite parties, neither of Paraguay's parties were born with a strong base of support in the countryside. Both parties had developed out of political clubs in Asunción, and many of their civilian leaders had spent most of their lives in exile in Argentina (Lewis 1993). In order to organize elections and maintain order outside the capital, these parties depended on alliances with local village leaders. In the late 1880s, the incumbent Colorado Party and the opposition Liberal Party competed for the loyalties of the village leaders and mobilized both the leaders and their clients into their party organizations. While the Colorados and Liberals remained clientelistic parties that were dominated by party elites, they nevertheless developed a multi-class base of support and a mass party structure based on networks of local party committees run by village brokers (Lewis 1993).

Parliamentary Monarchy: Brazil

Conservative state-building could encourage elite opposition parties to transform into mass organizations. However, this occurred only in a competitive political environment in which

opposition parties faced severe resource constraints compared to incumbent parties. Although Brazilian elites implemented a successful conservative state-building project in the 1840s and 1850s, Brazil's unusual 19th century political system weakened the relationship between electoral victory and governing status and reduced the resource asymmetries between incumbent parties and opposition parties. As a result, party elites in Brazil had weak incentives for incorporating activists into their party organizations.

Brazil was the only Latin American country that had both a monarchy and a parliamentary system throughout most of the 19th century. Upon coming of age in the 1840s, Emperor Pedro II became a critical stabilizing force in Brazilian politics who deescalated conflict between Brazil's Liberal and Conservative parties and helped forge a bipartisan elite consensus behind the creation of a strong, centralized state. The presence of a popular, non-partisan head of state created a political dynamic in Brazil that was absent from Spanish America's presidential republics. The Emperor was the political actor responsible for inviting a Prime Minister to form a government, and he regularly alternated Brazil's two parties between government and opposition, often with little regard for which party held the most seats in parliament. This lowered the stakes of elections and prevented either party from establishing the sort of single-party dictatorship that governed most of Spanish America in the 19th century (Graham 1990, 55-56).

While this political system offered Brazil a degree of political stability that was unmatched in Spanish America, it also weakened elites' incentives for party-building. Even by 19th century standards, Brazil's parties were unusually ideologically fluid, and politicians often switched their allegiances from one party to another depending on which party happened to hold the premiership (Graham 1990, 149). Moreover, the Liberal and Conservative parties sometimes joined together in a "grand coalition" government, and even during periods of single party rule, the opposition party usually retained ample access to patronage resources. Unlike opposition parties in Chile and Colombia, Brazilian parties did not need to enlist the support of policy-seeking activists in order to gain power. Instead, they only had to bide their time and wait until the Emperor switched

out the government again. Due to this low electoral pressure, neither of Brazil's parties had any reason to develop strong mass party organizations. Even as late as the 1880s, these parties were still organized as constantly-shifting patronage networks that linked national politicians, local brokers or *coroneis*, and ordinary voters (Graham 1990, 123).

After the fall of the monarchy and the founding of Brazil's "Old Republic" in the late 1880s, party-building became even less necessary for Brazil's political elites. Party competition vanished throughout most of the country as new state-level Republican Parties monopolized elections in their respective states and co-opted politicians who had belonged to the Liberal and Conservative parties. The *coroneis* took on an increasingly central role as brokers who would herd voters to the polls on behalf of particular politicians. Moreover, compared to elections under the Empire, suffrage was more restricted under the Old Republic, especially in urban areas (Graham 1990, 108). Although the Republican Parties were generally more cohesive than their Liberal and Conservative predecessors, they remained little more than political machines that had shallow mass support and relied on clientelistic strategies and alliances with local intermediaries to bring voters to the polls (Wirth 1977; Hagopian 1996).

The Consequences of Party Transformation

The party elites' decisions to incorporate policy-seeking activists into their parties were usually driven by short-term electoral concerns. Nevertheless, the institutional changes that reinforced the alliances between party elites and activists had several lasting consequences for these parties. Over the long run, they shifted the parties' ideological positions, institutionalized the activists' role in their parties, and helped these parties expand their base of popular support and capture non-elite voters' partisan loyalties.

Ideological Drift

One important consequence of the activists' greater voice in the transformed parties was that these parties began advocating policies that were more in line with the interests of lower-class and middle-class citizens. This ideological shift was particularly stark in the case of Chile's Radical Party. While the Radical Party was originally an ideologically liberal party that favored free trade and limited government intervention in economic affairs, by the 1890s the party had developed a strong socialist faction that looked to Germany's Social Democratic Party as a model (Remmer 1984, 65; Grez 2016). This socialist faction prevailed in the Radical Party's national convention of 1906, and the convention voted to embrace "state socialism," pursue government intervention in policy realms such as health, housing, and education, and abandon the party's long-standing commitment to free trade (Barr-Melej 2001, 28). Around the same time, Chile's Conservative Party developed a social Catholic faction that pushed the party to place a greater emphasis on the "social question" and the plight of the poor (Remmer 1984, 72; Barr-Melej 2001, 39). Similar ideological shifts to the left are also perceptible in other transformed traditional parties in the region, including the Colorado and National parties of Uruguay and the Radical Civic Union of Argentina. The relative openness of the Batllista Colorado Party helped the party attract new activists who had previously remained on the sidelines of party politics, including immigrants, Afro-Uruguayans, and women's suffrage activists. Like the Radical Party of Chile, the Batllista party also developed a well-organized socialist faction called *Avanzar* (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:276).

These ideological shifts were mostly rhetorical at first, and they posed little immediate threat to the interests of party elites, who continued to hold most of their parties' seats in congress and leadership positions. Nevertheless, there were moments when party elites seemed to be in real danger of losing control over the party's direction. For example, when Chile's first Radical president was overthrown in a 1932 coup that established a short-lived Socialist Republic, some of the Radical Party's assemblies voted to support the socialist revolution against their own

party's president. Later that decade, the assemblies forced the Radical Party to withdraw from the Liberal-led governing coalition and formed a Popular Front alliance with the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, over the objections of the party's traditional elites (Urzua 1987; Barr-Melej 2001, 111).

Institutionalization of Party Activism

The relationship between activists and their party began to change as well. Most importantly, these organizational reforms encouraged party activists to build a long-term relationship with a single political party over the course of their careers. While patronage-seeking campaign workers might switch to whichever party happened to hold power at a given moment, policy-seeking activists who had made a long-term ideological investment in a particular party were more likely to stay and continue to fight for their party even after it fell from power (Sanders 2004). At the same time, the party activists' participation in party activities grew more routine and less focused on mere short-term electoral mobilization. Activist-run base organizations like the democratic societies of the Colombian Liberal Party and the assemblies of the Chilean Radical Party became intimately involved in year-round grassroots work in their communities. Among other things, these local party organizations established mutual aid societies and held night classes that taught their lower-class supporters how to read (Barr-Melej 2001, 165; Sanders 2004, 133)

The activists' greater voice in party decisions also became difficult to reverse after it had outlived its usefulness to the party elites. In parties where activist-controlled base units now had a veto over major reforms to the party's statute, party leaders could not easily curtail the activists' voice without risking a split in the party. Even if party elites managed to weaken the party institutions that guaranteed the activists a voice in party decisions, the activists might continue to organize on their own initiative and exert pressure on the party. It is telling that in several of the cases when party elites tried to reduce the influence of their party's activists, they often found it more convenient to overthrow democracy altogether rather than attempt to expel the activists

from the party. After Colombia's Liberal elites became convinced that they were going to lose control over their party to their lower-class activists in the 1870s, many of these elites chose to abandon the party and joined with the Conservative Party in a coup that ousted the Liberal Party from power (Sanders 2004, 170). In Uruguay in the early 1930s, elites from both the Colorado and National parties worked together to dismantle Uruguay's democracy from within after the Blanco convention ousted Herrera from the National Party's directory and left-wing Batllistas became ascendant in Colorado Party politics. In 1933, the incumbent Colorado president Gabriel Terra (a former elite Batllista) joined with Herrera to close the congress and the executive council in a self-coup that was immediately backed by Uruguay's economic elite and all but one of the former Colorado presidents who were still alive at the time. Over the following years, Terra and Herrera's bipartisan dictatorship imprisoned left-leaning activists from their own Colorado and National parties (D'Elia 1982; Jacob 1985). Yet in both of these cases, the elite-backed coups failed to demobilize the traditional parties' activists. Instead, the activists organized the popular resistance to these dictatorships, and their base units quickly resurfaced upon the return of democratic competition (Jacob 1985; Reyes 1989, 227; Marquez 2005)

Emergence of Mass Partisanship

The greater presence of party activists within the transformed political parties also changed the way that lower and middle-class citizens perceived these parties. By the early 20th century, political parties like the Radical parties of Chile and Argentina and the Liberal Party of Colombia began to be seen as multi-class, "popular" forces rather than elite parties (Rock 1975; Remmer 1978; Barr-Melej 2001; Sanders 2004; Horowitz 2008). Although the concept of "party identification" did not yet exist and there are no public opinion surveys from this period, it does appear that a large number of non-elite citizens were beginning to develop some sort of psychological attachment to these parties and even thought of themselves as Radicals, Liberals, or Batllistas (Bushnell 1993; Delpar 1981; Scully 1992; Lewis 1993).

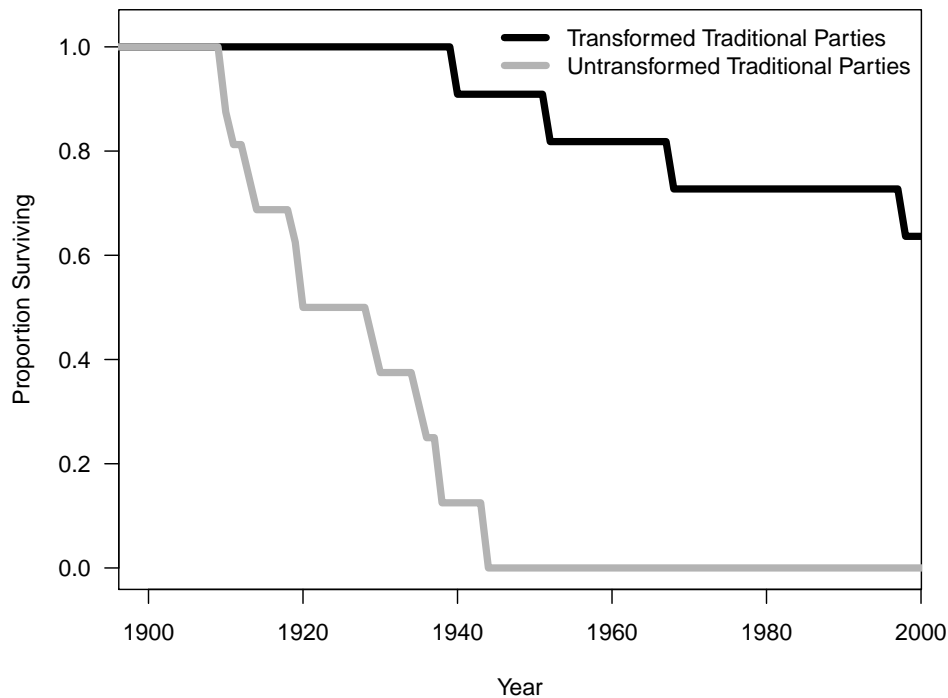


Figure 4.11: The Electoral Survival of Latin American Elite-Founded Parties.

Note: This figure shows the share of elite-founded parties that had not yet finished the final presidential term that they won in an election, grouped by whether or not the party incorporated mass activists into its organization. The sample of presidencies includes presidents who came to power through clearly-fraudulent elections, but it excludes presidents who came to power through some means other than an election, such as a coup. The sample of parties is restricted to elite-founded parties that existed in 1900 and won at least one presidential election after 1900.

If the parties that granted their activists a voice in party decisions were indeed more successful at forging popular support, we might expect that these parties would be more durable over time compared to their untransformed rivals, especially after the expansion of suffrage in the early 20th century. I test this hypothesis by comparing 20th century electoral outcomes between the two types of parties. Because electoral data is unavailable for most Latin American countries before 1950, I instead use the parties' victories in presidential elections as a proxy for their mass electoral support. Figure 4.11 shows the proportion of elite-founded parties in each category that

had not yet finished their final elected presidential term by a given year.¹² This figure shows that elite-founded parties that incorporated mass activists into the party organization were much more likely to survive into the late 20th century. Roughly 75% of these parties continued to win presidential elections after the 1960s, when most Latin American countries had close to universal suffrage. On the other hand, almost all of the untransformed elite-founded parties were out of power by the end of the 1940s. These differences suggest that the elite-founded parties that transformed into mass parties prior to the expansion of suffrage were more likely to remain potent and politically-relevant parties even after the franchise was extended to most citizens.

Another way to assess the effect of party activists on traditional parties' popular support is by examining differences at the subnational level. As Figures 4.2 and 4.10 show, even relatively "mass-based" traditional parties like the Chilean Radical Party and the Colombian Liberal Party initially developed their local party organizations in under half of their countries' cities and large towns. If the Radical and Liberal activist bases were responsible for their parties' subsequent electoral growth, then we should expect that these parties would gain votes at a faster rate in the communities where they had well-established local party organizations.

I begin by analyzing the growth of the Chilean Radical Party's electoral support during the Parliamentary Republic, when the party's national-level congressional voteshared gradually increased from 14% in 1891 to 29% in 1924. There was no significant expansion of suffrage during this period; between 25% and 35% of men were *eligible* to vote, and roughly 10% actually voted in each election (Valenzuela 1985). I estimate the district-level multi-level model

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{RadicalVoteshare}_{dt} &= \mu_d + \eta_t + \tau_d \text{Year}_t + \beta \text{NumberCompetitors}_{dt} + \varepsilon_{dt} \\
 \mu_d &= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{RadicalAssemblyDensity}_d + \alpha_2 \text{LiteracyRate}_d + \varepsilon_d^\mu \\
 \tau_d &= \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{RadicalAssemblyDensity}_d + \gamma_2 \text{LiteracyRate}_d + \varepsilon_d^\tau
 \end{aligned}$$

¹²The sample is restricted to parties that were founded before 1900 and won at least one presidential election after 1900.

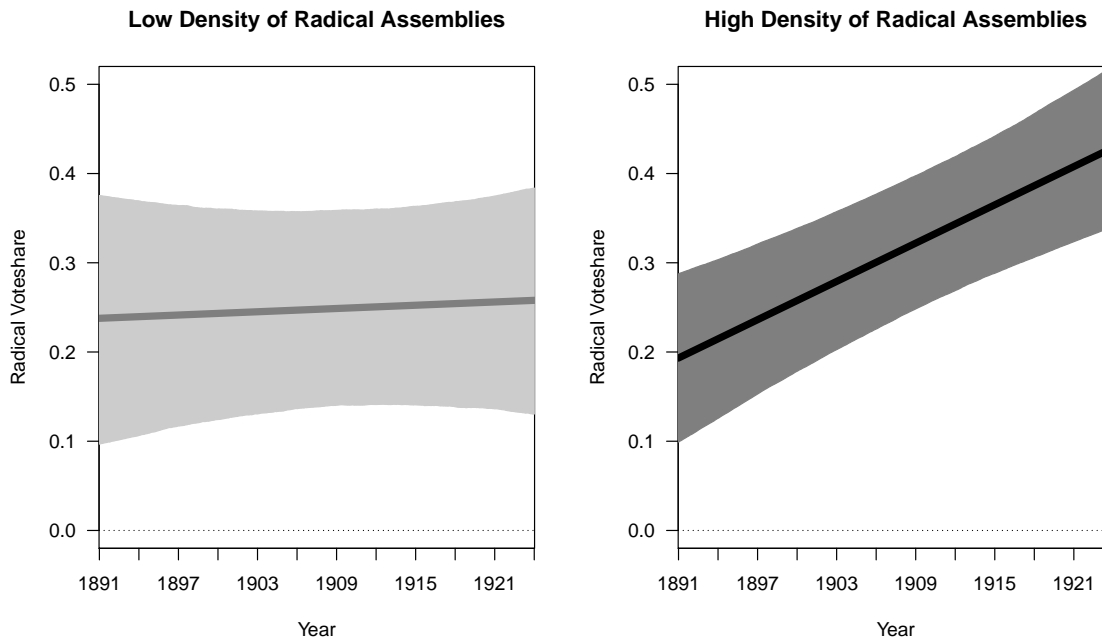


Figure 4.12: District-Level Electoral Growth of the Radical Party of Chile, 1891 to 1924.
Note: This figure shows the linear time trend in the Radical Party’s electoral support for a district that had zero Radical assemblies and a district that had a Radical assembly in every locality.

where $Year_t$ is the year of the election and $RadicalAssemblyDensity_d$ is the proportion of the congressional district’s population that lived in a locality that had at least one Radical assembly by 1890. I also control for the number of parties that competed in the district in a given election and the literacy rate in the district at the time of the 1904 census. The parameter of interest is γ_1 , which represents the contribution of the party’s local organizational presence to the growth of its electoral support at the district level. If the Radical assemblies did help the party attract mass support, we should expect that the party’s voteshare would grow at a faster rate in districts that had a higher density of assemblies.

Figure 4.12 shows the estimated growth rate in the Radical Party’s voteshare for a district that had zero Radical assemblies and a district in which every locality had a Radical assembly. The party’s electoral support barely changed in the districts where the party had a weak organizational presence, while its voteshare more than doubled in the districts where it had a dense organizational

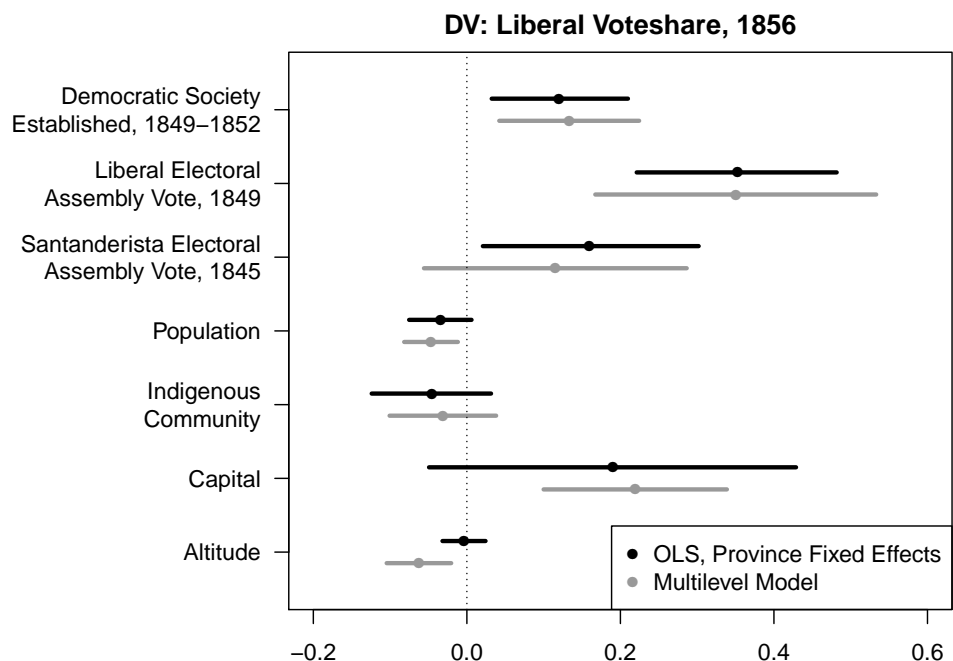


Figure 4.13: Democratic Societies and the Liberal Voteshare in Colombia’s 1856 Election.
Source: The data on democratic societies comes from Vega (1990), and the control variables come from Uribe-Castro (2019)

presence. These results indicate that while the Radical Party expanded its electoral support over all during the early 20th century, this growth was concentrated in the places where its activist-based organization was already well-established by the end of the 19th century.

The evidence from Colombia suggests a similar conclusion. My dependent variable in this analysis is the Liberal Party’s voteshare in the 1856 presidential election—the first direct election in which both the Liberal and Conservative parties competed. My main independent variable is whether a democratic society was established in the municipality between 1849 and 1852, based on data from Vega (1990). I also control for the electoral assembly voteshare of the Liberal Party in 1849, and its predecessor, the Santanderistas in 1845, along with other municipal covariates. Figure 4.13 reports the results from this model. Even after controlling for the Liberal Party’s past election results, the party experienced around a 15 percentage point boost in support in the municipalities where it established a democratic society. Interestingly, the likelihood that a

municipality developed a democratic society was negatively correlated with the Santanderista voteshare in 1845, which suggests that these early Liberal party organizations were more likely to emerge in the municipalities where the Liberal elite was relatively weak. Like the results for the Radical Party of Chile, these results suggest that the Colombian Liberal Party attracted mass support most rapidly in the localities where it already had an activist-run local party organization.

Alternative Explanations

Before closing this chapter, I will consider three alternative explanations that are often used to account for the rise of mass partisan attachments to Latin American traditional parties. Perhaps the most common alternative explanation is that Latin American traditional parties developed mass partisan support by mobilizing peasants to fight in the region's numerous partisan civil wars in the 19th century. According to these arguments, peasants who fought in the conflicts internalized the partisan identity of the party that they were fighting for and passed these identities down to their descendants. This sort of explanation appears frequently in the literature on the traditional parties of Colombia (Delpar 1981; Martz 2017) and Uruguay (Vanger 1980; Gonzalez 1991). It also fits well with more-recent approaches to understanding the consolidation of Latin American parties, which hold that strong parties emerge from extraordinary political conflict (Levitsky, Loxton, and Van Dyck 2016).

One problem with these arguments is that mass participation in the partisan civil wars was usually quite narrow since it did not take a particularly large army to topple the government of a weak state. Most rebel armies in 19th century Uruguay consisted of only a few hundred men, and even in Uruguay's largest partisan conflicts, the combatants never accounted for more than 10% of the adult male population (Lopez-Alves 1993; Somma 2012, 123). Moreover, a large share of these combatants were foreign mercenaries rather than native Uruguayans (Lopez-Alves 1993, 39). Mass participation in Chile's civil wars was even lower, at around 2% of the adult male population

(Somma 2012, 398). Another issue with these arguments is that several Latin American countries experienced large waves of European immigration in the late 19th century, after the partisan civil wars had largely wrapped up. It is not obvious why partisan civil wars that occurred mostly in the mid-19th century would have affected the partisan loyalties of the large numbers of citizens whose families arrived in the Americas only at the end of that century. An even more glaring problem for conflict-based approaches is that mid-19th century partisan civil wars appear to have left no lasting imprint on mass partisan loyalties in countries like Mexico and Argentina, where the level of mass participation in the conflicts was relatively high. This explanation runs into trouble even in Colombia because most of the country's Liberal-Conservative conflicts occurred only *after* the traditional parties began attracting mass support through activist-based organizations like the democratic societies (Sanders 2004). The high rates of mass participation in 20th century Colombian partisan conflicts like the Thousand Days War and *La Violencia* were more likely a consequence—rather than a cause—of strong mass partisan attachments to the traditional parties.

A second alternative explanation is that mass partisan loyalties to the traditional parties were the product of clientelistic exchanges between parties and lower-class citizens. Clientelistic explanations are not necessarily incompatible with my activist-based approach, and as I show in the next chapter, activist brokers sometimes used material exchanges to pull recently-enfranchised voters into the orbit of the traditional parties. Nevertheless, most clientelistic explanations for the rise of partisan attachments to traditional parties cut activists out of the story altogether and focus narrowly on patron-client relationships between a large landowner and his peons, peasants, and servants. Under this approach, lower-class Latin Americans adopted the partisan allegiances of their elite patrons out of loyalty or gratitude (Delpar 1981, 40; Rama 1987).

However, the presence of patron-client relationships was clearly insufficient for the development of mass partisan attachments to Latin American traditional parties. Most of Latin America's 19th century parties relied on clientelistic relationships to mobilize votes, but only a few of these parties acquired widespread partisan support among the mass population. Moreover,

if clientelism was the source of mass partisan attachments, we would expect that incumbent “political machine parties” like the Liberal Party of Chile or the National Autonomist Party of Argentina would have attracted the most partisans since these parties enjoyed the largest resource advantages. Instead, these machine parties attracted considerably fewer partisans compared to their resource-poor Radical rivals, which spent most of their early years in the opposition (Remmer 1984).

A third alternative explanation is that parties earned the partisan loyalties of lower-class voters by adopting ideological positions that appealed to them. This sort of explanation aligns closely with ideological approaches to partisanship, such as the one developed by Lupu (2016). Although this explanation appears less frequently in the historical literature on Latin American parties, it is noteworthy that many of the elite-founded parties that were most successful at attracting mass partisan support had adopted a “populist” ideological orientation by the early 20th century. Moreover, the policy positions of Colombia’s early parties are sometimes cited as a reason for why the Liberals were especially successful at attracting the support of Afro-Colombians, while the Conservatives were more popular among the indigenous population: the Liberal Party was credited with abolishing slavery, while the Conservative Party defended the indigenous communities’ traditional rights against the Liberal reforms of the 1850s and 1860s (Delpar 1981; Bushnell 1993, 107).

The problem with this alternative explanation is that the shifts in these parties’ ideological orientations were usually a *consequence* of their incorporation of mass activists, which means that they are endogenous to my argument. The elite leaders of Chile’s Radical Party were horrified by the party’s shift to the left in the 1900s, and the party’s leader, Enrique Mac-Iver, even threatened to leave the party over the adoption of the socialist plank in the party’s 1906 platform (Barr-Mejel 2001, 29). Given this elite push-back, it seems unlikely that the party would have embraced these policy positions on its own if it had not been pushed to these positions by its assembly activists. Similarly, the leadership of Colombia’s Liberal Party dragged its feet on the abolition

of slavery after it won the presidency in 1849, and it followed through in the end only under pressure from the party's activists (Sanders 2004). The Batllista reforms in Uruguay between 1904 and 1916 were one of the few unambiguous cases in which a leader consciously tried to mobilize lower-class political support by enacting ambitious social reforms "from above" (Barran and Nahum 1986), but these reforms failed to bring most lower-class citizens into the Batllista movement. The Batllistas lost the first election under universal male suffrage, and they broadened their base of popular support only in the 1920s, after they granted their mass activists a greater voice within the movement.

Conclusion

On the night of October 23, 1933, in a theater in the Uruguayan town of Minas, a group of Batllista activists held a political rally in which they denounced the self-coup that had been perpetrated earlier that year by their party's own president, Gabriel Terra. When the police arrived to break up the meeting, three of the rally's organizers attempted to flee by car. The police then fired into the vehicle and arrested the activists, who were gravely wounded during the confrontation. The activists are believed to have been tortured during their confinement, and their leader, Julio Cesar Grauert, died in a military hospital a few days later (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:341).

This incident and the broader wave of repression that was directed against Batllista and progressive Blanco activists under Terra's bipartisan dictatorship in the 1930s revealed the shallowness of the party elites' commitment to the democracy that had briefly taken root in Uruguay after 1916. However, they also underscored the depth of the organizational changes that had occurred within Uruguay's traditional parties over the previous generation. It is unlikely that these party elites would have gone to the trouble of repressing their own activists if the activists had been merely compliant, patronage-obsessed servants who could be expected to fall

in line behind the directives of the party leadership. Many of the same politicians who had been the greatest electoral beneficiaries of the grassroots party activism of the 1920s evidently felt threatened by these activists by the early 1930s. They also felt that it was necessary to go to extreme lengths in order to reduce the activists' influence in their parties.

This chapter has traced the transformation of Latin American elite-founded parties into mass-based organizations in the late 19th century. I argued that these transformations were motivated primarily by opposition elites' short-term electoral interests. In order to compete against incumbent parties that controlled the electoral machinery, opposition elites formed alliances with lower-class policy-seeking activists, and they cemented these alliances by granting their activists a limited voice in their party's decision-making processes. These organizational changes enabled the opposition elites to tie their hands and credibly commit to upholding their policy promises upon winning power, and at the time, they likely seemed like a small price to pay for a base of ideologically-committed activists who were willing to take on the considerable risks associated with working for an opposition party during this period.

However, the effects of institutions do not always remain constant over time, and institutions can end up serving ends that their creators had never intended (Hacker, Pierson, and Thelen 2015). Over the long term, the incorporation of policy-seeking activists into Latin American traditional parties had far-reaching consequences for the parties' ideological positions, internal competition, and depth of popular support. The next chapter will take a closer look at some of the most important changes in these parties that had become apparent by the mid-20th century.

Chapter 5

Party Activism and Partisanship During the Era of Mass Politics

The emergence and deepening of mass democracy across much of Latin America in the 1930s and 1940s was a mixed blessing for the elite-founded parties that had transformed into mass parties by the early 20th century. On the one hand, these parties were ideally-positioned to capture the political loyalties of the recently-enfranchised lower-class citizens who now trickled into the electorate. Most of the transformed elite-founded parties flourished in the early elections held under expanded suffrage as their working-class activists mobilized their friends and neighbors into the party, channeled new voters away from their un-transformed rivals, and starved their new socialist competitors of electoral support.

On the other hand, the rise of mass politics also destabilized the alliance between party elites and party activists. As I showed in the previous chapter, these alliances had taken root in the second half of the 19th century, at a time when suffrage was still restricted and economic issues were not particularly salient. But by the mid-20th century, grassroots party activism became increasingly dangerous for elite interests. As more lower-class activists entered the party and the party's electoral fortunes became more tightly bound to the activists' organizational work,

the activists pressed new demands on the party elites, organized their own factions within the party, and started to challenge the elites for control over the party's leadership positions. Internal conflicts between ideologically-opposed party factions became a fact of life for most major Latin American parties in the mid-20th century.

During this period, patronage took on a new importance as a tool that helped parties mitigate their internal conflicts and hold their diverse coalitions together. While this dissertation takes the view that the role of material resources in *crafting* mass electoral support in the 20th century is overstated, these resources were nevertheless a vital source of organizational stability for Latin America's parties. Patronage strengthened the hand of party leaders, distracted the activists from their extreme policy demands, and helped placate the party's out-factions. It also fueled the organizational growth of Latin American parties by financing the expansion of their grassroots party organizations into every urban neighborhood and rural town.

This chapter is somewhat longer and more descriptive than the other chapters of this dissertation. Although it will continue to test the argument developed in Chapters 2 and 3, one of its central goals is to reconstruct a picture of what neighborhood party activism looked like in mid-20th century Latin America, and what this meant for the health of the activists' parties. I begin with an overview of how Latin American parties' grassroots organizations functioned during the "era of mass politics" that extended from the 1930s to the 1970s. Next, I examine how different parties dealt with their internal conflicts, and I show that many parties throughout the region became increasingly reliant on patronage to hold themselves together. Finally, I examine two "critical cases" that help illustrate the relationship between party activism and mass partisanship during this period. The first case is the bitter polarization that swept over Chile in the 1960s and 1970s, which is ostensibly a hard case for my argument. The second case is the puzzling survival of Uruguay's Colorado Party during its brand crises in the 1960s and 1970s, which is a "deviant case" that previous approaches to partisanship struggle to explain.

The parties that I analyze in this chapter include not only the transformed, elite-founded

Table 5.1: Typology of Mid-20th Century Latin American Parties

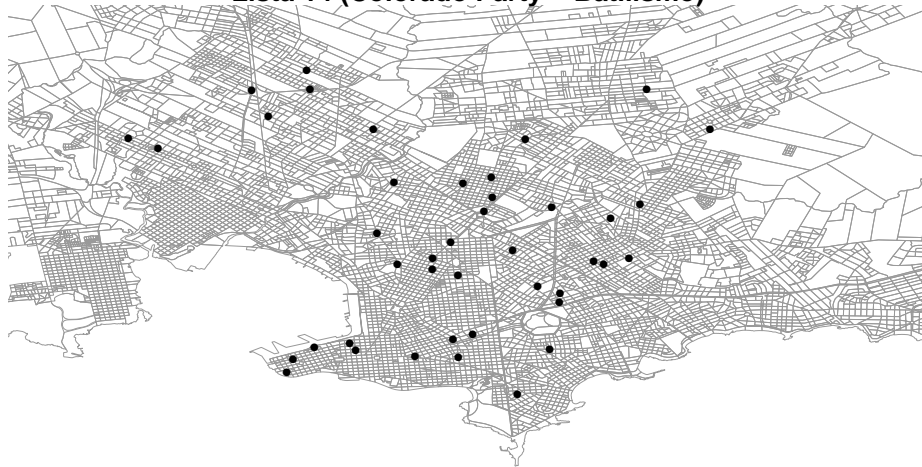
	Labor-Based	Not Labor-Based
Elite-Founded	<p><i>Corporatist Parties</i></p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Peronists (Argentina) PTB (Brazil) PRI (Mexico)</p>	<p><i>Classic Traditional Parties</i></p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Liberals (Colombia) Radicals (Argentina) Radicals (Chile) Colorados (Uruguay)</p>
Activist-Founded	<p><i>Classic Mass Parties</i></p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Socialists (Chile) Communists (Chile) Democratic Action (Venezuela) Apristas (Peru)</p>	<p><i>Mass-Reformist Parties</i></p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Christian Democrats (Chile) PLN (Costa Rica) COPEI (Venezuela)</p>

“traditional parties” that were the protagonists of the previous chapter, but also newer and generally more-ideological parties that were founded by activists in the early 20th century, which I term “activist-founded parties.” While I maintain a distinction between “elite-founded” and “activist-founded” parties in my analysis, I demonstrate that both types of party faced many of the same challenges and converged on a very similar set of organizational strategies for mobilizing mass partisan support. I also show that both types came to depend heavily on patronage by the mid-20th century. Table 5.1 shows examples of the mid-20th century Latin American parties that fall into each category.

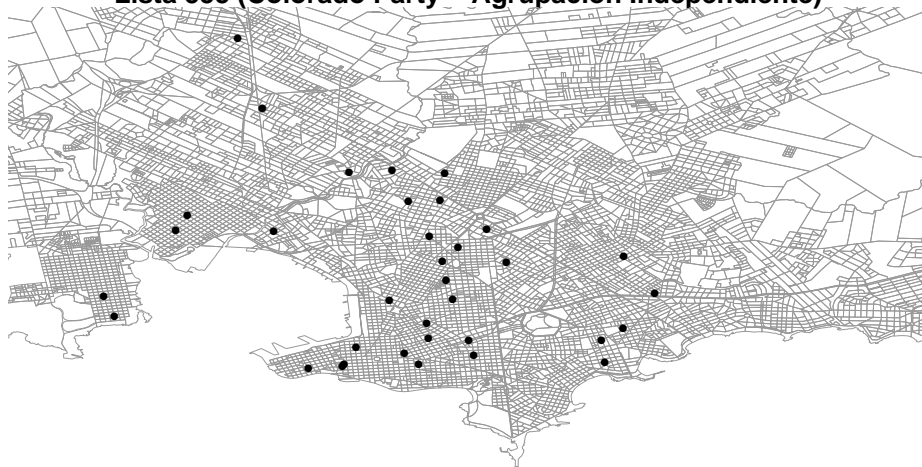
The Logic of Territorial Party Organizations

In the mid-20th century, elite-founded and activist-founded parties alike constructed vast networks of territorial base units that were organized and led by the parties’ grassroots activists. In most parties, these base units took the form of physical locales such as neighborhood clubs, party offices, and local assemblies that maintained a year-round presence in the community. Figure 5.1

Lista 14 (Colorado Party – Batllismo)



Lista 555 (Colorado Party – Agrupación Independiente)



Lista 51 (National Party – Herrerismo)

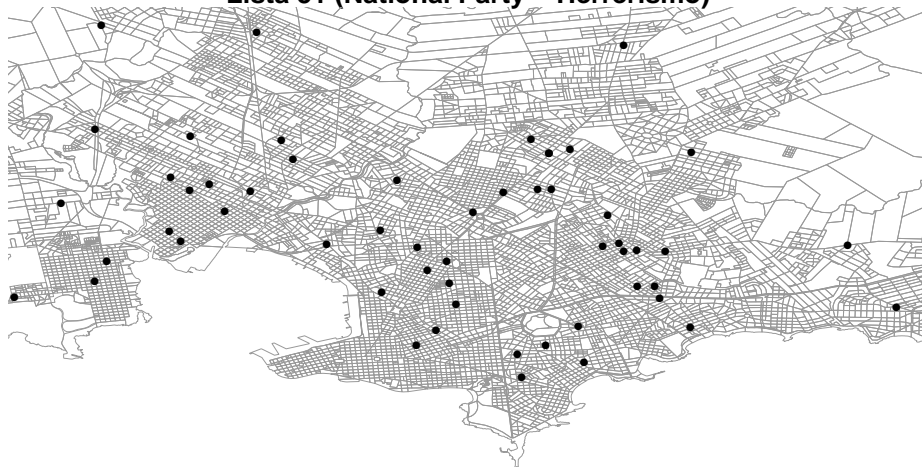


Figure 5.1: Party Clubs in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1946.

Source: Lista 14: *La Semana*, September 21, 1946; Lista 555: *La Voz Partidaria*, November, 1946; Lista 51: *Clarín*, October 19, 1946.



Figure 5.2: Socialist Party Neighborhood Offices in Valparaíso, Chile, in 1935.
 Source: *El Socialista*, April 4 and April 18, 1935.

depicts the locations of the neighborhood clubs of two Colorado factions and one Blanco faction in Montevideo around the time of the 1946 election, and Figure 5.2 depicts the locations of the Socialist Party of Chile’s neighborhood offices in the port city of Valparaíso during the party’s infancy in the 1930s.¹ Although Uruguay’s traditional parties and Chile’s Socialist Party had very different origins, ideological positions, and structures, each of these parties operated a year-round network of local party offices that extended the party’s reach into every neighborhood.

Nevertheless, it was sometimes prohibitively risky for ideologically-extreme opposition

¹The base unit data for both countries comes from lists of locales, offices, and clubs reported in party newspapers.

parties to maintain a physical office at the neighborhood or municipal level, especially when the party faced repression or proscription. In these cases, the party would often opt for informal networks between activists that could be organized underground. For example, while the Communist Party of Chile initially operated a system of municipal assemblies that were modeled on the assemblies of the Radical Party, during Chile's 1920s dictatorship the Communists abandoned this organizational model in favor of semi-clandestine party cells. Although the party leadership sought to maintain tight discipline over the cells, the cells were also designed to operate autonomously from the party leadership during moments of severe repression, when routine communication was impractical. Unlike the Radical assemblies and the Socialist offices, the Communist cells did not have a publicized meeting place, and they rarely contained more than twenty party members. The Communist Party retained this cellular structure even after it was re-legalized in the 1930s, and this allowed the party keep its neighborhood grassroots work alive after it was forced underground again in 1948 and 1973 (Furci 1984). The base units of the Peronist party in Argentina underwent a similar transformation during the party's proscription from 1955 to 1973. While the party's neighborhood-level *unidades básicas* were forced to disperse, Peronist activists formed a system of clandestine networks called "centers of action" that performed many of the same territorial functions as the *básicas* (Marcilese 2014).

Electoral Mobilization

The mobilization of voters on election day is one of the most important duties of any local party organization. During the run-up to elections, party base units would serve as neighborhood "campaign headquarters" that would oversee the various campaign activities in their area, including canvassing the neighborhood, making campaign posters, painting the neighborhood's walls in the party's colors, and transporting voters to the polls. Party base units were also one of primary settings where voters interacted with the party's candidates. For example, the Colorado and Blanco political clubs in Montevideo often hosted both formal campaign rallies and informal

charlas or “surgeries” that offered voters an opportunity to meet with their candidates and ask them questions (Rama 1971).

However, this campaign work was hardly the only function of these base units. Many base units remained open even after the election was over and continued holding party meetings and engaging in grassroots organization throughout the year. According to a Colorado activist interviewed by the Uruguayan sociologist German Rama in the late 1960s, a party club’s ability to mobilize support depended less on its “ground game” during the campaign than on its permanence and prestige in the community.

You can’t just open a new club and get a thousand votes that same year. To attract votes, you have to keep the club open permanently, solve people’s problems, get a scribe or lawyer to come to the club, and many other things. (Colorado activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 51)

Clientelism, Patronage, and Social Assistance

Latin American local party organizations in the mid-20th century were notorious for serving as centers of clientelistic exchanges between parties and voters. Rama (1971) suggests that the activists of the Montevideo clubs routinely distributed state resources to voters and performed small favors such as helping voters navigate the bureaucracy. Similarly, the Radical Party of Chile had earned a reputation as “the party of favors” (Del Pozo 1992, 114). Drake describes Chile’s Socialist Party of the 1940s as “a clientelistic employment agency devoted to electoral success almost as an end in itself” (Drake 1978, 240). Valenzuela notes that members of Communist cells in Chile participated in clientelistic exchanges with voters by sitting in on meetings between their party’s local politicians and their constituents, and by carrying out much of the footwork that was required in order to solve the constituents’ problems (Valenzuela 1977, 73).

Yet while the distribution of state resources and favors was clearly a central part of the base units’ mission, it is less obvious that this always constituted “clientelism,” at least according

to the way that Political Scientists use the term today. One of the defining features of a clientelistic exchange is that the voters' receipt of material benefits is *contingent* on their political support (Nichter 2018, 9). Party activists in the mid-20th century often appeared disinterested in imposing this condition on the voters that they served. In his study of the party clubs in Montevideo in the 1960s, Rama (1971) emphasizes that these clubs generally did *not* require their clients to vote for the party or faction's lists: "If the voter's political orientation differs [from that of the club, the activists] will simply offer them the club's services without any obligation to vote for the lists that the club represents" (Rama 1971, 20). Moreover, several of the activists that Rama interviewed were adamant that they would perform favors for any voter, regardless of their partisanship and vote-choice:

I never ask people to vote against their convictions. It's difficult to know how many voters we actually have. We have 700 members, 200 of whom attend nightly sessions. But one never knows how they vote. I have secured at least fifty retirements, gotten several people out of prison, and found telephones for thirty or forty people. But I don't know whether or not they vote for us. ... Nor do I permit anyone in the club to charge them for our services. (Blanco activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 90)

This type of non-contingent exchange is more consistent with "constituency service" than clientelism (Stokes et al. 2013, 14; Bussell 2019). In such cases, the problem-solving work may have served as a means of generating "goodwill" among voters and enhancing their club's reputation in the neighborhood, rather than as a mechanism for pressuring voters to change their votes.

In cases when activists did choose to make the exchange of resources contingent on the client's political support, they often expected much more from the client than just their vote. Rama's subjects suggest that the party clubs in Montevideo used public sector jobs primarily to recruit and reward their own activists:

Many [new arrivals] think that the club is just an employment agency. They come saying, "I'm here because I need a job." I tell them, "Fine, but you will have to work for it. If you assist me [in the club's work] and work hard, then I will help you find one." (Colorado activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 52)

This past year, I managed to secure jobs for eight or nine people. But naturally, I always find jobs for my closest associates first, for those who work hardest for the club. There is always work to do in the club, and it is logical to give preferential treatment to the people who put in the most effort. (Colorado activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 74)

This relationship between club membership (which usually implied some level of club activism) and access to material benefits is supported by survey evidence from Uruguay in 1970. Only 13% of respondents who were not club members thought that they would be able to obtain favors from a club, compared to 64% of club members who said the same (Biles 1972, 272).²

The activists themselves often had reservations about using their political connections to attend to voters' material needs. Nearly all of Rama's subjects complained that their problem-solving work now occupied too much of the club's focus and time. This sentiment is also evident in the way that the former Colorado activist Washington Bado describes the first time that someone from his club asked him for a temporary job in the 1960s:

I was horrified. I didn't think the position was possibly mine to give. But someone explained to me that I only had to send him with my letter of recommendation because every faction has a quota of positions. I still didn't want to do it, because I am against that sort of thing. But I saw in that man a father who was without work, who needed my help and had only asked for a simple favor. I relented and gave him my letter of recommendation. I had to close my eyes that night. (Bado 2004, 46)

A couple months earlier, Bado had left the mainstream Batllista faction in order to help found a left-wing reformist faction that was meant to challenge the Colorado Party's growing reliance on patronage. This example shows how even an activist who was ideologically opposed to patronage politics could be pressured into these material exchanges.

Although these examples present only a partial picture, they suggest a logic that is quite different from the logic of the centralized and well-organized political machines that we normally associate with urban areas in the United States during this same period (Shefter 1994; Aldrich 2011), or contemporary "clientelistic parties" in Latin America such as Peronism in

²Most club members also claimed to have performed campaign work for their club.

Argentina (Levitsky 2003; Stokes et al. 2013; Szwarcberg 2015). The distribution of public sector jobs through the Montevideo party clubs looks less like a coordinated effort to mobilize votes than a way for small teams of club activists to capture a portion of the state's resources for themselves. The clubs' habit of restricting material resources to their own activists would be counter-productive as a method of electoral clientelism, and it seems more consistent with a party-building logic: the club's resources served to entice new activists to join the club and keep the club's existing members engaged in grassroots party work. In cases when the club lent its services to non-members, this appears to have been driven mainly by voters' demands for small favors such as help navigating the government bureaucracy. Rama's subjects clearly did not see these favors as an effective method for "purchasing" votes, and there is little evidence that they systematically tied the voters' receipt of the favor to their voting behavior. Nor is it obvious that these favors even contributed to the parties' electoral support in a significant way; the most "clientelistic" factions of the Colorado and National parties tended to perform quite poorly in elections throughout the mid-20th century (Gonzalez 1991, 28). Finally, even by the most liberal estimates, the reach of these brokerage networks was far too narrow to account for the traditional parties' high levels of mass partisan support in mid-20th century Uruguay. Surveys from Uruguay in the 1960s and '70s suggest that the vast majority of voters who identified as "Colorado" or "Blanco" had never asked a club activist for a favor.³

Socialization, Indoctrination, Proselytization, and Community Engagement

Neighborhood party organizations also engaged in a variety of other activities and tasks throughout the year that seem only tangentially related to electoral mobilization. Rama (1971) argues that the most important function of the party clubs in Montevideo was their role in socializing voters into the party's traditions and perpetuating their partisan identities.

The club maintains the individual's party loyalties by creating a sociability that

³For example, in a 1970 survey, less than a third of Colorado and Blanco partisans believed that they would even be *able* to obtain a favor from a club (Biles 1972).

sustains and consolidates traditional political behavior and eliminates the conflicts that can arise with respect to one's other social identities. The club, as a basic social group, fosters interactions between co-partisans. This tends to isolate the individual from contact with heterodox opinions and drives them to political conformity. (Rama 1971, 22)

Rama's mechanism aligns well with this dissertation's social network logic. By becoming a year-round presence in their community, a club could shape its supporters' social networks and control which types of political messages reached them.

A closely-related objective of the base units was the indoctrination of voters. Through their weekly assembly meetings and ideological classes, these organizations hoped to reshape voters' world-view and educate them in the party's doctrine. The Chilean Socialist Party's newspaper in Santiago identified this as the primary motive behind the party's neighborhood work in the 1930s:

One of the most important projects undertaken by the secretary of the Section and the neighborhood organizations is the indoctrination of the workers, members, and sympathizers of the Socialist Party. Each Friday, we organize neighborhood discussions about current events, designed to orient the masses... This process of the intensification of proletarian culture in order to counteract the dogmas of the bourgeois culture...deserves the preferential attention of the Socialist Party, without neglecting, of course, action in the streets and places of work.⁴

Nor was indoctrination only a concern of Marxist parties. Writing on the early development of the Peronist movement in Argentina in the late 1940s, Little (1973) notes that the indoctrination of voters was also one of the most important functions of the base units of the recently-formed Justicialist Party.

The *unidades básicas* (local branches) were not to be used merely as electoral committees but, more importantly, for the recruitment of local leaders, the spread of propaganda, the inculcation of doctrine, and the elevation of the culture of the people... Once a Justicialist structure had been established, then the process of changing attitudes could begin. This was the particular responsibility of the Party, which was to create these new attitudes by an indoctrination (*adoctrinamiento*) obviating the need for old-fashioned spoils or coercion. (Little 1973, 656-657)

⁴"Cultración de la masa obrera," *Jornada*, November 17, 1934

In order for their base units to perform these functions, the parties needed voters to show up for their meetings and other events. The various problem-solving services provided by party activists likely helped draw many voters to party base units like the Montevideo political clubs. But by the club activists' own reckoning, even the most successful clubs lacked the resources to provide material benefits to more than a small fraction of the voters who requested them. Another way that activists got voters to come back to their clubs from week to week was by making the club a center of the voters' social life. To that end, they supplemented their lectures on the party's history and ideology with activities such as folk music concerts, dances, and banquets (Rama 1971). These social functions were equally important in the Radical Party assemblies in Chile. Gil (1966) notes that

The site of the [Radical] *asamblea* generally serves at the same time as a social club, with restaurants and other facilities always open to members. Party activities at the local level thus combine with recreation, a fact which contributes much to creating an atmosphere of conviviality and comradeship among the *asamblea* members. The attractions of social gatherings, coupled with the characteristic faithfulness of the Radical rank and file, tend to insure a high rate of attendance at party meetings. They provide a place to meet friends and acquaintances over drinks, to exchange pleasantries and political gossip, or to engage in serious intellectual discussion. Through the activities of the *asamblea* the individual becomes involved in party affairs to the extent that his political affiliation is an important part of his life—a far more important part than if he merely supported a political program or voted for nominees. (Gil 1966, 263)

Social functions also feature prominently in descriptions of the base units of newer Latin American parties, such as APRA in Peru and Peronism in Argentina:

The Aprista *Casas del Pueblo* seek to become all things for the initiated: restaurant, barbershop, drugstore, pool hall, social center of the community. (Hilliker 1971, 106)

[Peronist] *básicas* could be thought of as “mini cities” that contained institutions such as libraries, dispensaries, schools, pharmacies, gyms. (Quiroga 2004, 81)

Grassroots party activists also engaged voters beyond the walls of their base units. Rama notes that the Colorado and Blanco club activists frequently proselytized on behalf of their party

by carrying out periodic “censuses” of their neighborhoods. Among other benefits, the censuses gave the activists an excuse to speak to voters and discern their partisan loyalties (Rama 1971, 20). As a Colorado activist described the process,

Our people go from house to house, noting the addresses, number of family members, and occupations of everyone... Above all, this census permits us to understand the political opinions of the neighborhood. We ask them their opinions about how things are going in general and how that compares to years past. If they say things aren't going well, we ask them what we can do to make things better. This permits our club to channel each individual's opinions. (Colorado activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 119)

Another proselytizing tool was the formation of neighborhood-level civil society organizations such as sports clubs and youth clubs, which party activists would then use to pull Independent voters into their party's orbit. This tactic was particularly common among Chilean party activists in the 1960s. A Communist activist's account of her family's foundation of a basketball club in her shantytown in the 1960s emphasizes the proselytizing and party-building motives behind the creation of this type of organization:

My father always said that our ideology would gain influence if we formed mass organizations. So we created a basketball club in our *población* for men and women. ... He also said ever since we were young that...apart from politics, the healthiest thing for the body and mind was sports, for that was the best way to reach people. ... That was how we formed the base unit “Luis Emilio Recabarren,” which was the first base unit that I ever joined. Not everyone who played basketball with us joined the base unit, but the majority did, and the rest came to sympathize with our party. (Communist activist, quoted in Del Pozo 1992, 111)

The Communist Party was not unique in this regard. During that same decade, Chile's Christian Democratic Party leveraged its incumbency status to construct a vast network of over 20,000 neighborhood-level civil society organizations that it used to mobilize poor voters into the party (Portes and Walton 1976; Castells 1983; Fleet 1985; Oxhorn 1995).

Voice and Accountability

In some parties, base units also institutionalized the participation of grassroots activists in the party's decision-making processes. In addition to serving as forums for political discussions

and debates, base units played a central role in their parties' internal elections as both polling places and constituencies. The Radical assemblies in Chile elected their own officers every year, and they also elected delegates to the party's conventions and participated in the selection of candidates at both the local and national levels. Gil (1966) notes that as late as the 1960s, the Radical assemblies still functioned as largely-autonomous groupings of activists that held party leaders and politicians accountable:

“No [Radical Party] leader can hope to maintain his influence without immediate connection with the *asambleas*, since these bodies often enough can manage to make or unmake candidates by their stubborn resistance to submit to impositions from above. Therein lies the main difference between the PR and the rightist parties. (Gil 1966, 265)

The structure of the Colorado Party's dominant Batllista faction appears to have changed very little between the 1920s and 1960s. At the time of the sector's 1965 internal elections, the national leadership was still elected indirectly, through a tiered system of clubs, departmental commissions, and the national convention. Clubs elected their own officers, the members of neighborhood-level executive committees, and the delegates to the departmental convention using closed lists. Most of these lists were tied to one of the sector's three major sub-factions, but the lists consisted almost entirely of low-level club activists. On average, there were around 3 rival lists for every active club in Montevideo in the 1965 election, which indicates that the leadership positions within most clubs were genuinely contested by rival groups of activists. Although vote counts are not available at the level of individual clubs, the department-level vote total also indicates a highly-competitive election. Each of the sector's three major sub-factions received roughly the same number of votes across all of their lists, and the winner of the election received only 40% of the vote. Despite the sector's tiered system for electing its national leadership, participation in the intermediate-level organs (the neighborhood committees and departmental commissions) continued to be quite broad. The left-leaning newspaper *Marcha* estimated that between the neighborhood committee positions and the commission delegate seats, there were

over 11,000 local-level party leadership positions up for grabs in Montevideo alone.⁵

Not surprisingly, there were instances when party leaders and politicians attempted to sway the outcome of internal elections or co-opt the base units and their activists. The winning sub-faction in the 1965 Batllista elections was accused of buying the votes of the party's activists with offers of government jobs (Rodriguez 2017, 135), and shortly before internal elections, Batllista politicians would sometimes found temporary clubs of their own that were intended to draw votes away from the more-permanent, activist-run clubs (Rama 1971). Similarly, the Radical Party leadership occasionally intervened in assembly meetings or even expelled some of their members from the party (Urzua 1987, 318-319).

Nevertheless, the Radical and Batllista base units were far from subservient to their politicians and party elites. The independence of the Radical assemblies was especially evident during the party's first term in the presidency in the early 1930s. Several Radical assemblies openly criticized their co-partisan president, Montero, as his government grew more repressive and beholden to the military. When the party leadership chose to stand by Montero, the assemblies voted overwhelmingly to force all Radical Party legislators to resign their seats in Congress. After Montero was overthrown in a left-wing coup, the Radical assembly in Santiago voted to support both the coup and the short-lived "socialist revolution" that followed (Urzua 1992, 458-476). Later that decade, the assemblies forced the party to withdraw from its unpopular coalition government with the Liberal Party, and to the horror of the Radical Party's elite leadership, they voted to form a "Popular Front" with Chile's Communist and Socialist parties (Barr-Melej 2001, 111). Uruguay's Batllista club activists were equally independent from their party elites in the 1930s. Batllista activists formed the backbone for the popular resistance to the dictatorship of their co-partisan Gabriel Terra, who had himself been a Batllista politician until the end of the 1920s. In 1935, Batllista activists even joined with dissident Blancos in an unsuccessful uprising against Terra's government (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 2:352).

⁵"Los detalles," *Marcha*, November 27, 1965.

Base units rarely attained the same level of influence within the newer and more-ideological “activist-founded” parties that emerged in the early 20th century. Gil describes Chile’s Christian Democratic Party as “a highly centralized national political organization in which the influence of the top leaders is paramount. Although there may be internal struggles, in every case the will of the national leaders has ultimately prevailed” (Gil 1966, 275). He also notes that decisions within Chile’s Socialist Party “generally are made by the leadership with little or no participation by the rank and file... Subordination of the rank and file to the party hierarchy is characteristic of the Socialist organization” (Gil 1966, 292). Paul Drake concurs with this assessment of the Socialist Party, and he notes that the party’s decisions “emanated from a highly centralized, rather authoritarian leadership” and there was “little real room for democratic participation from the grassroots” (Drake 1978, 167).

The low levels of activist voice in these ideological parties are consistent with the predictions of the model outlined in Chapter 3: if a party’s leaders and politicians are already ideologically-extreme, the party does not *need* to offer the activists a voice in order to commit to implementing the extreme policies that appeal to the party’s policy-seeking activists. Another factor that contributed to the internally-authoritarian nature of these ideological parties was the repression that they faced in the early 20th century, which often led them to develop hierarchical and militaristic party structures that discouraged activist participation in party decisions. This militarization occurred not only within the communist parties that faced the greatest repression, but also within predominantly middle-class activist-founded parties. For example, during their early years in the 1930s, both Chile’s Socialist Party and the Falange (the precursor of the Christian Democratic Party) often behaved less like electoral parties than paramilitary organizations; their members wore military-style uniforms, marched and drilled in public spaces like military units, and brawled with activists from rival parties on the streets (Drake 1978, 227; Arrate and Rojas 2003, 191; Schnake 2004, 101; Diaz 2000, 145; Rolle 2006; 70).

Maintaining the Balance: Patronage and Power-Sharing

Latin America's mass-based parties flourished in mid-20th century elections thanks to the expansion of suffrage and the proliferation of their grassroots party organizations. However, these changes also presented new dangers for these political parties. As I argued in the previous chapter, the leaders of parties like the Radical Party of Chile and the Colorado Party of Uruguay had entered into their alliances with policy-seeking activists at a time when suffrage was still quite limited and electoral mobilization stood little risk of challenging the interests or authority of the party elites. But now that broad segments of the working class were participating in electoral politics, the balance of power within the parties started to shift away from the elites in favor of their low-level activists. By mobilizing their friends and neighbors into their parties, these activists increased not only their party's electoral support, but also their own weight within the party's internal politics. In several parties, working-class activists eventually gained enough influence to push new issues onto the party's agenda, form viable factions of their own, and even challenge the party elites' leadership. The elites of many Latin American parties soon faced a dilemma: if they ceded control over their party to the activists, the party might spiral to ideological extremes that could cost it votes, challenge the elite's own interests, or lead the military to step in and remove it from power through force; yet if the elites fought to retain control over their party, they risked either alienating their activists or tearing their party apart in the ensuing power-struggle

Patronage became an indispensable tool for holding parties together and mitigating these internal conflicts. While secure access to patronage had deterred many incumbent parties from incorporating activists into their organizations in the 19th century, patronage now helped the transformed traditional parties sustain the alliances between party elites and activists. By buying off activists with patronage jobs, the party elites could forestall the rise of the party's newer, more-radical factions. Patronage jobs also gave the activists a material stake in the party's electoral success and led them to temper some of their more extreme policy demands.

Another factor that affected the likelihood that a party would survive its internal conflicts was the party's structure—particularly whether decision-making powers within the party were centralized in a single executive body or directory, or dispersed across multiple party organs. In a centralized party, whichever faction managed to gain control over the party's directory would be able to dictate the party's policy positions, political strategies, and candidate-selection decisions. This tended to raise the stakes of the competition between ideologically-opposed factions, and it led factions to resort to extreme measures to win and hold power within the party, such as purging rival factions from the party, or breaking away from the party to form a new organization. On the other hand, ideologically-diverse factions were more likely to coexist peacefully in decentralized parties where no single party leadership body was able to dictate the policies for the party as a whole. Dispersing power within the party lowered the stakes of factional competition and provided security to “out-factions” by guaranteeing their autonomy from the party's dominant faction.

The Elite-Founded Parties

Although the dilemmas posed by the rise of mass politics were present in most Latin American parties, these dilemmas were particularly acute in the case of the elite-founded parties that had transformed into mass parties by the early 20th century. Because these parties had been founded by elites, they usually retained a strong cadre of wealthy politicians and leaders who preferred moderation on economic issues. Yet these parties had also developed a large base of middle and lower-class activists who were more ideologically radical than the party's elite leaders. Moreover, because these parties had attracted their activists by offering them a limited voice in party decisions, the activists often wielded institutional tools that enabled them to pressure their elite leaders or even challenge them from control over the party's leadership organs. As suffrage expanded and economic issues became more salient in the mid-20th century, the parties' elites and activists found themselves increasingly at odds.

The Radical Party of Chile and the Colorado Party of Uruguay exemplify these ideological tensions. As late as the 1930s, both parties were still led by ideologically-liberal elites, including some of their countries' wealthiest landowners (Urzua 1987, 23; Barran and Nahum 1986; Caetano 1993). Yet both parties had also developed a well-organized left-wing faction that drew support from the party's grassroots activists and steadily gained influence within the party during the 1940s. However, while the Radical Party tore itself apart through its factional conflicts, the Colorado Party successfully managed these conflicts, at least until the end of the 1960s.

The diverging fates of these two parties are not easily explained by their ideology, since both parties contained a very similar mixture of "liberal" and "social democratic" ideological currents. Nor are their fates fully explained by access to patronage; both parties enjoyed ample patronage resources during their period in power in the 1940s, but lost much of this patronage after they fell from power in the 1950s. Instead, the demise of the Radical Party and the survival of the Colorado Party are best-explained by differences in their internal institutions. Although it was not as centralized as other Chilean parties, the Radical Party had developed strongly majoritarian internal institutions that enabled the dominant faction in its national convention to control most of the party's national-level leadership organs (Gil 1966, 264). As a result, the Left's growing influence within the party's convention posed an existential threat to the party's traditional elite. By contrast, the Colorado Party remained just as decentralized as it had been in the 1920s, and it was still structured as an electoral alliance between three to five autonomous Colorado party organizations that had their own leaderships and networks of party clubs. Due to the decentralized nature of the party, the party's left-wing *Batllismo-15* faction was able to become the dominant faction within the Colorado Party in the 1950s without threatening the interests of the party's elite.

The Radical Party of Chile

The Radical Party of Chile fell into steep decline in the mid-20th century due to its inability to manage the internal conflicts between its elites and activists. The Radical Party remained one of the most internally-democratic parties in Latin America, and in the 1940s the party even took some steps to ensure that the party assemblies in Santiago and other urban areas would have a weight in party decisions that was more proportional to the size of their membership. Yet the party's internal institutions suffered from a key weakness: its winner-take-all internal electoral system meant that whichever faction could muster the most assembly delegates in the party's conventions would usually be in a position to take control over the party machinery. Between 1938 and 1971, the party's left and right wings battled each other for control over the party, and this conflict ultimately tore the party apart.

The Radical Party had two major factions in the 1930s. Its progressive wing, also known as the *doctrinarios*, had strong support among the low-level assembly activists, along with many of the party's younger politicians in Santiago; many of the progressive assembly activists had come to see Chile's Communist Party as a natural ally, and they were the strongest proponents of the Popular Front, an alliance of left-of-center parties that helped bring the Radicals to power in 1938. The Radical Party's right wing consisted of most of the party's congressional politicians and elite members, but it also included a group of ideologically liberal assembly activists in the provinces; the right wing of the party was staunchly anti-communist and tried repeatedly to undermine the Popular Front and the subsequent alliances between the Radical Party and the Communist Party (Urzua 1987, 166). Although these internal divisions had existed in some form since the 1890s, they became more open and more bitter after 1938, now that the Radical Party was finally in a position to implement the progressive platform that it had first adopted in 1906. Another source of tension was the disconnect between the party's leadership and its politicians in congress and the cabinet: while the progressive wing generally dominated the party's conventions and its Executive Committee during the 1940s, most of the party's quota of cabinet positions in

the 1938-1952 Radical-led governments went to wealthy, provincial landowners who belonged to the conservative wing of the party (Drake 1978, 235),

An early sign of the growing factional tensions within the Radical Party was the extreme instability of the party's leadership: the party cycled through 14 different party leaders between 1937 and 1942 alone (Urzua 1987, 225). While the progressive wing eventually consolidated its control over the party machinery by the early 1940s, it struggled to impose its will on the Radical politicians in congress and the cabinet. This became especially clear when the time came to select the party's alliance partners for the 1942 presidential election. Just as 80% of the assembly delegates to the Radical Party's national convention voted to renew the party's alliance with the Communists, the Radical politicians in congress were engaged in talks with the Liberal and Conservative parties over the formation of a right-leaning electoral alliance (Urzua 1987, 166). The Radical Party ended up aligning itself with the Communists and the Socialists in the 1942 campaign, but a year after being sworn into office, the new Radical president, Juan Antonio Rios, broke off this alliance, booted the left-wing parties from the cabinet, and formed a new cabinet that consisted of only Radical and Liberal ministers. The Radical Party's convention in 1944 reaffirmed the party's socialist ideological stance and insisted on the formation of an exclusively left-wing cabinet. When the president refused, the Radicals' Executive Committee ordered the resignation of all Radical members of the cabinet. By the end of 1944, relations between the president and his own party had become so strained that the party's Executive Committee declared that the Radical Party was now part of the opposition to Rios' government (Urzua 1987, 236).

Unable to maintain discipline over the party's own politicians in the cabinet and congress, the party's progressive leadership resorted to expelling recalcitrant politicians from the party. This set off a long cycle of expulsions that continued off and on into the late 1960s. When the party's conservative wing regained control over the party leadership in the late 1940s, it promptly expelled several of the party's leftist politicians for voting against the party's anti-communist legislation in congress (Urzua 1987, 313). Each of the major waves of expulsions led to splits in

the party: several of the party's anti-communist politicians left the party in 1946, while a segment of its progressive wing split from the party in 1948.

During these internal conflicts, the Radical Party came to rely more heavily on patronage to hold itself together, and it filled the bureaucracy with assembly activists who then used their positions to develop their own clienteles (Adler 2008). Patronage appears to have been a stabilizing force within the party, and the hope of receiving a larger share of the spoils of government may have helped convince some of the party's progressive activists to go along with the president's decision to break with the Communist Party in 1948 (Urzua 1987). However, the Radical Party lost control of most of these patronage resources upon its defeat in the 1952 presidential election. The aftermath of this 1952 defeat revealed just how dependent on patronage the Radical Party had become: in the next legislative election in 1953, the Radicals' voteshare fell from 22% to just 14%.

The Radical Party fell into a prolonged state of stagnation between 1952 and 1970. While it managed to increase its vote count in most legislative elections during this period, it lagged behind the Christian Democrats and the Marxists in the race to capture the loyalties of the recently-enfranchised segments of the electorate, such as the urban poor. By 1970, the party's level of partisan support in the Santiago metropolitan area had fallen to just 5% of the adult population, compared to around 16% a decade earlier.⁶ Without secure access to patronage, the party was incapable of winning the presidency in its own right, but each of the party's attempts to align itself with Chile's right-wing or left-wing blocs only reignited the ideological conflicts within the party.

This deadlock was finally broken in late 1969, when Marxist activists seized control over the party machinery and expelled most of the party's right-leaning members, politicians, and elites, including the party's presidential candidate in the previous election. These activists then pulled what was left of the party into the leftist Popular Unity alliance, and the party participated

⁶CEDOP surveys #6-7 (1961) and #30 (1970).

in Allende's 1970-1973 government (Valenzuela 1978). However, this final power-struggle took a heavy toll on the party, and in the 1973 legislative election, the Radical Party received just 3.5% of the vote, while the two right-leaning parties that had split from the Radical Party in 1969 and 1971 also received 3.5% between them. Although the Radical Party was eventually reunited with one of these offshoots after the reestablishment of democracy, it has been only a marginal force in Chilean politics since the early 1970s.

The Colorado Party of Uruguay

While the Colorado Party of Uruguay also faced deep internal ideological divisions in the mid-20th century, the Colorados were considerably more successful than the Radicals at mitigating their internal conflicts. The key to the party's success was its extremely decentralized structure, which lowered the stakes of internal competition between factions and allowed an ideologically diverse set of factions to coexist within the same party. While the party's progressive and activist-supported Batllista faction became the dominant faction in the party after 1942, the party's decentralized structure helped the Batllistas placate the party's declining right wing and avert the painful cycle of expulsions and splits that occurred in Chile's Radical Party.

Like the Radical Party, the Colorado Party of the 1940s contained a mix left-wing and right-wing factions. The party's largest progressive faction, *Batllismo*, was the faction that had the greatest activist energy, though this faction eventually split into two pieces in the 1950s: the centrist *Batllismo-14*, which was led by two of José Batlle's sons; and the left-leaning *Batllismo-15*, which had deeper support among the party's activist base and was led by José Batlle's nephew, Luis Batlle (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:178). The party's right wing consisted of several personalistic and conservative factions, the most influential of which was the Baldomirista faction, which had initially supported the 1930s dictatorship but eventually helped restore Uruguayan democracy at the end of the 1930s. While the Colorados' conservative factions had been skeptical of grassroots party organization in the 1920s, they founded their own networks of party clubs

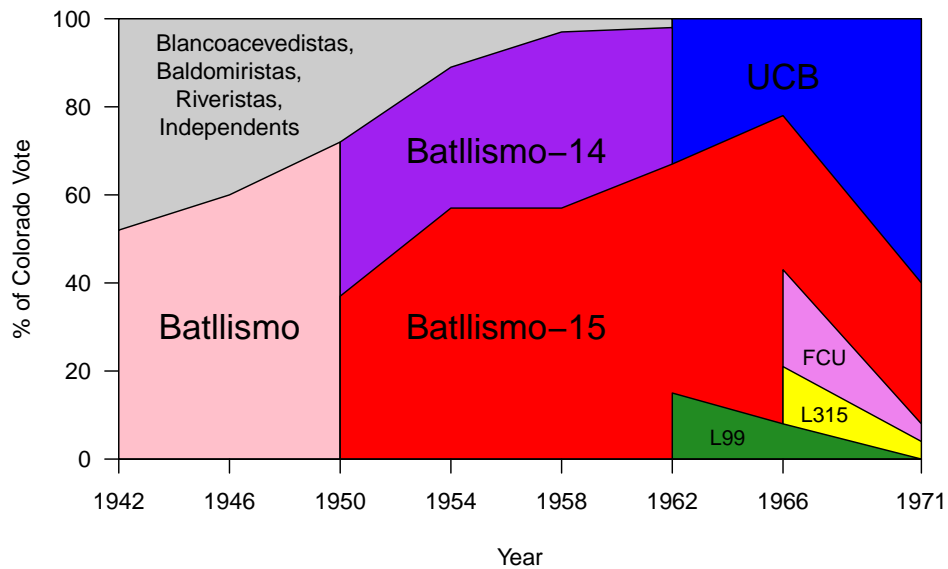


Figure 5.3: Evolution of Colorado Party Factions, 1942-1971

in the 1940s in an attempt to compete with the already well-established Batllista neighborhood organizations (D’Elia 1982).

One important difference between the factions of the Radical and Colorado parties was their structure and degree of organization. Uruguay’s unusual electoral system allowed party factions to run their own slate of candidates in an election but still pool their votes together as a party, and this encouraged each faction to develop its own, independent party machinery, complete with elected leadership bodies and neighborhood party clubs. This organizational decentralization was critical for the stability of the Colorado Party in the 1940s and 1950s because it meant that even if the Batllistas had the most support among the party’s activists, the conservative factions would still be guaranteed a piece of the party machinery, and they would still have the opportunity to compete against the Batllistas in elections without splitting the Colorado vote.

While the Batllistas in government moved forward with their progressive platform in the 1940s, the Batllista leadership also took steps to avoid a party split by sharing power with

the party's conservative factions. This power-sharing is evident in the distribution of cabinet positions. Although the Batllistas won a majority of the Colorado vote in 1942 and 1946, each of the cabinets during the 1940s contained a mixture of Batllistas and members of the party's conservative minority factions. This tradition of splitting up the cabinet between different factions continued in most of the Colorado governments of the 1950s and 1960s, and it likely helped prolong the lifespan of the party's declining conservative wing: by holding cabinet portfolios, the conservative factions would control their own sources of patronage that they could use to maintain their neighborhood party clubs. Similarly, the split of *Batllismo* in 1950 was partly a response to the conservatives' fears that the progressive faction was growing too dominant within the party: by breaking the Batllista faction into two pieces, it would be easier for the conservative factions to compete for power within the party, and this would make them less likely to break party ranks (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:178).

The abolition of the presidency in the early 1950s further decreased the threat that the Batllistas posed to elite interests. Maiztegui Casas (2005) suggests that this constitutional reform was a conscious strategy by *Batllismo-14* and the National Party to tie the hands of Luis Batlle and his progressive *Batllismo-15* faction. Although *Batllismo-15* ended up winning the 1954 election, Luis Batlle's reformist agenda was soon stymied by the political gridlock that resulted from the presidency's replacement by a nine-person, bipartisan executive council (*colegiado*). By the late 1950s, *Batllismo-15* had shed much of its ideological radicalism and focused its attention on maximizing its control over patronage. Although patronage was part of Uruguayan party politics since the 19th century, it appears to have become even more central under the *colegiados* of the 1950s and '60s. Most of the club activists that Rama (1971) interviewed speak of their parties' obsession with patronage as if it was a fairly recent trend, and they contrast it with the party clubs' ideological focus in the 1930s and 1940s. Under the new *colegiado*, the number of neighborhood clubs increased dramatically, as new groups of patronage-seeking activists entered the fray in the hope of capturing some patronage resources of their own (Rama 1971; Gonzalez

1991).

Compared to the Radicals of Chile, Uruguay's Colorado Party was also more successful at adapting to opposition status. While the Colorados' 1958 defeat was psychologically devastating for a party that had held power without interruption since 1865, the party held on to the bulk of its popular support, and it managed to win back power in 1966. The party's secure access to patronage was likely a major source of its organizational stability during this period of opposition. The Colorado and National parties had a long history of divvying up lower-level government positions between them, so although the Colorados no longer controlled the cabinet, they still retained a significant quota of government jobs. Moreover, the party still held the strategically-important Intendancy of Montevideo, along with three seats on the *colegiado*, and each of these offices offered the party an additional supply of state resources.

However, patronage was not the only reason behind the party's survival, and in fact, many Colorado activists sought to reduce their party's reliance on patronage during this same period. The Colorado Party was also reinvigorated in the early 1960s by a renovation of both its leadership and its platform. The leadership renovation began within *Batllismo-15*, as a younger generation of Batllista activists began to challenge Luis Batlle more openly after the party's fall from power in 1958 (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:254; Bado 2004). It was also helped along by the fracturing of *Batllismo-15* after Luis Batlle's death. By the end of 1965, the Colorado Party found itself with six new and relatively evenly-matched national leaders, including three below the age of 50, and three who had risen through the Batllista movement's ranks as ordinary club activists.

This renovation in the party's leadership contributed to the renovation of the party's policy platform. By the mid-1960s, the Colorado Party had become a vocal advocate for political reform and the reduction of the role of patronage in Uruguayan politics. While this reform movement eventually won the backing of even the party's most conservative politicians, it originated in the Batllista political clubs in the early 1960s. In 1962, a group of left-leaning Batllista activists broke away from *Batllismo-15* and formed a new reformist faction (L99) under the leadership of

Zelmar Michelini, which attempted to design a new form of neighborhood activism that would not rely on either clubs or patronage (Bado 2004, 31). A more-centrist group of young reformists prevailed in *Batllismo-15's* 1965 internal election and pulled the faction firmly into the pro-reform camp (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:402; Rodriguez 2017). By the time of Uruguay's 1966 election, the Colorado Party was more organizationally fractured than ever, but it also appeared relatively united in purpose as four of its five factions had formed a firm consensus behind abolishing the *colegiado* and introducing other reforms to Uruguay's political system.

Other Elite-Founded Parties

Chile's Radical Party and Uruguay's Colorado Party were extreme cases, and most of Latin America's other major elite-founded traditional parties fell somewhere in the middle. Nevertheless, the same trends and tensions are discernible in their counterparts in other countries. First, following the expansion of suffrage and onset of mass democracy, several of these parties experienced conflicts between left-wing factions that were backed by the bulk of their activists, and right-wing factions that were backed by much of the party's traditional elite. The factional conflicts within Argentina's Radical Civic Union after it rose to power in 1916 culminated in the party's rupture into rival party organizations in 1922 (Rock 1975; Horowitz 2008). The party suffered a second major split in 1957, and the party was not reunified again until the 1970s. As was the case with Chile's Radical Party, the fracturing of Argentine Radicalism appears to have constrained its capacity to expand and hold its popular support, even at a time when Peronism was proscribed and severely repressed. By the 1960s, the Radical Civic Union's two main offshoots had the partisan loyalties of only 12 to 16% of the electorate between them (Lupu 2016, 60).

Colombia's Liberal Party also experienced severe internal tensions along both ideological and class lines. By the early 1940s, the party had developed a well-organized leftist faction led by the charismatic politician Jorge Gaitán, who had himself come from a family of lower middle-class Liberal activists (Green 2003, 46). When the Liberal establishment refused to

back Gaitán's 1946 presidential candidacy, the party ended up nominating two rival presidential candidates who split the Liberal vote evenly between them. The following year, Gaitán's faction briefly ousted the Liberal Party's traditional elites from the party leadership and consolidated its own control over the party (Green 2003, 240; Martz 2017, 53). While the Liberal elites eventually recaptured the party leadership after Gaitán's assassination in 1948, they struggled to halt the decentralized partisan violence that erupted in the wake of the assassination (Bushnell 1993, 206). The Liberal establishment proved more capable at enforcing its control over the party after the restoration of democracy in 1958. Liberal activists appear to have lost much of their influence in party decisions by the 1960s, and most of the Liberal Party's candidate-selection decisions after 1970 were negotiated in advance between senior party leaders (Martz 2017).

Like their counterparts in Chile and Uruguay, the elite-founded parties in other countries also came to depend on patronage for mitigating internal conflict and sustaining their grassroots party organizations. Argentina's Radical Civic Union constructed a patronage-based political machine shortly after its rise to power in 1916 (Rock 1975), and even after its 1922 split, both of its major offshoots continued to rely heavily on patronage to mobilize their activist and supporters (Horowitz 2008, 65). Patronage became equally critical for the Colombian Liberal Party after 1958. In fact, Martz (2017) suggests that the Liberal Party's decline into a patronage-based party was one of the reasons why the party's establishment was able to consolidate its control over the party organization in the second half of the 20th century.

The Activist-Founded Parties

Internal conflicts were generally less visible in Latin America's newer, more-ideological parties that had been founded by political activists during the early 20th century. The ideological preferences of their leaderships tended to be better-aligned with the preferences of their activist bases. Moreover, most of these parties adopted hierarchical structures that imposed tight discipline over their base units and offered their activists relatively few avenues for contesting the party's

leadership. Yet these “activist-founded” parties also faced dilemmas of their own in the mid-20th century. While they were born with an endowment of ideologically-committed activists, their ideological rigidity and reluctance to give their activists a meaningful voice in party decisions also made it harder for these parties to broaden their activist bases and pull new groups of activists into their organizations. Moreover, when ideological rifts did emerge within these parties, their hierarchical and centralized structures left them particularly incapable of managing these conflicts; without viable mechanisms for contesting power within their parties, dissident activists often preferred to leave the party altogether.

Because they could rarely attract new groups of activists through voice-based incentives, their ability to expand their activist base usually hinged on whether or not they had secure access to patronage. While Shefter (1994) predicts that ideological “externally-mobilized” parties like these activist-founded parties would restrain themselves from relying on patronage upon coming to power, there is little evidence of this restraint in mid-20th century Latin America. When Latin American activist-founded parties managed to win power, they made full use of the patronage resources available to them, and if anything, patronage was even more critical for their organizational growth than it was for elite-founded parties like the Radical Party and the Colorado Party. The inclusion of Chile’s Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties in Chile’s national governing coalitions in the 1930s and 1940s offered these parties access to the resources that they needed in order to recruit new members and expand their organizations throughout the country. But their Uruguayan counterparts were always excluded from Uruguay’s governing coalition, and they remained only minor political forces throughout Uruguay’s mid-20th century democracy.

The Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties of Chile

For most of their early histories, Chile’s activist-founded parties were considerably more hierarchical and less internally democratic than the Radical Party. Although Chile’s Communist

Party descended from a series of splits from the Radical Party and had inherited the Radicals' system of local assemblies, the Communists abandoned this organizational model in the 1920s and established a strong, centralized party leadership that attempted to enforce strict discipline over the rest of the party (Grez 2014; Vega 2012). The Communist Party's transformation was followed by a series of purges of undisciplined activists and leaders, including the party's own founder, and the party emerged from the Ibañez dictatorship in the 1930s with only a tenth of its original membership (Barnard 2012, 122). The precursor of Chile's Christian Democratic Party, the Falange, was also an extremely hierarchical organization. Throughout the party's first decade, most of the party's decisions were made in private, by a small circle of senior party leaders, with little input from the party's activists (Rolle 2006, 188).

Chile's Socialist Party was a partial exception. The party's predominantly middle-class founders intended their party to be more inclusive and open to internal debate compared to the Communist Party, and the Chilean Socialists developed a fairly diverse base of activists that included left-wing intellectuals, populists, Trotskyists, nationalists, and followers of the left-wing Air-force General Grove who had helped lead Chile's short-lived socialist revolution in 1932. However, the party quickly developed a centralized cadre of leaders who excluded the party's grassroots from most party decisions and sought to control the party machinery through personalistic and clientelistic relationships with low-level members (Drake 1978, 167). As a result, the early Socialist Party had the worst of both worlds: it faced the same bitter factional conflicts that plagued the Radical Party, but it also had the same centralized structure as the Communist Party and the Falange that made it especially difficult for the party to deescalate its internal conflicts and placate its out-factions. The party soon fell victim to a long cycle of attempted takeovers by rival leaders that culminated in widespread purges of party members and splits by the losing factions. By the end of the 1940s, the party had fractured into three pieces that each claimed to be the "true" Socialist Party but competed against each other in elections (Drake 1978).

The organizational growth of these parties was closely linked to their inclusion in Chile's governing coalition, and by extension, their access to patronage. Each party cycled in and out of the Radical-led coalitions that governed Chile between 1938 and 1952. The Communists and Socialists were important if subordinate members of the original Popular Front that helped bring the Radicals to power in 1938. Although they had less influence over policy-making compared to the Radical Party, they were nevertheless allowed to share in the spoils of government, and they colonized the national government with their members and activists. These state resources helped both parties grow their organizations and penetrate regions of the country where they previously had little support (Drake 1978). The Falange was generally more hesitant to join these governing coalitions due to its ideological differences with the Radical Party on issues concerning the Church, but the Falange nevertheless participated in a few Radical-led cabinets in the 1940s and 1950s. The Falange's successor, the Christian Democratic Party, also enjoyed rapid organizational growth after it won the presidency in its own right in 1964; during the party's first year in power alone, its activist base doubled in size from 50,000 to over 100,000 (Hofmeister 1995, 137). Local governments provided Chile's activist-founded parties an additional source of patronage resources. Valenzuela (1977) observes that the Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties in the 1960s were just as likely as other parties to leverage local-level state resources to grow their local party organizations, recruit new members, and expand their base of support.

The Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties of Uruguay

Uruguay's Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties had almost no access to patronage throughout the 20th century. These activist-founded parties were consistently excluded from Uruguay's cabinets, and they were also excluded from the patronage-sharing arrangements established between the Colorado and National parties. Moreover, Uruguay's electoral system prevented these parties from winning access to patronage at the local level. The fusion of elections

for national president, Senate, Chamber of Deputies, departmental intendant, and departmental council into a single ticket tended to nationalize Uruguay's local elections and discouraged voters from casting votes for minor parties that stood zero chance of winning the presidency. None of these parties won local executive office until 1989, and they usually won only a handful of departmental council positions between them, which were concentrated mostly in Montevideo. Due to their lack of patronage resources, both their party organizations and their bases of partisan support remained considerably more shallow compared to those of their Chilean counterparts. In 1966, at a time when over 60% of Santiago voters identified with Chile's Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties, less than 10% of Montevideo voters identified with Uruguay's Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties combined.⁷

Other Activist-Founded Parties

Marxists and Christian Democrats in Chile and Uruguay had to compete against well-organized elite-founded parties for both activists and partisans, and this likely contributed to their slow organizational growth throughout much of the 20th century. Activist-founded parties did not have to contend with this sort of competition in countries like Venezuela and Peru, where elite-founded parties had failed to transform into mass organizations. Nevertheless, Venezuela's Democratic Action and Peru's APRA faced many of the same challenges as the Chilean and Uruguayan activist-founded parties. In particular, their lack of internal democracy made it harder for them to broaden their activist bases. While Democratic Action was fairly internally-democratic and pluralistic during its early years (Martz 1966, 50-51, 216), the party's activists had lost much of their voice in the party's decisions by the 1960s (Davis 1989; Coppedge 1994). Moreover, the party leadership's decision to expel several of the party's radical factions in the 1960s cost the party a significant share of its activists: Martz (1966, 182) estimates that nearly 80% of the party's youth activists deserted the party when it expelled its most left-wing faction in 1960. Peru's

⁷CEDOP Study #14; Instituto Uruguay de la Opinión Pública #580

APRA was a hierarchical and militaristic organization from its earliest days in the 1920s, and it always remained under the tight control of its founder, Haya de la Torre (Graham 1992, 25-26).

As was the case with the activist-founded parties in Chile and Uruguay, the organizational growth of Democratic Action and APRA hinged on their access to patronage. Starting in the 1950s, both parties attempted to gain power by shedding their ideological radicalism and accommodating themselves to conservative political forces in their countries (Martz 1966; Graham 1992, 35). Democratic Action's moderation paid off in 1958, when democracy was reestablished and the party was permitted to return to the presidency. Throughout the following four decades, Democratic Action and its center-right rival, COPEI, shared the resources of Venezuela's petro-state between themselves and used these resources to mobilize popular support (Karl 1997) and finance strong party organizations that penetrated every part of Venezuelan society (Coppedge 1994). However, this strategy was less successful in the case of the APRA. Partly due to the party's association with revolutionary violence in the 1930s, APRA was not permitted to come to power until after the reestablishment of democracy in Peru in 1980; the party's narrow victory in the 1962 presidential election was promptly annulled through a military coup. Shut out of power and deprived of state resources, APRA failed to broaden its base of popular support in the same way that Democratic Action did in Venezuela (Graham 1992). In the few elections in which APRA was allowed to run, the party's voteshare slowly *fell* from 36% in 1931 to 27% in 1980.

The Corporatist Alternative

Stable linkages between political parties and already well-organized interest groups such as labor unions offered an enticing alternative to territorial party organization in mid-20th century Latin America. Labor movements had helped "jump-start" socialist parties in early 20th century Europe by providing both an organizational infrastructure and a ready-made constituency (Eley 2002), and many Marxist and populist parties in Latin America attempted to follow a similar

labor-based strategy. If a party could count on the long-term support of organized labor, the unions themselves could become a source of campaign labor that might obviate the need for a territorial activist base. Compared to decentralized networks of territorial party organizations, Latin America's labor movements were also easier for party leaders to control or buy off, due to their centralized and hierarchical structures (Davis 1989).

The greatest drawback to union-based organizational strategies was that outside of Argentina, Latin American labor movements were quite shallow throughout the 20th century. Chile's labor movement was the second-largest in South America (Roberts 2014, 115), but the share of the Chilean workforce that belonged to a labor union did not surpass 20% until the Allende presidency (Valenzuela 1978, 28). Drake (1978) argues that the weakness of the Chilean labor movement throughout the first half of the 20th century was one of the factors that led Chile's Socialist and Communist parties to emulate the patronage-based organizational strategies of parties like the Radical Party.

Another drawback of union-based strategies was that even when a particular party dominated the labor movement, that dominance did not necessarily translate into electoral support. The Uruguayan case exemplifies this disconnect between labor politics and electoral politics: Uruguay's Communist and Socialist parties dominated Uruguay's labor movement by the 1940s, but as Buchanan (2008, 68) notes, "the rank and file voted for Marxist union leaders at the shop level but mainstream political parties in national elections (most often the Colorado Party, but increasingly the Blanco Party in the 1960s)." Moreover, the labor movements in some Latin American countries fiercely resisted domination by a single party and remained fairly pluralistic in partisan terms until the late 20th century. Chile's Marxist parties were the largest political bloc within Chile's main labor federation, the CUT, but they were far from a hegemonic force in the movement prior to the Allende presidency. The Communist and Socialist parties combined controlled only 60% of the delegates in the CUT's 1962 Congress, while the other 40% were split between the Christian Democratic and Radical parties and non-partisan groups (Pizarro 1986,

191).

Given these limitations, few Latin American parties could hope to attract significant partisan support by relying only on organized labor. Instead, Latin America's most successful left-wing parties diversified their organizational strategies. In addition to building ties with organized labor, they also constructed networks of territorial and activist-based grassroots party organizations that could operate independently from the labor movement. The contrasting fates of the Chilean and Uruguayan Marxist parties demonstrate the benefits of this organizational diversification. While Chile's Communist and Socialist parties adopted diversified strategies, Uruguay's Communist and Socialist parties chose to specialize in labor organizing at the expense of territorial party organization.⁸ The Uruguayan Marxists' strong roots in the labor movement may have helped these parties survive despite being shut out of government throughout the 20th century. But their focus on labor organizing also limited their reach in the electorate. Most Uruguayan voters were not affiliated with a labor union, and according to a 1966 survey, self-identified members of Montevideo's "working class" were more than twice as likely to belong to a Colorado or Blanco political club compared to a labor union.⁹ By contrast, the Communist and Socialist parties of Chile invested heavily in territorial party organizations. During the 1960s, both parties developed strong activist networks in the urban shantytowns, where the organized labor movement was traditionally weak (Schneider 1995, 38). These territorial organizations helped these parties mobilize non-unionized poor voters, and both parties greatly expanded their bases of partisan support in the early 1970s.

Panel survey evidence from the period suggests that the growth of Chile's labor movement in the early 1970s may have been a consequence rather than a cause of the strengthening of mass partisan attachments to the Communist and Socialist parties. If union membership made a voter

⁸Survey evidence from Montevideo and Santiago in 1966 is consistent with the idea that the labor movement was more central for the political strategies of the Uruguayan Marxist parties compared to their counterparts in Chile: over 25% of partisans of the Communist and Socialist parties of Uruguay claimed membership in a labor union, compared to just 8% of partisans of Chile's Communist and Socialist parties.

⁹Instituto Uruguay de la Opinión Pública #580.

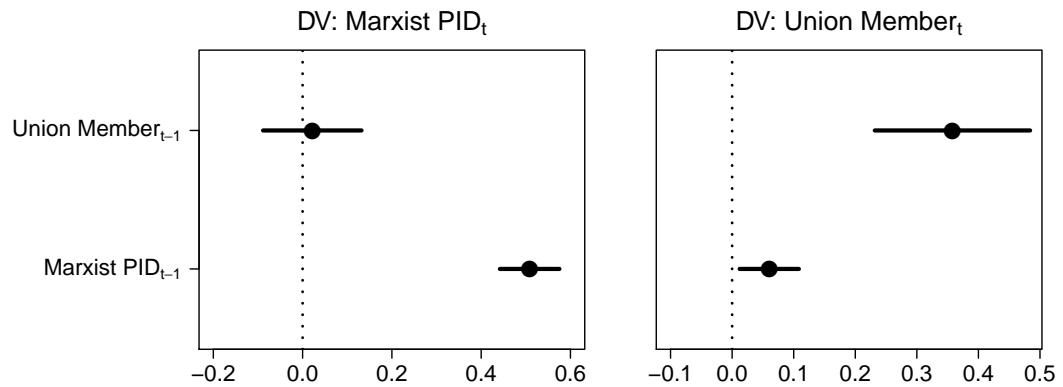


Figure 5.4: Union Membership and Communist and Socialist Party Identification in Chile (Cross-Lagged Models)

more likely to identify with the Communist or Socialist parties, then we should expect that union membership in one period would predict Communist or Socialist party identification in the next period, even after controlling for the voter’s lagged partisanship. Yet the results presented in Figure 5.4 suggests that union membership had close to zero effect on a voter’s partisanship in the next period. Instead, Figure 5.4 indicates that partisans of the Communist and Socialist parties were significantly more likely to *become* union members by the next wave of the survey. This implies that the increase in Marxist party identification in the early 1970s may have led to an increase in union membership, rather than the other way around.

Many of the elite-founded, labor-based “corporatist parties” adopted fairly diversified organizational strategies as well, and they often depended on their traditional territorial party organizations for much of their early partisan and electoral growth. The Peronist movement in Argentina was born with an activist-based territorial party organization that it had inherited from one of the Radical Civil Union offshoots that supported Perón’s 1946 campaign (Mackinnon, 2002; Aelo 2010). Even by the early 1950s, after the Peronists had consolidated their control over Argentina’s labor movement, the Peronist party continued to rely on neighborhood level base units (*unidades básicas*) to socialize voters into the party (Little 1973; Quiroga 2004). Similarly, the party that eventually became Mexico’s PRI originated as a federation of several smaller,

territorially-organized socialist, progressive, and populist parties that had emerged in the 1910s and 1920s, and the unified party did not establish its corporatist structure and its linkages to organized labor until the mid-1930s (Osten 2018, Garrido 1982; Perez 2011).

The Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) was closer to a “pure” labor party at the time of its founding in 1945, but this was partly because its elite founder, Getúlio Vargas, relied on his other party, the PSD, to mobilize the large numbers of poor and rural voters who were beyond the reach of Brazil’s labor movement (Skidmore 1967). After Vargas’ suicide in 1954, the PTB’s state-level organizations fell into the hands of local leaders and activists who weakened the party’s ties to organized labor and reorganized the PTB as a territorial party based on networks of activist-run “propaganda committees” and “directories” in working-class neighborhoods (Delgado 1989; Gomes 1994). This transformation of the PTB from a labor party into a territorial party was followed by an impressive rise in its level of partisan support in many of Brazil’s major cities. According to polls conducted in urban areas by IBOPE, between the mid-1950s and 1964 the PTB’s partisanship rate increased from 13% to 44% in Rio de Janeiro, from 11% to 23% in Belo Horizonte, and from 16.1% to 35% in Curitiba (Lavareda 1991). This increase in partisan attachments to the PTB might have been simply the result of the institutionalization of Brazil’s party system, rather than a consequence of the party’s organizational transformation. However, Brazil’s other two major parties, the PSD and the UDN, did not experience increases in partisan support during this same period. Moreover, in São Paulo, one of the few cities where the PTB had remained organized as a predominantly union-based party (Gomes 1994, 129), the PTB’s partisan support actually fell from 35% in 1950 to 13% in 1963 (Lavareda 1991).

Partisanship and Polarization in Chile

I close this chapter by analyzing two “critical cases” that occurred during the years leading up to the breakdowns of Chilean and Uruguayan democracy in 1973. I begin with a case that is

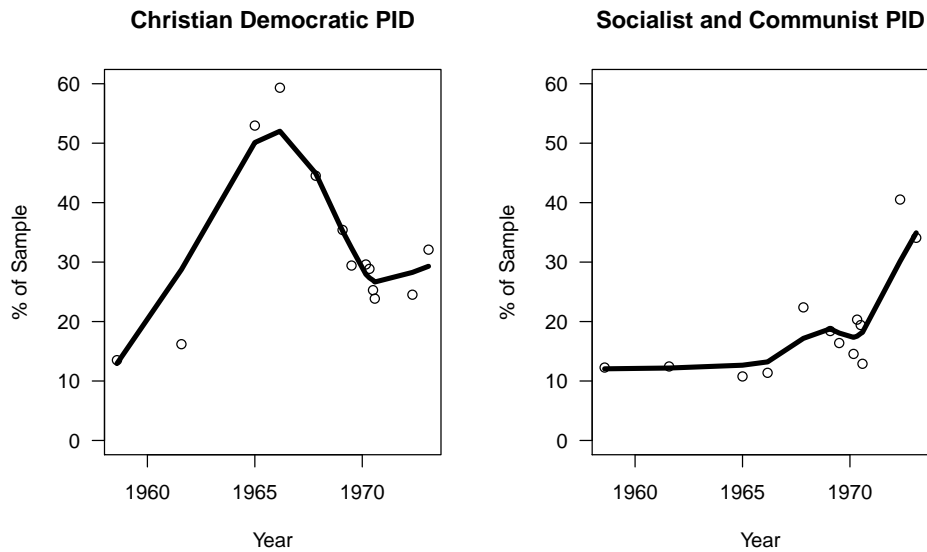


Figure 5.5: Party Identification with Chile’s Christian Democratic Party and Marxist parties, 1958-1973. *Source:* CEDOP surveys

ostensibly a “hard case” for my argument: the surge in mass party identification with Chile’s Christian Democratic, Socialist, and Communist parties during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Given that this growth in partisanship occurred during a chapter of Chilean political history that has become synonymous with “deep ideological polarization framed in a Cold War context” (Calvo and Murillo 2019, 52), this case might seem to fit better with ideological or brand-based approaches to partisanship. However, I argue that this view is misleading for two reasons. First, I show that the evidence from this period is actually more consistent with a model of “affective polarization” than “ideological polarization.” Second, both the affective polarization and the rise in party identification were fueled by the same cause: an intense social mobilization that was organized and led by low-level Christian Democratic and Marxist party activists.

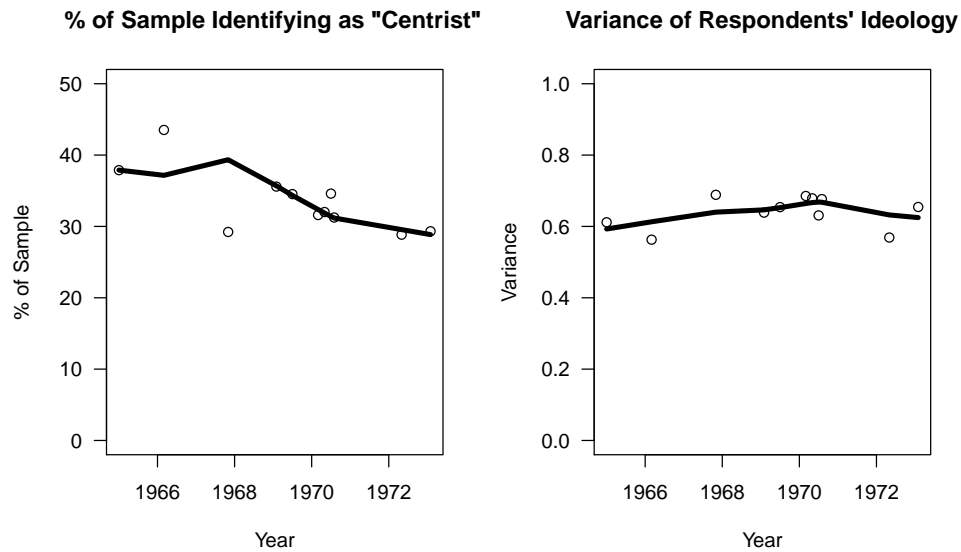


Figure 5.6: Centrist and Ideological Dispersion in Santiago, 1965-1973. *Source:* CEDOP surveys.

Ideological or Affective Polarization?

Chile in the early 1970s is sometimes viewed as a paradigmatic case of *ideological polarization*, which implies an increase in the ideological distance between voters or other political actors over time. If this is the case, then we should expect to observe evidence that Chilean voters became more ideologically dispersed during the 1960s and early 1970s. I test this hypothesis using the series of face-to-face CEDOP public opinion surveys conducted between 1958 and 1973 by Eduardo Hamuy, a former student of Paul Lazarsfeld and a pioneer of public opinion research in Latin America.¹⁰ In nearly every wave of the survey, respondents were asked to classify their politics as either “Left,” “Center,” or “Right,” and this question was asked the same way across survey waves. Figure 5.6 depicts the evolution of the electorate’s ideological dispersion between 1965 and 1973, based on two measures of ideological distance: the percentage

¹⁰One drawback of relying on these surveys is that most survey waves cover only the greater Santiago area, and none of the surveys were conducted outside of major urban areas. However, Santiago is arguably a “most likely case” for uncovering evidence of ideological polarization given that the city was the epicenter of the partisan street mobilizations and political violence that occurred during Allende’s presidency.

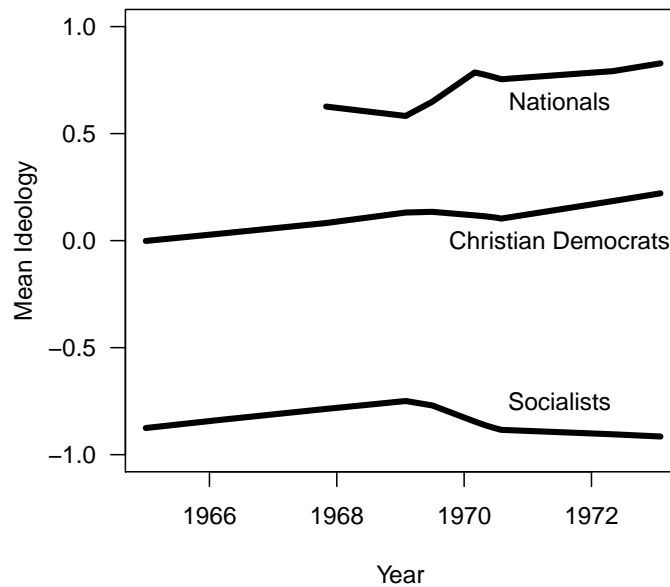


Figure 5.7: Chilean Partisans' Mean Ideology, by Party. *Source:* CEDOP surveys.

of respondents who classified themselves as “centrist,” and the variance of the respondents’ ideological self-placements. There was a small drop in the share of self-identified centrists over time. This drop was concentrated mainly during the late 1960s, before Allende assumed office, and centrists still accounted for roughly a third of the sample by 1973. There was practically no change in the variance of respondents’ ideological positions during this same period.¹¹ Over all, this figure shows remarkably weak evidence of mass ideological polarization during this critical period of Chile’s political history.

Another type of polarization that is sometimes conflated with ideological polarization is *partisan sorting*, or an increase in the correlation between voters’ partisan attachments and ideological commitments (Levendusky 2010). Yet once again, there is little evidence of significant

¹¹These two patterns are reconcilable by the fact that the average Santiago voter shifted to the left in the late 1960s, such that the average ideological distance between voters remained the same even though centrists became marginally fewer in number.

sorting in the Santiago electorate during this period. Figure 5.7 shows loess curves for the ideology of self-identified partisans of Chile's three largest parties. While the average ideological distance between Socialist and Christian Democratic partisans increased slightly during the early 1970s, this divergence was quite small. Socialist partisans were just as likely to identify as left-wing in 1973 as they were in 1965, while Christian Democrats became only slightly more right-leaning in the early 1970s.

Even if there was only limited ideological polarization or sorting at the mass level, there is still the possibility that *elites* in Chile became more ideologically polarized or better-sorted. Under the logic of the brand-based model of partisanship developed by Lupu (2016), elite polarization and sorting could increase levels of mass partisanship by making it easier for voters to see clear differences between parties. Yet qualitative evidence from the period suggests that there was still considerable ideological common ground between elite politicians from the Marxist and Christian Democratic camps by the 1970s. The key structural reforms that occurred under Allende's presidency—land reform and the nationalization of the foreign-owned copper mines and other industries—were all positions that the Christian Democratic presidential candidate, Radomiro Tomic, had enthusiastically embraced in his own 1970 campaign (Smith 1982, 128). Shortly before the 1970 election, politicians within both camps even discussed uniting behind the same candidate in order to thwart the reelection of the popular, right-wing former president, Jorge Alessandri (Hofmeister 1995, 143). While they disagreed over questions of process and degree, Allende's Popular Unity coalition and the Christian Democratic Party offered very similar prescriptions for the social and economic problems that Chile faced. Applying the methodology used by the Comparative Manifestos Project, Gamboa, Lopez and Baeza (2013) find that the ideological distance between Allende and Tomic in 1970 was considerably *smaller* than the distance between the candidates of the *Concertación* and the *Alianza* in Chile's post-1990 democracy, a period renowned for elite consensus and cooperation across party lines.

A third type of polarization, *affective polarization*, occurs when partisans of a given party

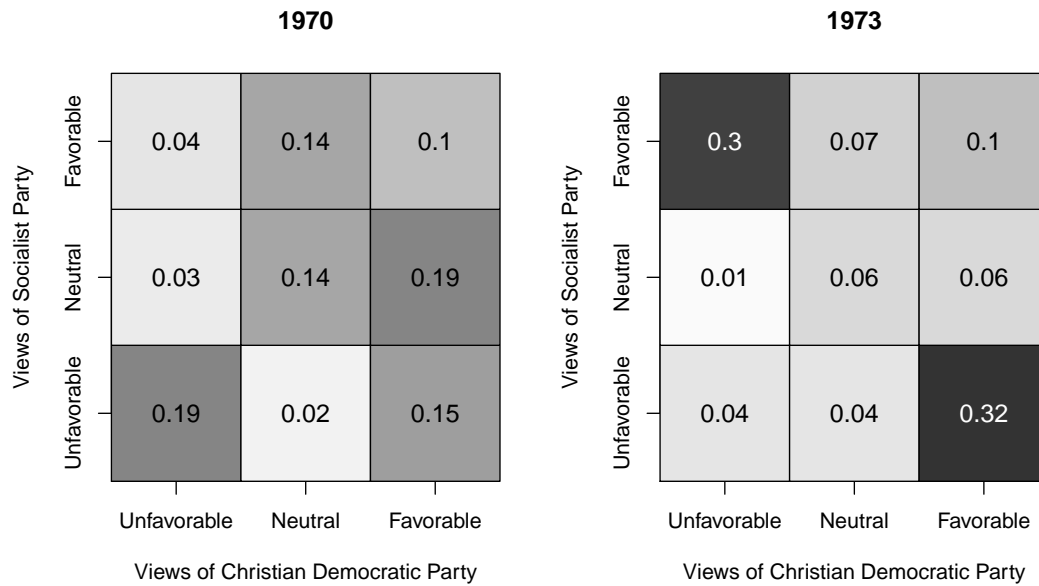


Figure 5.8: Santiago Voters' Views of the Socialist and Christian Democratic Parties.

Note: The shading and numbers in each cell indicate the proportion of survey respondents who fell into that category. For example, 32% of survey respondents had a favorable view of the Christian Democrats and an unfavorable view of the Socialists in 1973. *Source:* CEDOP surveys.

increasingly dislike the opposing party (Iyengar, Sood, Lelkes 2012). If Chile's polarization in the early 1970s was a type of affective polarization, then we might expect that voters' views of Chile's Christian Democratic Party and their views of the Marxist parties would have become more negatively correlated over time. Figure 5.8 depicts the relationship between Santiago survey respondents' views of the Socialist Party and the Christian Democratic Party, and this figure provides strong support for the affective polarization model. As late as 1970, there was a weakly *positive* correlation between views of the two parties: voters who liked one party tended to be favorable or at least indifferent toward the other, and voters who disliked one party tended to dislike the other as well. This positive correlation is not surprising, given that the Socialists and Christian Democrats had an established record of cooperating with each other since the 1950s, both in congress and at the grassroots level (Hofmeister 1995, 76). By 1973, however, there was

a strong, negative correlation between voters' views of the two parties. The right panel of 5.8 shows that the bulk of the Santiago electorate had sorted into two camps: those who liked the Christian Democrats but disliked the Socialists; and those who liked the Socialists but disliked the Christian Democrats. The notion that Chile's polarization was more affective than ideological is also supported by some of the qualitative accounts on the period. For example, Fleet (1985) notes that even left-leaning Christian Democrats in Chile's labor movement came to distrust and fear their counterparts in the Communist and Socialist parties:

Over the years intense and not entirely gratuitous feelings of mistrust, resentment, and antagonism built up on both sides. These feelings were often played on by others standing to gain from a divided workers' movement, but the basic perceptions and fears were real and there from the beginning. Developments at both the factory and neighborhood levels reenforced these feelings of mistrust and fear during Allende's first year... Christian Democratic and Marxist workers saw one another as adversaries and obstacles, not allies or fellow victims, and they tended to interpret each other's actions in the most threatening light possible. (Fleet 1985, 144-145)

Mass affective polarization may still be consistent with elite-driven accounts of partisan identity-formation such as Lupu (2016). Perhaps the affective polarization began at the elite level, filtered down to the mass level, and bolstered mass party identification in the process. However, this sort of story is at odds with Valenzuela's (1978) authoritative account of the breakdown of Chile's democracy. Valenzuela shows that party elites from the Popular Unity and Christian Democratic camps repeatedly tried to reach a compromise, all the way up until the final month before Chile's 1973 coup. While a few opportunistic politicians may have encouraged Chile's polarization, Valenzuela suggests that most elite politicians genuinely wanted to calm the polarization at the mass level, but ultimately proved helpless to stop it:

It soon became clear that confrontation politics had moved the fulcrum of the Chilean political system outside the realms of traditional decision-making institutions. The political leadership had lost, in large measure, control over its own followers. (Valenzuela 1978, 80)

The Role of the Party Activists

Valenzuela argues that the reason why the elite negotiations ultimately failed was because they were undercut at every turn by the actions of the parties' own low-level activists.

What made it virtually impossible to break out of the polarized system was the increased polarization among party activists, who in turn, and in a somewhat circular fashion, further polarized the system at the mass level. (Valenzuela 1978, 10)

This point is echoed by Fleet (1985):

Neither Allende nor the [Christian Democratic leadership] was in a position to “choose” their strategic posture... Each was being pressured and preempted not by their remote support bases but by increasingly militant rank-and-file elements, among whom activism and antagonism had stepped up following the elections. Each side was forced to endorse strikes and defend building assaults and seizures by their respective militants whether or not they believed such moves appropriate. Neither wanted to lose the support of these forces nor appeared capable of stopping or controlling them had they wanted to. (Fleet 1985, 168)

In this subsection, I take a closer look at the behavior of these party activists during the years leading up to the breakdown of Chile's democracy. While this case is already one of the best-studied cases in Latin American political history, it is a crucial case for my argument because it illustrates both how grassroots party activists can reshape the partisan landscape of their electorate, and the dangers that unbridled activist-led popular mobilizations can pose for democracy.

Two sets of institutional changes in the late 1950s help explain why Chilean party leaders had lost control over their activists by the beginning of Allende's presidency. The first set of changes took place within the Socialist and Christian Democratic parties themselves. In the process of reunifying the Socialist Party and merging the Falange and Social Conservative Party into the new Christian Democratic Party, these parties transformed from hierarchical and personalistic organizations into relatively pluralistic parties that could no longer be dominated by any one leader without the support of their party's other factions. While neither party could be described as “internally democratic” during the 1960s, this pluralism opened up space for a

new generation of activists to participate in party decisions, rise through the party's ranks, or play the party's rival leaders off of each other (Hofmeister 1995, 131; Arrate and Rojas 2003). This transformation was particularly stark in the case of the Socialist Party. Neither of the party's most prominent old guard leaders—Allende and Raul Ampuero—were elected to the party's Central Committee in 1965, and the party's principal leadership organ was instead filled with younger activists who had limited experience in elected office and had risen up through the party's various local committees (Casals 2010, 136). In 1967, the new party leadership expelled Ampuero from the Socialist Party for questioning its decisions. That same year, and over Allende's objections, the party's Congress in Chillán passed a resolution that declared that revolutionary violence was inevitable and discarded the party's traditional electoralist strategy for winning power (Arrate and Rojas 2003, 425-428). By 1970, Allende's position within his own party had become so tenuous that he nearly failed to secure the Socialist Party's nomination for his final presidential campaign. The party's Central Committee ultimately renominated him out of a concern that their Communist and Radical allies would not back any Socialist candidate other than Allende, but even then, most members of the Committee preferred to abstain rather than vote to nominate a candidate that they considered too moderate (Jerez 2007, 213-215).

The second set of institutional changes were reforms to Chile's electoral system. Between 1958 and 1962, an alliance of Christian Democratic, Communist, and Socialist politicians in Congress passed five electoral reforms that reduced the role of clientelism in Chilean politics and broadened popular participation in elections (Gamboa 2012; Baland and Robinson 2012). These reforms led to a large influx of new voters into the electorate during the 1960s. Figure 5.9 shows that share of the Chileans who participated in congressional elections tripled between 1957 (the second election held under female suffrage) and 1973 (the final election before the breakdown of democracy). Most of these new voters were so-called "*marginados*," or poor voters who were detached from both political parties and the labor unions and other social organizations that parties traditionally relied on to mobilize support. In the early 1960s, the Christian Democrats, Socialists,

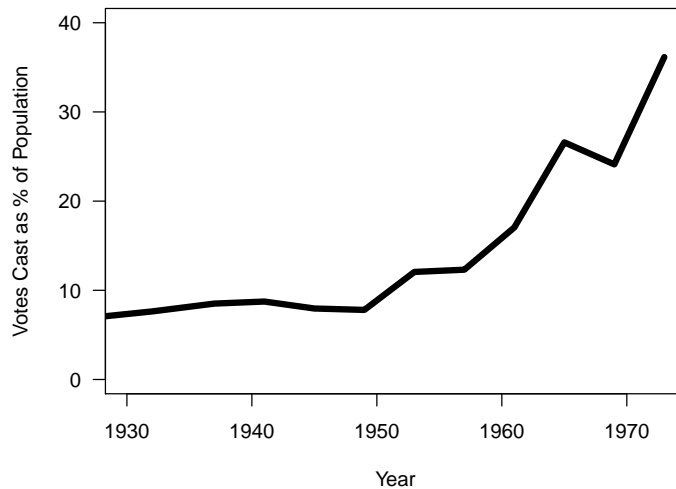


Figure 5.9: Expansion of Suffrage in Chile. *Source:* Nazer and Rosenblit (2000)

and Communists courted these new voters by sending their activists into rural communities and urban *poblaciones* (shantytowns), and by recruiting members of these communities into their grassroots party organizations (Fleet 1985; Cofre 2011; Garces 2013).

The Christian Democratic Party’s victory in the 1964 presidential election galvanized these organizational efforts by enabling the party to use the resources of the state to deepen its ties to the urban and rural poor. The Christian Democratic administration created a series of social programs called Popular Promotion that targeted the urban poor and established over 20,000 new civil society organizations in the *poblaciones*, including neighborhood committees, mothers’ centers, youth centers, and sports clubs. The literature on urban politics in Chile is nearly unanimous in the view that the Christian Democrats created these organizations with the intention of “capturing” the votes of the urban poor and forestalling the rise of the Marxist parties in these communities (Portes and Walton 1976, 125; Castells 1983, 207; Fleet 1985, 87; Oxhorn 1995; Posner 2004, 61). While the critiques offered by the opposition parties at the time focused on the clientelistic nature of Popular Promotion, later studies have also highlighted the

way that this program helped the Christian Democratic Party expand its activist networks in poor communities and indoctrinate the program's participants:

The [Christian Democratic Party] used its close ties with the Catholic Church to transform church-sponsored organizations in the *poblaciones* into party organizations. Courses offered by the government for participants in the newly created organizations were used to transmit the party's ideology into the *poblaciones*. (Oxhorn 1995, 52)

If these accounts are correct that Popular Promotion helped the Christian Democratic Party attract the support of the urban poor, then we should expect that voters who participated in these social organizations would become more likely to identify with the Christian Democratic Party over time. I test this hypothesis using a cross-lagged model that simultaneously regresses respondents' current partisanship and organizational participation on their lagged partisanship and organizational participation. The data comes from the two-wave panel survey conducted by Hamuy in the early 1970s, which asked respondents about their partisanship and their organizational participation in both waves. Figure 5.10 reports the results of this cross-lagged model. Respondents who participated in social organizations in the first wave became around 10 percentage points more likely to identify with the Christian Democratic Party in the second wave, even after controlling for their lagged party identification. However, respondents who already identified with the Christian Democratic Party in the first wave were no more likely to participate in social organizations in the second wave compared to non-Christian Democrats. These results imply that the direction of the causal relationship ran from organizational participation to Christian Democratic partisanship, rather than the other way around. This is consistent with the conventional wisdom that the party used these party-sponsored grassroots organizations to transform poor voters into Christian Democrats.

The Christian Democrats' success at mobilizing the urban poor forced Socialist and Communist activists to step up their own organizational efforts in the *poblaciones*. Valenzuela (1978) argues that the Christian Democratic Party's attempts to outflank the Left in these communities helped trigger the cycle of mobilization and counter-mobilization that ultimately led to the

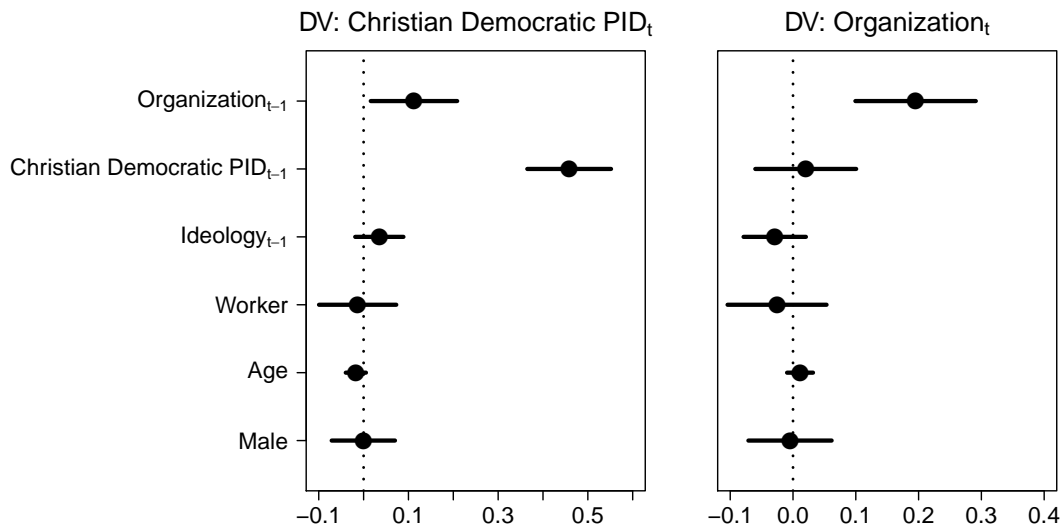


Figure 5.10: Organizational Membership and Christian Democratic Party Identification (Cross-Lagged Model)

breakdown of Chile's democracy.

[The Christian Democrats'] efforts at mobilization and their disdain for some of the traditional clientelistic mechanisms encouraged as never before a frantic race among all sectors to prevent the centrist party from obtaining majority support. The Left moved quickly, if belatedly, into the countryside and the *poblaciones* to accelerate its effort to broaden its base among the working class... The goal of the mobilization was not only to incorporate new sectors into the political process but to ensure that this incorporation would lead to partisan advantage. (Valenzuela 1978, 37)

Activists from the Christian Democratic Party and the Marxist parties competed against each other on a variety of terrains from the late 1960s through 1973, including working-class neighborhoods, labor unions, the recently-created civil society organizations, rural estates, and the urban streets. However, the most iconic tactic that the parties relied on was the urban land invasions (*tomas de terrenos*), which often led to the foundation of new *poblaciones* that would be dominated by activists from a particular political party. Party-led land invasions were already a well-established mobilization tactic in Chilean politics by the late 1940s, but these land invasions occurred on an unprecedented scale between 1964 and 1973. Cofre (2011) identifies 344 separate land invasions in Santiago from 1970 to 1973 alone, at least half of which were organized and

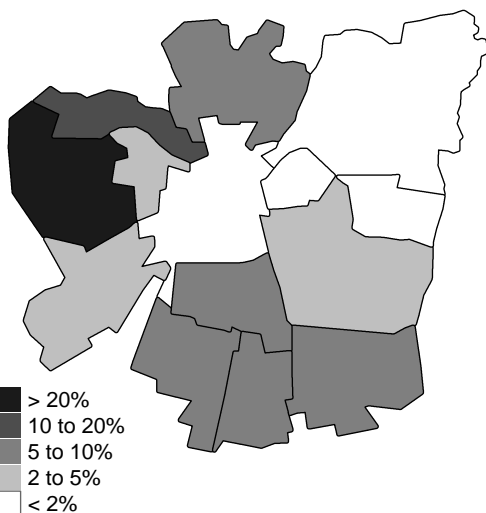
led by the activists from a particular political party. Like the social organizations created under Popular Promotion, the new *poblaciones* that the parties founded through the land invasions served not only as a means of satisfying poor voters' economic needs and purchasing their gratitude, but also as a tool for indoctrination and proselytization:

Communist socialization attempted to present the invasion and subsequent confrontations with government and landowners as practical lessons in the class struggle. The effective help provided by the Party on these occasions was aimed neither at purely electoral support nor at participation within the existing order but rather at drastically changing the dominant ethic among these groups. Its goal was to effect a transformation of basic needs into a clear understanding of the structural origins of poverty and the necessity of class solidarity. (Portes and Walton 1976, 105)

The effects of these activist-led land invasions on voters' partisanship are challenging to measure because none of Hamuy's surveys identify respondents to the level of particular *poblaciones*. It is noteworthy, however, that the growth of Socialist and Communist partisan support in Santiago during the early 1970s was concentrated in the communes of the city where the land invasions were most prevalent. The left map in Figure 5.11 depicts a rough estimate of the share of the commune's population that lived in a *población* associated with one of the parties in Allende's alliance, Popular Unity, by the end of 1970, based on archival data collected by Cofre (2011). The map on the right shows multi-level regression and post-stratification (MRP) estimates of the percent change in the share of the population that identified with the Socialist or Communist parties between 1970 and 1973, based on data from Hamuy's surveys. The Marxist parties gained most of their partisan support in the communes of southern and northwestern Santiago, where Socialist and Communist grassroots party activity was most intense, and these parties actually lost partisans in central and eastern Santiago.

While Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic activists used the urban land invasions and the creation of new *poblaciones* to mobilize the partisan loyalties of recently-enfranchised poor voters, this did not necessarily have to lead affective polarization. In the 1960s, activists from different parties had frequently worked together in the same Homeless Persons

% of Population Living in Poblaciones Associated with Unidad Popular in 1970



% Change in Socialist and Communist Party Identification from 1970 to 1973

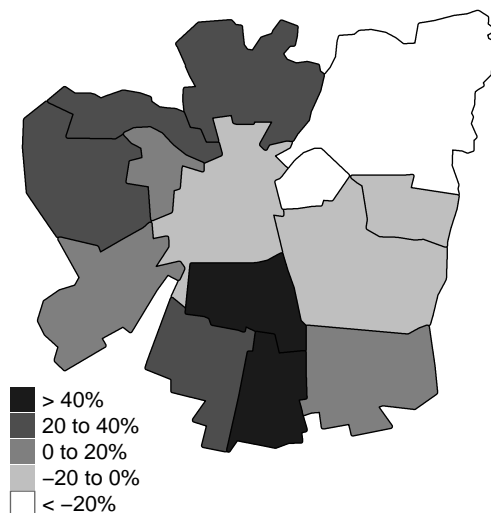


Figure 5.11: Land Invasions and Marxist Party Identification in Santiago.

Note: The left panel shows estimates of the share of the commune’s population that lived in a Popular Unity *población*, based on archival data on land invasions from Cofre (2011) and data from Chile’s 1970 Census. The right panel shows MRP estimates of the change in Marxist party identification, based on public opinion surveys carried out in Santiago in 1970 and 1973, data from Chile’s 1970 Census, and commune-level electoral data from 1969, 1970, and 1973.

Committees that organized the land invasions (Hofmeister 1995, 76). Moreover, Cofre’s dataset on land invasions in Santiago suggests that several of the invasions that occurred in 1969 were “joint ventures” between the Christian Democratic and Marxist parties. However, this cross-party cooperation appears to have ended around the time of the 1970 election, and most of the party-led land invasions that occurred during Allende’s presidency were sponsored either by the Christian Democrats or by one of the parties in Allende’s Popular Unity coalition (Cofre 2011).

The rise in the number of *poblaciones* that were tied to a particular party contributed the disappearance of partisan pluralism in many voters’ social networks. The party activists who founded a new *población* typically policed the borders of the settlement in an attempt to keep out activists from rival parties. This gave the founding party tight control over which political messages reached the settlement’s residents and the manner in which they participated in politics:

Each *campamento* was dependent upon the political leadership which had founded it. Political pluralism within the *campamento* was rare. ... The participation of the *campamentos* in the political process very closely followed the political line dominating each settlement. We should actually speak of the *pobladores'* branch of each political party, rather than of a "squatters' movement" (Castells 1983, 201).

Moreover, the land invasions were often accompanied by violence, not only between the *pobladores* and the police, but also between rival groups of *pobladores* who were associated with different political parties. For example, a month after the 1970 election, there was a violent clash between *pobladores* aligned with the Socialist and Christian Democratic parties in the commune of Conchalí after the Christian Democrats occupied a plot of land that was adjacent to a *población* that the Socialist Party had founded two months earlier (Cofre 2011).

By the second year of Allende's presidency, this activist-led grassroots mobilization had spilled over into other realms as well. Christian Democratic activists helped organize the three week work stoppage in 1972 (Fleet 1985, 159), and Marxist activists responded by seizing control over factories and pressuring their allies in the government to nationalize them (Castillo 2010). Mass political demonstrations and counter-demonstrations became a regular occurrence in Santiago by the end of 1972. Violent confrontations between rival groups of activists also became increasingly common, and several parties soon began training their own paramilitary groups (Fleet 1985, 170).

If this activist-led mobilization was responsible for the affective polarization in Chile in the early 1970s, we should expect to observe greater levels of affective polarization in the places where Christian Democratic and Marxist party activity was most intense. I test this hypothesis using a multilevel model based on the Hamuy survey data from the early 1970s. I operationalize affective polarization as the absolute distance between survey respondents' views of the Christian Democratic Party and the Marxist parties. My main independent variable is whether the respondent lived in one of the neighborhoods on the periphery of Santiago where the activist-led land invasions were most common. I also control for individual-level variables

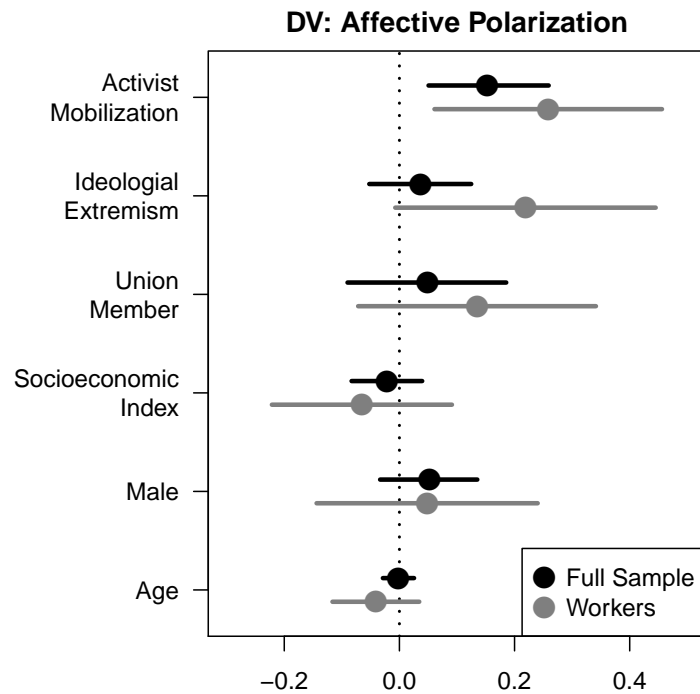


Figure 5.12: Grassroots Mobilization and Mass Affective Polarization in Santiago (OLS Estimates)

related to previous explanations for Chile’s polarization, including the respondent’s ideological extremism, union membership, and demographic characteristics. Figure 5.12 reports the results of this model. The effect for the level of Activist Mobilization in the neighborhood was positive and significant, which indicates that the correlation between respondents’ views of the Christian Democratic and Marxist parties tended to be more-negative in the neighborhoods that had the highest level of party activist activity. Moreover, the effect is even stronger when I restrict the sample to working-class respondents, which suggests that neighborhood is not simply proxying for socioeconomic class. Surprisingly, the effect for the respondent’s ideological extremism was small and insignificant for the full sample, and only significant at the 0.1 level for the workers’ subsample. None of the other individual-level variables were associated with affective polarization.

In addition to fueling mass affective polarization, the behavior of Marxist and Christian Democratic activists also complicated the negotiations between party leaders. The seizure of factories by Marxist activists was particularly damaging to the relations between Popular Unity and the Christian Democratic Party because the Christian Democratic politicians saw these seizures as a violation of Allende's promise that he would enact his program only through constitutional mechanisms. Yet Fleet (1985) notes that these seizures often occurred against the express wishes of Allende's government, on the initiative of party activists who were seeking to pressure their government to accelerate Chile's transition to a socialist society.

Under the leadership of militant Socialists the *cordones*¹² outflanked and gradually preempted party and government-controlled labor organizations. They instigated numerous factory seizures, generally ignored Allende's calls for patience, order, and due process, and played an increasingly prominent role in political activities beyond their own industries. On a number of occasions they forced the government to take over firms it had not wanted, or had promised not to take, and refused to give up others it had promised to return. (Fleet 1985, 169)

When an attempted military mutiny in June, 1973 prompted Popular Unity and Christian Democratic leaders to resume negotiations in a last-ditch effort to avert a military coup, party activists denounced their own leaders for trying to reach a compromise with the other side (Fleet 1985, 172). Without support from the parties' grassroots base, the formal elite-level talks broke down for the last time in August, 1973 (Valenzuela 1978, 98). The military overthrew Allende's government a month later.

The mass mobilization that occurred in Chile in the 1960s and '70s highlights both the strengths and dangers of grassroots party activism. The intense competition between Christian Democratic and Marxist party activists during this period incorporated hundreds of thousands of lower-class Chileans into the political process. For the first time, grassroots party activity had reached every corner of Chilean society, including the shantytowns that had traditionally been

¹²The *cordones industriales* were a type of militant workers' organization that emerged in Santiago during the strikes of 1972. Many of the *cordones* were originally founded by Socialist Party activists, though they eventually came to include activists from other left-wing parties. See Castillo (2010) for a discussion of the origins of the *cordones*.

at the margins of Chilean politics. In the process, these parties crafted bases of partisan support that were much deeper than the partisan base that the Radical Party pieced together through over a century of assembly activism. Yet by the early 1970s, this process had spiraled beyond the control of the party leaders. The activist-led seizures and demonstrations repeatedly undercut the high-level negotiations between party leaders and senior politicians, and the violent clashes between rival groups of activists fueled the perception that Chile was on the verge of civil war. Valenzuela (1978) argues persuasively that the party leaders had grown so dependent on their activist base for political support that even if they had been able to broker a compromise, it is unlikely that they would have been able to enforce it over the objections of their “maximalist” activists. As we will see in Chapter 7, the Socialist and Christian Democratic leaders who survived the authoritarian period eventually learned from these mistakes during their long exile in the 1970s and 1980s. When Chile transitioned back to democracy in the late 1980s and the parties entered into negotiations with the outgoing military dictatorship, the party leaders were careful to demobilize their activists in order to prevent them from “spoiling” the delicate transition.

The Survival of the Colorado Party of Uruguay

The final case that I analyze in this chapter is a case that previous theories of partisanship struggle to explain: the puzzling survival of the Colorado Party during its identity crisis in the late 1960s. Between 1967 and 1973, the Colorado Party did nearly all of the things that center-left parties are not supposed to do if they hope to hold onto their popular support. It diluted its progressive brand by moving sharply to the ideological right, leap-frogging its traditional rival; it signed an agreement with the IMF after explicitly campaigning against such an agreement in the 1966 election; it implemented the IMF’s recommended policies of wage freezes and currency devaluations, which decreased the standard of living of the party’s working-class base; it then repressed this base, tortured and killed labor activists, and revoked civil liberties after the labor

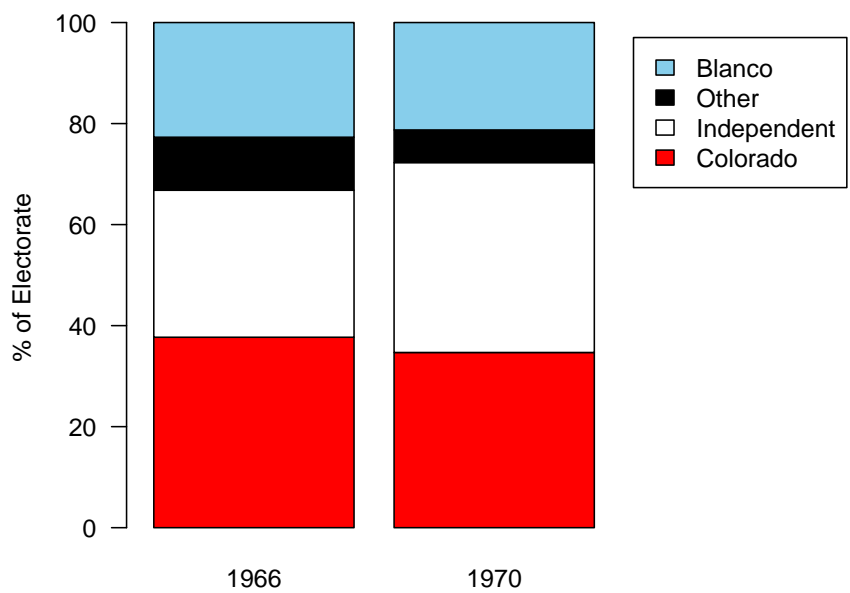


Figure 5.13: Partisan Composition of the Uruguayan Electorate, 1966 and 1970.
Source: Biles (1972)

movement protested against its economic policies; its government maintained abysmal approval ratings amidst hyperinflation and rampant social and political violence; it experienced open infighting between its factions throughout these years and suffered a major split in 1971 that saw several of its prominent progressive leaders leave to help found a new party; it elected to the presidency a political outsider with dubious loyalty to the Colorado Party, who promptly formed a coalition government with the Colorados' traditional rival, the National Party; and it presided over the dismantling of Uruguay's democracy, which culminated in the forcible closure of Congress by a Colorado president in 1973.

Both the ideological and the performance-based approaches to partisanship predict that a party that did what the Colorado Party did between 1966 and 1973 would lose most of its partisans within a matter of years. When the Venezuelan party Democratic Action did many of

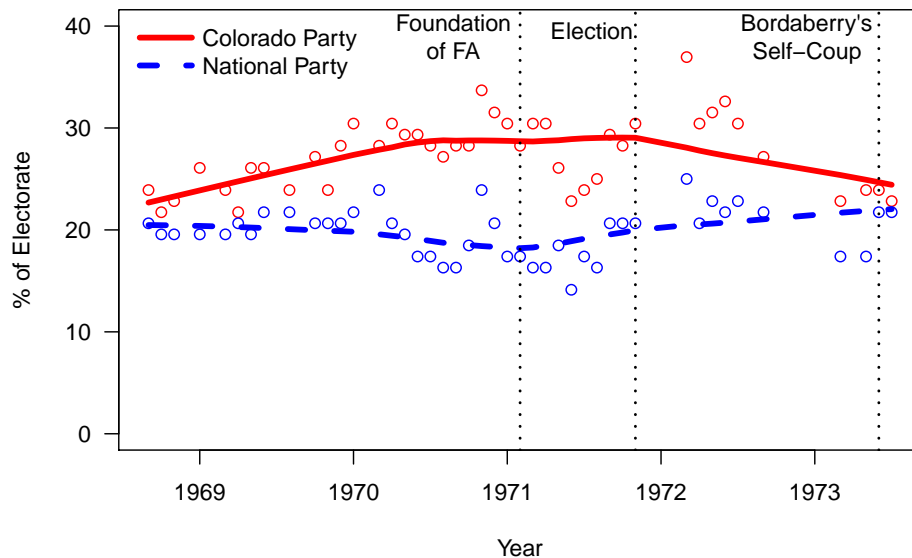


Figure 5.14: Montevideo Voters' Party Preferences, 1968-1973. *Source:* Gallup Uruguay

these same things in the 1990s, its level of partisan support fell from around 30% of the electorate to 10% in just over one year (Lupu 2016, 111). Yet there is no evidence that Uruguay's Colorado Party experienced a collapse of partisan support in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Figure 5.13 shows the partisan composition of the Uruguayan electorate in late 1966 and late 1970, based on survey data from Gallup. During this pivotal four-year period, the share of voters who identified with the Colorado Party fell by only 3 percentage points, which was within the margin of error. We observe similar stability in popular support for the Colorado Party in Figure 5.14, which depicts the party preferences of Montevideo voters, measured through monthly Gallup polls.

The resilience in Colorado partisanship during this period indicates that brand crises and negative performance shocks do not always trigger declines in party identification. Instead, as I argue in this dissertation, voters' partisan attachments are vulnerable to these types of shocks only when their partisanship is no longer reinforced by their social ties to party activists. The Colorado Party held onto its partisans in the early 1970s because its neighborhood club networks remained

quite strong, and because most of the club activists chose to stand by their party through its crises. I begin by discussing how the Colorado Party severely damaged both its party brand and its governing record by the early 1970s. Next, I analyze the party-switching and faction-switching behavior of Colorado activists during this period, and I discuss why most activists chose to remain in the Colorado Party.

Brand Dilution

Lupu (2016) argues that a party is likely to lose its partisans when its actions dilute its party brand. He relies on three types of indicators to measure brand dilution: sudden changes in a party's ideological position, and especially "policy-switching," or the governing party's abandonment of the policy platform on which it campaigned; convergence with the party's principal rival, which in its most extreme form involves the formation of an alliance or coalition government with that rival; and intra-party conflict characterized by major policy disagreements between different factions or leaders of the party. As I will show in this sub-section, the Colorado Party committed each of these offenses during the years following its return to power in 1967.

By the mid-1960s, the Batllista movement had achieved such a dominant position within the Colorado Party that the Colorado brand was largely indistinguishable from the Batllista brand. Every Colorado government throughout the previous generation had been a Batllista government, and all of the party's major power-brokers either had or claimed to have deep ties to the Batllista movement.¹³ There were two core elements of the Batllista brand in the

¹³The party's three left-leaning leaders, Alba Roballo, Amílcar Vasconcellos, and Zelmar Michelini, had each begun their political careers as Batllista activists, and Roballo and Vasconcellos had been members of Julio Cesar Grauert's socialist Batllista group, *Avanzar*. Jorge Batlle was the son of Luis Batlle and the grandson of José Batlle. Jorge Pacheco was the editor of the Batllista newspaper, *El Día*, and he was also related to the Batlle family by marriage. The retired air force General Óscar Gestido was the only prominent leader in the party who did not have any relationship to *Batllismo* prior to 1960, but this was partly because Uruguay's constitution at the time prohibited the political participation of active military officers. Nevertheless, Gestido went out of his way to portray himself as a consummate Batllista on the campaign trail, and he played to Batllista supporters' nostalgia for the progressive governments of José and Luis Batlle by promising to restore "the old, reformist *batllismo*, now largely forgotten" (quoted in Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:321).

mid-20th century. The first was the movement's commitment to democracy; Batllista activists had helped lead the struggle against the Terra dictatorship in the 1930s, and the movement also claimed credit for Uruguay's initial democratization in the 1910s. The second element was the movement's progressive economic stance, based on a fierce defense of Uruguay's welfare state, developmentalist economic policies, and support for organized labor and the working class in general, which constituted *Batllismo's* "core" base of support. The movement's founder, José Batlle, had pushed for Uruguay's first wave of progressive labor legislation as president, and the Batllista governments of the 1940s and 1950s presided over the expansion of Uruguay's welfare state and a rise in the standard of living of working-class voters (D'Elia 1982; Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:134; Ferreira 2013).

Survey evidence from 1966 suggests that Uruguayan voters also perceived clear differences between the Colorado and National parties. Figure 5.15 shows Aldrich-McKelvey estimates of the ideological positions of the Colorado and Blanco presidential candidates in 1966, and the distribution of the survey respondents' recovered ideal points.¹⁴ The survey respondents positioned each of the Colorado presidential candidates to the left of the National Party candidates. Moreover, when asked which party was most likely to defend the interests of "workers," half of working-class respondents named the Colorado Party, while only a quarter of the sample named the National Party and Uruguay's Marxist parties.¹⁵

The Colorado Party's shift to the economic right began with the 1965 internal elections within *Batllismo-15*, which until that point had been one of the party's most progressive factions. While the internal election campaign focused mostly on the issue of political and constitutional reform, the winner of the election, Jorge Batlle, also favored the liberalization of Uruguay's economy and was a vocal critic of the statist economic policies associated with his father, Luis Batlle. Jorge Batlle's victory led to the fracturing of *Batllismo-15*, as several of the faction's older

¹⁴This method is a scaling procedure that uses survey respondents' placements of stimuli (in this case, candidates) on a left-right spectrum to place both the stimuli and the survey respondents on the same "basic space."

¹⁵Instituto Uruguay de la Opinión Pública poll #580

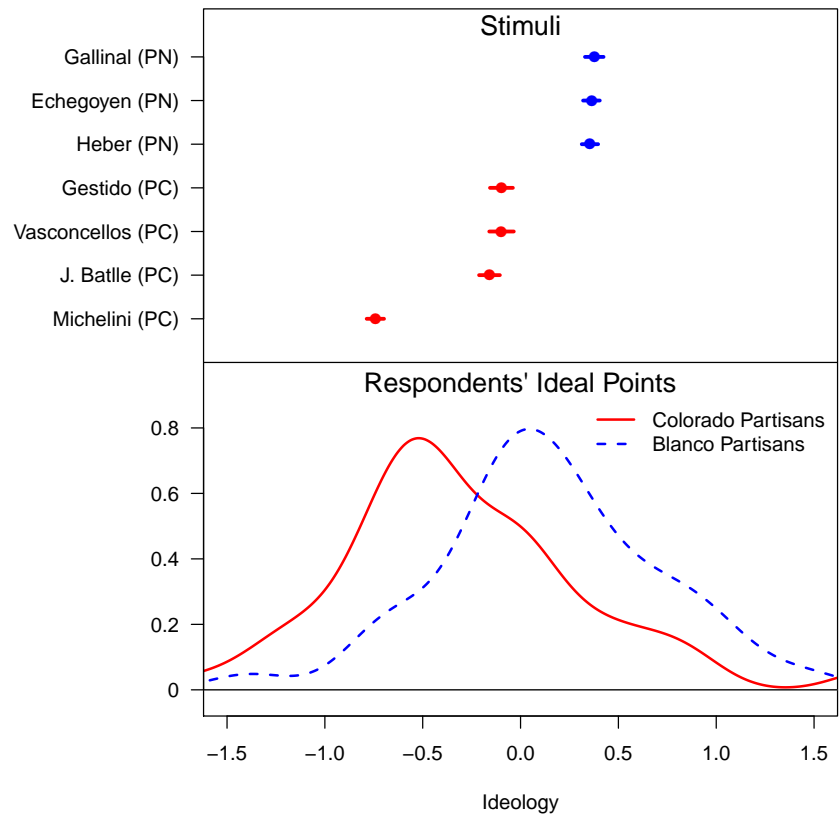


Figure 5.15: Ideological Placements of Uruguayan Politicians and Respondents’ Recovered Ideal Points in 1966 (Aldrich-McKelvey Estimates). *Note:* These estimates are based on Uruguayan survey respondents’ ratings of the ideological positions of the major presidential candidates in Uruguay’s 1966 general election. The survey was fielded by Gallup Uruguay in November, 1966.

politicians left the faction to form their own “Batllista” factions (Ferreira 2013; Rodriguez 2017). In the presidential election campaign in 1966, Jorge Batlle broke with the dominant position within his party and faction and called for free-market reforms.

Batlle’s main rival within the party and the eventual winner of the 1966 presidential election, Óscar Gestido, ran explicitly to Batlle’s left. On the campaign trail, Gestido described himself as “a man of the Left,” he criticized the incumbent Blanco government for signing a letter of intention with the IMF, and he promised to lead “a government that governs like before,” which would have been understood as a reference to the progressive Batllista governments of the

Table 5.2: Colorado Party Leaders in 1966

Leader	Faction in 1962	Faction in 1966	Faction's Share of PC Vote, 1966	Leader's Ideology, 1966
Óscar Gestido	Unión Colorada y Batllista (UCB)	Independent	-	Center-left, pro-reform
Jorge Pacheco	Unión Colorada y Batllista (UCB)	Unión Colorada y Batllista (UCB)	20.1	Center-right, pro-reform
Jorge Batlle	Batllismo-15	Batllismo-15	34.7	Center-right, pro-reform
Alba Roballo	Batllismo-15	Frente Colorado de Unidad (FCU)	22.5	Left, pro-reform
Amílcar Vasconcellos	Batllismo-15	Por la Defensa del Batllismo (L315)	12.8	Center-left, anti-reform
Zelmar Michelini	Batllismo-15 → Por el Gobierno del Pueblo (L99)	Por el Gobierno del Pueblo (L99)	7.9	Left, pro-reform

1940s and 1950s (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:415-420; Ferreira 2013, 75). Gestido also attempted to distance himself from the conservative elements of the party that had backed his candidacy in 1962, and he courted the support of the left-leaning Batllista factions that had recently split from *Batllismo-15*. He won the backing of the “Group of Senators,” a loose alliance of senior Batllista politicians, and he allegedly asked the party’s young left-wing leader Zelmar Michelini to be his running-mate (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:414).

Gestido attempted to implement his center-left, developmentalist platform during the first few months of his brief presidency. After Jorge Batlle criticized his government for failing to move aggressively enough to control inflation, Gestido sacked all of the *Batllismo-15* members from his cabinet and appointed two of the party’s most prominent leftist politicians, Amílcar Vasconcellos and Michelini, to the key economic positions in the cabinet. As finance minister, Vasconcellos canceled the negotiations with the IMF and pursued a heterodox stabilization program based on price controls (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:437).

However, Gestido abruptly reversed course in October, 1967 when he refused to meet with representatives from Uruguay’s largest labor confederation and replaced Vasconcellos with one of the party’s most conservative politicians, Cesar Charlone, who had been Minister of Labor

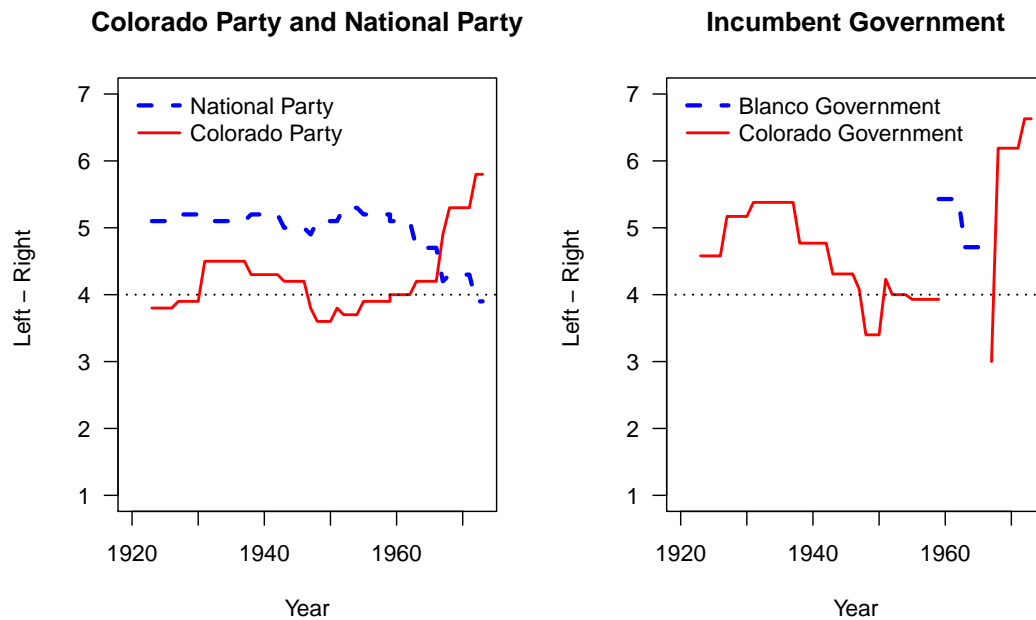


Figure 5.16: Ideological Placements of Uruguay’s Traditional Parties, 1920-1973.
Source: Guedes, Kardjian, and Luján (2010)

under Terra’s labor-repressive dictatorship in the 1930s. Charlone promptly renewed talks with the IMF and implemented the first of a long series of devaluations of the Uruguayan peso. That same month, Gestido assumed emergency powers, arrested over 400 labor activists, and closed several left-wing newspapers (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:441).

Gestido died at the end of 1967, but the conservative shift that marked the final months of his presidency continued under his successor, Jorge Pacheco. The new president finalized the agreement with the IMF in June, 1968, and his government soon abolished the wage councils that had been in place since the 1940s, implemented a wage freeze, and banned strikes by organized labor. Pacheco also proscribed several left-wing parties and stepped up the repression against the labor movement. When Uruguay’s Congress voted to revoke Pacheco’s emergency powers, Pacheco defied both the Congress and the Constitution by immediately re-issuing the emergency decree (Maiztegui Casas 2005, 3:447).

Figure 5.16 visualizes the Colorado Party's sharp swing to the right between the 1966 election and 1968, based on an expert survey about party and government ideological positions fielded by Guedes, Kardjian, and Luján (2010). Prior to Gestido's presidency, the Colorado Party had always been positioned to the left of the National Party, and according to these experts, it had been a center-left party from the mid-1940s until the 1960s. However, the Colorado Party and the National Party traded places after 1967. From that point forward, the Colorado Party was considered Uruguay's most right-wing party, and these experts coded Pacheco's government well to the right of both the Herrerista Blanco government of the late 1950s and the Terra dictatorship of the 1930s.

The Colorado Party also diluted its brand in other ways during Pacheco's presidency. The Colorado governments between 1967 and 1973 were marked by constant and quite public infighting between the party's various factions, and the party's internal politics became increasingly polarized between its left and right wings. While Gestido's first cabinet had included members from all five of the party's major factions, Pacheco's cabinets after 1968 included only the party's two most right-wing factions: Pacheco's own *Unión Colorada y Batllista* (UCB) and Jorge Batlle's *Batllismo-15*. By early 1968, Vasconcellos and Michelini were effectively part of the congressional opposition to their party's own government, and they were soon joined by other prominent Batllista politicians, including the former cabinet minister and senator Alba Roballo, who had been part of the Group of Senators. Vasconcellos himself organized the congressional hearings that led to the censure and removal of one of Pacheco's key cabinet ministers.

The Colorado Party finally split during the run-up to the 1971 general election. After Michelini and Roballo failed to unite the other progressive factions of their party behind the candidacy of the leftist Batllista and retired general Liber Seregni, they opted to break away from the party in an attempt to thwart the re-election of a conservative Colorado government.¹⁶ In

¹⁶Under Uruguay's electoral rules at the time, votes for president pooled at the party level (technically, the *lema* level) and the presidency was awarded to the candidate who won the most votes within the party that won the most votes. This meant that if the Colorado Party's progressive factions ran under the party label but failed to win a plurality of the vote within their party, their votes would help secure the conservative Colorados' victory over the

late 1970, Michelini's faction, L99, voted to withdraw from the Colorado Party, and it entered into talks with the Christian Democratic Party and a left-wing faction of the National Party about uniting behind Seregni's candidacy under the Christian Democratic Party label (*lema*). These talks led to the foundation of the *Frente Amplio* or "Broad Front" in early 1971, which came to include Michelini's L99, the Christian Democratic Party, Roballo's small Batllista faction, the Socialist and Communist parties, and several other progressive movements that had recently split from Uruguay's two traditional parties.

As the Colorado Party's progressive wing exited the party, its conservative wing grew closer to the National Party—especially the conservative Blanco faction, *Herrerismo*. In 1971, Pacheco's Colorado faction, the UCB, chose Juan María Bordaberry as its presidential candidate.¹⁷ Bordaberry was an outsider to Colorado party politics who had only joined the party in 1969 and had previously been elected to the Senate off of the National Party's list in 1962; Corbo (2009) suggests that Pacheco put Bordaberry on the ticket partly in the hope that he would bring right-wing Blanco voters with him (Corbo 2009, 66). After winning the 1971 presidential election, Bordaberry broke with tradition by including Blanco politicians in his cabinet. By the middle of Bordaberry's first year in office, members of the National Party came to outnumber the members of Jorge Batlle's *Batllismo-15* in the cabinet. The relationship between the UCB and *Lista 15* deteriorated as Bordaberry's government became increasingly authoritarian, and *Batllismo-15* finally withdrew from the cabinet after Jorge Batlle was arrested and confined to a military barracks as a political prisoner. The withdrawal of *Batllismo-15* left the UCB as the only Colorado faction in the cabinet, and for the remaining months leading up to his 1973 self-coup, Bordaberry depended heavily on the support of the military and conservatives within the National Party.

progressive Blanco opposition leader, Wilson Ferreira.

¹⁷Technically, Pacheco intended for Bordaberry to be his running-mate, and Pacheco also attempted to extend his presidency through a popular referendum on ending presidential term limits that was held simultaneously with the general election. In the end, however, Pacheco's faction won the presidential election but lost the referendum on abolishing term limits. As a result, Pacheco remained constitutionally barred from serving another term, and the presidency instead passed to Bordaberry.

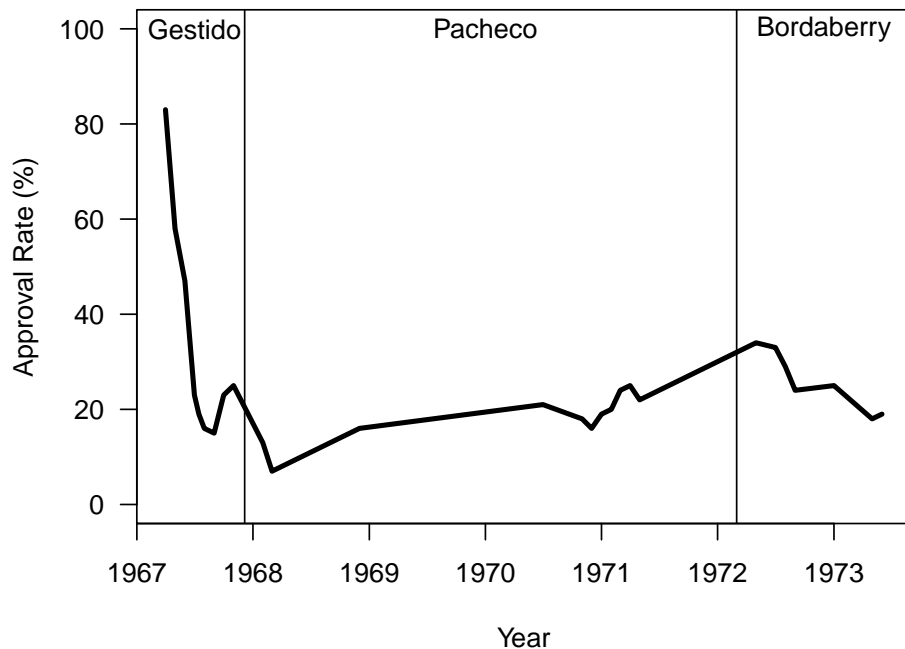


Figure 5.17: Approval Rate of Colorado Governments, 1967-1973. *Source:* Gallup Uruguay

Poor Performance in Office

Another party-level approach to explaining declines in partisanship suggests that partisans stop identifying with their party when the party's poor performance in office severely damages its national-level reputation. This reputational damage can result from corruption scandals that implicate a party's national leaders (Seawright 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2015; Baker et al. 2016). It can also be triggered major economic crises that happen under the party's watch (Samuels and Zucco 2018).

The Colorado governments of the late 1960s and early 1970s were deeply unpopular governments. Figure 5.17 shows that approval of Gestido's government plummeted during the first three months of his presidency, and after that, neither his government nor the subsequent Colorado governments under Pacheco and Bordaberry ever gained the approval of more than

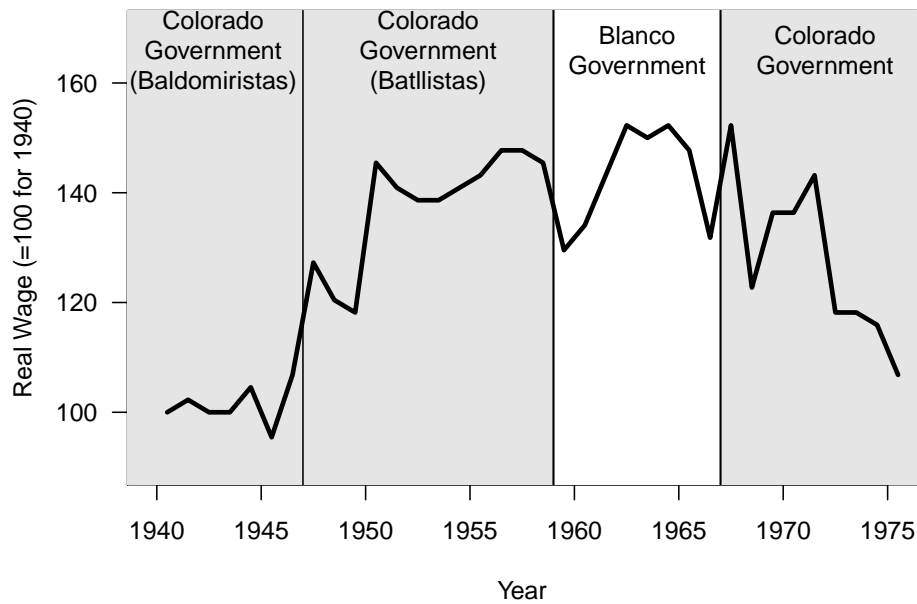


Figure 5.18: Real Wage under Colorado and Blanco Governments. *Source:* Bertola et al. (1999)

a third of the population. One reason for the collapse in the government’s popularity was its inability to end the long economic crisis that had been simmering since the late 1950s. Uruguay’s inflation rate reached 135% in 1967, and while inflation briefly fell during the second half of Pacheco’s presidency, the inflation rate climbed back up to 95% in 1972. Moreover, because the temporary drop in the inflation rate in the late 1960s had occurred mainly through currency devaluations and wage freezes, it came at the cost of a deterioration in workers’ purchasing power. Figure 5.18 depicts Uruguay’s real wage from 1940 to 1975, based on estimates provided by Bertola et al. (1999). By the time of Bordaberry’s self-coup in 1973, nearly all of the wage gains that workers had enjoyed under the earlier Batllista governments of the late 1940s had been reversed, and most of this reversal occurred under the Colorado governments of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

When the Activists Stay

Both of the major party-centered approaches to understanding collapses of partisanship would predict that the Colorado Party would have lost most of its partisans by the early 1970s. Yet as Figures 5.13 and 5.14 showed, the Colorado Party did not experience a significant drop in partisan support during this period. While this stability in Colorado partisanship is puzzling from the standpoint of previous approaches, it is not surprising from the standpoint of my activist-based theory of partisanship: most of the Colorado Party's club activists chose to stand by their party throughout these crisis, and this helped stabilize the party's identity and popular support.

I measure activists' party and factional loyalties using the ballot archive maintained by Uruguay's electoral court. Under Uruguay's unusual electoral system, parties were allowed to present multiple closed lists whose votes would pool at the party level, and each faction and sub-faction of the traditional parties tended to run its own list.¹⁸ These lists could be quite lengthy, and a single sub-faction's ballot might contain as many as 200 names in a low-magnitude district, and over 400 names in Montevideo. Due to the large number of rival lists that competed in these elections, even the most popular lists could not expect to win more than a handful of seats in either chamber of congress. As a result, the vast majority of people listed on these ballots stood zero chance of winning a seat in that election, and factions tended to fill out the lower places on their lists with the names of local club activists.

I use these lists to identify a sample of club activists and track their factional and party affiliations over time. Unfortunately, many of the ballots from the 1966 election are no longer legible, so instead I focus on an influential subset of activists: the members of the departmental councils, or *ediles*. These local council positions are not particularly prestigious, and Uruguayan

¹⁸Prior to 1971, the elections for president, senate, chamber of deputies, mayor, local councils, and electoral council were "fused," and voters would cast a vote for each of these offices simultaneously by putting just one faction list in the ballot box. The large factions like *Ballismo* or the UCB tended to correspond to different slates of presidential and senate candidates, but each of these factions contained multiple sub-factions that would run rival slates of deputies and local candidates. In general, each faction list contained one "titular" candidate and three or four "alternate" candidates for every seat in that district.

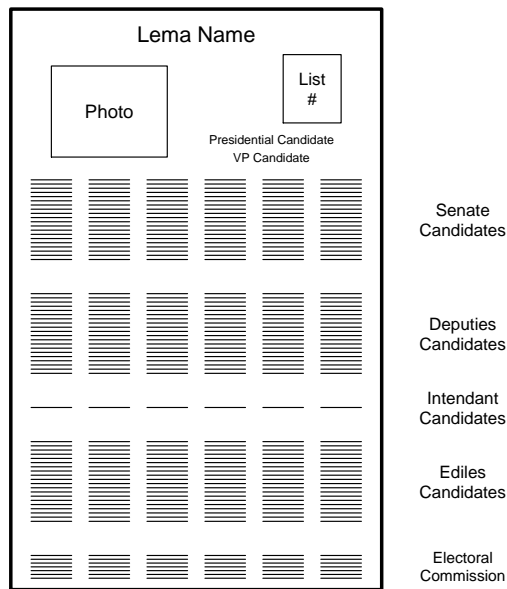


Figure 5.19: Structure of Uruguayan electoral lists in 1966.

Note: Voters cast a vote for every candidate on the list simultaneously by putting the list in the ballot box. Since these lists were “closed,” the voters could not choose between different candidates on the list, nor could they “split their tickets” by voting for one list’s candidate for president but another list’s candidates for congress. The voters’ sole choice in the election was between rival lists.

ediles are more likely to be party insiders than professional politicians.¹⁹ To the extent that they had their own support base, this support would have come from their leadership position in a party club or their long record of neighborhood activism. At the same time, the *ediles* were among the most successful and well-connected club activists. Many of them may have been sent to the local councils as a way of grooming them for a future career in the national legislature, while others likely used their positions to secure greater access to state resources for their club and faction. My sample consists of the 300 Colorado Party *ediles* elected in 1966. I use the lists off of

¹⁹Most of the contemporary *ediles* that I interviewed said that they saw themselves as activists rather than politicians.

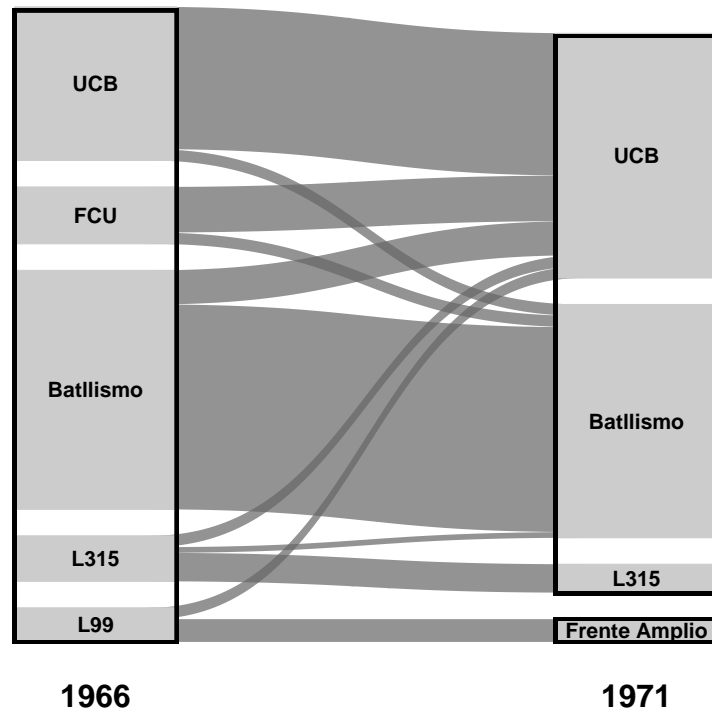


Figure 5.20: Party- and Faction-Switching Among Colorado Activists, 1966-1971

which the *ediles* were elected to code their factional affiliations in 1966. I then cross-check their names against the (more-legible) 1971 electoral lists to identify whether they switched factions or parties.

Figure 5.20 depicts the flow of Colorado *ediles* between factions and parties. This figure suggests that the split in the party that contributed to the formation of the *Frente Amplio* was relatively minor at the grassroots level. While two of the Colorado Party's 16 senators and several of its national deputies defected to the *Frente Amplio* in 1971, over 95% of the *ediles* remained in the Colorado Party. The only Colorado *ediles* who switched to the *Frente* were members of Michelini's faction, L99, and only a subset of this faction ultimately followed Michelini out of the party.

Why did most Colorado activists choose to remain in a party that was abandoning all of the principles that it had stood for since the late 1930s? The party's secure access to patronage

was likely an important factor behind activists' decision to stay. This is supported by the fact that several Batllista activists defected to the conservative UCB faction, which was the faction that held the presidency and thus had the greatest access to patronage resources. Figure 5.20 shows that the UCB doubled in size between 1966 and 1971 by incorporating activists from each of the other four factions, including activists from left-of-center Batllista factions like Michelini's L99 and Vasconcellos' L315. If an activist was primarily interested in patronage, it would be rational to desert resource-poor dissident factions like L99 and L315 and switch to the faction that had the greatest access to public sector jobs. However, patronage cannot easily explain why activists in the rump of L315 remained in the Colorado Party, even though the faction had effectively been in the opposition since Vasconcellos' resignation from the cabinet in 1967. Nor does it explain why many Batllista activists remained loyal to the party even after Jorge Batlle was arrested in 1972 and his faction fell from power.

A second reason why many left-of-center Batllista activists chose to stay in the party was because the survival of internal democracy within the Colorado Party offered them some hope that they would be able to win the party back. After all, that was precisely what had happened in the early 1940s, when Batllista activists wrestled control over the party away from the conservative party elites who had backed Terra's dictatorship. The emergence of dissident Batllista factions like L99 and L315 in the 1960s suggests that a significant number of Colorado activists were motivated more by ideology than by patronage, and it also implies that at least some political clubs were still sufficiently autonomous from senior politicians like Jorge Batlle and Pacheco that they could defect to a minor faction that was closer to their view-point. The account by one of Rama's subjects of his club's switch from *Batllismo-15* to L315 presents the decision to change factions as a largely decentralized decision that had little to do with material considerations:

I went to [Jorge Batlle's] house, like he asked. After a brief chat, he asked [me to support him]. I had to tell him: "I'm sorry, Jorge, but this is the end of the road." I left in tears. I cannot help but be sentimental. My life is my party, and my party is the cause for which I live. Afterwards, I called a meeting of the club assembly. I didn't do anything else—I didn't make any decisions by myself—I only let my people know

what had just happened. I explained to them that two currents had appeared within our faction, and they would have to choose. I am only the club's secretary general; they are the ones who must decide. The assembly ultimately decided to support Vasconcellos. A large number of people attended and they discussed the issue at length. I gave them complete freedom to decide, for as a rule, I always respect the decisions of the majority in matters concerning the future of the club. If the decision had gone against my convictions, I simply would have told them, "Well boys, this is yours now; I'm going home." ... After the club announced its decision, [Jorge Batlle's people] started coming to us with offers of jobs. They were able to lure away a man who had worked with me for ages. But they couldn't sway me, and [the activists who left our club] are still waiting for the jobs that they were promised. (Colorado activist, quoted in Rama 1971, 130-133)

This example demonstrates the relatively democratic way in which some clubs still made their decisions, and it highlights the trade-off that the club activists faced between patronage, ideology, and voice. This activist suggests that party elites like Jorge Batlle attempted to use patronage to purchase the loyalty of this club, but the club ultimately chose to take the riskier course and leave their party's largest faction for a new faction that was closer to the club's ideological preferences. This type of faction-switching is an illustration of the voice that neighborhood clubs wielded in the party's internal politics: by switching from one faction to another, a club could attempt to shift the balance of power within the party and sanction politicians who abandoned the party's principles .

On the other hand, activists who chose to leave the party altogether would often see their political influence disappear. Washington Bado, one of the L99 *ediles* who followed Michelini into the *Frente Amplio*, notes that he almost immediately came to regret the decision as it left him unable to shape political events in the early 1970s.

I felt so alone. I had abandoned my party—a party that I had always considered my own ever since I was a boy—and now I watched from the wilderness as my country descended into dictatorship, extremism, and violence. I wished I could have stood at the side of Dr. Vasconcellos as he fought to defend our democratic institutions and the most noble Batllista principles. At the same time, I felt uncomfortable in that popular front [the *Frente Amplio*], which was coming to be dominated by the Marxists and their allies. (Bado 2004, 182)

Bado left the *Frente Amplio* and retired from politics shortly after the 1971 election, though he eventually returned to the Colorado fold in 1982 and became an activist in a political club that was affiliated with Vasconcellos' faction of the party (Bado 2004, 202). The senior Batllista politicians who defected to the *Frente Amplio* in 1971 did not fare much better during the aftermath of the election. Alba Roballo failed to win a seat in congress in 1971 and 1984, and she never again held public office; Zelmar Michelini retained his Senate seat in 1971, but he was soon forced into exile in Argentina, where he was ultimately assassinated; Liber Seregni became the *Frente Amplio's* most visible leader during its early years, but he was arrested on the day of Bordaberry's 1973 self-coup and spent most of the next decade in a political prison. In this type of political climate, leaving the incumbent party not only cost an activist or politician their influence in politics, but also put them in grave danger.

Because the Colorado Party managed to hold onto most of its activists, its neighborhood-level organizations remained quite vibrant in the early 1970s. In a Gallup poll fielded in 1971, 27% of Colorado voters in Montevideo and 23% in the Interior reported participating in a party club during the campaign, and around 13% of Colorado voters reported participating in other types of campaign work such as passing out pamphlets.²⁰ In light of this organizational stability, it is not surprising that relatively few of the Colorado Party's partisan supporters deserted the party during this period. The face of the party that most Colorado partisans interacted with each week remained fundamentally unchanged, and this may have helped disillusioned voters shrug off the party's recent crises as an aberration that would eventually be corrected, akin to the Terra dictatorship of the 1930s.

The resilience of the Colorado Party's activist base throughout these crises highlights one of the most important characteristics that separates activists from ordinary voters. Activists make a long-term and costly investment in a particular party over the course of their careers, and they do not walk away from that investment lightly. Rather than leave a party that is experiencing a

²⁰Gallup Uruguay poll #180-181. For comparison, only 14% of Colorado voters in Montevideo claimed club membership in 1966.

brand crisis, activists often prefer to stay and fight to recover their party. In the short run, the party loyalty of left-leaning Batllista activists in the early 1970s was arguably counter-productive: by pooling their clubs' votes with those of the party's right-wing UCB faction, they inadvertently contributed to the election of Bordaberry, the man who would close the congress and dismantle what was left of Uruguay's democracy just two years later. However, the activists' view that their party could still be "saved" was vindicated in 1982, when Uruguay's military dictatorship had the Colorado and National parties hold internal elections in order to legitimize the party leaderships that would negotiate the military's exit from politics. The Batllista factions re-activated their neighborhood club networks and decisively defeated the party's military-backed UCB faction, winning nearly two-thirds of the seats in the Colorado Party's national convention and 11 of the 15 seats on the party's new executive council (Gonzalez 1991). The Batllistas remained firmly in control of the Colorado Party leadership throughout the following two decades.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the complex relationship between Latin American parties and their grassroots activists during the "era of mass politics" in the mid-20th century. On the one hand, activist-run neighborhood-level base units were a valuable tool that parties from across the ideological spectrum used to extend their reach into recently-enfranchised communities and mobilize their partisan loyalties. On the other hand, party activists also imposed political costs on their parties by pulling the parties to extreme ideological positions, and by challenging the party's elites for control over the party. Consequently, many of the same parties that had excelled at crafting large bases of partisan support also experienced constant internal conflicts throughout this period that threatened to rip the party apart.

This chapter has also highlighted the important role that patronage played in many Latin American parties by the second half of the 20th century. While Chapter 4 showed that secure

access to patronage could deter elites from party-building, the present chapter suggests that patronage can have beneficial consequences for parties that are already well-institutionalized. In the mid-20th century, Latin American parties from across the ideological spectrum relied on patronage to deescalate their internal conflicts, hold their diverse factions together, and finance their labor-intensive grassroots party organizations. The abundant supply of patronage in the ISI-era Latin American state also helped extend the life of the alliances between party elites and activists. In particular, it made the activists less dangerous to party elites, as activists who were focused on extracting material benefits from the state were less likely to challenge their party leaders for control of the party. However, in the end patronage proved to be only a temporary solution, and as we will see in the next chapter, many of these patronage resources had dried up by the end of the 20th century.

One of the broader goals of this chapter was to reexamine our assumptions about how party politics worked in 20th century Latin America. To the extent that the contemporary, English-language Political Science literature still bothers to engage with Latin American's mid-20th century party systems at all, it has tended to put these parties in one of two buckets: "elite," "oligarchic," "machine," or "conservative" parties that relied primarily on clientelism and personalism for electoral support, and "mass" or "labor-based" parties that mobilized support through a mixture of populist appeals and linkages to the organized labor movement (Roberts 2014, 112-114). This literature has also downplayed the role of territorial party activism, since party activists were assumed to be irrelevant in parties that were dominated by elites, and redundant in parties that enjoyed stable linkages to organized labor.

However, I find little support for these assumptions in either the primary source accounts or the secondary literature from that period. Supposedly "elite" parties like the Chilean Radicals and the Uruguayan Colorados wielded highly-developed "mass" party organizations by the mid-20th century based on the year-round participation of low-level party activists. Nor were their activists confined to a merely subservient role within the party. On the contrary, these activists

were autonomous, formidable, and frequently combative political actors in their own right who were often able to force their parties down paths that the traditional party elites clearly did not want to go. Likewise, “labor-based” parties like the Chilean Socialists and Communists invested a considerable share of their resources in maintaining activist-based, territorial party organizations, and they relied on these organizations to mobilize the large number of lower-class voters who were beyond the reach of labor unions. Most of the Latin American parties that developed large bases of mass partisan support in the mid-20th century did so by building powerful networks of grassroots activists that extended the party’s reach into every corner of society. On the other hand, parties that abstained from territorial party activism—such as “machine parties” like the UDN and PSD of Brazil, or “pure” labor parties like the Marxist parties of Uruguay—failed to attract many partisans.

Territorial party activists often served as brokers who leveraged their political connections to perform favors for the other voters in their communities. Yet it would be a mistake to dismiss their role as merely a clientelistic one. First, the activists were also intimately involved in a range of other grassroots activities and social functions that had little to do with material resources and favors. Second, even their “clientelistic” activities often bore little resemblance to the strategic clientelistic brokerage that has become the focus of the contemporary literature on clientelism. A large share of the state resources that flowed through party organizations like the Radical assemblies and the Colorado party clubs served to recruit and reward the activists themselves rather than mobilize electoral support. When activist brokers like the Uruguayan club activists did perform favors for ordinary voters, they often declined to make the favors conditional on the voters’ voting behavior, which is one of the defining features of clientelism. The brokerage duties that the activists performed may have helped draw voters into the orbit of local party organizations, but it seems unlikely that these favors were the driving force behind mass party identification with these parties.

Chapter 6

State Reform and the Uneven Decline of Political Parties

During the final decades of the 20th century, major political parties across much of Latin America lost a significant share of their partisan supporters. This chapter argues that these declines in partisanship were an indirect consequence of the wave of state reforms that occurred across the region in the 1980s and 1990s. These reforms weakened local party organizations in Latin America by depriving parties of the patronage resources that they had used to recruit and reward their low-level activists in the mid-20th century. Many parties in the region ultimately responded to this loss of patronage resources by demobilizing their activist networks and transitioning to less-expensive strategies for mobilizing votes. With fewer activists left to reinforce the partisan leanings of their social networks and communities, voters' partisan attachments became more fragile and more vulnerable to elite-driven shocks to parties' national reputation, such as corruption scandals and brand crises (Seawright 2012; Lupu 2016). While parties such as the Colorado Party of Uruguay had been able to weather these types of crises in the 1960s and 1970s, back when they still had strong grassroots party organizations, these types of crises now triggered severe and irreversible declines in partisanship.

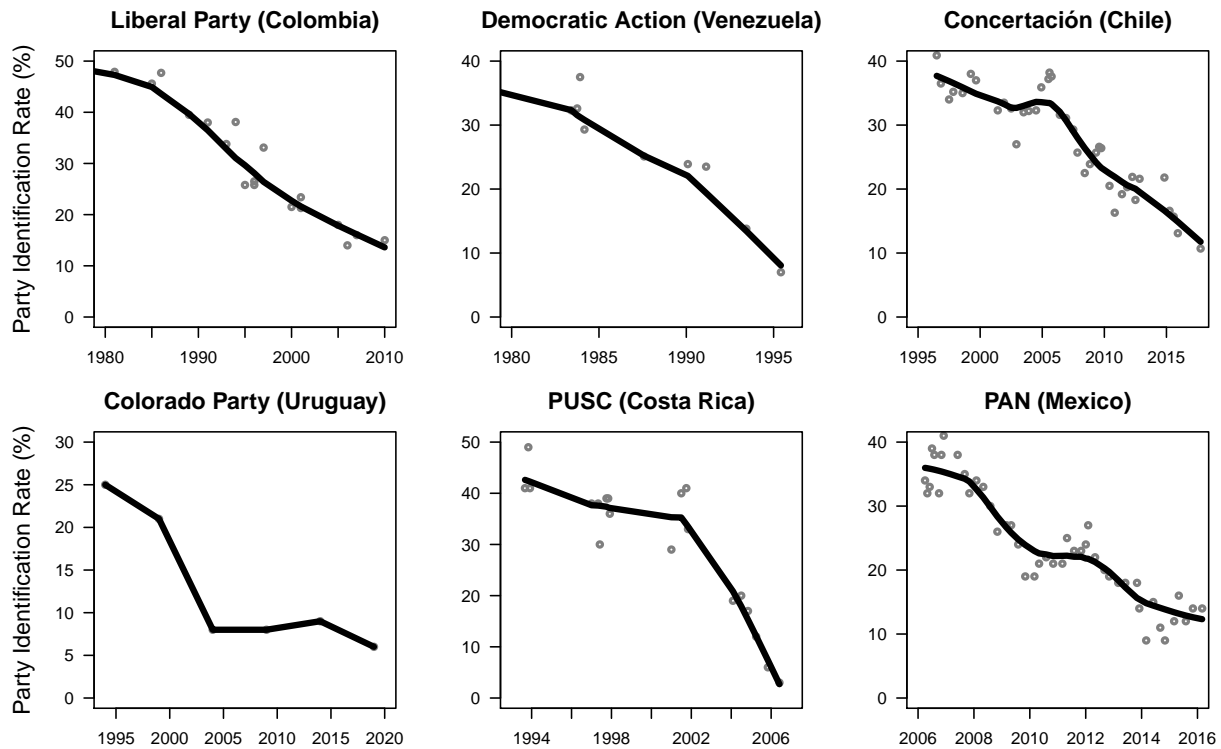


Figure 6.1: Partisan Declines in Latin America.

Source: Colombia: Gallup; Venezuela: Gallup and Datos; Chile: CEP; Uruguay: Equipos Consultores; Costa Rica: CID-Gallup; Mexico: ISA.

However, parties' traditional grassroots party organizations were more durable in some places compared to others. A party was more likely to maintain a strong activist network in localities where it could find an alternative source of patronage resources, such as the state resources in local governments. These strong local party organizations, in turn, could help stabilize the party's mass partisan support in that particular area. Consequently, although many parties in the region have experienced steep drops in partisanship overall, several of these parties have often been able to hold onto pockets of intense partisan support in certain localities.

I begin with an overview of the state reforms of the late 20th century and how they constrained parties' access to patronage. I then discuss some of the most common ways that parties have adapted to the loss of patronage. I show that while these resource constraints made it harder for parties to maintain their activist-based grassroots party organizations, this did not

always translate into electoral decline; instead, many parties simply substituted to lower-cost brokers who were often quite effective at mobilizing votes, even if they were less effective at maintaining voters' partisan loyalties. Finally, I show that the patronage resources offered by local governments can help a party maintain its grassroots party organizations and hold onto its supporters' partisan loyalties during moments of crisis.

The Reforms of the Late 20th Century

The wave of “Neoliberal” structural reforms that occurred across Latin America during the final decades of the 20th century consisted of a variety of measures, including trade and financial liberalization, privatizations, decentralization, labor reforms, tax reforms, and civil service reforms (Baker 2009; Lora 2012). Most of these reforms likely had a close-to-neutral effect on Latin American political parties. However, the subset of reforms that affected the size and organization of the state could threaten the health of parties over the long run by reducing the supply of the patronage resources that they used to finance their grassroots party organizations.

Privatizations

The privatization of state-owned enterprises was one of the most emblematic and unpopular components of Latin America's economic restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s (Baker 2009). Privatizations reduced the supply of patronage by eliminating many of the public sector jobs that parties had traditionally used to reward their activists. In Chile, the number of jobs in state-owned enterprises was cut by nearly 90% during the military dictatorship (Reid 1992). Even in Uruguay, where privatizations were less extreme and less permanent, the number of jobs in public enterprises fell by 31% during the presidency of Luis Alberto Lacalle, and by roughly 50% between 1990 and 2005.

Nevertheless, the effect of privatizations on public sector patronage should not be over-

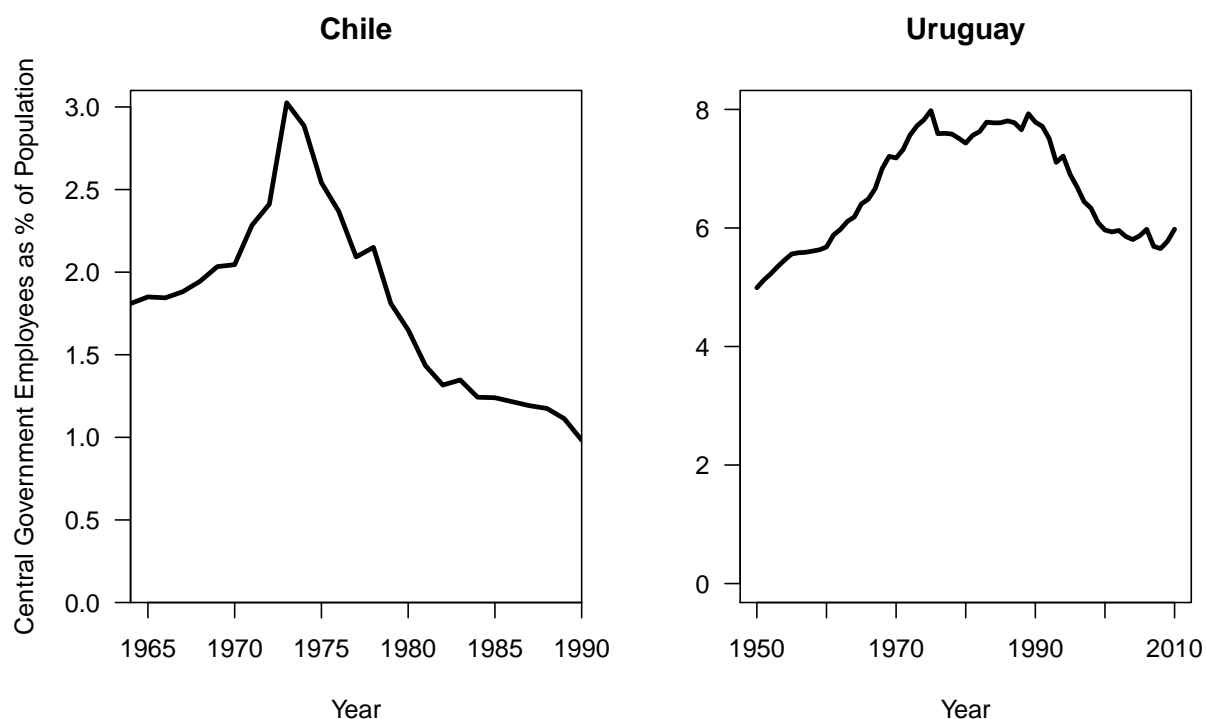


Figure 6.2: Central Government Employees in Chile and Uruguay as a Percentage of the Population. *Source:* Chile: Reid (1992); Uruguay: Banco de Datos de de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de la República

stated. In many Latin American countries, state owned enterprises constituted only a small share of public employment prior to the reform period. Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of the Chilean and Uruguayan populations that was employed by the central government. In both countries, there was a noticeable decrease in the per capita share of central government employment during the reform period. Yet this drop in public employment was partly just a reversal of the surge in public employment that had occurred in the 1960s and '70s. By the end of the wave of privatizations, public employment in both countries remained at a similar level to what it had been in 1950. The decline of public employment was even milder in several other Latin American countries, and public employees *increased* in per capita terms in Argentina, Paraguay, and Colombia during the late 1990s (Mizala, Romaguera, and Gallegos 2007).

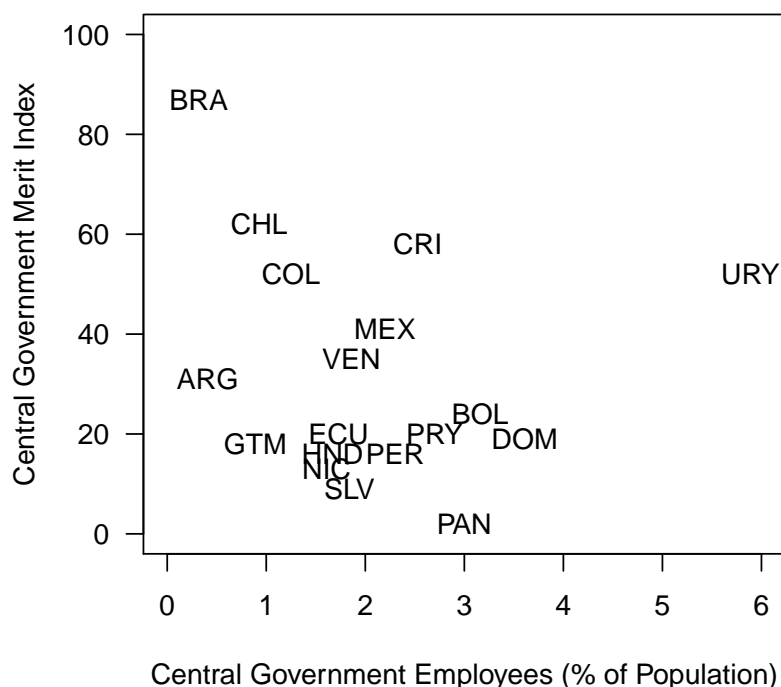


Figure 6.3: Meritocracy and Bureaucracy Size in Latin American Central Governments in the mid-2000s. *Source:* Echebarría (2006)

Civil Service Reform

Civil service reforms in central government bureaucracies often had a greater effect on the patronage system because these reforms were specifically designed to depoliticize the civil service hiring process and establish meritocratic rules for appointments, promotions, and dismissals. In Chile and Uruguay, political parties lost control over the appointments of most low and middle-level positions in the central bureaucracy (Panizza and Philip 2005; Grindle 2012). However, not every Latin American country went as far as Chile and Uruguay in depoliticizing the national civil service. Figure 6.3 shows the relationship between meritocratic employment rules and the size of the central government in different Latin American countries in the mid-2000s. The

y-axis of this figure represents the degree to which appointments to the central government civil service are based on meritocratic criteria rather than political considerations, and higher values indicate more-meritocratic civil services. This figure suggests that the Chilean and Uruguayan civil services are among the most meritocratic in the region. On the other hand, the old type of patronage system that existed in Latin America in the mid-20th century might still be viable in countries that have both a large national civil service and a high degree of political discretion in hiring. Both of these conditions hold in countries like Paraguay and the Dominican Republic, and parties in both countries continue to rely heavily on patronage in the national government to reward their members and activists (Molinas, Perez Liñan and Saiegh 2004; Benito 2010). Throughout much of the region, however, the national civil service is now either too small or too meritocratic to offer the ruling party a significant number of patronage jobs, and parties have been forced to look elsewhere for alternative sources of patronage resources.

Decentralization

Beginning in the early 1980s, countries across Latin America transferred policy-making responsibilities and fiscal resources from the central government to subnational governments. At the same time, Latin American countries established direct elections for offices like mayor or governor that had been traditionally appointed by the president, and subnational governments gained an unprecedented degree of autonomy from the center. Even in Chile and Uruguay, where the decentralization reforms were relatively mild compared to neighboring countries, mayors and intendants steadily gained more powers and resources over the course of the 1990s and 2000s (Eaton 2004; Falletti 2010).

The decentralization reforms affected the patronage system by shifting the locus of state resources. Like the privatizations and civil service reforms, they contributed to the disappearance of patronage resources in the central government, but unlike the other reforms, they also helped preserve these resources at the subnational level. Critically, the civil service reforms that made

appointments to the central government bureaucracy more meritocratic often left the subnational bureaucracies relatively unaffected (Panizza and Philip 2005). This meant that the old patronage system might still be viable at the local level, even after it had been rooted out at the national level.

Depoliticization of Social Spending

Privatizations, civil service reform, and decentralization each reduced the supply of patronage in the central government. A fourth set of reforms, the expansion and depoliticization of social spending, reduced voters' *demand* for the type of brokerage services that party activists had traditionally provided. This, in turn, has made the activists less electorally valuable to their parties.

In the 2000s, nearly every country in the region established new antipoverty programs and expanded existing social protection and health programs (Stampini and Tornarolli 2012; Pantelic 2011). These programs could either reinforce or disrupt clientelistic practices, depending on whether access to the programs could be withheld from opponents of the government or reserved for its supporters. The *misiones* in Venezuela represented one extreme: Hugo Chávez's government used these anti-poverty programs to channel state resources to its supporters, and the government's opponents were often excluded these programs (Corrales and Penfold 2010; Stokes et al. 2013). Social programs in Argentina such as the National Food Security Program have been used as a clientelistic resource as well, and mayors and governors have some discretion over which voters are included on the beneficiary lists (Weitz-Shapiro 2014).

At the other extreme are programs such as *Bolsa Família* in Brazil, whose funds are distributed according to purely non-partisan criteria. This latter type of program could reduce demand for clientelism by making poor voters better-off and therefore less dependent on parties and politicians for their economic security (Nichter 2018). Most social spending in Chile and Uruguay is of the non-politicized type, and Chile and Uruguay were two of the Latin American

countries that made the most progress at eliminating political discrimination in their welfare states in the 2000s (Pribble 2013).

The Reforms' Effects on the Parties

The state reform process was often a positive development for Latin America, and it left behind a state that was more efficient, more equitable, and less politicized. However, these reforms also had damaging effects on the political parties that traditionally depended on state resources for patronage. While some parties managed to hold onto much of their *electoral* support by substituting to lower-cost electoral strategies, the loss of patronage resources nevertheless severely weakened these parties at the grassroots level. The dense networks of neighborhood-level party organizations that had helped parties forge and then stabilize voters' partisan attachments in the mid-20th century had become unsustainable on a nation-wide scale in many Latin American countries by the early 2000s, and many parties eventually chose to abandon this model and downsize their grassroots party organizations. This has made it harder for these parties to reinforce voters' partisan loyalties and hold onto their partisans during moments of crisis.

Demobilization of Party Activists

Perhaps the most visible way in which the state reforms affected the parties was by prompting them to demobilize their grassroots party organizations and activist networks. Chapter 5 discussed how Latin American parties from across the ideological spectrum had come to rely heavily on patronage jobs to fuel their grassroots party organizations by the mid-20th century. Now that parties no longer had broad discretion over the allocation of public sector jobs, they struggled to recruit new activists and keep their veteran activists working for the party on a year-round basis.

In his detailed study of grassroots party activism in Uruguay in the early 2000s, Luna

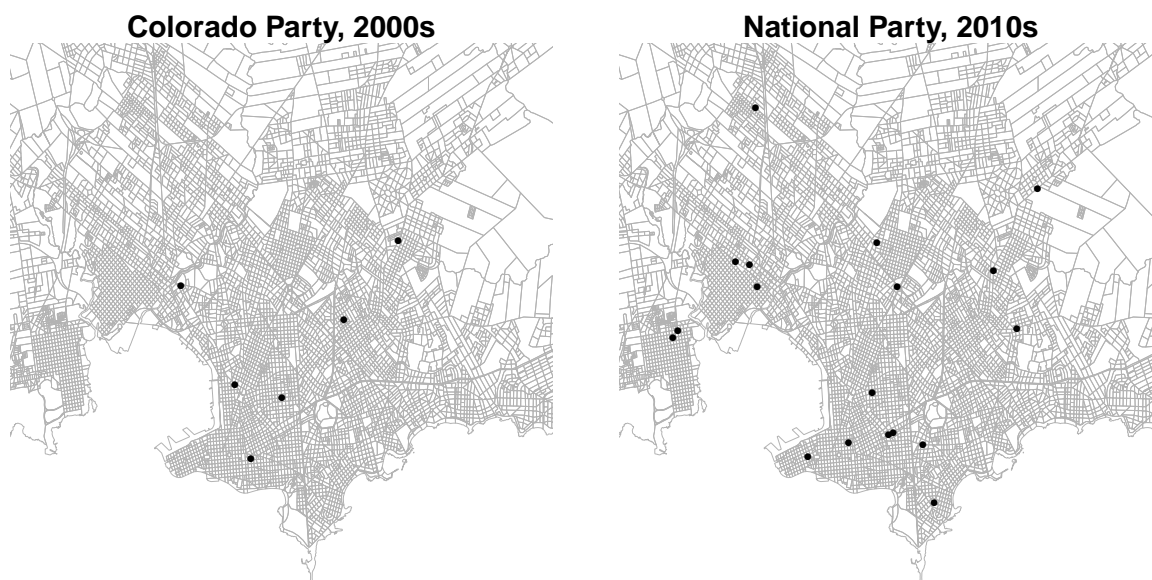


Figure 6.4: Political Clubs and Party Seats in Montevideo, 2000s and 2010s

(2004) finds that most of the territorial party organizations of the Colorado and National parties, the neighborhood party clubs, had ceased to function on a regular basis because the parties and factions no longer had the resources necessary to maintain them. Map 6.4 supports the notion that the party clubs in Montevideo have largely disappeared.¹ By the mid-2000s, the Colorado Party had physical locales in only a couple of Montevideo's neighborhoods. The club network of the National Party appears to have been more resilient compared to that of the Colorado Party, and the National Party still operated clubs in several neighborhoods, especially in the poorer parts of the city. Yet even the National Party's club network is only a fraction of the size that it had been in the 1960s or even the 1980s.

¹I identify the locations of party clubs using the lists of polling places that these parties published shortly before their respective youth-wing elections. Unlike the official internal or primary elections that occur a couple months before Uruguay's general election, the internal elections for the youth-wings are not overseen by Uruguay's electoral court, and the parties must organize them using their own resources. The Colorado and National parties traditionally used their party clubs as the primary polling places for their internal elections, and several party clubs are still mentioned on the lists of polling places in the 2000s and 2010s. However, the vast majority of the polling places are now held on non-party property, such as local schools, neighborhood sports clubs, and the houses of party members. Interviews with party activists in Uruguay suggest that it would be highly unusual for a party to operate a club in a neighborhood but neglect to use it as a polling place in one of these elections. Thus, these lists of polling places offer a rough estimate of the number and locations of the parties' clubs at the time of the internal election.

The demobilization of local party organizations was equally severe in Chile during this same period. Parties like the Socialist Party and the Christian Democratic Party had reestablished many of their grassroots party organizations after the return of democracy in the early 1990s. Hofmeister (1995) reports that the Christian Democratic Party was particularly well-organized at the local level in the early 1990s, and it still had over 100,000 grassroots activists. However, this picture changed drastically by the early 2000s. Posner (2008) finds that most of the parties in the center-left coalition, the *Concertación*, had stopped funding their grassroots organizations during the late 1990s, and as a result, activist participation in grassroots party activity fell sharply over the following decade. Similarly, Luna (2014) finds that by the 2000s, most of the parties within the *Concertación* no longer had the resources to keep their local party organizations active on a year-round basis.

The parties' loss of state resources could even affect the participation calculus of activists who had predominantly ideological motives for working for their party. One of the former Socialist Party activists that I interviewed in Chile had first joined the party in the 1960s, and he had quickly gravitated towards the party's most militant wing. He had participated in a *cordón industrial* in southern Santiago during Allende's presidency, he remained involved in underground party activity during the military dictatorship despite the significant risks that this work entailed, and he helped rebuild the Socialist Party's local organization in his commune after the return of democracy in the 1990s. However, he stopped working for the party in the early 2000s. Although he had never held a patronage job or received a party salary, he nevertheless cited the Socialist Party's loss of resources as one of the main reasons why he drifted away from the party:

I don't have much of a relationship with the Socialist Party anymore. I can't remember the last time I asked the party for anything. I have stopped asking the party leaders for help, because I know they don't have anything to give me. The Party is no longer able to help me attend to the needs of my neighborhood. (Former Socialist activist, Southern Santiago, December 2017)

This former activist continues to carry out grassroots organizing work in his *población*, but he no longer does this work as a representative of the Socialist Party. His ties to the party are less

useful to him now that the party no longer has sufficient resources to support grassroots party organizations in the *poblaciones* of Santiago, and he believed that he could do this work more effectively by working through non-partisan civil society organizations.

Substitution to Politician Brokers

The decline in the number of party activists did not always lead to the disappearance of clientelism and other forms of brokered distributive politics. Many Latin American parties have kept clientelistic exchanges going by shifting the activists' brokerage responsibilities onto other actors. Throughout much of the region, low-level elected officials such as city councilors have taken over a large portion of the problem-solving work that used to be performed by party activists. Several of the city councilors that I interviewed in Chile and Uruguay reported devoting the majority of their time to this problem-solving work.

The influence of the parties in society is mediated by the work of their city councilors. If a party wins three councilors seats, then it has three people in that commune who will spend each day attending to the needs of voters, on behalf of the party... I meet with people every morning, and usually all day on Mondays and Thursdays, and I attend to their problems. People have health problems, illnesses or other needs, and I do what I can to make sure that the municipality and the relevant municipal organizations help them. I also help them deal with other parts of the state, with national agencies, for example. And in the afternoons, I visit the various neighborhoods and *villas*² in my commune, because many voters have demands that they do not feel comfortable talking about here in my office. (Socialist city councilor in eastern Santiago, October 2017)

I am constantly meeting with people and dealing with their needs. And if I have to be at a session of the city council or a committee meeting, you will always find my two secretaries here, receiving people from the moment this building opens around 9, until around 6:30 or 7 in the evening. We do everything that we can to help people with their bureaucratic problems. Because when we solve their problems...we are able to earn their gratitude. And then when the election campaign comes around and we go door to door, we can say to people, "Look, I helped you with that matter a few years ago, and I would be very grateful if you will vote for our list this election." (National Party city councilor in Montevideo, September 2017)

²*Villas* are a type of working-class settlement that is common in Eastern Santiago. They are similar to *poblaciones*, but they have a less-militant connotation.

Delegating brokerage responsibilities to elected officials is an attractive solution for parties for several reasons. The party does not need to devote much of its own scarce resources in order to “employ” a politician broker since they are public officials who have their own salary. Like activists, politicians are also likely to have the experience and political connections that enable them to help voters navigate the bureaucracy. In some cases, politician brokers may even be more efficient at clientelism compared to activist brokers since they are more likely to internalize the electoral benefits of their problem-solving work. However, city councilors and other low-level politicians also have a much more limited reach due to their small numbers. The Socialist city councilor quoted above estimated that his party had 200 to 300 activists who did problem-solving work in poor neighborhoods in his municipality in the 1960s.³ But now this city councilor is the Socialist Party’s only elected official in a municipality that has over 300,000 residents.

Substitution to Personal Brokerage Networks

A related solution is to delegate brokerage responsibilities to non-party political organizations that are loyal to a particular politician. This strategy is especially common among national legislators who face larger electorates compared to city councilors and have greater legislative responsibilities that keep them away from their districts. Luna (2014) finds that many of the *Concertación*’s national deputies and senators in Santiago have constructed their own, personalistic brokerage networks in their districts. One important way in which these brokerage networks differ from traditional party organizations is that their brokers are usually non-partisan community activists rather than party activists. As a result, they are often uninterested in shaping their clients’ partisan loyalties, and they are more likely to prioritize personalistic messages over partisan ones. Moreover, while traditional party organizations theoretically belong to the party as a whole, these personal brokerage networks are the property of the particular politician who creates and maintains them. This makes reliance on personal brokerage networks risky for parties:

³This city councilor was one of the Socialist Party’s activists in that municipality in the 1960s.

if the politician switches to a different party, the party might lose both his electoral organization and his votes (Novaes 2015).

Many of the personal brokerage networks in Santiago are now much larger and more active than the party organizations that they replaced. The largest networks, such as the Citizen's Initiative Network created by Socialist senator Carlos Montes, can contain as many as 500 year-round community activists (Luna 2014). They also carry out many of the same functions that Chilean grassroots party organizations used to perform during the 1960s and early 1970s. As an activist from the Citizen's Initiative Network explained,

It was never our goal to replace the political parties. But I suppose we are doing a lot of the organizational work at the neighborhood level that the parties used to do decades ago. Above all, we are trying to generate a popular consciousness in the municipality and help the various neighborhood committees, women's centers, and youth groups work together to solve problems at the neighborhood level. That sort of work used to be the responsibility of the political parties, but the parties are no longer interested in the social realities of these neighborhoods. (Interview with a Citizen's Initiative Network activist, Chile, October, 2017)

The fact that organizations like this one have endured suggests that ordinary voters' material needs are not being fully met by the state, and it also suggests that politicians' electoral needs are not being fully met by non-organizational strategies like mass media campaigning. In other words, year-round grassroots political organizing and brokerage are still valuable to both voters and politicians. But when this grassroots work is carried out by nonpartisan or personalistic networks that are organized on a politician's own initiative, it is less likely to help parties hold onto their partisans. In fact, Montes' former congressional district is the area of Santiago where the *Concertación* has experienced the steepest decline in party identification; according to the MRP estimates that were reported in Figure 1.4 in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the *Concertación's* party identification rate in that district fell from 49% in 2000 to just 8% in 2010.

Substitution to Market Brokers

A third alternative is to buy votes directly from nonpartisan local community leaders such as the leaders of shantytowns and civil society organizations. Market brokerage has become especially common in countries that have weakly-institutionalized party systems, such as Peru and Colombia (Szwarcberg 2015; Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015). Moreover, even relatively institutionalized parties sometimes rely on market brokers to mobilize votes in shantytowns and other poor communities. For example, Alvarez (2017) finds that since the 1990s, all three of Uruguay's major parties have relied on market brokers in Montevideo's shantytowns, and the Colorado and National parties in particular have come to depend on this strategy now that they are no longer able to maintain their political club networks on a wide scale.

Market brokerage has several properties that make it a highly efficient form of clientelism from the party's perspective. First, the party does not need to maintain a permanent organizational presence in the community in order to buy votes this way. Second, this type of strategy can reduce the party's transaction costs because the party only has to deal with a single community leader who can sell a whole bloc of votes at once. Third, community leaders are often better-suited than politicians or party activists for carrying out the difficult work of monitoring the clients and sanctioning clients who vote the wrong way (Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015). Yet while market brokerage tends to be efficient from an electoral standpoint, it is one of the most ineffective methods for crafting voters' *partisan* loyalties. Since most of the market brokers' clients will never come into direct contact with an agent of the party that they are voting for, and since they may switch their votes to a different party in each election, they are unlikely to develop any deeper loyalty to a party that buys their votes through market brokerage.

Municipal Patronage and the Survival of Local Parties

Although the state reforms of the late 20th century have made it harder for parties to maintain their grassroots party organizations and local activist networks, a party may be able to keep its activists mobilized if it can find an alternative source of patronage resources. In many Latin American countries, local governments continue to supply parties with the types of patronage jobs that are increasingly unavailable at the national level, and winning local elections has become critical for parties' organizational survival (Filgueira et al. 2003; Scherlis 2010; Oliveros 2013; Luna 2014; Muñoz and Dargent 2016). When a party wins a mayorship, it can harness the patronage resources in the municipal government and use these resources to keep its traditional grassroots party organization intact. This, in turn, can help the party hold onto the partisan loyalties of the voters who live in that municipality.

One reason why patronage has been more resilient at the municipal level is because the civil service reforms that rooted out patronage in the central government were often less extensive at the local level. In some cases, the civil service reforms were specifically designed to preserve patronage resources at the local level. For example, Panizza and Philip (2005) find that local bureaucracies were intentionally excluded from the civil service reforms in Uruguay and Mexico in order to reduce the political costs for the parties that enacted them and ensure that they would still have some patronage resources at their disposal.

In other cases, the civil service reforms applied to all levels of government, but they only affected some categories of public sector jobs and not others. In Chile, career civil service positions (*planta*) and public employees on yearly contracts (*contrata*) are supposed to be appointed through public selection processes based on non-political criteria, but many short-term contract positions (*honorarios*) are still appointed by executive decree, with little transparency or oversight. While these short-term positions make up only 17% of positions in Chile's central government, they now account for over half of the positions in Chile's municipal governments

(Neira and Rojas 2016; Valdebenito 2017). Over the last few years, several Chilean mayors have faced scandals for appointing relatives, friends, and political supporters to *honorarios* positions.⁴ In Brazil, career civil service positions at all levels of government are filled through highly competitive selection processes that include a civil service examination, but contract positions and some managerial positions are exempt these requirements; these exempt positions account for roughly 25% of the public sector positions in Brazil's municipal governments (Brollo et al. 2017).

Another factor behind the survival of patronage at the local level is that local governments were one of the few parts of the Latin American state that actually grew during the 1980s and 1990s. As was discussed above, most Latin American countries enacted decentralization reforms in the late 20th century that transferred both government functions and resources from the national government to local governments (Eaton 2004; Falletti 2010). Subnational governments' revenues increased as a percentage of GDP in nearly every Latin American country in the 1990s (Santos 2015), and this increase in revenues was often accompanied by a growth of local bureaucracies and an increase in the number of public sector jobs at the local level (Bertino and Garcia 2008).

The survival of municipal patronage can mitigate the demobilizing effects of the late 20th century reforms on Latin American party organizations. When a party retains access to patronage at the local level, it is able to employ its activists on the public payroll and keep its local party organizations running year-round at little cost to the party itself. However, in order to access these local patronage resources, the party must either hold the mayorship in its own right, or it must at least be part of the mayor's local governing coalition. If the party fails to win the mayorship, it may be cut off from the local patronage resources that it needs in order to keep its grassroots

⁴Notable examples include the Socialist mayor of San Ramón, Miguel Ángel Aguilera, who was accused of granting *honorarios* positions to members of a local drug cartel that supported his campaign; the right-wing mayor of Colina, Mario Olavarría, who was accused of appointing several allies to *honorarios* positions without requiring them to do the work for which they were nominally being paid; and the right-wing mayor of Maipú, Cathy Barriga, who replaced nearly a thousand municipal workers during her first 18 months in office. For a discussion of these cases and other abuses of appointments to *honorarios* positions, see: "San Ramón: tres investigaciones cercan al alcalde vinculado a narcotraficantes," *CIPER*, June 26, 2018; and "Falsos honorarios: Los contratos que han convertido a municipios en cajas pagadoras," *Reportajes Bio Bio*, December 13, 2017.

organization active. For example, a municipal party leader from Chile's Socialist Party cited his party's loss in a 2000 municipal election as one of the primary causes behind the collapse of his local party organization:

It was a disaster for my party when we lost the mayorship to the Right. ... The new mayor used his position to put together a powerful network of community leaders from across the commune, including many Socialists who had been with us for years. He lured away our activists with jobs, and that has left us so weak in this commune that we are no longer capable of winning the mayorship back. (Socialist Party local leader, Eastern Santiago, October 2017)

Similarly, the Colorado Party's loss of the Intendancy of Montevideo in 1989 accelerated the decline of its neighborhood party clubs, disrupted its clientelistic networks, and contributed to the exodus of activists from the party (Luna 2007; Goldfrank 2011; Alvarez 2017)

This suggests that the speed with which local party organizations fall into decline should vary with a party's municipal incumbency status. In the municipalities where the party holds the mayorship, it is more likely to have access to the material resources that help it recruit and retain its local party activists. This would be a source of stability for the party's local organization that would cut against the prevailing trend of activist and partisan demobilization. Conversely, in the municipalities where the party is in the opposition, the party is more likely to struggle to hold onto its activists, and its grassroots organization would decline more rapidly.

One testable implication is that even in countries that have enacted civil service reforms at the national level, parties should still be able to use civil service positions at the municipal level to reward their activists with patronage. Specifically, being on the winning side in a municipal election should increase a party activist's chances of gaining a public sector job during the next term.

H1: Party activists whose party wins a municipal election are more likely to be employed by the municipal government compared to activists whose party loses

To the extent that parties use municipal patronage resources to incentivize and reward their activists, they should also be able to maintain larger bases of party activists in the municipalities

where they hold the mayorship. Even when activists have mainly ideological motives for working for the party, patronage jobs help compensate them for the opportunity costs that they incur by organizing on the party's behalf. This material inducement can help the party recruit new activists into its ranks, and it can also make a party's veteran activists less likely to leave the party while it is still in power.

H2a: A party will be able to recruit new activists at a higher rate in the municipalities that it governs

H2b: Activists will be less likely to leave the party in the municipalities that it governs

By strengthening a party's local activist network, municipal incumbency can help shield its base of partisan support from the negative effects of its national-level brand crises. In the municipalities where the party holds the mayorship, its activist network is likely to be better-developed, and voters' loyalties to that party are more likely to depend on their personal relationships with that party's activists rather than their positive evaluations of the party's elite politicians. Consequently, in the municipalities that the party governs, the loyalties of its partisans should be more immune to negative, elite-driven shocks to the party's national reputation. If this is the case, we should expect to observe a reduced-form relationship between incumbency and partisanship:

H3: Voters' partisan attachments will be more resilient in the municipalities that their party governs

While this reduced-form relationship is useful for establishing whether municipal incumbency affects partisanship, evidence of such a relationship does not necessarily mean that incumbency affects partisanship through my party-building mechanism. We would be more confident that local party organizations are responsible for reinforcing voters' partisanship if we also observed that voters' partisan attachments to a particular party are more resilient in the municipalities where that party operates a larger activist network, regardless of its local incumbency status.

H4: Voters' partisan attachments will be more resilient in the municipalities where their party operates a larger activist network

Data

I test these hypotheses using several datasets from Chile, Brazil, and Mexico on public employment, party activist participation, party membership, and mass party identification. In order to test the hypotheses about municipal patronage, it is necessary to know both the identities of the party's activist, and their public sector employment status before and after the municipal election. I identify party activists in Chile using campaign donations and spending records that are released to the public after each election. Campaigns for municipal and national office in Chile are required to keep registries of their volunteers and paid campaign workers, and these registries are reported by Chile's electoral court after the election, alongside data on the campaign's donors. These records contain the names and personal ID numbers of each donor and campaign worker, along with a brief description of the nature of their donation or the type of campaign labor that they performed. I code a person as a party activist if they contributed any amount of voluntary labor to the campaign (such as door-to-door canvassing or staffing a party booth on a plaza), or if they were hired by the campaign as a paid campaign worker. I merge this list of party activists with the public employment registries reported by Chilean municipal governments each month, and I match individuals on their full name and region of residence.⁵

My second dependent variable is the size of the party's local activist base. For these analyses, I measure the prevalence of party activists using individual-level panel data on party membership. Formal members of the parties within Chile's *Concertación* and Brazil's PT are typically activists rather than ordinary partisans. By joining one of these parties, a party member

⁵Under Spanish naming conventions, individuals have at least one given name and two surnames, which correspond to the first surnames of each of their parents. The vast majority of Chileans also have one or more middle names. Because most individuals are identified by four or more names, it is very uncommon for two people to have exactly the same full name. In 2017, less than 1% of adult Chileans shared the same full name with someone else who lived in their region.

takes on several obligations, including the obligations to pay membership dues and participate in certain party activities. These obligations deter most ordinary voters from formally joining these parties, and this makes party membership in this context more analogous to party membership in Western Europe compared to the nearly-costless party registration in the United States (Dosek 2016). In 2018, around 0.7% of Brazil's population was affiliated with the PT, while just over 1% of Chile's population was affiliated with one of the parties that belonged to the *Concertación*.

I operationalize party activist *recruitment* as the share of a municipality's electorate that joined the party during a given mayoral term. Party activist *retention* is more difficult to measure using party membership data because parties often neglect to report disaffiliations. I overcome this challenge by exploiting a 2016 law that forced Chile's traditional parties to cancel the affiliations of all of their members simultaneously and re-enroll members who wished to remain affiliated on an individual basis.⁶ This law offers a convenient way to determine which party members were still active members in 2016: by default, a member's affiliation would lapse in 2016, and in order to remain affiliated with their party, the member would have to navigate a tedious bureaucratic process that involved either filling out a hard-copy form before a notary public or applying in person at the Civil Registry for a personal code that would allow the member to complete the procedure online. I analyze the re-affiliations of members of the Party for Democracy (PPD), which released copies of its youth membership registry⁷ in late 2014, a year and a half before the affiliations were canceled, and again in January 2017, just before the electoral court relaxed the re-affiliation rules. I focus on this party because it is the only Chilean traditional party that published individually-identifiable data on its members shortly before the 2016 law went into effect. All of the party members in this sample joined the PPD between 2006 and 2014 and were still formally affiliated with the party in 2014.

⁶Ley N° 20.900. The membership cancellation went into effect in April, 2016, and parties had one year to re-enroll their members before they would risk losing their registration as an official political party. The membership cancellation applied only to members who had joined their parties prior to August, 2014.

⁷The PPD youth wing's statutes define "youth members" as ordinary party members who are younger than 30. In the PPD and other parties in the former *Concertación*, these youth members supply much of the manpower for the party's campaigns.

I measure my third dependent variable, party identification, using repeated cross-sectional survey data, pooled across multiple surveys conducted by the same polling companies. The survey data for Chile comes from the Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP), which has carried out nationally-representative surveys two to six times a year since Chile's transition to democracy in 1989. I measure party identification in Brazil using surveys conducted by Datafolha, which has carried out nationally-representative surveys approximately once a month since the early 2000s. Finally, I extend this analysis to Mexico using monthly survey data from Investigaciones Sociales Aplicadas (ISA) since the early 2000s. Although each survey sample contains a different set of respondents, this type of data can still be used to study aggregate changes in party identification at the local level as long as the same municipalities are re-sampled at multiple points in time.

Patronage

If municipal governments are still a viable source of patronage resources, then an activist's employment prospects in the municipal government should depend on whether their party won or lost the most recent mayoral election. Figure 6.5 shows the discontinuity in the share of Chilean party activists who were employed in the municipal government at the 0% margin of victory threshold that separates winning parties from losing parties. Approximately half of the activists received a job in the municipal government during the first year of the new mayoral term in the municipalities that the activists' alliance barely won. That share dropped to around zero among the municipalities that their alliance barely lost. This sharp drop in the probability of public sector employment at the treatment threshold indicates that incumbency status has a strong effect on the public sector employment prospects of local party activists. The party activists who were on the winning side in the mayoral election stood a very good chance of being appointed to a public sector job in the next mayoral administration, while the activists whose party lost the election had almost no chance of receiving public sector employment.

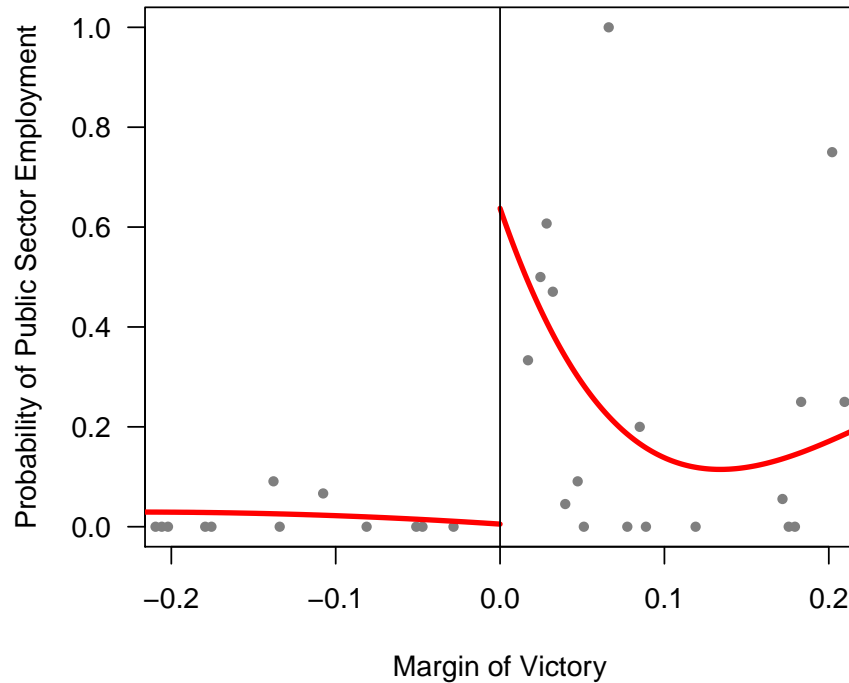


Figure 6.5: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on the Public Sector Employment of Party Activists in Chile

Activist Participation

If a local incumbent party can use the patronage resources of municipal governments to motivate and compensate its activists, the party should also be able to maintain larger bases of activists in the municipalities that it governs. First, the incumbent party's ability to credibly promise to reward its activists with public sector jobs could make it easier for the party to recruit new activists. Figure 6.6 tests this hypothesis by showing the relationship between municipal election outcomes and the post-election membership recruitment rates for the *Concertación* of Chile and the PT of Brazil. For both political organizations, the membership recruitment rate was roughly twice as high in the municipalities that the party narrowly won, compared to the municipalities that the party narrowly lost. This suggests that these parties enjoyed a significant recruitment advantage in the municipalities where they held the mayorship.

Access to municipal patronage should also help the incumbent party hold onto its current

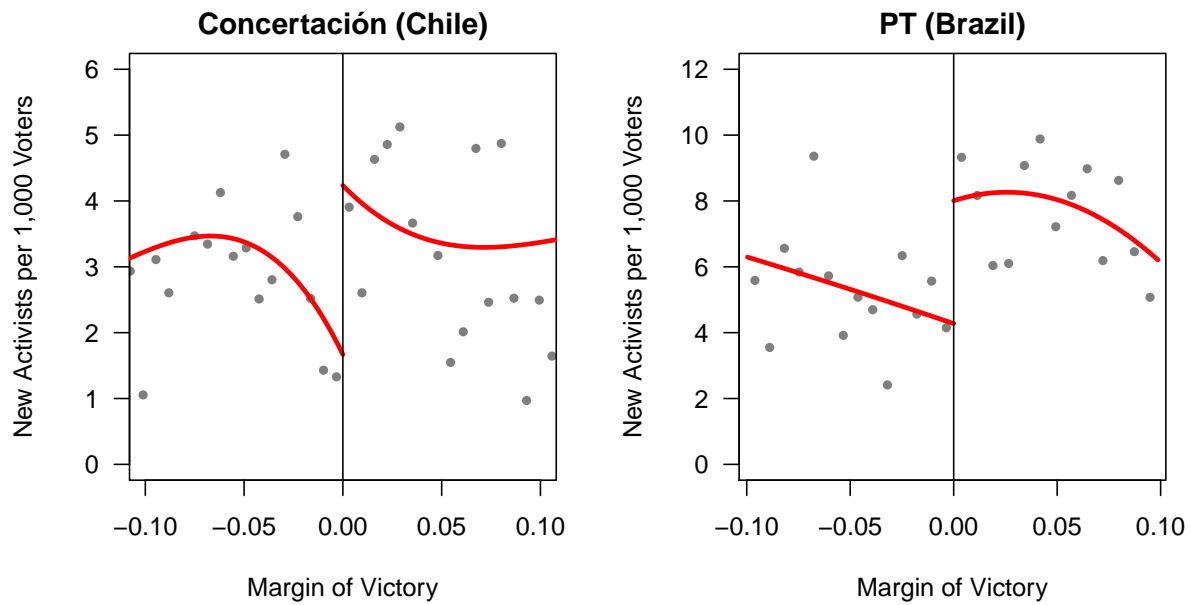


Figure 6.6: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on Party Activist Recruitment

activists over the long term. An incumbent party might use the promise of a patronage appointment in the near future to convince disillusioned activists to stay in the party. Alternatively, the party's threat to fire its disloyal activists from their municipal jobs could increase the costs that the activists would incur by exiting their party. Figure 6.7 illustrates the effect of municipal victory on membership reaffiliation for the Party for Democracy, one of the parties in Chile's *Concertación*. The y-axis shows the proportion of members who chose to renew their affiliations with the party by the end of 2016. While only around 10% of PPD members remained affiliated with the party in municipalities that the *Concertación* had narrowly lost in the previous municipal election in 2012, this share jumped to around 50% in the municipalities that the *Concertación* narrowly won. This indicates that having a co-partisan or allied mayor in office helped the party retain its grassroots members in those municipalities.

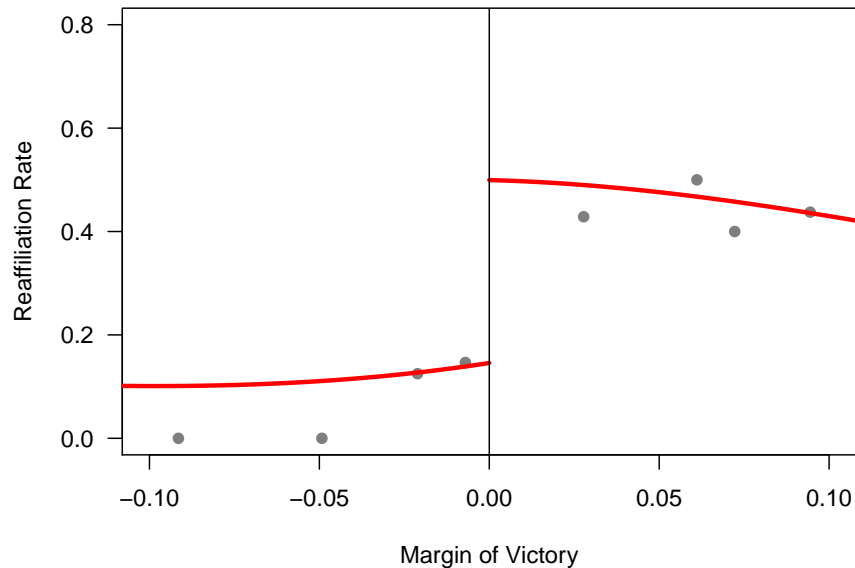


Figure 6.7: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on PPD Member Re-Affiliation in 2016

Mass Party Identification

By enlarging the party's activist base and strengthening its local party organization, municipal incumbency status can also make voters in the municipality more likely to identify with the party. Figure 6.8 depicts difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of incumbency on the share of the municipal electorate that identifies with Chile's *Concertación*, Brazil's PT, and Mexico's three largest parties in the 2000s, the PRD, the PRI, and the PAN. For each party, the estimated treatment effects are positive and statistically significant. Voters were around 10 percentage points more likely to identify with the *Concertación* in municipalities that had a *Concertación* mayor, relative to municipalities where the *Concertación* was in the opposition. Voters were between 4 and 6 percentage points more likely to identify with the PT and the Mexican parties in the municipalities where those parties held the mayorship.

If stronger local party organizations are the mechanism that links municipal incumbency to mass partisanship, we should also expect that voters' partisan attachments would be more resilient in the municipalities where their party has a larger activist network. I test this hypothesis

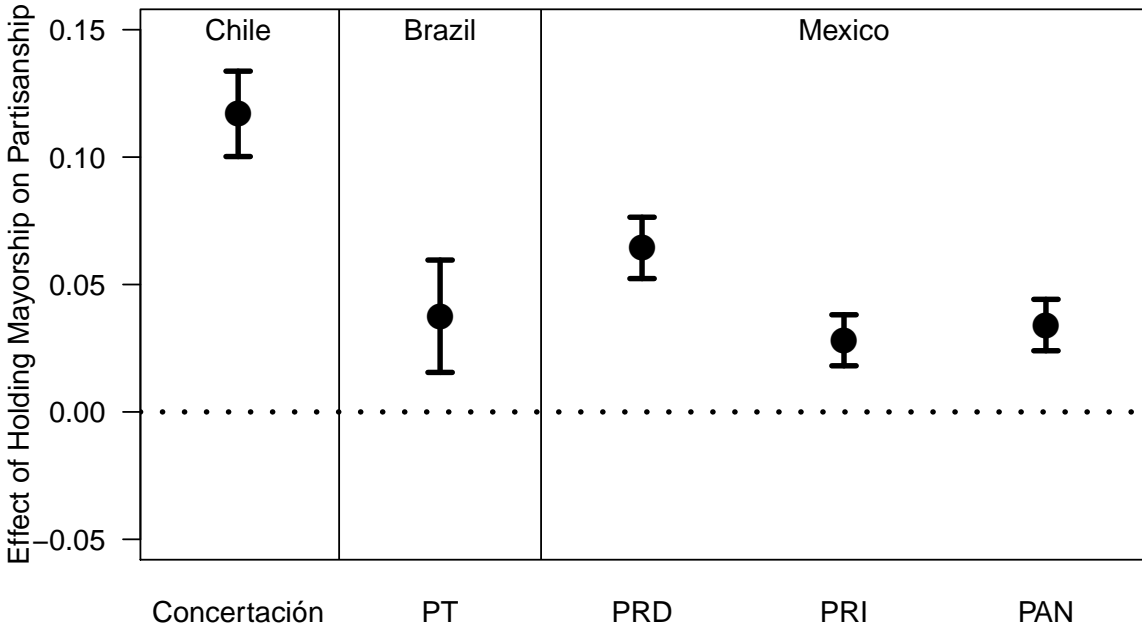


Figure 6.8: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on Party Identification (Difference-in-Differences Estimates)

by examining how the effect of the PT’s 2005 *Mensalão* scandal on partisanship varies with the size of the party’s local activist base on the eve of the scandal. This scandal was the largest corruption scandal during the PT’s first term in the federal presidency, and previous work has found that it triggered a deep if temporary drop in party identification with the PT (Baker et al. 2016; Samuels and Zucco 2018). If grassroots party organizations stabilize voters’ partisanship, then we should expect that the effect of this scandal on PT partisanship would be milder in municipalities where the party had a larger activist base. In order to determine whether the impact of the scandal was conditional on the size of the party’s local activist base, I estimate the following

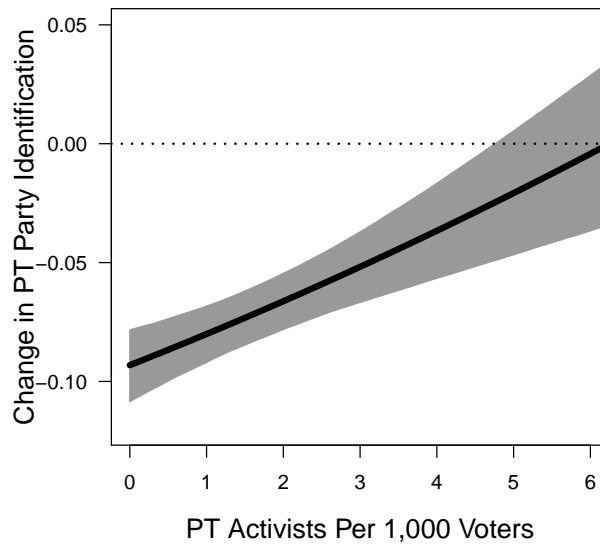


Figure 6.9: The Marginal Effect of the *Mensalão* Scandal on PT Party Identification, by the PT’s Pre-Scandal Membership Density

interaction model:

$$PetistaID_{im} = \eta_m + \alpha Scandal_i + \beta Scandal_i * X_m + \delta Scandal_i * MembershipDensity_m + \varepsilon_{im}$$

The quantity of interest is the coefficient on the interaction term with the party’s membership density, δ , which measures the effect of the scandal on PT partisanship, conditional on the size of the PT’s membership base. Because the prevalence of PT members is likely to be correlated with other municipal characteristics that could affect the rate at which PT party identification changes over time, I also include similar interaction terms with several pre-treatment municipal covariates (X_m) that are likely to influence PT partisanship: whether the municipality’s mayor was affiliated with the PT, the share of municipal residents who were beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* cash-transfer program, the share of the population that lived in urban areas, and the municipality’s human development index, population, and region.

Figure 6.9 is a marginal effects plot that shows how the predicted change in PT identification between 2004 and 2006 varies with the size of the party’s membership base. According to

this figure, the PT was predicted to lose the partisan support of roughly 9% of the population in municipalities where the party had no members. However, the adverse effect of the scandal on PT identification becomes less severe as the PT's membership density increases, and PT party identification was largely unaffected by the scandal in municipalities where the PT's grassroots members accounted for more than 0.5% of the municipal electorate. This is consistent with the hypothesis that strong grassroots party organizations can stabilize voters' partisan attachments to a political party.

Clientelism as an Alternative Explanation

The evidence presented so far is consistent with the logic of this dissertation's argument: patronage helps a party hold onto its activists, and party activists help their party hold onto its partisans. However, this evidence may also be consistent with other mechanisms, such as direct clientelistic relationships between the mayor and voters. In addition to using patronage jobs to reward its activists, the incumbent party might use these jobs (or other municipal resources) to shore-up the partisan loyalties of the voters who live in that municipality. If that is the case, then the resilience of mass partisanship in these municipalities may simply be the result of the resilience of clientelism, rather than a consequence of stronger grassroots party organizations.

One way that we can assess this alternative explanation is by examining which type of party supporter is most likely to receive a patronage job. If we observe that winning the mayoral election boosts the public sector employment prospects of both the party's activists and non-activist supporters alike, that would suggest that the party is using these patronage resources for clientelism in general, rather than as a way to mobilize party activists in particular. On the other hand, if we observe that activists are the main recipients of patronage jobs and winning the election has little effect on the public sector employment of non-activist supporters of the party, that would suggest that the party is using this resource for grassroots party-building rather than electoral clientelism. I test these hypotheses by returning to the analysis of the effect on

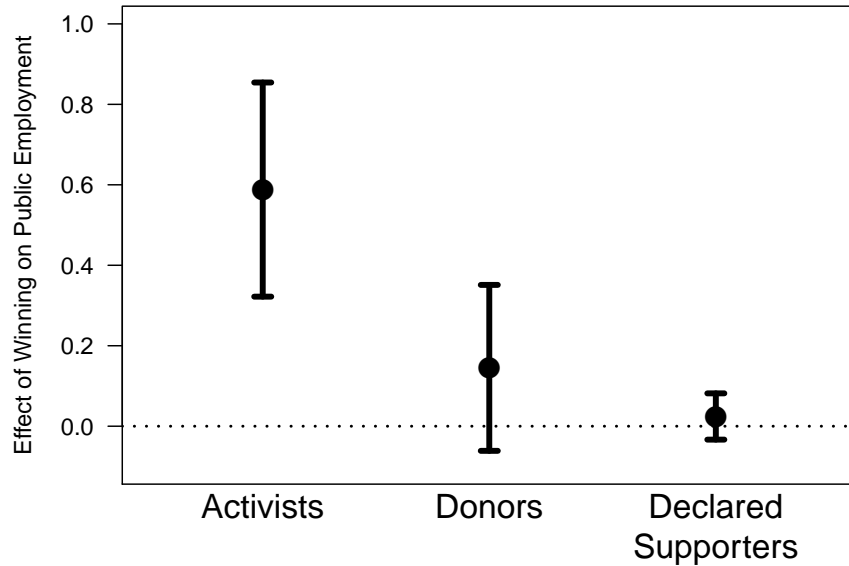


Figure 6.10: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on Public Sector Employment in Chile, By Type of Party Supporter (RD Estimates)

incumbency on public sector employment in Chile. The campaign records that I used to code party activists also allow me to identify two other types of party supporters: *donors* who made a financial contribution to the campaign; and *declared supporters* who authorized the placement of campaign posters or signs outside their home or business.⁸ In Latin America, declaring one’s support for a party or candidate in this way often serves as a costly signal of the voter’s credibility that increases the likelihood that the voter will receive clientelistic benefits from the party if it wins the election (Nichter 2018).

Figure 6.10 shows the effect of winning the election on post-election public sector employment for each type of party supporter. While the point estimates are positive for each group, the treatment effects for the donors and declared supporters samples are statistically insignificant. Moreover, the point estimates for donors and declared supporters are considerably closer to zero compared to the point estimate for campaign workers. This suggests that supporters

⁸Under Chilean electoral law, written authorization from either the property-owner or the renter is required before either party actors, owners, or renters are allowed to place political signs supporting a particular candidate or party on private property. These authorizations are reported in the campaign dataset as a special type of campaign donation, and they are by far the most common type of “donation” in these records.

of the winning party are not equally likely to receive a public sector job after the election. Instead, incumbent parties appear to be reserving these scarce and valuable positions primarily for the party activists who do the most work for the party on the ground.

While this figure suggests that the incumbent party is not giving patronage jobs to its ordinary, non-activist supporters, there remains the possibility that the incumbent party is rewarding its voters with other types of state resources, such as access to healthcare, targeted municipal services, or cash handouts. If municipal incumbency makes a party more likely to rely on clientelistic strategies, we might expect that the party's supporters would be more likely to receive clientelistic benefits in the municipalities that their party governs. On the other hand, if we observe that a voter's partisan alignment with their mayor does not increase the likelihood that they receive clientelistic benefits, that would suggest that local incumbency status has little bearing on the likelihood that the party engages in clientelism, and clientelism would be unable to explain the effect of incumbency on partisanship shown in Figure 6.8. Figure 6.11 depicts the proportion of supporters of the *Concertación* and the PT who reported being offered clientelistic benefits in surveys, grouped by the party affiliation of their mayor. *Concertación* supporters were no more likely to report being offered clientelistic benefits in municipalities that had a *Concertación* mayor compared to municipalities that were governed by other parties. PT supporters were slightly less likely to report being offered clientelistic benefits in municipalities that had a PT mayor, though this difference was significant only at the 0.1 level. These null results imply that incumbency status has little effect on the size of these parties' clientelistic networks, and this aligns with the conventional wisdom that the *Concertación* and the PT are primarily programmatic organizations that do not rely heavily on clientelistic strategies.

A third way to assess whether clientelism is driving the observed effects of incumbency and party activists on mass partisanship is by examining whether the size of these effects depends on the municipality's level of economic development. In Latin America, clientelism is more common among poor communities compared to affluent ones. Because poor voters face greater

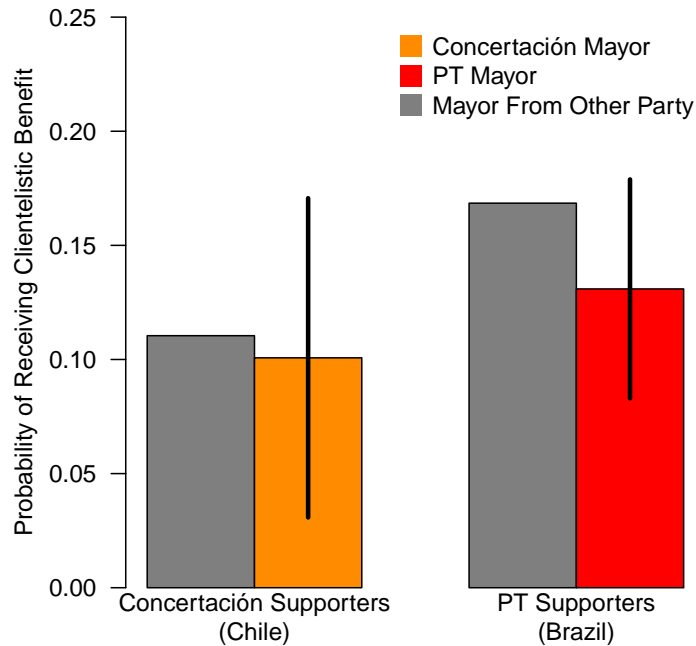


Figure 6.11: Voters' Partisan Alignment and Self-Reported Clientelism

economic risks, they are more reliant on the insurance that clientelistic relationships with a party can provide, and they are often willing to sell their vote at a lower price (Stokes et al. 2013; Nichter 2018). Moreover, clientelism can be a losing strategy in wealthier municipalities because middle-class voters in Latin America often *punish* parties and candidates that rely heavily on clientelism (Weitz-Shapiro 2014). This encourages parties to tailor their electoral strategies to the socioeconomic characteristics of the locality: the same party may employ clientelistic strategies in poor areas but rely primarily on programmatic linkages to voters in wealthier areas (Luna 2014; Calvo and Murillo 2019). Thus, if clientelism is the primary mechanism that explains the effects of incumbency and party activism on mass partisanship, we should observe that these effects would be strongest in municipalities that have a low level of economic development, where clientelism is more prevalent.

However, Figure 6.12 suggests that the opposite is the case. The effect of incumbency on party identification with the *Concertación* was positive and significant only among the

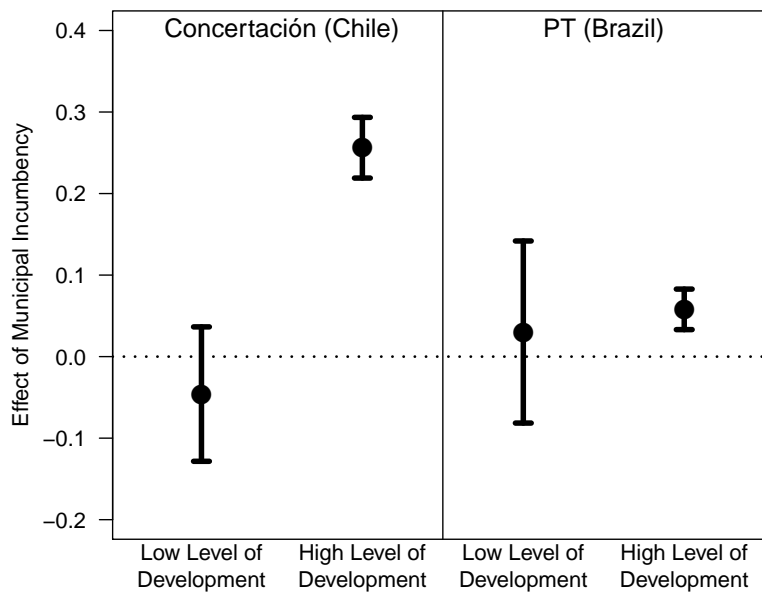


Figure 6.12: The Effect of Municipal Incumbency on Party Identification, by the Municipality's Level of Development (Difference-in-Differences Estimates)

municipalities whose level of development was above the median value, and incumbency had no significant effect in the poorer municipalities. The point estimate of the effect of incumbency on PT identification was positive in both sets of municipalities, but once again, the effect was significant only among the wealthier municipalities. Figure 6.13 shows a similar pattern in the relationship between party activists and mass partisanship. Having more PT activists in the municipality boosted party identification with the PT only among municipalities that had a high level of development, and it had no effect among poorer municipalities. These heterogeneous effects indicate that the results shown in Figures 6.8 and 6.9 were driven by the municipalities where clientelism is *least* common, and this casts doubt on the alternative explanation that clientelism is the primary mechanism that links local incumbency to mass partisanship.

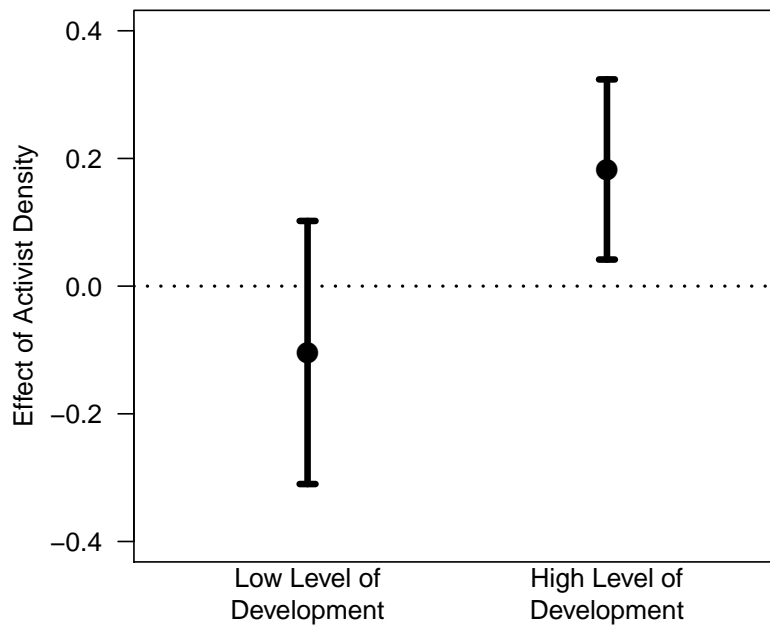


Figure 6.13: The Effect of Party Activists on the Change in PT Party Identification, by the Municipality's Level of Development

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the consequences of Latin America's late 20th century state reforms for the health of the region's political parties. While many of these parties became significantly weaker during the aftermath of the reforms, the decline of political parties was often an uneven process. The contemporary history of Latin American traditional parties is a story about not only decline, but also adaptation. Even when parties no longer had sufficient resources to maintain their labor-intensive activist networks, they were often able to continue their clientelistic relationships with voters by replacing their activists with cheaper or more-efficient non-activist brokers, such as local politicians, nonpartisan civil society organizations, and community leaders (Luna 2014; Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015). As a result, some Latin American parties remained quite effective at mobilizing voters in elections even after the collapse of their traditional, territorial grassroots party organizations. However, as I argued in Chapter 2, these non-activist organizational strategies are an imperfect substitute for traditional activist-based

grassroots party organizations because non-activist strategies are less effective at mobilizing voters' *partisan* loyalties. The different electoral and partisan implications of these substitute strategies help explain why some Latin American parties, such as the *Concertación* of Chile or the traditional parties of Colombia (Wills-Otero 2015), continued to win relatively high voteshares decades after they lost most of their partisans.

A second way that Latin American parties adapted to the state reforms was by finding alternative sources of patronage at the local level. I showed that parties could use the patronage resources that often persisted in municipal governments to maintain both their activist networks and their bases of partisan support among voters who lived in that municipality. Although these analyses focused on a small number of parties in Chile, Brazil, and Mexico, the finding that local governments sustain traditional forms of party organization helps account for the party-level variation in other parts of the region. For example, it helps explain why parties like Argentina's Peronist party or Uruguay's National Party were able to maintain their activist networks and bases of partisan support, while other parties such as the Argentina's UCR, Uruguay's Colorado Party, or Venezuela's Democratic Action experienced severe organizational and partisan decline during this same period. The Peronists retained control over most of Argentina's provincial and municipal governments, and they used the resources in these governments not only to buy votes, but also to maintain their local party organizations and activist networks (Levitsky 2003; Scherlis 2010; Oliveros 2013). Similarly, Uruguay's National Party consistently won a majority of Uruguay's departmental governments in every local election in the 1990s and 2000s, despite losing every presidential election during those decades, and it has used the resources of these local governments to finance its local party organizations (Luna 2014). On the other hand, parties like the UCR, the Colorado Party, and Democratic Action were less successful at maintaining their grip on subnational office, and as a result, their local party organizations fell into steeper decline.

A third solution was for parties to motivate their activists using non-material incentives,

such as a greater voice in party decisions. As I will show in the next chapter, voice-based incentives have helped contemporary Latin American parties like Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* keep their activists mobilized in the absence of patronage. However, cases like the *Frente Amplio* are the exception. Very few Latin American parties responded to the loss of patronage by increasing the activists' voice in the party. Instead, most parties in the region preferred to demobilize their activist networks altogether once they could no longer finance them through patronage.

Chapter 7

Giving the Activists a Voice

1989 was a pivotal year for Chile and Uruguay's left-of-center multiparty alliances. In Chile, the *Concertación's* presidential candidate, the moderate Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin, won that year's election in a landslide against the candidate backed by the outgoing military regime, and the *Concertación* also won a comfortable majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. This election marked the end of 17 years of military rule. Despite fears of another military intervention, Aylwin successfully finished his term in office, and the *Concertación* went on to win the next three presidential elections as well. The twenty uninterrupted years of *Concertación* rule between 1990 and 2010 would see the elimination of the military's influence in Chilean politics, the weakening of most of the other "authoritarian enclaves" left over from the military regime, the consolidation of Chilean democracy, a steep reduction in poverty, and Chile's ascension to developed economy status.

On the other side of the Andes, Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* was facing its first major internal crisis. A dispute over the *Frente's* 1989 presidential nomination had resulted in the departure of two of the alliance's largest and most moderate parties: the Batllista L99 and the Christian Democratic Party. Both organizations had been founding members of the *Frente* in 1971, and they accounted for roughly half of the seats in congress that the *Frente* had won in the

1971 and 1984 elections. The loss of these two moderate parties—coupled with the alliance’s admission of a far-left movement founded by former Tupamaro guerrillas—drastically changed the *Frente Amplio*’s ideological profile. While the *Frente Amplio* of 1971 had been a diverse coalition of dissident Batllistas, progressive Blancos, Christian democrats, social democrats, socialists, and left populists, the *Frente Amplio* emerged from Uruguay’s 1989 elections as a predominantly Marxist alliance whose largest party was now the Communist Party. The *Frente Amplio* managed to maintain its 1984 voteshare despite these defections, and it even won the mayorship of Montevideo. But for the third time since its founding, the *Frente* remained in a distant third-place in the national vote and it seemed no closer to winning Uruguay’s presidency.

Over the following decades, however, the fortunes of these two alliances slowly reversed. The *Concertación* experienced a steady decline in partisan support after the late 1990s. The alliance failed to shake its elitist and technocratic party image through its attempts to re-brand itself as the *Nueva Mayoría* in the mid-2010s, and it soon came to be reviled by a large segment of its traditional supporters. The Christian Democratic Party split from the *Nueva Mayoría* in 2017, and the remaining parties formally dissolved the alliance the following year. By contrast, the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay quickly recovered from its 1989 crisis, and it even managed to expand its partisan base beyond Montevideo and into rural areas over the following decade. It finally won Uruguay’s presidency in 2004 and held power at the national level throughout the next fifteen years. While the parties within the *Concertación* have been largely uprooted at the grassroots level (Luna and Altman 2011), the *Frente Amplio* remains one of the few parties left in Latin America that has strong grassroots party organizations comparable to the territorial party organizations of Latin America’s mid-20th century parties.

The cases of the *Concertación* and the *Frente Amplio* demonstrate two contrasting approaches to grassroots party activism in an era when parties can no longer depend on patronage resources to finance their local party organizations. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 suggests that patronage-poor parties may be able to keep their activists mobilized by offering

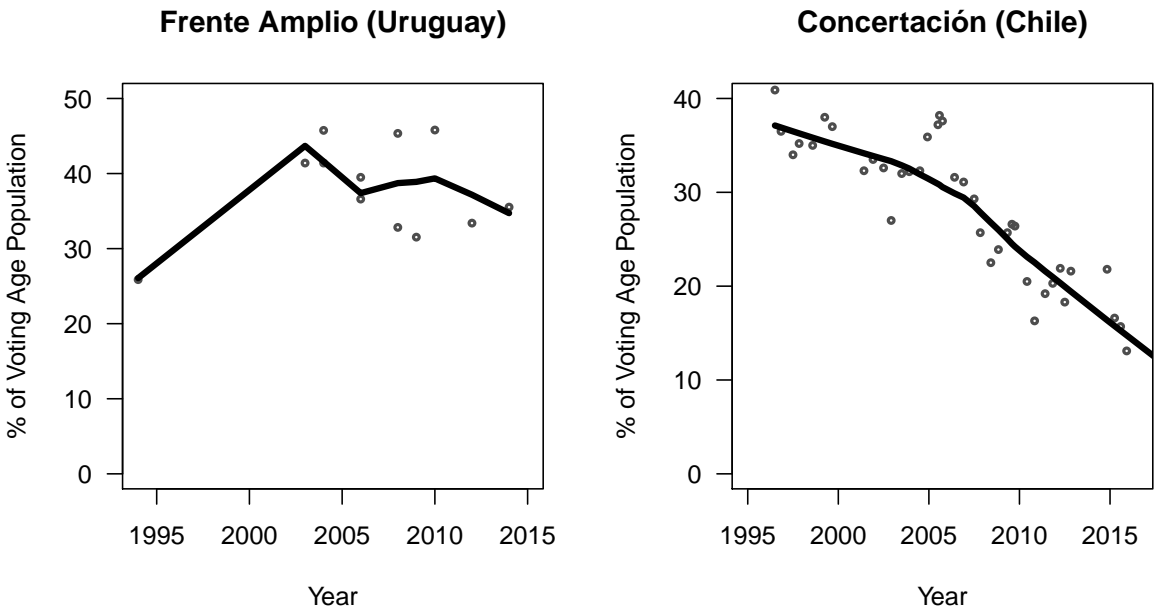


Figure 7.1: Party Identification with the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación*.
 Source: Uruguay: LAPOP, CNE, Equipos Consultores; Chile: CEP

them voice-based incentives such as institutionalized influence in the party’s decision-making processes, but it also highlights the risks that parties take on when they relinquish control to policy-seeking activists. Uruguay’s *Frente Amplio* ultimately chose to accept these risks, and in the 1990s, it greatly expanded the role of grassroots activists in day-to-day party decisions. This has helped the *Frente* maintain an active grassroots party organization even in the absence of patronage. Chile’s *Concertación* chose to go a different route by insulating its leadership from activist pressure, demobilizing its grassroots party organizations, and transitioning to what Panebianco (1988) calls an “electoral-professional” strategy. While the *Concertación* remained one of the most electorally-successful political organizations in Latin America through the 1990s and 2000s, it failed to hold onto its voters’ partisan loyalties. By the late 2000s, the *Concertación* owed its continued electoral dominance mainly to its skill at crowding out and co-opting any electoral opposition to its left, rather than to the strength of voters’ affective ties to the organization.

I begin this chapter by explaining why these two alliances took such different approaches to party activism in the 1990s, and I trace the key point of divergence to the decisions that party leaders made during the years following their respective transitions to democracy. I then analyze the major decision-making institutions in both alliances. I show that while activists in the *Frente Amplio* wield considerable influence in their alliance's strategic, candidate-selection, and programmatic decisions, party leaders within the *Concertación* have diluted their formally-democratic internal institutions to such an extent that the leaders face no real accountability to their activists. Next, I demonstrate that activists are more willing to participate in grassroots party work when they have a greater voice in their party's decisions. Finally, I discuss the recent emergence of the *Frente Amplio de Chile*, a new left-wing multi-party alliance in Chile that attempted to replicate its Uruguayan namesake's success at using voice-based incentives to maintain a mobilized activist base in the absence of patronage.

The Origins of Activist Voice

In this section, I trace the origins of activist participation in party decisions in Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* and elite-centric decision-making in Chile's *Concertación*. I argue that these alliances were structured quite similarly during their transitions to democracy in the 1980s, and they began to diverge only during the post-transition period in the 1990s. This divergence is consistent with this dissertation's prediction that opposition parties are more willing to increase the voice of their activists, compared to incumbent parties. The *Frente Amplio* expanded the voice of its activists in party decisions at a moment when it was still in the opposition and its leaders saw no other way to keep its grassroots organizations active. However, the *Concertación's* incumbency status during the decades after the transition discouraged the party leaders from permitting their activists a voice in the alliance's decisions, partly out of a concern that activist participation would destabilize Chile's transition.

The Parties under the Dictatorships

Chile and Uruguay experienced very similar transitions to democracy in the 1980s. The position of their respective “bureaucratic-authoritarian” military regimes became untenable after the regimes lost referenda on continuing military rule in 1988 in Chile and 1980 in Uruguay. Both countries also saw a surge of anti-regime protests in the 1980s, in which party activists played an important leadership role (Caetano 1994; Oxborn 1994; Posner 2008). However, this popular mobilization started to lose energy after the leaders of the pro-democracy opposition parties entered into negotiations with the military regimes. These military-party pacts led to the reestablishment of elections and the transfer of executive power to elected civilian leaders, but they also preserved political constraints that were designed to protect the interests of the outgoing regime and prevent the regimes’ most vocal opponents from winning power (Gillespie 1991; Siavelis 2000).¹

The parties that comprised the *Concertación* and the *Frente Amplio* also faced similar challenges under military rule. The military dictatorships banned party activity and imprisoned, tortured, and executed large numbers of left-wing party activists. During their respective transitions to democracy, the *Concertación* and the *Frente Amplio* were dominated by senior party leaders, many of whom had spent the authoritarian period in exile (Roberts 1998). Party activists from both countries had attempted to organize both underground and in exile, but they were sidelined during the negotiations that brought about the restoration of democracy.

One important difference between these two left-of-center alliances was that the *Concertación* emerged only during Chile’s transition to democracy, as the leaders of the Christian Democratic Party, Radical Party, and moderate factions of the Socialist Party joined together to extricate the military from power, while the *Frente Amplio* had been founded shortly before the

¹In Chile, both the Socialist and Communist parties were still proscribed at the time of the 1989 election. In Uruguay, Wilson Ferreira and Liber Seregni—the progressive leaders of the National Party and the *Frente Amplio*, respectively—were barred from running in the 1984 elections, and Wilson remained a political prisoner until after the election was over.

breakdown of Uruguay's democracy in 1973. During the *Frente's* brief period of legality between 1971 and 1973, the alliance had developed a network of grassroots party organizations called "base committees" (*comités de base*). However, the base committees had no formal role in the *Frente's* decision-making processes throughout the first decade and a half after the *Frente* was founded. When democracy was restored, both the *Concertación* and the *Frente Amplio* were still structured as loose alliances between political parties that were primarily led by national politicians and senior party leaders. The relationship between the parties, their activist base, and the alliance as a whole was still an open question.

The Deepening of Activist Voice in the *Frente Amplio*

The *Frente Amplio's* base committees emerged during the 1971 election campaign as the *Frente's* answer to the political clubs of the Colorado and National parties. Most base committees were founded spontaneously by small groups of party activists from the same neighborhood, and they usually contained a diverse mix of activists from several different parties or "political sectors" within the *Frente Amplio*. The party leaders who founded the *Frente Amplio* welcomed the formation of the base committees because they were a useful source of campaign labor, and they also helped strengthen the ties between the *Frente's* constituent parties. Yet several of the *Frente's* more-moderate leaders, including leaders from L99, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Socialist Party, also appear to have been nervous about the committees' emergence; they recognized that their parties' own supporters were underrepresented in the committees, and they suspected that some of the committees had been infiltrated by members of the leftist guerrilla movement, the Tupamaros (Harnecker 1991; Bado 2004, 159). Given these concerns, it is not surprising that the *Frente Amplio's* 1971 statutes insulated the alliance's leadership bodies from pressure from the base committees. The base committees originally had no formal role in electing the members of the *Frente's* two highest decision-making bodies, the National Executive Council and the National Plenary, and these bodies were instead comprised of delegates chosen by the

leaders of the *Frente's* constituent parties.

This base committees' influence increased only marginally during the first few years after Uruguay's transition to democracy. The committees gained formal representation in the National Plenary and the Political Council in 1986, but the *Frente's* parties or "political sectors" still held two-thirds of the seats in the Plenary and all but one of the seats on the Political Council. At the same time, the 1986 reform also weakened the Plenary by transferring some its functions to the Political Council, including the power to select the *Frente's* joint candidates for President and Intendant of Montevideo, and the power to approve or reject the admission of new political sectors into the *Frente*. The political sector within the *Frente* that won the most votes in the 1984 election, the Batllista faction L99, was one of the sectors that was most skeptical of the base committees, and it preferred to maintain the *Frente Amplio* as a loose electoral alliance whose constituent parties would have relative autonomy from both the Plenary and the Political Council (Yaffé 2002).

The turning point for the base committees' role in the alliance came during the aftermath of the *Frente Amplio's* 1989 split. This split followed nearly a year of growing tensions between the *Frente Amplio's* left and centrist sectors that centered on the question of whether L99's new leader, Hugo Batalla, would be permitted to run as the *Frente Amplio's* second presidential candidate, alongside Seregni.² When the Political Council refused to nominate Batalla, L99 and the Christian Democratic Party left the *Frente Amplio* and formed a new alliance called New Space. A collection of elite interviews carried out by the Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker at the time indicates that several of the *Frente Amplio's* leaders saw the power-struggle between Seregni and Batalla as a proxy for a larger debate over whether the *Frente Amplio* would become a mass movement or a party-dominated electoral alliance:

In 1988, Seregni worked hard to maintain the *Frente* as a *seregnista* movement, against the parties that he saw as competitors... Seregni emerged as the representative

²Uruguay's electoral law at the time allowed *lemas* or parties to run multiple presidential candidates whose votes would pool together. This system was analogous to holding a presidential primary at the same time as the general election, and running multiple presidential candidates was the norm in the Colorado Party and the National Party.

of the *Frente*-qua-movement, while Batalla emerged as the consensus representative of the parties. (Juan Terra, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, quoted in Harnecker 1990, 105-106)

It was my understanding that two conceptions of the *Frente Amplio* were at stake. The comrades who chose to leave the *Frente* preferred a loose structure, without unity of action, in which some sectors could enter into alliances with sectors outside of the *Frente*. In practice, these alliances tended to marginalize the Left, the Communist Party and those who would later form the MPP. Also at stake were two forms of doing politics: one which minimized the role of the activist and focused solely on the relationship between politicians, the television, and public opinion, while the other looked to use the media to stimulate popular participation in political decisions. (Hugo Cores, leader of the Party for the Victory of the People, quoted in Harnecker 1990, 108)

The 1989 split had beneficial consequences for activist participation in the *Frente Amplio*. In particular, the departure of L99 and the Christian Democratic Party removed the staunchest opposition to granting the base committees greater influence in the *Frente*'s decisions (Yaffé 2013). In 1993, the *Frente Amplio*'s statutes were reformed once again, and the base committees' representation in the National Plenary and the Political Council increased to half of the seats on both leadership bodies; the other half would still be reserved for the political sectors, but these sector seats would now be directly elected by *Frente Amplio* activists and members through closed lists drawn up by the sectors. Yet while the 1989 split made this institutional transformation possible, the *Frente Amplio*'s leaders also had more pressing reasons for deepening the voice of the base committee activists. *Frente Amplio* leaders and activists often refer to the late 1980s and early 1990s as the “*crisis de militancia*,” or “participation crisis,” and the party leaders were concerned by the sharp drop in activist participation during the years following the 1984 transition. Several of the *Frente Amplio* leaders and activists that I interviewed suggested that the institutional reforms of 1993 were partly an attempt by the alliance's leaders to revitalize participation in the base committees by expanding their influence in the *Frente*'s decisions. This view is also supported by some of the accounts in Harnecker (1990).

Over the longer term, the 1989 split also provided an empirical test of the two competing

visions for the *Frente Amplio*. In 1994, the mass-based *Frente Amplio* won nearly as many votes as the Colorado and National parties, and for the first time, it showed signs of becoming a truly national party that drew support from both Montevideo and Uruguay's Interior. The electoral-professional New Space, by contrast, remained a marginal force in Uruguay politics. Although L99 and the Christian Democratic Party had been two of the *Frente's* most electorally-successful sectors in 1971 and 1984, most of their votes did not follow them out of the *Frente* in 1989, and New Space received a disappointing 8% of the national vote, concentrated mostly in Montevideo. After several of its leaders and activists opted to return to the *Frente Amplio* or defected to the Colorado Party, New Space's voteshare fell below 5% in 1994, and what was left of the party eventually chose to reintegrate into the *Frente Amplio* in the early 2000s.

The Dilution of Activist Voice in the *Concertación*

Unlike Uruguay's *Frente Amplio*, Chile's *Concertación* never evolved beyond a loosely-structured alliance that was dominated by senior party leaders. By the end of the 1990s, the *Concertación* had become "institutionalized" in the sense that it had established a system of informal institutions that would govern decision-making within the alliance, and it had also developed an alliance-level mass partisan identity that quickly came to subsume the partisan identities of its constituent parties (Carey and Siavelis 2006; Luna and Altman 2011; Gonzales et al. 2008). These factors help explain why the *Concertación* was able to hold together with minimal internal conflicts for thirty years—a rare feat for a multi-party alliance in Latin America. Unlike the *Frente Amplio*, however, the *Concertación* declined to develop formal leadership bodies for the alliance as a whole, nor did it develop neighborhood-level base units that might transcend party lines like the base committees of the *Frente Amplio*. Instead, the *Concertación's* leaders have preferred to run the alliance through an informal system of periodic, closed-door meetings of senior party leaders, called "conclaves."

The parties that comprise the *Concertación* also took steps in the 1980s and 1990s to

insulate their leaderships from accountability to their grassroots activists. This shift was most evident in the case of the Socialist Party. By the early 1980s, the Socialist Party had split into two separate organizations: a “renovated” sector that was organized mostly in exile in Europe, and a “traditionalist” sector that was organized underground in Chile. The traditionalist sector of the party was closest to the party’s grassroots activists, and it helped organize the popular protests against the dictatorship in the early 1980s. But party activists lost much of their influence in the organization after the Socialist Party was reunified in the late 1980s (Roberts 1998). Posner (2008) notes that during this period,

[the Socialist Party’s] political strategy was now increasingly determined by party elites in consultation, not with the grass roots, but with elites from the other parties that made up the Concertación. This trend toward increasing elite control was particularly evident in the leaders’ dissolution of the umbrella organizations that they had constructed to shape the disparate opposition groups in the shantytowns into a broad-based unified opposition movement. (Posner 2008, 77)

One reason behind the demobilization of the grassroots activists and the insulation of the party leadership from activist pressure was the pacted nature of Chile’s transition to democracy, which strengthened the hand of senior party leaders during the final years of the transition. Posner adds that

the split that was evolving between party elites and grassroots constituents in the PS was symptomatic of a larger phenomenon occurring in the Concertación as a whole. Once popular opposition had opened sufficient space in civil society for political parties to safely resurface, the struggle for democracy began to transform itself from one based upon grassroots organization and mass mobilization into one in which political elites negotiated behind closed doors with minimal, if any, input from the popular sectors. (Posner 2008, 77)

Similarly, Roberts (1998) emphasizes the constraints that the transition to democracy placed on the Socialist Party and its allies:

The Socialist and Christian Democratic leaders were wary that popular mobilization would frighten the military and the political Right and thus destabilize the democratic transition. Hence they sought to keep popular pressures in check and channel grassroots participation into less threatening forms of electoral mobilization... The elitism

inherent in a shift toward electoralism can also be seen in the emphasis on political personalities rather than grass-roots organization. (Roberts 1998, 139)

However, the pacted nature of Chile's transition to democracy is insufficient for explaining the decline in activist voice in these parties; Uruguay's transition to democracy was also grounded on a pact between the military leadership and the leaders of the Colorado Party and the *Frente Amplio*, yet that did not prevent the *Frente Amplio* from expanding its activists' voice in the alliance in the early 1990s.

The most important difference between the *Concertación* and the *Frente Amplio* was their incumbency status during the post-transition period. As Chile's governing alliance from 1990 to 2010, the *Concertación* was responsible for ensuring that the transition to democracy endured, and it was constrained well into the 2000s by a still-powerful military that likely could have reversed the transition at any time. In order for the transition to succeed, the *Concertación* had to make itself as non-threatening to the outgoing military regime as possible, and this meant weakening the influence of the type of grassroots activist that party elites blamed for the breakdown of democracy in the early 1970s. By contrast, the *Frente Amplio* already posed little threat to Uruguay's military in the 1990s since it was only Uruguay's second-largest opposition party. Moreover, the Uruguayan Left had decisively lost a 1989 popular referendum on revoking the amnesty that protected the military and police from prosecution for their human rights violations during the dictatorship, and this provided additional reassurances to the military that the transition was unlikely to threaten its interests. The *Frente's* relatively weak political position during the decade after the transition helped make it possible for the Uruguayan alliance to broaden the voice of its activists because even a *Frente Amplio* that was dominated by left-wing party activists was not at risk of becoming a "spoiler" to Uruguay's transition. By the time that the *Frente Amplio* finally won power at the national level in the 2004 elections, Uruguay's democracy had already consolidated under twenty uninterrupted years of civilian rule.

Conceptualizing Activist Voice

Most contemporary Latin American parties are structured in a way that pays lip service to the principle that the party is a mini-democracy whose leadership and decisions represent the will of its low-level members. The parties' leadership positions are filled through periodic internal elections in which ordinary members have the right to vote, and several parties also offer their members some role in forming the party's platform and selecting the party's candidates for local and national office. In most cases, the party structure also resembles the structure of a representative democracy, with a directly-elected national deliberative body, a directly- or indirectly-elected national executive, and various elected bodies at lower levels of government. Under certain conditions, these institutions can give party activists a formal voice in party decisions that enables them to shape their party's composition, policy positions, and strategies. In practice, however, Latin American politicians and elite party leaders frequently find ways to subvert these formally democratic internal institutions and weaken the party leadership's accountability to grassroots party members. If parties were nations, the vast majority of Latin American parties would be considered competitive authoritarian regimes rather than functioning democracies.

In this section, I will analyze the internal decision-making institutions in the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación*, with an emphasis of how these institutions work in practice and the extent to which they offer their activists a meaningful voice within their parties. I will show that while these institutions have given grassroots activists within the *Frente Amplio* an unusually potent voice in their alliance's decisions, low-level activists within the *Concertación* have little influence over their party leaders. Political parties' internal decision-making institutions can take a variety of forms, but most revolve around some sort of voting process, either in internal elections, in the party's national deliberative body, or through referenda open to party members. I will judge these decision-making institutions based on five standards: the competitiveness of the decision, the

breadth of the selectorate, the efficacy of the decision, the chain of delegation, and the degree to which politicians or party elites are able to intervene in the decision-making process.

The first standard, *competitiveness*, refers to how “close” the decision was, or whether it could have gone the other way. One of most common ways that party elites curtail their activists’ voice in party decisions is by ensuring that its internal elections are non-competitive. This can happen when party elections feature only a single slate of candidates with no opposition, or even when the party is dominated by a single faction that always wins every election. When the outcome of a vote is already certain before the vote is even held, activists are unlikely to be able to use that vote to influence their party’s direction.

The second standard is the *breadth of the selectorate*, which refers to the size and composition of the set of people who select the party’s leaders, candidates, policy-positions, and strategies. This is where the concepts of “activist voice” and “democracy” part ways: while there is a positive relationship between breadth and democracy, there is a non-monotonic relationship between breadth and activist voice. An institution or process usually becomes more democratic when the selectorate is broadened to include all “citizens” (in this case, party members or even ordinary voters). But the voice of party activists is maximized when the activists alone comprise the selectorate, and non-activist party members and ordinary voters are excluded. Partly for this reason, Amaral (2010) argues that the transition of Brazil’s Workers’ Party (PT) to a system of direct leadership elections among all party members after 2001 actually *strengthened* the position of the party’s leadership relative to its activist base; the interests of ordinary party members tended to be much more closely aligned with those of the party’s leaders compared to its activists, and this internal reform had the effect of marginalizing the party’s left-wing activists.

Efficacy, the third standard, is the extent to which the decision affects the party’s trajectory or places binding constraints on the party’s leaders and politicians. Even if a party holds highly competitive internal elections, these elections would not be efficacious if the elected bodies were merely “paper institutions” whose will could be safely ignored by the politicians and elites who

actually run the party. One significant threat to the efficacy of parties' internal decision-making processes is the "presidentialization" of Latin American parties (Samuels and Shugart 2010), or the domination of parties by their presidential candidate or their president; since the president is responsible for implementing the party's platform, Latin American parties' inability to hold their presidents accountable once in office renders even otherwise-functioning internal decision-making processes inefficacious. Allowing activists to choose the party's leaders and platform means very little if the president will ignore the party and abandon his platform once in office, which is a common occurrence in Latin America (Stokes 2001). Another threat to efficacy is the personalistic and non-ideological nature of factional competition within many Latin American parties. It is difficult for activists to use internal elections to shape their parties when all of the rival factions and candidates have the same policy positions and strategic preferences, or fail to communicate to the electors how they would run the party and how that would differ from their competitors.

The fourth standard is the nature of the *chain of delegation* that nominally runs from the party members to the party's leaders and politicians. Although nearly all Latin American parties hold some type of internal election, many of these elections are based on a tiered system with increasingly smaller (and increasingly elite) electorates. For example, in most Brazilian parties other than the PT, rank-and-file party members are allowed to vote only in their party's municipal conventions, which in turn elect delegates to the state convention, which then elects delegates to the national convention, which is the body that actually selects the party's leaders and platform (Ribeiro 2013). At the other extreme are parties like Chile's Democratic Revolution, in which most major decisions are made directly by the party members through an online referendum.³

³However, direct participation through a referendum does not always solve the problems associated with delegation. Party leaders can usually shape the outcome when they are the actors who select the choice set on the ballot. Party leaders can also shape the outcome by interpreting the meaning of the result or how it will be translated into action. For example, during my fieldwork in Chile in late 2017, Democratic Revolution held a referendum to determine whether or not it would endorse the *Nueva Mayoría* presidential candidate, Guillier, in the runoff election, and the vague, "middle-ground" option won a majority of votes. During an interview a few days later, my subject (a former member of the party's leadership body) exclaimed "I have no idea what we decided in that referendum! Are we endorsing Guillier or are we not? The position that won—well, it does not actually specify, does it? It is open to

Long chains of delegation tend to dilute the voice of the party's activists and members because they create a greater potential for agency loss. Another factor that affects agency loss is who the delegates are. Even if a party's leadership bodies are directly elected, agency loss is likely to be greater if the activists' "delegates" on the leadership body consist of politicians or party elites instead of ordinary activists.

One of the reasons why long chains of delegation constrain activist voice in their parties is because they create more opportunities for politicians and elites to *intervene* in the decision-making process. Many parties that nominally let members or voters choose their candidates and policy positions nevertheless safeguard the interests of the party's leaders by preserving formal or informal mechanisms that allow them to intervene in the decision (Cohen et al. 2008). This can occur when unelected party organs are given a veto over the decisions of its elected deliberative bodies, or when party leaders control or appoint a significant portion of the seats in the party's deliberative body or convention. Leaders and politicians also intervene in a party's internal elections by vetoing "insurgent" candidacies, pressuring some candidates to withdraw from the race, expelling members from the party or at least revoking their voting privileges, or using patronage to buy off party members. Endorsements are a milder form of elite intervention in parties' internal elections and primaries. While most endorsements are close to innocuous, there are cases in which they can drastically reduce the degree of competition in the internal election. For example, in a presidentialized party, an endorsement by a popular incumbent president may be sufficient to secure the victory of a candidate in an internal election or force other candidates to withdraw.

interpretation, and it will mean whatever the party directory decides it means" (Personal Interview, Chile, November, 2017).

Activist Representation in Party Decision-Making Bodies

Apart from referendum-based decision-making, the most direct way that a party can give its activists a voice in party decisions is by letting the activists themselves hold the party leadership positions that make the party's key strategic and programmatic decisions. However, activists who hold leadership positions may not be able to exercise a meaningful voice in these decisions if they are beholden to politicians or party elites for their positions. Activist representation in the leadership is most likely to enhance the activists' voice in the party when the activists are elected as the representatives of a group of other activists or base unit, with little involvement of politicians or other party elites in the election process.

Few major parties in the world today give their activists a greater role in day-to-day decision-making than the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay. The *Frente Amplio* has two permanent leadership bodies: its deliberative body, the National Plenary, which consists of 150 members, and its executive body, the Political Council, which consists of 30 members. Since the 1993 reforms to the *Frente's* statutes, roughly half of the seats on both bodies have been reserved for "base delegates," or low-level activists who represent the *Frente's* base committees, while the other half of seats are allocated to the *Frente's* "political sectors" (parties, movements, factions), such as the MPP and the Socialist Party. In practice, many of the base delegates are also members of a given political sector within the *Frente*,⁴ but sectoral affiliations play little role in the election of base delegates. Instead, the delegates are elected out of small, territorial districts, and a delegate's sector is not even listed on the ballot. One base delegate who also belonged to one of the largest and most influential sectors within the *Frente Amplio* believed that her long record of grassroots activism was much more decisive for her election compared to her affiliation with the sector:

I began as just an ordinary member of my base committee. Later on, I came to represent my committee in our *coordinadora*.⁵ Eventually, my comrades came to

⁴This is also true of ordinary members of the base committees. Perez, Piñeiro, and Rosenblatt (2019) find that roughly 7 out of 10 activists who participate in a base committee also participate in one of the *Frente Amplio's* political sectors.

⁵*Coordinadoras* are an intermediate-level party organization in Montevideo that contain multiple base committees

believe that I might be a good delegate to represent them in the National Plenary, and they have elected me to the Plenary in the last two elections. They chose me because I have worked for over thirty years in the committee and the *coordinadora*, and as a result, they know me well. People are more likely to vote for a comrade who they see every day and know on a personal level, and who understands everyday activism. These personal relationships are much more important than which sector you belong to. (Base delegate to the National Plenary of the *Frente Amplio*, Uruguay, September, 2017)

Moreover, base delegates are specifically charged with representing the base committees in their neighborhood rather than their particular sector. Several base delegates suggested that they felt obligated to follow the instructions given to them by their committees.

We are the representatives of the *coordinadora*. Our role is to transmit the position of the committees to the Plenary, and represent their interests in the *Frente's* decisions. We will not vote on an issue without consulting the committees first. It is our responsibility to find out how they feel about a given issue, and then report back to them after the Plenary has made its decision. (Base delegate to the National Plenary of the *Frente Amplio*, Uruguay, September, 2017)

On Mondays, the delegates from Montevideo meet together, and we receive information from the Political Council. On Tuesdays, we go to the various *coordinadoras* and committees that we represent. We share this information with our comrades, and we ask their opinion on each issue. ... Then on Wednesday, we return as a group and relay our comrades' opinions back to the Political Council. ... It is our job to know what our comrades are thinking about the *Frente* and about politics in general. (Base delegate to the National Plenary of the *Frente Amplio*, Uruguay, September, 2017)

This form of representation is crucial for activist voice in party decision-making because it means that a large segment of the *Frente's* leadership is directly answerable to the activists themselves, rather than to particular politicians or factions. This limits the influence that party elites wield over the base delegates, and it reduces the risk that these positions in the *Frente's* leadership bodies will be captured by party elites or factions.

The *Frente Amplio's* consensual decision-making style offers the activists additional guarantees that their opinions will be taken into account. A large portion of the decisions made by

from the same neighborhood

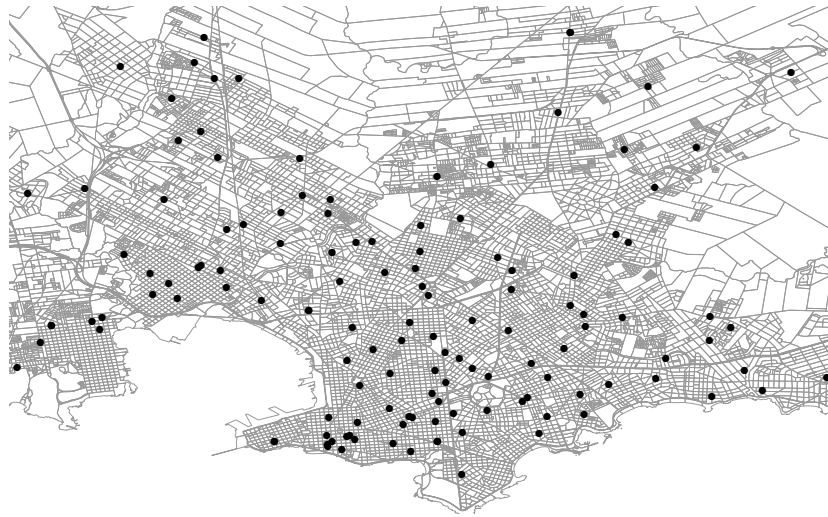


Figure 7.2: *Frente Amplio* Base Committees in Montevideo in 2016

the National Plenary must clear a supermajority threshold of either $2/3$ or $4/5$, and since the base delegates control nearly half of the seats in the body, these proposals stand little chance of passing without the support of the party activists and their delegates. In addition to the Plenary, there are also informal mechanisms of consultation between party leaders, politicians, and grassroots party activists.

When half of the representation in the Plenary belongs to the bases and the other half is distributed between 32 political sectors, the bases naturally have a lot of weight in the *Frente's* decisions. ... The bases have a key role in the *Frente*, but at the same time, this is a role that they have earned through the process of doing politics. The bases are the reason why the *Frente* has become a formidable organization. The activists keep their base committees open year-round, and they meet every few weeks to talk about the politics of the *Frente*, criticizing it, evaluating it, debating it. And they even ask members of congress to come and explain what they are doing to deal with a situation. (*Frente Amplio* legislator, Uruguay, September, 2017)

Some base activists offered a more-nuanced account of their influence in party decisions:

We have more influence on some issues than others. Sometimes the government will ask the *Frente* for its opinion, and in these cases, the Plenary will usually take a position on the issue. That is what happened with the trade agreement with the United States. [President] Tabaré Vazquez asked the *Frente* whether it would support the trade agreement. The *Frente* then discussed the matter internally. We discussed it first in the base committees, and then in the Plenary. In the end, the Plenary decided against pursuing the trade agreement, and Tabaré had to drop the matter. But that only works for very concrete issues. In general, we don't have nearly as much influence over the executive as we have over the legislators in Congress. The Plenary and Political Council can ask legislators to vote a certain way in congress. But it is harder to get the president and the cabinet to do what we want them to do. (Base delegate to the National Plenary of the *Frente Amplio*, Uruguay, October, 2017)

Perez, Piñeiro, and Rosenblatt (2019, 138) suggest that opposition from the base activists was decisive in tanking the trade agreement that this delegate mentioned, as most of the representatives of the political sectors had voted in favor of the agreement.

The *Concertación* of Chile does not have any elected decision-making body comparable to the *Frente Amplio*'s National Plenary. Instead, the *Concertación*'s major decisions are made through informal "conclaves" of senior party leaders, who are usually prominent national-level politicians such as senators or deputies. Party activists sometimes rise to leadership positions in the particular parties that comprise the *Concertación*, but they are unlikely to do so without the backing of senior politicians in their party. As a Socialist activist who holds a local leadership position in her party explained,

In order to get anywhere in the [Socialist] Party, you first have to join a faction. And then you have to build ties with the leaders of your faction and maintain their favor. I have tried to maintain good relationships with several deputies from my faction, and even a few mayors, because I know that I will need their support if I want to continue advancing in the party. (Socialist activist, Chile, November, 2017)

Party Leadership Elections

The most common way that parties give their activists a voice in party decisions is through internal elections of the party's leadership positions. Internal elections can offer the activists

themselves an opportunity to rise through the ranks in their parties and attain senior leadership positions. Moreover, even in cases where most of the candidates for leadership positions are elite politicians rather than party activists, the activists may be able to use the elections to pressure party leaders or choose which party elites will be in a position to steer their party going forward. Yet in order for activists to use internal elections to influence their parties, the elections themselves must be competitive, they must feature opposing candidates or slates of candidates who represent clear and diverging positions on matters of policy and strategy, and the party leaders who are being elected must have sufficient authority to translate their visions into action. These conditions are rarely met in practice in most internal party elections in Latin America. Incumbent party leaders frequently insulate themselves from accountability by intervening on behalf of one of the candidates or limiting the competitiveness of the internal elections. Many of these elections are also far from efficacious, either because the election centers around personal loyalties to politicians rather than strategic visions for the party, or because the elected body has little real power in the party.

The *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay has a stronger record than most parties in the region at holding meaningful and competitive leadership elections. The most important internal elections in the *Frente Amplio* are the elections for the alliance president and all members of the National Plenary.⁶ The alliance president, base delegates, and representatives of the political sectors are each elected off of different ballots, and through different electoral rules.⁷ Internal elections in the *Frente Amplio* tend to be quite competitive; in the last two elections, the winning candidate for alliance president fell short of a majority of the vote. Moreover, the only time that any one sector

⁶The *Frente* also holds two other types of internal elections: the presidential primaries, which will be discussed in the next section, and the elections of base delegates to the *Frente's* congresses. In addition to these alliance-level elections, most of the *Frente's* sectors hold internal elections of their own for leadership positions within the sector.

⁷The alliance president is elected by a plurality vote. Base delegates are elected from multi-member constituencies based that correspond to either the department or, in the case of Montevideo and Canelones, the much smaller geographic zones covered by each individual *coordinadora*; the number of base representatives that each department and *coordinadora* gets is determined by turnout in the election. The representatives of the political sectors are elected through closed-list proportional representation, and the lists of candidates are generally drawn up by the sector leaders.

won more than a third of the sectoral seats in the Plenary was in 1997, when the Socialist Party won 25 out of the 72 seats. Although the MPP has been the *Frente's* largest sector in congress since the mid-2000s, it is far from a dominant force in the *Frente's* internal elections; for example, while the MPP won nearly half of the *Frente's* seats in the Chamber of Deputies in 2014, it won just over 20% of the sectoral seats in the Plenary in 2016, or around 10% of the total seats. This high degree of competition and the fractionalized nature of the *Frente's* internal politics offers party activists considerable influence over the election outcomes:

It is hard to rise to a leadership position in the *Frente* without grassroots support. Even the politicians who lead their own sector are careful not to alienate the base activists, because no politician wants to be seen as an opponent of the bases. And this is a good thing, because it is a source of balance for the *Frente*. Each political sector has very particularistic interests, but by having to court the support of the activists, the struggle for power within the *Frente* becomes about something much bigger. (Member of the National Political Council of the *Frente Amplio*, Uruguay, October, 2017)

The *Concertación* of Chile does not hold any internal leadership elections for the alliance as a whole, and the alliance's informal leadership conclaves consist solely of the senior leaders of its constituent parties. Although these parties are required to hold internal elections for national and subnational leadership positions within the party, these internal elections are often extremely uncompetitive. This is especially true of the internal elections held in the Party for Democracy (PPD).

Our last four [internal] elections have been just a ritual. There is never any competition for the party presidency, nor for any of the other positions. If there are 100 positions to fill, there will be only 102 names on the ballot. ... The only reason why we still hold elections is because our party statutes say that we have to hold them. That's the only reason. The law says that parties are required to hold internal elections every few years. But the law doesn't say that the elections have to be competitive. (PPD Activist, Chile, November, 2017)

This activist attributed the disappearance of internal competition to the consolidation of the leadership of the Senator from Santiago, Guido Girardi:

After Lagos won the presidency, most of our leaders focused their attention on governing. The only ones who continued to do any work in the party were Guido and his people. And as a result, Guido took over the party. Before, Guido was just the leader of a faction, only one leader out of many. But now Guido's faction is the only group that has any influence in the party. This is because Guido lives, breaths and eats for the party. You can criticize his methods, but you can't deny his sacrifice for the party. He has a group of followers who are devoted to him. They won't consider anyone else. He favors them with jobs and positions. There are others who never get favored, but they still recognize the work that he does for the party. They know that there is nobody else willing to do what he does. ... The party today is effectively controlled by Guido Girardi. Guido's people occupy all of the important positions in the party leadership. Nobody else in the party dares compete against the candidates that Guido picks, because they know that they would lose. Instead of competing against him, they negotiate with him. (PPD Activist, Chile, November, 2017)

Internal elections tend to be slightly more competitive in the *Concertación's* other two major parties, the Christian Democratic Party and the Socialist Party. However, even for these parties, the internal elections are frequently dominated by senior politicians, and most of the candidates for the party's high offices are politicians rather than activists. With the exception of non-elected interim leaders, every president of the Christian Democratic Party since the transition to democracy in the late 1980s has been a sitting or former member of congress, and the winning candidates for party president typically receive between 60% and 80% of the vote.

The Socialist Party was the only party within the *Concertación* that consistently held competitive elections for the party leadership. But these elections offer activists and party members minimal influence over the Socialist Party's policy positions and strategy because the party's internal factions are rooted in personalistic networks that revolve around senior party leaders rather than ideological differences. According to an elderly activist who first joined the party in the 1960s,

Originally, there were meaningful differences between the factions. Each one had a clear vision about how to confront politics. There were both ideological and strategic differences between them. But that was many years ago. Now, the factions have been disfigured... The ideological differences between factions no longer exist. The factions are solely focused on gaining access to power within the party. (Socialist Activist, Chile, October, 2017)

The influence of activists in the Socialist Party's internal elections is further constrained by the fact that the outcome is usually driven by alliances between the elite leaders of different factions. In every internal election since 1992, the winning candidate for party president has always been the candidate who was able to win the backing of most of the faction leaders. Moreover, the faction that has served as the "king-maker" in most of these elections, *Tercerismo*, is one of the factions that has the weakest grassroots support among rank-and-file party members (Gamboa and Salcedo 2009).

Primary Elections and Candidate-Selection

Primary elections are a third type of institutional mechanism that activists can use to exercise a voice in their parties. By contributing their labor to the primary campaigns of certain candidates and not others, activists can try to influence their party indirectly, by way of the politicians at the top of the party. However, as a tool for offering party activists a voice in party decisions, primary elections in Latin America tend to be deficient in several respects. First, primary elections in Chile and Uruguay are either "open" or "semi-open primaries," and this means that party activists usually comprise a very small share of the primary electorate.⁸ Second, these primary elections tend to be even less competitive than internal elections for the party leadership. In multi-party alliances like the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación*, entire parties often endorse a particular primary candidate for the alliance's presidential nomination. When most of the parties in an alliance band-wagon behind the same candidate, these party-level endorsements can swing the primary outcome in favor of that particular candidate; this band-wagoning behavior is sometimes enough to pressure the other candidates into withdrawing from the race before voting even begins. Third, like internal leadership elections, primary elections

⁸Contemporary Chilean primary elections are open to both the registered members of the alliance's constituent parties, and the vast majority of Chilean voters who are not members of any party. In Uruguay, voters can vote in any party's primary election, regardless of whether they are members of that party. Over 2 million voters (approximately 16% of the electorate) participated in the *Nueva Mayoría's* 2013 presidential primary, while roughly 300,000 voters (13% of the electorate) voted for one of the *Frente Amplio* lists in Uruguay's 2014 primaries.

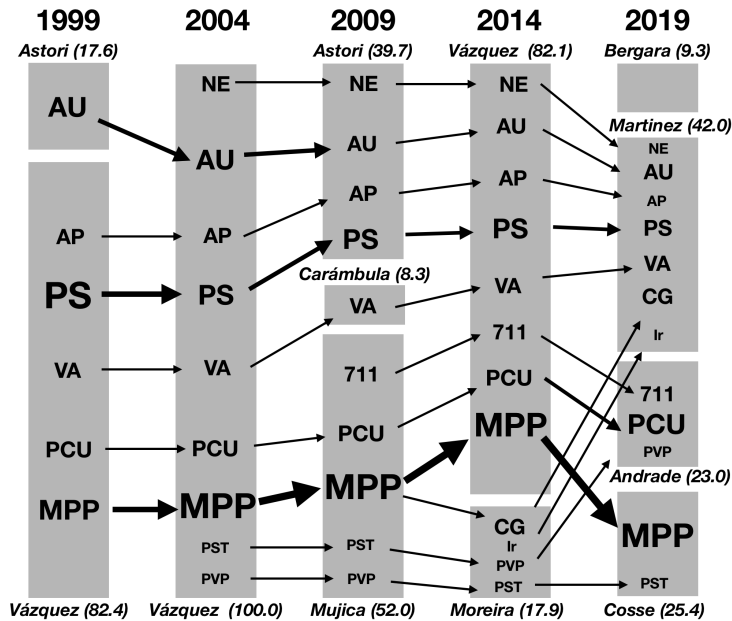


Figure 7.3: Sector Endorsements in *Frente Amplio* Presidential Primaries

often lack efficacy, as many Latin American parties are helpless to prevent their politicians from abandoning their campaign platforms once in office (Stokes 2001).

Uruguay’s *Frente Amplio* has had a mixed record in holding competitive primary elections. Figure 7.3 summarizes the sector endorsements and candidate voteshares in the *Frente Amplio*’s presidential primaries since 1999. The competitiveness of the primaries was closely linked to whether or not the political sectors band-wagoned behind the same candidate. The *Frente* held competitive primaries in both 2009 and 2019, when the major political sectors were split between different candidates. In 2009, the nomination went to the *Frente*’s left-wing “insurgent candidate,” José Mujica, even though he was opposed by much of the *Frente*’s traditional establishment, including most of the parties that had helped found the alliance in 1971. In 2019, the centrist, Socialist mayor of Montevideo, Daniel Martinez, won the presidential primary with just 42% of the vote, due in part to the failure by the *Frente*’s left-wing sectors to coordinate behind a single candidate. However, in the *Frente Amplio*’s other three presidential primaries, most of the political sectors united behind a single candidate, Tabaré Vázquez. In 1999 and 2014, Vázquez’s

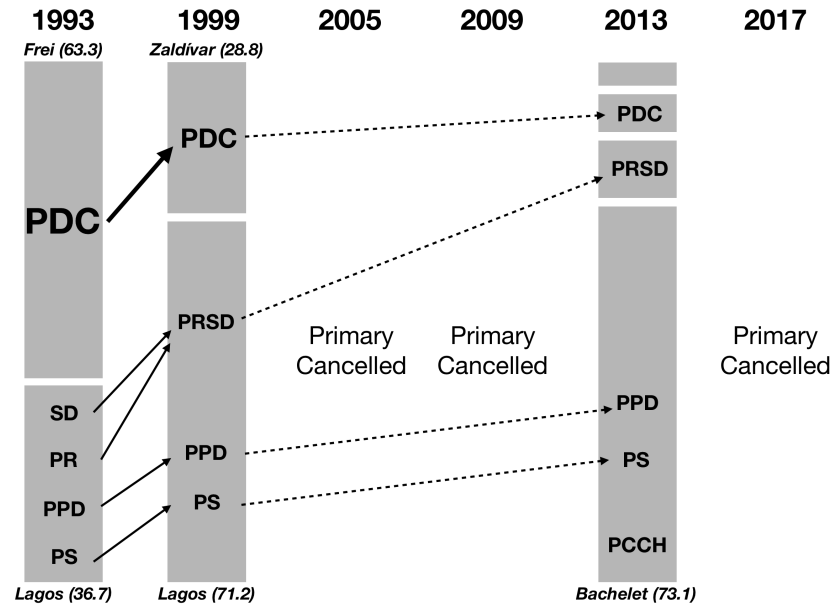


Figure 7.4: Party Endorsements in *Concertación / Nueva Mayoría* Presidential Primaries

opponent won only around 18% of the vote, while in 2004, Vázquez ran completely unopposed.

Neither Chile’s *Concertación* nor its successor, the *Nueva Mayoría*, have ever held a competitive primary election for president. Three of the primary elections were won by a wide margin, while the other three were canceled. The 2005 primary was canceled before voting even began after the Christian Democratic candidate, Soledad Alvear, withdrew her candidacy in protest of the incumbent president’s endorsement of her rival. The 2009 primary was canceled after voters in only two regions had a chance to vote, when one of the two candidates was pressured to withdraw from the race. The 2017 primary was canceled after the Socialist Party, the Radical Party, and the PPD band-wagoned behind the Independent senator Alejandro Guillier, and the Christian Democratic Party split from the alliance so that its leader could mount a separate candidacy in the general election. The *Concertación’s* record with congressional primaries has been no better. Prior to 2013, the alliance’s congressional lists were decided through “conclaves” between the senior leaders of each party. The *Nueva Mayoría* planned to hold congressional primaries for the first time in 2013, but resistance from incumbent politicians and party leaders

led to their cancellation in all but 11 of Chile's 60 lower-house congressional districts.

In most cases, primary elections have not been a viable way for activists in the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación* to shape their parties and alliances. The outcomes of these contests are often decided in advance by party leaders, and as a result, the primary elections are rarely competitive by the time that the low-level party members get a chance to vote. Uruguay's 2009 primary was one of the few contests in which the "establishment candidate" failed to prevail, but this case highlights the limited efficacy of primary elections as a tool for shaping a party's policy positions. Despite expectations that the winning candidate, José Mujica, would push the *Frente Amplio's* second government to the left, Mujica governed quite moderately as president and he made little attempt to change the economic policies that he had inherited from his predecessor (Perez and Piñeiro 2016).

Intra-Alliance Competition in National Elections

A final way that activists can seek to influence their parties is through the general election itself. The electoral systems used throughout much of Latin America offer some degree of intra-party or intra-alliance competition between candidates or factions. For example, in Chile prior to 2017, each alliance ran two candidates in each district who would compete against each other in the general election. Similarly, Uruguay's Double Simultaneous Vote (DSV) electoral system allows parties to present multiple (closed) lists whose votes would pool at the party or "*lema*" level. This sort of internal competition could conceivably offer activists some influence over which of their party's congressional candidates would ultimately make it into office. Yet intra-party and intra-alliance competition suffers from many of the same problems as primary elections, and the activists' weight in the general election electorate tends to be even smaller than their weight in the primary electorate.

In order for intra-alliance competition in national elections to offer activists real influence over the composition of their alliance, the contest within the alliance's list must be "internally

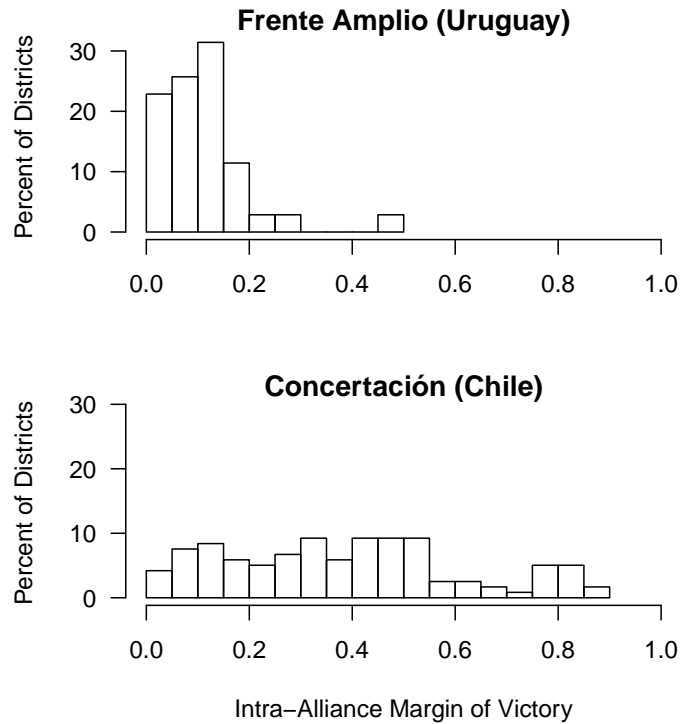


Figure 7.5: Intra-Alliance Competition in the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación*.

Note: These histograms show the distribution of the intra-alliance margin of victory, which is defined as the difference between the vote of an alliance’s first-placed and second-placed lists or candidates, as a share of all of the votes that the alliance won in that district across all of its lists and candidates. This figure shows only the districts where the alliance won a single seat; in these cases, the seat would be distributed to the party or candidate within the alliance that won the most votes, as if it were a plurality election.

competitive,” meaning that more than one of the alliance’s parties must stand a decent chance of winning the seat. If the election is not internally competitive, then the activist’ effort in the campaign would have little bearing on the distribution of seats between the different parties and candidates within their alliance. Figure 7.5 shows the within-alliance margin of victory for the *Frente Amplio* and the *Concertación* in the districts where the alliance won only a single seat, which would be awarded to whichever list (in the *Frente Amplio*) or candidate (on the *Concertación*’s list) won the most votes.⁹ This figure indicates a high degree of intra-alliance

⁹I focus on this subset of districts in order to make it easier to compare competitiveness across these different electoral systems. If the alliance wins only one seat, the contest *within* that alliance is essentially a first-past-the-post election, and the seat would go to the party that won a plurality of the alliance’s vote in that district. Because the

competition in the *Frente Amplio* and a low degree of competition within the *Concertación*. In nearly all of the districts, the winning sector within the *Frente Amplio* had a margin of victory of less than 20% of the total *Frente Amplio* vote, and roughly half of these races were decided by a margin of victory under 10%. For the *Concertación*, however, only around a quarter of districts had an intra-alliance margin of victory of less than 20%.

These differences in internal competitiveness may be partly driven by the different number of alternatives in the race: the *Concertación* was allowed to run only two candidates in each district, while the *Frente Amplio* could run as many lists as it wanted to run; it is easier to have a close race when the vote is split between ten different alternatives within the same alliance, instead of just two. However, previous work on candidate-selection in Chile suggests that the lack of competitiveness within the *Concertación* is also driven by the candidate-selection process itself. Party leaders within the *Concertación* restricted intra-alliance competition by intentionally nominating weak candidates to accompany the alliance's incumbent politicians on the *Concertación* list (Siavelis 2002). As a result, while Chile's electoral system allowed for competition within the alliance, in most districts the result of the election was already a forgone conclusion and activists had little room to shape the outcome.

Voice and Activist Participation

The usually high level of influence that grassroots party activists wield in Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* has helped the *Frente* keep its activist base mobilized on a year-round basis despite having limited access to patronage. During the decade following the *Frente*'s 1993 institutional reform, the alliance experienced a surge of membership affiliations and activist participation. One district magnitude in Chile was fixed at 2, the *Concertación* won only a single seat in almost every district. In Uruguay, the district magnitude varies with the population of the department, and the districts where the *Frente* won only a single seat are mostly rural departments in the Interior. The exclusion of the more-populous departments like Montevideo and Canelones means that this figure likely understates the true degree of internal competitiveness within the *Frente Amplio*.

indication of this is the increase in participation in the *Frente Amplio*'s internal elections, which are open only to its members. Between 1997 and 2006, the number of votes cast in these internal elections increased from around 130,000 to 207,000. *Frente Amplio* base activists also play a prominent role in both the alliance's election campaigns and the day-to-day grassroots work that continues even after an election is over (Handlin and Collier 2011; Luna 2014; Perez, Piñeiro, and Rosenblatt 2019). Perez, Piñeiro, and Rosenblatt (2019) draw a causal link between *Frente Amplio* activists' voice in party decisions and their participation in grassroots party work using a survey experiment that manipulates the activists' perception of the effect of their participation on party decisions. They find that *Frente Amplio* activists were significantly more willing to devote time to party activities when they believed that their party work would influence the party's decisions.

During this same period, the parties that comprise the *Concertación* struggled to keep their activists involved in grassroots party politics (Posner 2008; Luna 2014). While these parties still have some members, only a fraction of their members are active in election campaigns, and even fewer participate in party activities outside of elections. Several of the Chilean party activists that I interviewed commented on the drop in activist participation that occurred within their parties during the early 2000s:

In theory, the structure of my party, established in the party statutes, is based on a territorial system of base units in each neighborhood, commune, and region. But it stopped working that way in practice long ago. Our party has ceased to be a territorial party. We are a purely bureaucratic party now. We focus on the administration of power and governance, but we no longer have a presence in the neighborhoods or the *poblaciones* like we once did. (Socialist local party leader, Chile, November, 2017)

In the 1990s, my party was still organized into neighborhood base units. This was a legacy of our popular heritage during the transition to democracy. ... But with time, the bases stopped functioning. I don't think the party leaders want them to function anymore. The PPD no longer has much of a territorial structure...and we would be extremely lucky to have just 20 activists show up at any party event. (PPD local party leader, Chile, November, 2017)

One consequence of the elitist nature of decision-making within the *Concertación* is that

it deters new activists from joining the parties. Two activists who are now members of the new, left-of-center party Democratic Revolution cited their lack of voice in Chile's traditional parties as the main reason why they decided not to join an established left-wing party like the Socialist Party:

It's really hard to transform the existing parties because they are ancient organizations. And as an outsider, I couldn't even begin to understand the internal politics of the Socialist Party and all of its factions. If I wanted to build a career in the Party, I would not know how to start. But I can see that their leader has been leader for a long time. There is a faction that has dominated the party for decades, and all of the party's decisions seem to be made by a small group of people. It is hard for a new member to rise through an organization like that, and it is not attractive emotionally to join a party that does not let you participate in party decisions. In order to be a party member, you have to defend your party even when it is wrong. It's much harder to do that in an established party, where you don't have the same influence that you would have in a new party. (Democratic Revolution activist, Chile, October, 2017)

I am pretty close to the Socialist Party ideologically. But their authoritarian way of doing politics pushed me away from them. It is an old style of politics, a politics that happens behind closed doors, a politics that isn't interested in the participation of people like me. I didn't want to work for a party like that. (Democratic Revolution activist, Chile, December, 2017)

The absence of activist voice in party decision-making can also make the party's veteran activists less willing to continue working for the party. A common complaint among party activists in Chile is that their party leaders rarely consult them in candidate-selection decisions and often choose candidates who have dubious loyalty to the party organization. One way that activists protest these unpopular candidate-selection decisions is by withdrawing their labor for the party's campaign. For example, an activist from the PPD noted that he and his comrades refused to work for their party's municipal election campaign after the party leadership declined to nominate the candidate that the activists preferred and instead chose a celebrity candidate who was not even formally affiliated with the party.

The party leaders never asked for our opinion. I was the party's communal president at the time, but they did not even give me the courtesy of a phone call before they announced their decision. Can you believe it? Not one phone call. But they still

expected us to work for the candidate that they chose. I told them no. If they weren't going to involve me in the decision, then I was going to stay home. (PPD activist, Chile, October, 2017)

These examples suggest that having a voice in party decisions matters deeply to party activists. But does the amount of voice that they have actually affect their participation in the party's grassroots work on a wider scale? I answer this question using data on party members and campaign workers in Chile, and by leveraging an age-based threshold in Chilean parties' internal rules that leads to a sharp reduction in an activist's influence once they are too old to participate in the party youth wing. While decision-making in Chile's traditional parties is generally closed to ordinary members, the parties' youth wings are an important exception. Youth members tend to have greater autonomy from the party leadership, and many parties in Chile even reserve seats in their national leadership organs for youth leaders. However, most members never again enjoy this amount of influence in the party once they "age-out" of their party's youth wing:¹⁰

Youth members have more influence than most older members. The youth wing is able to push issues onto the party's agenda and shape its priorities. And because we have our own quota of seats in the Central Committee, we are also able to participate in the party's decisions. It becomes much harder to do that after you graduate from the youth wing because there are fewer entry points [in the leadership organs] available to you. (Socialist Party youth activist, Chile, December, 2017)

If having a greater voice in party decisions encourages activist participation in grassroots party work, then we should expect that party activists in Chile would be less likely to participate once they age out of the youth wing and lose the extra influence that youth activists enjoy. I test this hypothesis by examining the participation of members of the PPD in their party's 2016 municipal election campaigns. I focus on the municipal campaign because this makes it easier to disentangle the effect of a voice in party decisions from the effects of the youth wing's mobilization functions. While party youth wings in Chile sometimes mobilize their members in national election campaigns for president or congress and organize their own campaign activities,

¹⁰Different parties use a different age threshold, but for most of Chile's major parties, that threshold is between 26 and 30. See Espinoza and Madrid (2010) for a discussion of the age thresholds in Chilean party youth wings.

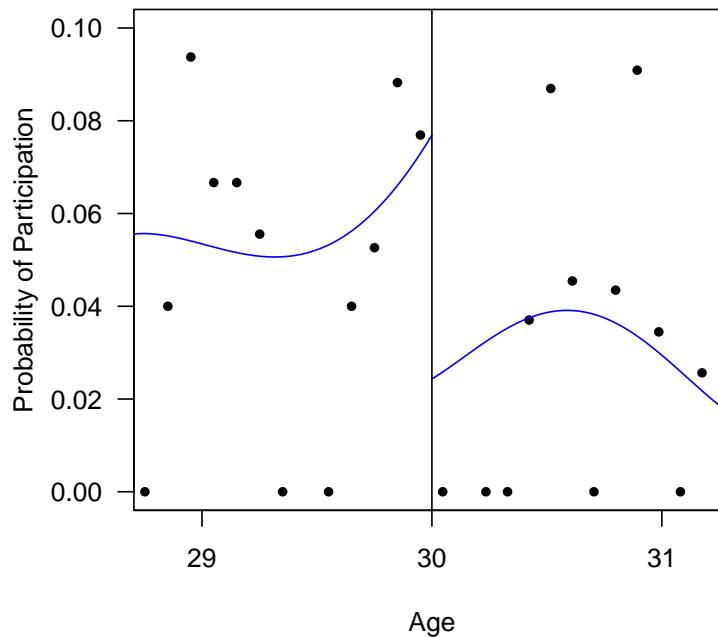


Figure 7.6: Activist Voice and Participation in the PPD’s Municipal Election Campaigns

they rarely do this for municipal elections unless the candidate was a recent graduate of the youth wing. For this reason, if a youth member decides to work for a mayoral or city council campaign, this is more likely to be a decision that they came to individually. Figure 7.6 is a regression discontinuity plot that illustrates the demobilization of party activism that occurs when a member reaches the age of 30.¹¹ Members who were just under the age of 30 at the time of the 2016 election campaign were around 3 times more likely to do campaign work during the campaign compared to members who had recently turned 30 and no longer had the extra rights in the party afforded to youth members. This effect should be interpreted with caution because there may be

¹¹I use the age of 30 as the treatment threshold because that is the age cutoff identified in the PPD youth wing’s own statutes: “The members of the Juventud PPD are any youths who, from the age of 14 to the age of 29 and 11 months and 30 days, are inscribed in the party’s membership registries” (Estatuto de la Juventud del Partido por la Democracia, Article 5). The statutes also suggest that youth members automatically lose their leadership positions and other privileges once they turn 30. The age of 30 is also the threshold that determines which party members are included in the voter registries for the youth wing’s internal elections.

other factors bundled with a member's eligibility to participate in the youth wing besides their influence in party decisions. Nevertheless, these results offer suggestive evidence that activists are more likely to participate when they have a greater voice in the party.

Alternative Explanation: The *Concertación*'s Brand Dilution

One alternative explanation for both the drop in *Concertación* partisanship and the demobilization of its activist base is the Chilean alliance's ideological moderation and embrace of neoliberalism in the 1990s. Lupu (2016) argues that when left-wing parties move to the ideological center, this can dilute their party brand and lead their partisans to stop identifying with the party. In subsequent work, he suggests that the *Concertación*'s moderation in the 1990s and 2000s was a paradigmatic case of brand dilution (Lupu 2018). While Lupu's dependent variables are partisanship and voteshares, it is easy to imagine that brand dilution might also make a party's activists less willing to do grassroots work on its behalf. In fact, one of the implications of the model that I presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation is that all else equal, parties that are more ideologically extreme are able to maintain larger activist bases, compared to centrist parties.

However, it is not obvious that the *Concertación* has diluted its brand in the way that Lupu suggests. Chile's Socialist and Christian Democratic parties have certainly become less left-wing since the early 1970s in the sense that they are no longer advocating land reform or the nationalization of industries, and they have largely embraced the market-led model of economic development (Roberts 2011). But by that standard, Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* has also moderated considerably since the early 1970s (Yaffé 2002; Garcé and Yaffé 2004; Lorenzoni and Perez 2013). By the 1980s, the *Frente Amplio* had abandoned its calls for state-led land redistribution and economic planning (Lorenzoni and Perez 2013), and none of its governments between 2005 and 2020 seriously challenged Uruguay's "neoliberal" economic framework (Perez and Piñeiro 2016). In the literature on Latin America's wave of left-of-center governments in the 2000s, Chile's *Concertación* and Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* are invariably grouped together with the

Workers' Party (PT) of Brazil in the category of “moderate” or “social-democratic” left parties that have sought modest increases in social spending while maintaining orthodox macroeconomic policies (Castañeda 2006; Panizza 2005; Schamis 2006; Beasley-Murray, Cameron and Hershberg 2010; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). If historically left-wing parties' abandonment of socialism in the late 20th century is responsible for the subsequent collapse of activist participation and party identification with the *Concertación*, we might expect that this would have had a similar effect on Uruguay's *Frente Amplio*. Instead, party identification with the *Frente Amplio* increased dramatically during the two decades following its ideological moderation.

Moreover, Chile's party system remains ideologically-structured (Alemán and Saiegh 2007; Kitschelt et al. 2010), and as late as the mid-2010s, Chilean voters still perceived clear ideological differences between the *Concertación's* successor, the *Nueva Mayoría*, and its right-wing opponent, *Chile Vamos*. Figure 7.7 depicts the ideological positions of the parties and sectors within Chile's *Nueva Mayoría* and Uruguay's *Frente Amplio*—along with the placements of their main rivals—along the left-right ideological spectrum, based on Aldrich-McKelvey scaling of survey respondents' assessments of the ideological positions of these parties.¹² In order to put these estimates in context, I note the percentiles of the survey respondents “recovered” ideal points on the x-axes.¹³ The Chilean survey data comes from 2013, well after the *Concertación* lost most of its activists and partisans, while the Uruguayan data comes from 2004, which was a high point in both *Frente Amplio* activist participation and party identification.¹⁴ Figure 7.7

¹²I chose this method because it is based on survey respondents' *perceptions* of the parties' ideological positions. In the framework developed by Lupu (2016), brand dilution is primarily defined by voters' perceptions of the party's ideology or brand. However, Chile's center-left and right-wing alliances would appear similarly ideologically polarized if I were to use ideal point estimates based on roll-call voting instead.

¹³The substantive meaning of “left” and “right” is likely to vary across countries, and most observers would likely place the Uruguayan electorate to the left of the Chilean electorate. Nevertheless, Saiegh (2015) uses the Aldrich-McKelvey method to place all of Latin America's major parties and prominent politicians on the same “common space,” and he finds that Latin American survey respondents perceive that Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* and Chile's *Concertación* occupy roughly the same ideological position. The stimulus for the *Frente Amplio* was located between the stimuli for Chile's Socialist Party and PPD. Moreover, Chile's Michelle Bachelet and Uruguay's José Mujica (who both came from the left wings of their respective alliances, but governed relatively moderately as president) were perceived to be nearly ideologically identical.

¹⁴This 2004 survey is the most-recent survey that I can find in which respondents rated the ideological positions of each of the *Frente Amplio's* political sectors separately.

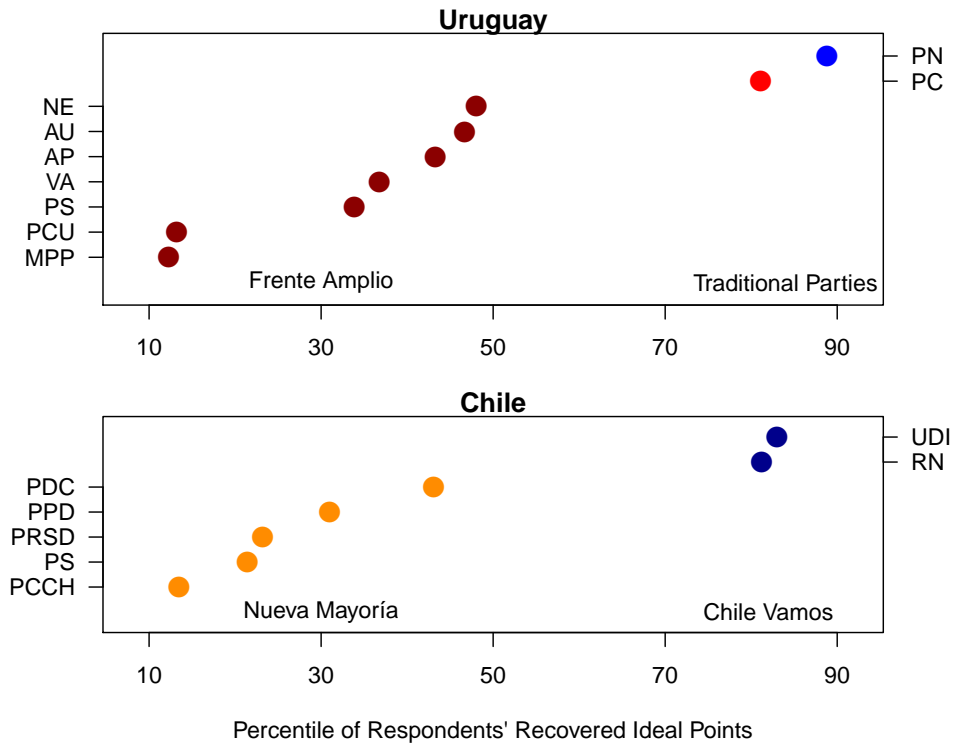


Figure 7.7: Ideological Positions of Uruguayan and Chilean Parties (Aldrich-McKelvey Estimates). *Note:* This figure shows Aldrich-McKelvey of the ideological positions of Uruguayan and Chilean factions and parties, based on survey respondents' ratings of the parties' positions on a left-right spectrum in the 2004 CNE survey in Uruguay and the 2013 CSES survey in Chile. The positions of the party stimuli are reported in relation to the percentile of the survey respondents' recovered ideal points. For example, a party positioned at the 50th percentile would have the same ideological position as the median survey respondent.

suggests that when placed in the context of their respective electorates, the *Nueva Mayoría* and the *Frente Amplio* occupied very similar positions along the ideological spectrum: both alliances contained parties or political sectors whose ideological positions spanned most of the left half of the electorate, from the 10th percentile to the median voter. Moreover, both alliances were thought to be quite ideologically distant from their right-wing rivals; the RN and UDI in Chile and the Colorado and National parties in Uruguay were each placed within the most-conservative quintile of their respective electorates. In short, there is little evidence that Chile has experienced the same sort of ideological convergence between opposing parties that occurred in other Latin

American countries in the 1990s, such as Venezuela and Costa Rica. At least in the eyes of Chilean voters, the *Nueva Mayoría* remained a left-of-center alliance, and there were significant ideological differences between the *Nueva Mayoría* and its right-wing rivals.

Democratic Revolution and the *Frente Amplio de Chile*

Perhaps the clearest indication that having a voice in party decisions matters to party activists is that when activists have an opportunity to design parties of their own, they tend to prefer an organizational model closer to the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay than the *Concertación* of Chile. Shortly after Chile's 2011 students protests, left-wing civil society activists founded several new political parties based on the principles of participatory democracy and activist participation in party decisions, and when they united in an electoral alliance in order to contest Chile's 2017 general elections, they named their alliance after the successful Uruguayan alliance. This chapter will conclude by discussing the rise and early organizational development of the *Frente Amplio de Chile* and its largest party, Democratic Revolution, which is also one of the main cases that I analyze in the next two chapters. While Democratic Revolution has developed a relatively-institutionalized participatory decision-making structure, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* as a whole has been slower to institutionalize activist participation in its decisions.

Democratic Revolution (RD) was founded as a political movement in early 2012 by participants in Chile's 2011 students protests, including Giorgio Jackson, the president of the Catholic University's students federation and one of the principal leaders of the protests. While RD eventually came to present itself as a left-wing alternative to the center-left *Nueva Mayoría* (the successor of the *Concertación*), the movement's dominant faction during its early years actually favored integrating RD into the *Nueva Mayoría*.¹⁵ RD even sought to compete in the

¹⁵Several of RD's early leaders also had personal, professional, and family ties to Chile's traditional center-left alliance. For example, the party's first National Coordinator, Miguel Crispi, had previously been a member of the Socialist Party, and his mother was a cabinet minister under Michelle Bachelet's first government.

Nueva Mayoría's 2013 congressional primary elections. The movement also endorsed the *Nueva Mayoría's* presidential candidate, Michelle Bachelet, and one of its members served on Bachelet's senior campaign staff. In that year's election, Jackson was elected to congress as an Independent who was unofficially backed by the *Nueva Mayoría*. Several of RD's members, including its leader, Miguel Crispi, also accepted appointments to positions in the Ministry of Education during the first year of Bachelet's presidency. However, RD distanced itself from the *Nueva Mayoría* and ordered its members to resign their positions in Bachelet's administration after Bachelet's popularity plummeted in 2015. From that point forward, the movement positioned itself as a "third force" in Chilean politics that would challenge the *Nueva Mayoría* from the left. RD transformed into an official political party in 2016, and it won a handful of city council seats in Chile's 2016 municipal elections. Early the following year, RD joined with several other small and predominantly leftist and anti-establishment parties and movements to found the electoral alliance *Frente Amplio de Chile*.

Although RD could be considered a left-wing party, its brand is defined less by its ideological position than by its commitment to participatory democracy. Even during its earliest days as a movement, RD sought to get its members directly involved in all of its major programmatic and strategic decisions, including the crafting of its original statutes and statement of principles, its decisions about whether it would endorse the *Nueva Mayoría's* presidential candidates in the 2013 and 2017 runoff elections, its decision about whether it would become an official party, the crafting of its policy platform, its candidate-selection decisions, and its policies on alliances with other parties and movements. Early decisions such as the drafting of the movement's statutes were often made in a deliberative manner, through open forums held in public spaces like parks or plazas. As the movement's membership base grew and it expanded beyond the Santiago metropolitan area, it turned to binding, online referenda as its main decision-making mechanism. Figure 7.8 depicts two of the ballot measures on the referendum that followed the party's 2019 strategic congress, which centered on the party's rules for candidate-selection and the formation

MOCIÓN D7: DEFINICIÓN DE CANDIDATURAS

En caso de definir las primarias como mecanismo de definición de candidaturas, se optará por:

[MARQUE TODAS LAS ALTERNATIVAS QUE CONSIDERE ADECUADAS]

- A) Primarias legales con fuerzas del Frente Amplio
- B) Primarias ciudadanas con fuerzas del Frente Amplio
- C) Primarias Legales con fuerzas del Frente Amplio y otras fuerzas de oposición que converjan en visión política y programática
- D) Primarias ciudadanas con fuerzas del Frente Amplio y otras fuerzas de oposición que converjan en visión política y programática.

MOCIÓN F7: ESTÁNDAR MÍNIMO

Las candidaturas de Revolución Democrática deberán cumplir una serie de requisitos para cumplir un estándar mínimo y poder ser aprobadas. Sobre la militancia:

- A) Ser militante de RD
- B) Ser militante de RD con mínimo 6 meses de afiliación previos a la inscripción de la candidatura
- C) Ser militante de RD con mínimo 1 año de afiliación previos a la inscripción de la candidatura
- D) Ser militante de RD con mínimo 18 meses de afiliación previos a la inscripción de la candidatura
- E) No se exigirá militancia

Figure 7.8: Examples of Ballot Measures in the Referendum for RD's 2019 Strategic Congress

of political alliances in upcoming elections.

Even after this shift to online referenda, the party has tried to keep its members involved in in-person party meetings and consultations. RD has three types of base units: Territories, which are a territorial base unit that is usually organized at the commune level; Fronts of Action, which focus on maintaining the party's linkages to civil society organizations and social movements, but also play some role in crafting RD's policy agenda; and Content Commissions, which specialize in particular policy areas such as Health or Education, and focus on crafting concrete policy proposals that will then be voted on by the party's broader membership base. The party's Directory often consults the base units on day-to-day issues that fall within their domains. In addition to the base units, RD holds periodic, in-person Congresses every one or two years, which update the party's platform and strategy and craft proposals that will then be voted on in online referenda.

RD has also established a participatory candidate-selection process that contrasts with the centralized and top-down manner in which candidate slates are decided in most of Chile's other major political parties. Prospective RD candidates begin by communicating their interest in running to the party leadership. The leadership then gives a list of potential candidates to the Territories in the district, and the Territories review each candidacy in order to determine whether the candidate has sufficient public recognition in their district. Next, the candidacy must be formally approved by both the party members who live in the district, and by the party leadership. As a former member of the party's national leadership body explained,

It is important that our candidates pass through both of these filters. We have the party members who live in the district vote to approve or reject the candidacy because we want candidates who are community leaders, who have an established record of doing territorial work in their district, and whose leadership is well recognized by their peers. And we give the Political Council a veto over each candidacy as a safeguard that ensures that we won't nominate a candidate who is involved in prior scandals that might tarnish the party's reputation. (Former member of RD's National Political Council, December, 2017)

If the number of candidates remaining is less than or equal to the number of spots on the list, their candidacy is formalized. Otherwise, the party selects the candidates through an additional

primary election.

RD's internal elections have been highly competitive, and the party has three evenly-matched and ideologically-differentiated factions: the *Pantalones Largos*, which is the party's most centrist faction and favors cooperation with the *Nueva Mayoría*; the *Territorialistas*, which is the party's most left-wing faction and favored the creation of the new left-wing political alliance, the *Frente Amplio de Chile*; and the *Terceristas*, which was supportive of the formation the *Frente Amplio* as well but has also worked to professionalize the party and present a pragmatic and moderate party image. None of these factions has ever won a majority of the factional seats on RD's National Political Council, and each faction received just under a third of the vote in the 2018 internal elections for the Political Council. The *Terceristas* won the party's presidency in the internal elections of 2017 and 2019 with 45% and 51% of the vote, respectively.

While RD has opened up several different avenues for its members to participate in the party's decision-making process, it has been less successful at convincing many of its new members to take full advantage of these mechanisms. Participation fatigue has been a constant challenge for RD, ever since its earliest days as a political movement. For example, RD's official summary of the results of its 2013 ideological plenary (one of the movement's first online referenda) observes that later ballot measures had progressively fewer votes cast, and it notes frankly that "people got 'bored' during the course of voting, and didn't make it to the end."¹⁶ This problem only grew worse as RD's membership base expanded in 2017. While the size of RD's membership base compares favorably to established left-wing parties like the Socialist and Communist parties, RD tends to have much lower turnout rates in its internal elections compared to Chile's traditional parties.

Although many of RD's allies in the *Frente Amplio de Chile* share RD's ideological preference for participatory democracy, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* itself has been relatively slow to institutionalize activist participation in its decisions. The alliance's current decision-making

¹⁶"Resultados oficiales: votación del plenario ideológico," *Revolución Democrática*, October, 2013. <https://revoluciondemocratica.cl/congresos/>.

structure resembles that of the *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay around 1972, in the sense that its major decisions are still made through agreements between its constituent parties, and its base units and grassroots activists are still excluded from many of these decisions. While the *Frente Amplio de Chile* held primary elections for congressional nominations in 2017, these primaries occurred in only seven districts, and only one of those primaries featured candidates from more than one party. In most districts, ballot positions were divided between the *Frente Amplio*'s constituent parties and movements through negotiations between party leaders. The *Frente Amplio de Chile* has established a system of territorial base units at the commune level, and like the base committees that developed within the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio* in the early 1970s, these base units belong to the alliance as a whole and usually contain activists from multiple different parties and movements. However, the Chilean alliance's base units were not represented on its National Council, and their role in the alliance's decisions has generally been limited to consultation.

After the 2017 election, the *Frente*'s minor movements lost much of their influence in the alliance's decision-making processes, and elected politicians such as the *Frente Amplio*'s 21 national legislators have assumed an even more central role in the alliance's week-to-week management. In 2018, the alliance announced that most of the National Council's functions would be transferred to a new executive body, the Executive Council, which would consist of only the parties and movements that had congressional representation.¹⁷ Since 2017, congressional politicians have also risen to the party presidencies and other key leadership positions in several of the alliance's constituent parties, including Democratic Revolution.

In late 2019, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* experienced its first major split after three of its parties (Democratic Revolution, the Liberal Party, and the recently-founded *Comunes*) signed an agreement with parties from the former *Nueva Mayoría* and *Chile Vamos* to call a popular referendum on drafting a new constitution. While re-writing Chile's constitution was one of the *Frente Amplio*'s central goals since its founding, several politicians and activists within the

¹⁷“Creación de Mesa Ejecutiva divide al Frente Amplio,” *Diario y Radio U Chile*, July 23, 2018.

Frente criticized these parties for acting on their own initiative, without the support of the rest of the alliance. Some observers also drew comparisons between the closed-door nature of these cross-party negotiations and the elite-level negotiations between the *Concertación* and the *Alianza* during the 1990s that have become a symbol of corruption for Chile's anti-establishment Left.¹⁸ Later that week, the Equality Party announced its withdrawal from the *Frente Amplio* on the grounds that the three parties that had participated in the negotiations had "violated the will expressed by the [*Frente's*] National Council last Thursday, which has rejected any elite pacts... They have betrayed the confidence of both the bloc and the public."¹⁹ Over the following weeks, several of the *Frente Amplio's* other parties and movements withdrew from the alliance as well, including the Green Ecologist Party and the Humanist Party, which held four of the alliance's seats in congress. By the end of 2019, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* was left with only fifteen seats in congress and only four parties.

The *Frente Amplio de Chile's* trajectory since 2017 illustrates the challenges that parties face even when they sincerely want to grant their activists a meaningful voice in party decisions. While the *Concertación* had been founded primarily by senior party leaders and exiled politicians who were wary of the dangers of mass participation, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* was founded by social movement activists who were critical of the *Concertación's* elitism, and who generally had deep ideological commitments to participatory democracy. Yet despite the intentions of its founders, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* has often functioned in a manner that is more similar to the *Concertación* than the post-1993 *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay. Since its founding, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* has been run by a small circle of party leaders and politicians. This type of elite-centric decision-making is common in organizations that are still in the early stages of their institutionalization process, and as we saw, this was the primary way in which the Uruguayan *Frente Amplio* made its decisions throughout its first two decades as an organization. Elite-centric

¹⁸"Diputado Félix González: 'Algunos en el Frente Amplio quieren ser la Concertación,'" *Dario y Radio U Chile*, November 20, 2019.

¹⁹"'Traicionaron la confianza del bloque': Partido Igualdad anuncia suspensión de su participación en el Frente Amplio," *CNN Chile*, November 16, 2019.

decision-making provides the type of decisive leadership that can mean the difference between life and death for a party that is still in its infancy. The ultimate test of the *Frente Amplio de Chile*'s claim to represent a "new way of doing politics" will be whether it deepens the role of grassroots activists in its decision-making processes as it continues to institutionalize.

Conclusion

The literature on the collapse of Latin American political parties since the 1980s is a literature about the mistakes that parties made in office: their scandals, their broken promises, their inept economic management (Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Morgan 2007; Seawright 2012; Roberts 2014; Lupu 2016). The implication of this focus on mistakes is that these parties would not have lost their partisans and popular support if only they had "behaved better." Yet the most intriguing puzzle about the lengthy decline of Chile's *Concertación* is that by most metrics, the *Concertación*'s governments were one of Latin America's greatest success stories. During its first twenty years in power, the *Concertación* navigated Chile through a perilous transition to democracy, negotiated the withdrawal of the military from politics, initiated criminal trials of military officers involved in human rights abuses, launched several enduring social programs, led Chile into the OECD, and presided over consistent macroeconomic stability, strong economic growth, and a reduction of the poverty rate from 40% to 10%. The *Concertación*'s Chile did not see major riots like Venezuela's *Caracazo*, nor did it experience economic collapses like the ones that occurred in Argentina and Uruguay in the early 2000s. Its corruption scandals were fairly mundane by the standards of most other Latin American countries, and at a time when presidents in neighboring countries were struggling to even finish their terms in office, Chile was a rare island of political stability.

Despite these successes, the *Concertación*'s partisan support gradually slipped from around 40% of the electorate in the early 1990s to just 20% by the late 2000s. The *Concertación*

faced a profound image crisis—not because of anything that it did in office, but because of what it stopped doing in the rest of Chilean society. Once the *Concertación* no longer had strong grassroots party organizations and activist networks in most communities and neighborhoods, the alliance took on an elitist and technocratic party image that alienated much of its traditional working-class base. Valenzuela and Dammert (2006, 73) aptly described the Chilean public’s sentiment towards the *Concertación* by the mid-2000s when they noted that “the most successful governing coalition that the country has ever known increasingly strikes the public as distant at best, and self-serving and exclusionary at worst.” The *Concertación*’s strong electoral performance prior to 2017 suggests that parties that consist mainly of politicians, technocrats, and political consultants may excel at winning votes. But it takes more than policy expertise and a solid record in office to maintain voters’ deeper psychological attachments to a party. Chapter 5 showed that parties like Chile’s Christian Democratic and Socialist parties had historically relied on their grassroots activists to mobilize voters’ partisan attachments and keep their parties relevant to the voters’ daily lives. By cutting out their activists in the aftermath of Chile’s transition to democracy, these parties ultimately lost their hold on most of their partisans as well.

Unlike Chile’s *Concertación*, Uruguay’s *Frente Amplio* has maintained high rates of partisan support and an energetic activist base, even though both alliances had to contend with many of the same political constraints. Both alliances’ activist bases had been severely repressed under military dictatorships in the 1970s, and their parties had to abandon most of their ideological radicalism during the pacted transitions to democracy in the 1980s. Both alliances also came to power in the aftermath of the late 20th century wave of market reforms. They inherited political systems in which incumbent parties could no longer count on patronage resources to keep their activists mobilized, and they would instead have to uphold macroeconomic orthodoxy if they wanted to win reelection. Yet while the *Concertación* responded to these constraints by shedding its grassroots activists, the *Frente Amplio* responded by deepening the role of its activists in the alliance’s day-to-day governance. The unusually high amount of influence that party activists

wield at every level of the *Frente Amplio*'s decision-making processes has helped this alliance keep its activists mobilized and engaged in grassroots party work on a year-round basis. The experiences of Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* thus offer a model for how contemporary Latin American parties can use voice-based incentives to sustain grassroots party activism even in the absence of patronage. The recent emergence of parties like Chile's Democratic Revolution suggests that at least a few other parties in the region are beginning to follow this model in an attempt to replicate the *Frente Amplio*'s success.

Chapter 8

Party Activists and Partisan Change in Neighborhoods

The final two empirical chapters of this dissertation will take a closer look at the hypothesis that party activists can forge and strengthen the partisan attachments of the other voters in their communities. This chapter will examine the effect of activists on partisanship at the neighborhood level. If party activists shape the partisanship of their friends, neighbors, and other peers, then we should expect to observe a relationship between the strength of a party's activist-based grassroots organization in a particular neighborhood and the depth of its partisan support in that neighborhood. Parties should be able to attract new partisans at a faster rate in the neighborhoods where they have a larger activist base. Voters' partisan attachments should also be more resilient over time in the neighborhoods where that party has a stronger activist network.

One reason why we should expect to observe these relationships at the neighborhood level in particular is because neighborhoods and geographical proximity structure voters' social networks (Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague 2004). People who live near each other are more likely to come into contact and develop friendships and other relationships. It is also easier to maintain social ties when they are reinforced by the routine face-to-face contact that results from

geographic proximity. Consequently, the social contagion logic that I theorized in Chapter 2 and will test in greater detail in the next chapter would likely be at work at the neighborhood level as well. Moreover, neighborhoods in Latin America often carry powerful group identities that make the neighborhood an especially salient part of their residents' self-conceptions (Schneider 1995; Oxhorn 1995; Alvarez 2017). For this reason, the political behavior and political loyalties of a voter's neighbors can be especially informative of which party would be the best fit for that particular voter.

Neighborhoods also structure the day-to-day organizing work that party activists do for their parties. As I have discussed in previous chapters, many parties in Latin America and elsewhere are organized on a "territorial basis," which means that party base units are charged with overseeing the party's grassroots activities within a specific geographical area or "territory." Through working in a territory over the course of several years, party activists become specialists and experts in the people, problems, and politics of that particular neighborhood. They invest time in building personal relationships with the neighbors and developing a strong reputation as a committed member of that community. These investments help the activists acquire information about the neighbors' political beliefs, and they also help the party tailor its messages to the community's preferences. In addition to carrying out party work in the neighborhood, party activists often *live* in that neighborhood year-round, and they become involved in a variety of non-party civil society organizations that serve that community, such as neighborhood associations, churches, and sports clubs. Even when their participation in these organizations is not directly related to their work for their party, activists can use the social ties that they develop in these organizations to extend their influence over their communities and reach out to people who do not already identify with the party.

Yet while neighborhoods play an important role in grassroots party politics, there is no reason to expect that the influence of an activist or the social ties of a neighborhood's residents would end at the often-arbitrary borders that separate one neighborhood from another. Few

neighborhoods are completely isolated from each other, and residents of one neighborhood often have social, familial, and professional ties to residents of adjacent neighborhoods. These social connections between adjacent localities facilitate the diffusion of political information and behaviors across space (Haim 2018). This suggests that over the long run, the politics of a neighborhood may spread outwards over time and affect the politics of nearby neighborhoods as well. For example, if party activists are particularly successful at crafting partisan loyalties in one neighborhood, this spatial diffusion mechanism may draw other neighborhoods in the area closer to the party as well.

I begin by discussing some of the identification challenges to estimating a neighborhood-level relationship between party activism and partisanship, and how my research designs will mitigate them. Then I will examine three ways that activists can affect the size of their party's partisan base in their neighborhood: by helping their party pull in new partisans, by activating their neighbors' latent partisan identities, and by reinforcing their neighbors' partisan loyalties during crises for the party's national reputation. The analyses in this chapter will rely on data from three contemporary and territorially-organized Latin American political parties: Chile's Democratic Revolution (RD), Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* (FA), and Brazil's Workers' Party (PT).

Research Design

Neighborhood-level analyses of the effect of party activists on the partisanship of their neighbors are likely to suffer from both endogeneity and omitted variable bias. It could be the case that the reason why a party has a larger activist network in a particular neighborhood is because it already has more partisans there. It could also be the case that both the size of the party's activist network and the size of its base of partisan support are caused by some unmeasured third variable, such as the ideology of the neighborhood's residents.

My analyses will alleviate these concerns to some degree by focusing on changes in a

locality's partisanship over time. This allows me to rule out many of the alternative explanations that plague purely cross-sectional spatial analyses by taking into account both the party's baseline partisan support in a locality and time-invariant characteristics of the locality that might affect the party's popularity among its residents. An analysis of partisan change also provides a more-appropriate test of the dynamic model of partisanship presented in Chapter 2.

This chapter will focus on three patterns of partisan change. First, I will look at the relationship between where a party's "founding activists" live and the speed with which it attracted new partisans during its early years as a party. This focus on a party's formative period helps mitigate the endogeneity problem as long as the infant party starts out with no partisan support outside of its small circle of founding activists. A party's formative period is also the moment in its life-cycle when the work carried out by its grassroots activists has the greatest effect on its growth because most new parties are unable to rely on the same strategies that established parties use to mobilize support, such as clientelism and media-based strategies (Van Dyck 2014a).

Second, I will examine whether changes in the *intensity* of party activists' work in a particular neighborhood leads to subsequent changes in the share of the neighborhood's residents who identify with that party. In particular, I will analyze the effects of the temporary surge in grassroots party activity that accompanies an election campaign. Although this dissertation has argued that activists' routine, extra-electoral party work is more important for the development of mass partisan support compared to temporary campaign participation, the extra effort that activists put into their party work during election campaigns may still affect the size of the party's partisan base at the margins, by activating voters' latent partisan identities over the short term. Because this analysis leverages variation in party activism both over space and over time, it also offers a stronger research design. By comparing each neighborhood with itself at a different point in time, I will be able to account for time-invariant characteristics of the neighborhood or its population that might have an independent effect on partisanship.

Third, I will investigate whether having a strong activist base in a neighborhood *mitigates*

the types of national-level shocks that are known to cause voters to cease identifying with a party, such as major corruption scandals that implicate the party's senior leaders. This dissertation has argued that party activists can bolster other voters' partisanship during these scandals by providing an alternative face of the party or "party image" that is untainted by the scandals that are going on at the top of the organization. If this is true, then we might expect to observe greater partisan stability in the neighborhoods where the party has a stronger grassroots organization. In essence, this analysis will take the size of the party's neighborhood activist base as a given, and it will examine the interaction effect between the shock to the party's reputation (the scandal) and the number of activists that the party had in the neighborhood on the eve of the scandal.

The Growth of Partisan Loyalties to New Parties

One of the reasons why most new political parties die at birth is because infant parties rarely have access to the media-based strategies, governing reputations, donors, and state resources that their established competitors rely on to mobilize support. During a party's formative years, a party's own founding activists are one of the few resources that the party has in abundance, and many infant parties rely heavily on their activists for outreach and organizational growth (Van Dyck 2014a). The grassroots work that the party activists do in their neighborhoods can help their party raise awareness about who it is and what it stands for at a time when the party is still considered too small and irrelevant to be covered by the media. Moreover, a party's formative period is often a time when the party's "brand" is still being decided, and the set of activists who choose to join the party early on can have a large effect on how the party develops and what type of organization it eventually becomes.

Yet while founding activists are an invaluable resource for an infant party, they are also a resource that may be spread quite unevenly across different regions, municipalities, and even neighborhoods. This places a geographical constraint on a party's ability to grow its popular

support through activist-based, “word-of-mouth” strategies. Infant parties are likely to attract new supporters at a faster rate in the neighborhoods where they were able to recruit a relatively large number of early activists, while they are more likely to struggle to grow in neighborhoods where they have few early activists.

Background, Data, and Empirical Strategy

I test this hypothesis by analyzing the early membership and partisan growth of the Chilean Party, Democratic Revolution (RD). As I discussed in the previous chapter, grassroots party activism is a central part of RD’s identity as a party, and one of RD’s three types of base units is a territorial base unit at the commune-level. RD’s various “Territories” organize many of the party’s neighborhood-level outreach activities, such as recruiting new members and passing out pamphlets in street markets and outside subway stations. They also work in the neighborhood committees (*juntas de vecinos*) in their communes, and collaborate with other neighborhood-level civil society organizations. Moreover, even many of the party’s activists who are affiliated with one of the party’s non-territorial base units (Content Commissions and Fronts of Action) often end up doing territorial activism in practice, whether by participating in formal party events in their neighborhood or through informal conversations with their friends and neighbors.

I construct a neighborhood-level measure of the size of RD’s membership base by combining two data sources: the party’s membership registry and the Chilean voter registry. The party membership registry contains a list of the personal ID numbers of all of the voters who were affiliated with RD at a given time. Although Chilean parties do not normally make this data public, RD is one of the few parties that has reported its full membership registry at several different points in time since its founding in 2012. I estimate the party’s *membership growth* by comparing the membership registries at different points in time. The Chilean voter registry is a series of files that contain basic demographic information on all registered voters,¹ including their

¹Since 2012, all Chileans 18 years or older are automatically registered to vote.

gender, approximate age, and street address. I merged these two datasets together by matching on the voters' personal ID numbers. I then used the street addresses in the voter registry to geocode every Democratic Revolution member who lived in the Santiago Metropolitan Area to the census block level, and I cross-validated the geocoding results across several commonly-used geocoding APIs: Google Places, Nominatim, and XYZ. Finally, I aggregated back up from the census block level to the neighborhood level, and I used population data from Chile's 2017 census to calculate the percentage of a neighborhood's residents who were affiliated with Democratic Revolution.

In the first set of analyses, I analyze the spatial diffusion of Democratic Revolution membership over time. Specifically, I examine whether the party's growth in a neighborhood during one period is predictive of the way that the party will grow in that same neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods in the next period. I estimate a temporal spatial autoregressive moving average (SARMA) model:

$$\Delta Members_{i,t} = \eta_c + \delta \Delta Members_{i,t-1} + \rho w_i^n \Delta Members_{t-1}^* + \beta X_i + \lambda w_i^d \varepsilon$$

The dependent variable, $\Delta Members_{i,t}$, is the membership growth in the neighborhood during a specific period, as a percentage of the neighborhood's voting-age population. The $\delta \Delta Members_{i,t-1}$ term captures the temporal-autoregressive influence of past membership growth in that neighborhood on current membership growth, and it represents the contagion of membership within a given neighborhood. The $\rho w_i^n \Delta Members_{t-1}^*$ term captures the spatial and temporal influence of membership growth in nearby neighborhoods, and it represents the diffusion of party membership between adjacent neighborhoods over time. $\Delta Members_{t-1}^*$ is a matrix of the membership growth of all of the neighborhoods in the dataset at time $t - 1$, while w_i^n is a spatial weights matrix that defines which neighborhoods are connected to each other. I test the robustness of the results to different multi-order contiguity and "nearest-k" specifications of the w_i^n matrix. X_i are neighborhood-level controls for the percentage of residents that have a college education, the

percentage that identifies as a member of one of Chile's indigenous communities, the percentage that identifies as Protestant, the percentage that identifies as non-religious, and the percentage that donated to candidates from each of Chile's major political alliances during previous elections, while η_c are Commune fixed effects. Finally, the $\lambda w_i^d \varepsilon$ term is the spatial error term, which accounts for the correlation in errors across space. The weights between two neighborhoods in the w_i^d matrix are defined as the inverse of the distance of their centroids, which implies that the correlation in errors is higher among spatially-proximate neighborhoods.

I use three different operationalizations of "neighborhood." The first type of neighborhood is the *unidad vecinal*, which is an administrative unit created by the municipal governments that defines the jurisdiction of neighborhood committees and other neighborhood civil society organizations. The second type of neighborhood is the *población* or *villa*, which are lower-class and lower middle-class urban settlements that were generally founded between the 1940s and the 1980s through land invasions or negotiations between the urban poor and the State or the Church. Although the *poblaciones* and *villas* rarely have an officially-sanctioned role in municipal governance, they carry powerful and often quite militant identities as neighborhoods. The third type of neighborhood that I use is the census block itself.

In the second set of analyses, I examine the relationship between the size of Democratic Revolution's early local membership base and the share of the electorate that voted for the party in the 2017 election, the share of the electorate that voted for the party's alliance, the *Frente Amplio*, and the share of the population that identified with the *Frente Amplio* at the time of the election. The electoral data is measured at the precinct level, while the party identification data is based on public opinion surveys that identified the respondents to the commune (municipal) level. Most communes contain one to four precincts, and most precincts contain many neighborhoods. I control for the precinct or commune's level of economic development, its demographic characteristics, and its electoral support in the 2016 Municipal Elections for the parties that would go on to found the *Frente Amplio* at the beginning of 2017.

At least 0.1% Membership Density in March At least 0.1% Growth, March–November

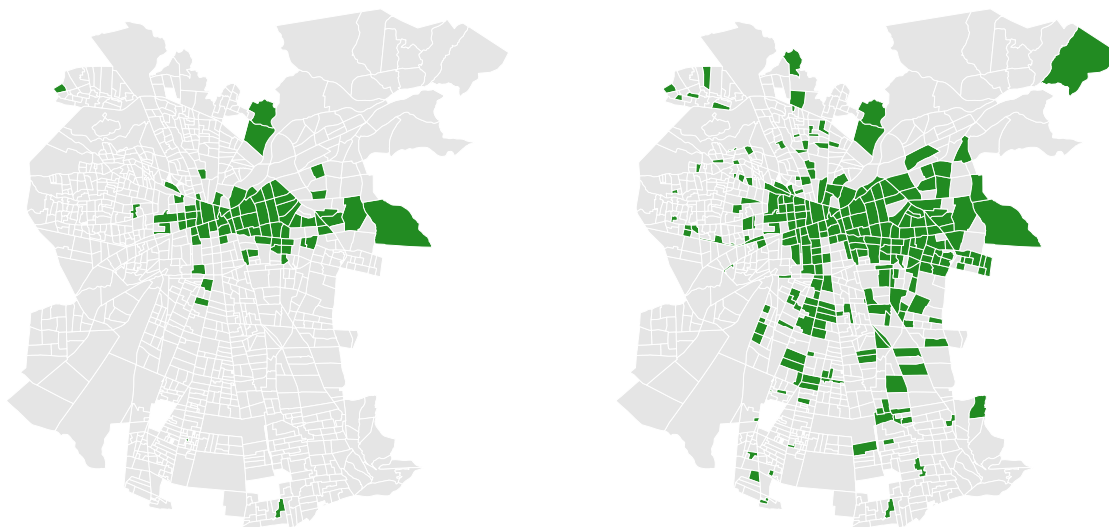


Figure 8.1: The Spread of RD Membership in Santiago

Results

If a party's growth follows a spatial diffusion process, we should expect that its membership growth will spread outwards over time. That is, the party would grow most quickly not only in the same neighborhoods where it experienced high growth during the previous period, but also in neighborhoods that are near those high-growth neighborhoods. The patterns presented in Figure 8.1 support this hypothesis. These maps show *unidades vecinales* where the party recruited at least 0.1% of the neighborhood's population prior to March, 2017 and between March and November, 2017. While the party's growth was concentrated in central Santiago during the first period, by 2017 the party was experiencing high growth in neighborhoods in nearby parts of the city, including the suburbs in Southeastern Santiago, and even some of the poorer neighborhoods in Southern and Western Santiago.

I quantify this diffusion relationship and control for neighborhood characteristics that might affect the party's popularity using the SARMA models. Figure 8.2 reports the coefficients of interest for several different levels of neighborhood and several different operationalizations of spatial proximity. Neighborhood-level controls were included in each model, but are omitted from the figure. The first coefficient in each panel is the temporal-autoregressive effect of membership growth within the same neighborhood, while the other coefficients represent spatial-temporal diffusion effects from nearby neighborhoods. For each level of aggregation, there is a large temporal-autoregressive effect of earlier growth, which suggests that the party experienced higher growth in neighborhoods where it was also more successful at recruiting early members during its first few years as an organization. There is also evidence of diffusion between nearby neighborhoods, though the magnitude of the diffusion effect depends on the way that "neighbor" is defined. For the *Unidades Vecinales* and *Poblaciones* samples, the current growth in a neighborhood was affected by the prior growth in its first-order neighbors (neighborhoods with which it shares a border), but the effect of its second-order neighbors was substantively small and statistically-insignificant. By contrast, the effects for the blocks are significant only for the nearest-k specifications.

The null results are not surprising. The absence of a second-order contiguity effects suggests that neighborhoods are affected only by their direct neighbors, and not by the neighbors of their neighbors. The weaker contiguity effects for the blocks sample are to be expected in most urban environments, where interactions between residents are rarely bounded by city blocks. The temporal autoregressive and diffusion effects for the *Poblaciones* and *Villas* are particularly noteworthy because the residents of these types of lower-class neighborhoods were an especially poor fit for the fairly elitist party image that RD had acquired during its early years. This suggests that the presence of early activists in a community may help mitigate the adverse effects of having a party image that would otherwise be unappealing to that community.

Although the analysis so far has used membership growth as the dependent variable, we

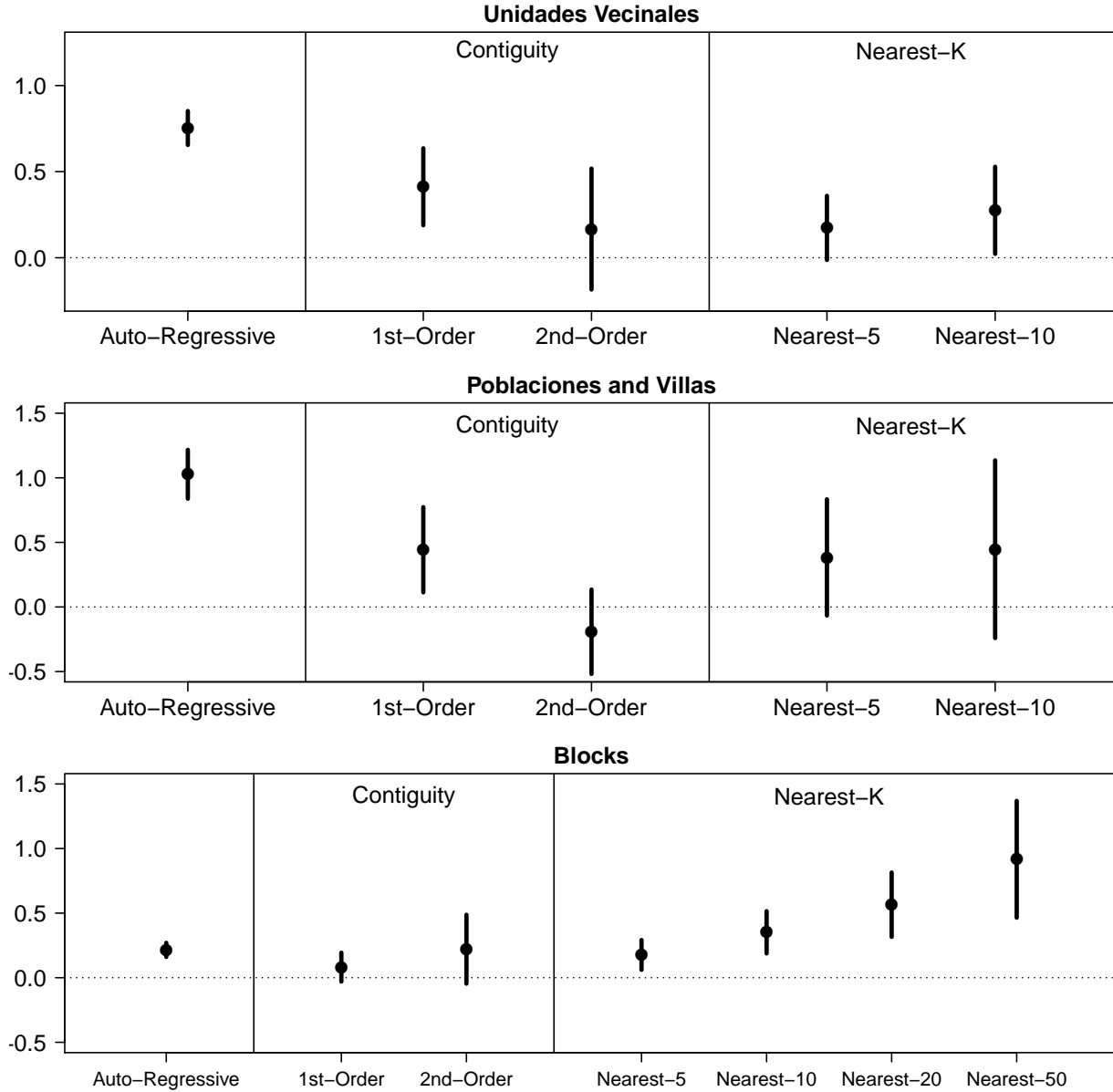


Figure 8.2: Within-Neighborhood and Between-Neighborhood Diffusion Effects.

Note: The Auto-Regressive effect is the lagged effect of membership growth in that same neighborhood. All of the other terms are lagged effects of membership growth in adjacent neighborhoods. “1st-order contiguity” refers to neighborhoods that are directly connected, while “2nd-order continuity” refers to neighborhoods that are separated by one other neighborhood. Nearest-K refers to the k neighborhoods that are closest to a given neighborhood, regardless of whether they directly border each other. Each model included commune fixed-effects and neighborhood-level controls for education, race, religion, and prior political donations.

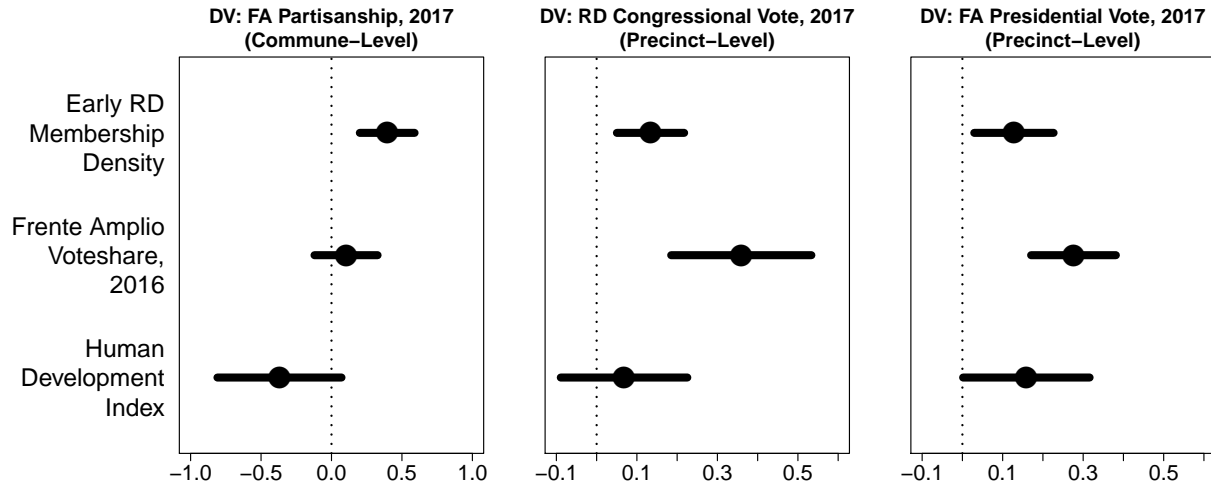


Figure 8.3: The Effect of Early RD Membership Density on *Frente Amplio de Chile* Partisanship and Voting. *Note:* Each of these models congressional district fixed effects, and the standard errors are clustered on the commune. Chilean electoral precincts are much larger than their counterparts in most other countries, and many communes contain only a single precinct.

might also expect that a party’s early membership recruitment in a locality would be predictive of its subsequent development of other types of mass support, including partisan and electoral support. Figure 8.3 shows the relationship between the size of RD’s early membership base and party identification with RD’s alliance, the *Frente Amplio de Chile* in October 2017,² RD’s lower house congressional voteshare in the November 2017 election, and the voteshare of the *Frente Amplio*’s presidential candidate, Beatriz Sánchez. Party identification is measured using the pre-electoral survey conducted by the *Centro de Estudios Públicos* in October, 2017, and respondents are identified to the commune level. Voteshare is measured at the precinct level. All three models are linear probability models with congressional district fixed effects, and the standard errors are clustered on the commune.

This figure shows that RD’s early membership density in a commune or precinct predicts both party identification and voting behavior in late 2017, even after controlling for past electoral

²By the late 1990s, stable multi-party alliances had replaced individual parties as the main objects of party identification in Chile. For this reason, identification with alliances like the *Nueva Mayoría*, *Chile Vamos*, and the *Frente Amplio* is generally more substantively meaningful than identification with the parties that comprise them.

results, the commune's level of development, and the congressional district. A one percentage point change in the percentage of the population affiliated with RD by early 2017 was associated with a 40 percentage point increase in the share of the population that identified with the *Frente Amplio* in October, 2017, and a 13 percentage point increase in the share that voted for RD's congressional list and presidential candidate. This suggests that RD and its alliance attracted popular support at a much faster rate in the places where it had a larger network of founding activists.

The Activation of Partisanship during Election Campaigns

The focus of this dissertation has been on “long-term” party activism that takes place throughout the year and continues after an election is over. Nevertheless, we might also expect that even the temporary surges of party activity that occur during election campaigns could increase the share of a population that identifies with a given party, at least in the short run. While the relative stability of partisanship during campaigns in the United States is often taken as evidence that partisanship is a deep social identity rather than a short-lived “attitude” (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002, 41), ephemeral increases in partisanship during campaigns are not necessarily incompatible with social identity conceptions of partisanship. After all, one of the core tenants of constructivist approaches to group identities is that the relative salience of a person's identities may shift over time, often in response to politics (Laitin 1986; Posner 2005). To the extent that an electoral campaign makes a voter's partisan identity more salient, short-term increases in levels of party identification near elections are to be expected. Indeed, this is a pattern that we often observe in Latin America. Figure 8.4 shows the deviation from the long-term trend in the share of voters who identified with Chile's two major alliances and two of Mexico's major parties. This figure suggests that levels of partisanship in these countries follows a cosine-like trajectory throughout the election cycle: the share of partisans increases during the months leading up to the

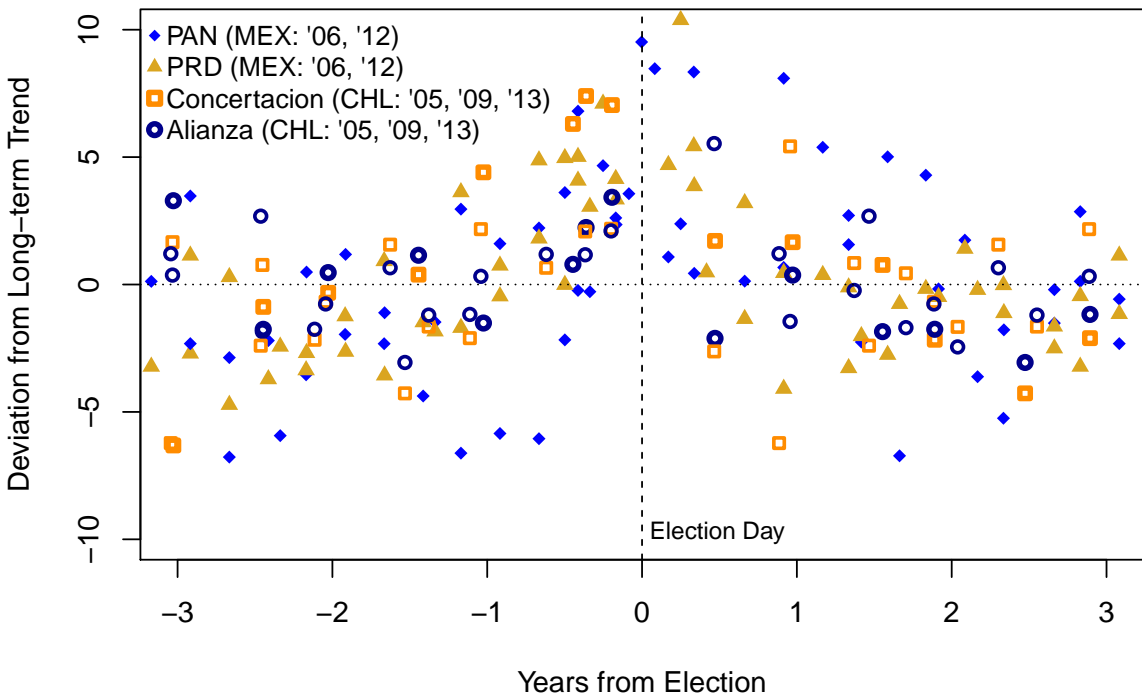


Figure 8.4: Partisanship and the Election Cycle in Chile and Mexico.
Note: The y-axis depicts the deviation between the long-term trend in a party’s party identification rate and its estimated party identification rate in a given survey. For example, a value of +5 would mean that in this particular survey, the share of voters who identified with the party was 5 percentage points higher than what we would have expected given the long-term trend.
Source: Chile: CEP; Mexico: ISA.

election, reaches a local maximum around the time of the election, and then gradually falls again once the election is over.

This type of wave-like pattern in partisanship could be driven by variation in the activity of local party organizations over time. After all, campaign periods are the moment when party organizations are the most active—when even moribund parties send their activists out to knock on doors and talk to voters on public plazas, and when even the most apolitical voters come into contact with local party organizations. However, these temporary increases in partisanship

could also be driven by a host of other factors that are correlated with campaign seasons, such as voters' media consumption habits, political advertisements on television, or politicians' increased visibility. If these surges in partisanship are the result of surges in local party activity in particular, rather than the product of campaign effects in general, we should expect that the increases in partisanship would be concentrated in the areas that are closest to the party's local organization.

Background and Data

The *Frente Amplio* of Uruguay is a fitting case with which to test this hypothesis. Uruguay's 5-year electoral calendar is structured such that all four of the country's major elections³ fall within a single 10-month period, and the campaigns for each of these elections tend to blur into a single, intense, year-long campaign period every five years, surrounded by a four-year period with no major elections. While the *Frente Amplio's* base committees and activist networks are active throughout this five-year cycle, the "campaign year" is the period when their work is most visible to the general public. During the campaign year, the base committees function as neighborhood campaign headquarters, and they organize the *Frente's* neighborhood campaign events, door-to-door canvassing, and distribution of leaflets and ballots. Shortly before the election, the committees' activists often paint the walls, telephone poles, street lamps, garbage cans, and sidewalks of the surrounding neighborhood in the party's colors (red, blue, and white).

Like many parties in Latin America, the *Frente Amplio* tends to experience a short-term boost in levels of party identification during this campaign year. Figure 8.5 shows estimates of Frenteamplista party identification between 2007 and 2012, based on the LAPOP survey. The vertical dashed lines indicate the dates of the four major elections. The percentage of Uruguayans who identify with the *Frente Amplio* has normally hovered around 30% since the early 2000s, but this share increased to 45% in the 2010 wave of the survey, which was carried out during the

³These elections are the Presidential Primaries, which are an open primary held in the Winter; the General Election for the Presidency and Congress, held in the Spring; the Presidential Runoff, held approximately a month after the General Election; and the Municipal Elections, held the following Fall.

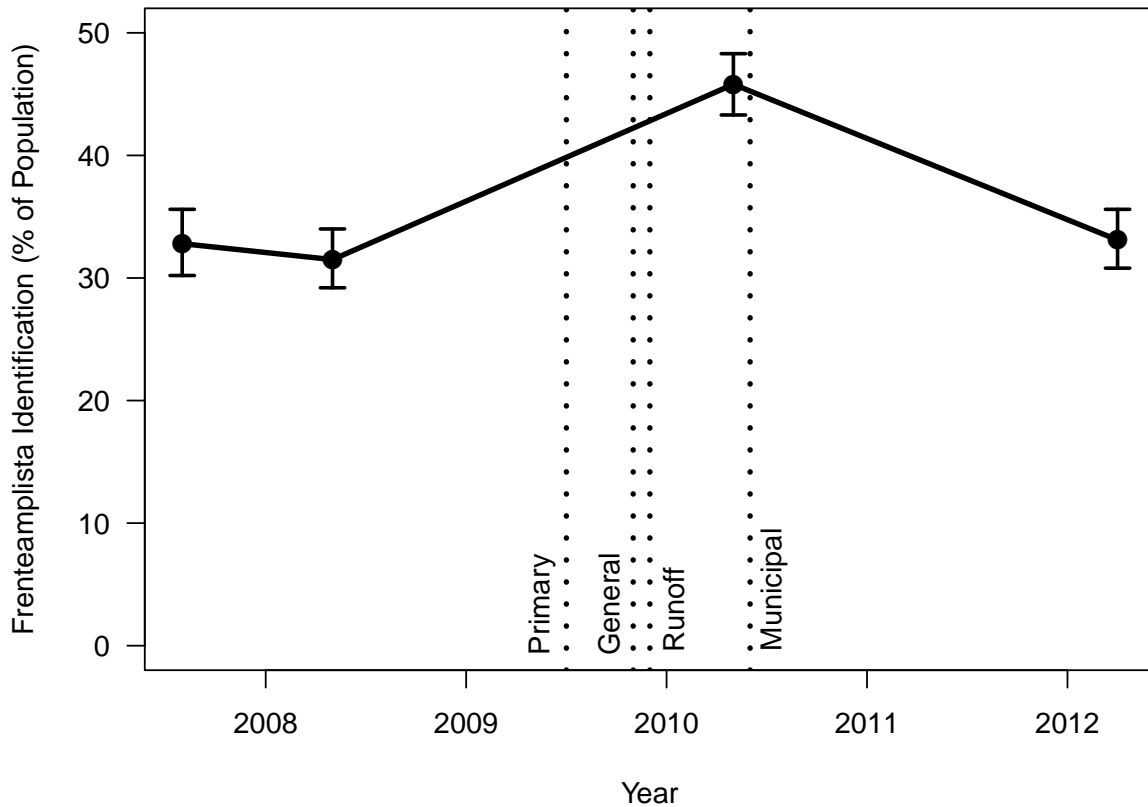


Figure 8.5: Frenteamplista Partisanship During the Election Cycle. *Source:* LAPOP

tail-end of the 2009-2010 campaign season.⁴ The extra 15% of voters whose partisan loyalties the *Frente Amplio* gains during the campaign season could be thought of as “latent partisans” (Gerber, Huber, and Washington 2010), or voters who normally think of themselves as “Independents,” but nevertheless have a party preference that surfaces when pushed.

Voters’ exposure to the work carried out by the *Frente Amplio* base committees also varies across space. Most of the base committees in Montevideo hold their week-to-week meetings and events in their own physical space—in some cases an old house or shop that has been converted into a party office, and in other cases just a shed or garage that belongs to one of the committee’s activists. Although the committee activists sometimes hold party events in public places, such as

⁴Public opinion data from Uruguay shows similar short-term surges in Frente Amplio partisanship around the 2004-2005 and 2014-2015 elections.

neighborhood parks, the committee’s locale is the epicenter of the committee’s week-to-week party work. A consequence of this locale-based organization is that voters who live on the same street as the committee’s locale are much more likely to be exposed to the committee’s activities, compared to voters who live in a different part of the same neighborhood.

I leverage this variation in base committee activity across time and across space to separate-out the surge in party identification induced by grassroots party work from the surge that could be induced by the campaign in general. My dependent variable is whether a survey respondent identifies with the *Frente Amplio*, measured through the LAPOP survey. Respondents in this survey were identified to the census zone level (the primary sampling unit), and due to Uruguay’s small size, many census zones were re-sampled in multiple waves of the survey. This allows me to track changes in party identification in the *same* census zones over time. I restrict my sample to respondents from the Montevideo department because the data on the locations of *Frente Amplio* base committees is less reliable for other departments. I also exclude the small number of respondents who lived in the rural part of the Montevideo department because distances are substantively different in urban and rural areas.

I estimate the interaction model

$$FrenteAmplioPID_{it} = \eta_z + \beta Campaign_{it} + \delta Campaign_{it} * Distance_z + X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

where η_z are census zone fixed effects, $Campaign_{it}$ is an indicator variable for whether the survey was fielded during the long campaign season, $Distance_z$ is the distance from the respondent’s census zone to the nearest *Frente Amplio* base committee, measured in kilometers, and X_{it} are individual-level covariates. The quantity of interest is the coefficient on the interaction term, δ .

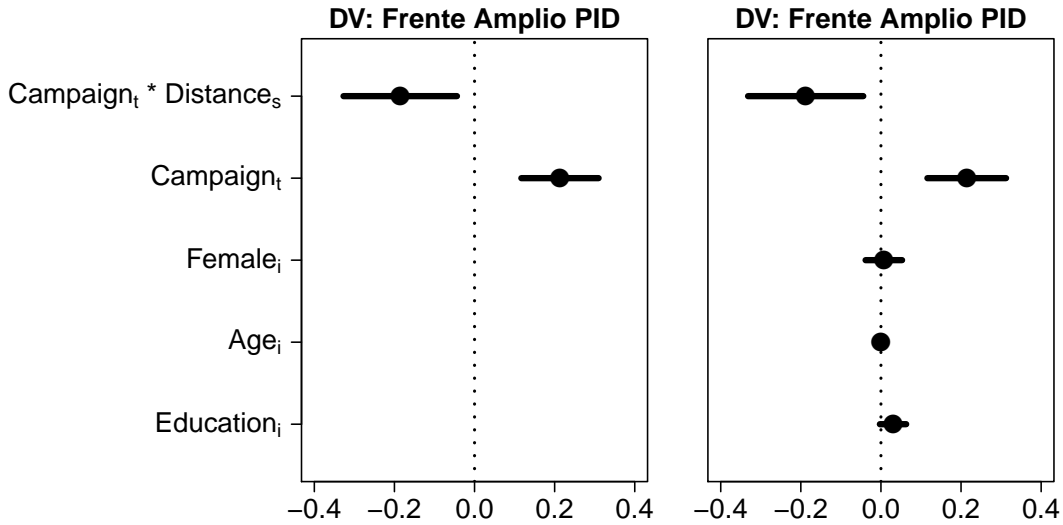


Figure 8.6: Activation of Frenteamplista Partisanship and Distance to Base Committee (OLS Estimates). *Note:* Both models included census zone fixed effects, and the standard errors were clustered at the census zone level.

Results

Figure 8.6 shows the coefficients from this interaction model. The positive and significant coefficient for the *Campaign* term means that respondents who lived in a census zone that contained a base committee (i.e., $Distance_z = 0$) were expected to become over 20 percentage points more likely to identify with the *Frente Amplio* during the campaign year, compared to non-campaign years. The negative and significant coefficient for the interaction term means that this increase in *Frente Amplio* partisanship became smaller as the respondent’s census zone grew more distant from the nearest base committee, and it largely vanished by the time the respondent lived around 1 kilometer away from the nearest committee. This negative interaction effect is consistent with the hypothesis that the base committees played a role in driving the temporary surge in *Frente Amplio* partisanship. In particular, it suggests that this surge in partisanship was concentrated among the respondents who lived closest to the committee and thus had the greatest exposure to its grassroots work.

Figure 8.7 illustrates how the marginal effect of the campaign on *Frente Amplio* partisan-

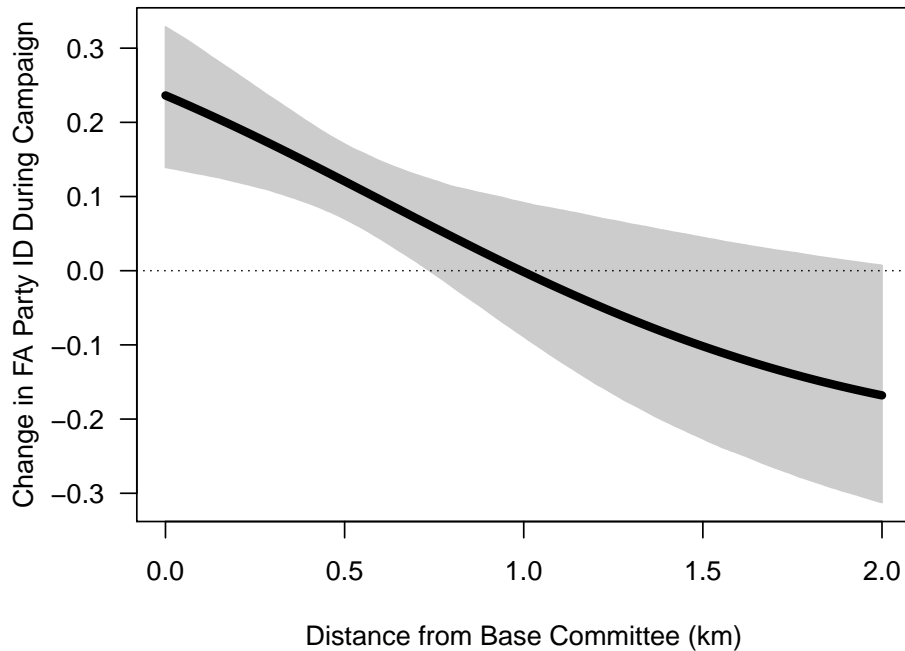


Figure 8.7: Change in Frenteamplista Identification During the Campaign Season and the Respondent’s Distance from the Base Committee. *Note:* This figure depicts the marginal effect of the election campaign on *Frente Amplio* partisanship, as a function of the respondent’s distance to the nearest *Frente Amplio* base committee.

ship varies with the respondent’s distance to the nearest base committee. This figure is based on a multi-level logistic version of the model described above. The figure shows that *Frente Amplio* partisanship increased by roughly 25 percentage points among voters who lived in the immediate vicinity of the committee’s locale. However, this effect quickly tapered off, and voters who lived more than 1 kilometer away experienced no significant change in partisanship during the campaign season. This suggests that while the campaign activities of the base committees may lead to a temporary boost in partisan support for the *Frente Amplio*, these committees have a very limited range, and their presence makes little difference for the partisanship of voters who do not live within their immediate vicinity.

The Resilience of Partisanship during Scandals

In addition to forging and activating their neighbors' partisan attachments, party activists could also help stabilize their neighbors' partisanship during moments of crisis for the party's national image. Negative elite-driven shocks such as corruption scandals often have a devastating effect on voters' partisan attachments because they damage the party brand upon which these partisan attachments are based, and they make voters less willing to associate themselves with the implicated party (Seawright 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2015; Baker et al. 2016). However, this dissertation has argued that the effects of scandals on partisanship may be less severe in places where the party has a stronger grassroots party organization. Through the grassroots party work that they perform in their communities, party activists can reassure disillusioned partisans, deflect the public's attention away from the scandal, and serve as a public face for their party that is untainted by the scandal. Consequently, we should expect that the extent to which a voters' partisanship is affected by a scandal should depend on the strength of the party's grassroots organization in the neighborhood where that voter lives.

Background and Data

By the early 2000s, the Workers' Party (PT) stood out as one of the few Brazilian parties that had developed an active membership base and a strong party brand. However, in 2005, two years after the PT came to power at the national level, several corruption scandals broke that severely damaged the party's image and destroyed its reputation for clean government. The largest scandal was the *Mensalão* scandal about a congressional vote-buying scheme in which the PT paid national legislators from other parties a monthly stipend in exchange for their support in key votes in congress. Other major scandals included a slush fund in PT-governed municipalities that allegedly financed the party's 2002 campaign, and a series of corrupt purchases by the national Ministry of Health. Although the PT survived this wave of scandals and went on to

win the next three presidential elections, the scandals contributed to a nation-wide electoral and partisan realignment during the late 2000s. Over the following years, much of the PT's traditional highly-educated, middle-class base in the Southeast abandoned the party, and the party came to depend more heavily on the electoral support of poorer voters, especially in the Northeast and North (Zucco 2008; Samuels and Zucco 2018).

I already examined the effect of the *Mensalão* scandal on PT partisanship at the *municipal* level in Chapter 6, and I found that while the PT lost partisans over all during the post-scandal period, this decline in PT partisanship was less severe in municipalities where the party had a larger activist base. However, one concern with this municipal-level analysis is that the apparent effect of the PT's activist base may be driven by some other factor specific to that municipality, such as the partisanship of the municipality's mayor. I can address this type of concern through a neighborhood-level analysis that exploits variation between different neighborhoods of the same city. I use data from the Two-City Panel Survey conducted by Baker, Ames, and Renno (2006) in the Brazilian cities of Caixas do Sul and Juiz de Fora in 2002, 2004, and 2006. One particular advantage of using a panel survey is that it allows me to examine how the opinions of the *same* respondents change over time, after the scandal hits. I estimate the first-differences model

$$\Delta PetistaID_i = PetistaID_{i,2006} - PetistaID_{i,2002} = \alpha + \beta X_i + \delta PTmembers_i + \epsilon_i$$

My main independent variable is the PT's membership density in the respondent's neighborhood in 2002, which is defined as the percentage of registered voters in that neighborhood who were formal members of the PT; as I explained in Chapter 6, I am treating PT membership as a proxy for PT party activism. I also control for individual-level demographic characteristics of the survey respondents (X_i) that might affect the trend in an individual's view of the PT over time. My dependent variable is the *change* in a given respondent's partisan attachment to the PT between 2002 and 2006, the two general election years on either side of the beginning of the *Mensalão*

scandal in 2005.⁵ I cluster the standard errors at the neighborhood level. The nearly 7,000 respondents who were interviewed in at least one wave of this survey were spread across 53 different neighborhoods.

Results

The left panel of Figure 8.8 reports the coefficients of the first-difference model. The negative intercept shows that PT partisanship weakened in neighborhoods that had few PT activists prior to 2002. However, the positive and significant coefficient for the PT Members term suggests that this decline in PT partisanship was milder in neighborhoods where the PT had a larger activist base, and the scandal had no discernible effect on PT partisanship in neighborhoods where at least one out of every 100 voters was a PT activist.

What is the mechanism behind this mitigating effect of the PT's neighborhood-level activist base? One possible mechanism is that PT activists are affecting their neighbors' opinion of the scandal itself, or their opinion of senior party leaders. Perhaps having more PT activists in one's neighborhood makes a voter less likely to believe that the party's leaders even did anything wrong. If this is the case, then we might expect that the party's neighborhood-level activist base would have a similar mitigating effect on voters' other opinions about the PT, such as their approval of Lula, the incumbent president and the PT's most visible national-level leader. An alternative mechanism is that having more activists in a neighborhood "uncouples" voters' partisan attachment to the PT from their evaluation of PT elites. Perhaps voters who are embedded in a community that has many PT activists are more likely to think of the party's brand in terms of the party activists in their community, rather than in terms of the party's elite politicians.

The results show in the middle and right panels of Figure 8.8 are more consistent with the second mechanism than the first. The model in the middle panel shows that even after we account

⁵I use waves from general election years in order to ensure that both my pre-test and post-test were taken at comparable periods in Brazil's four-year election cycle. The findings remain unchanged if I were to use the 2004 wave for my pre-test instead.

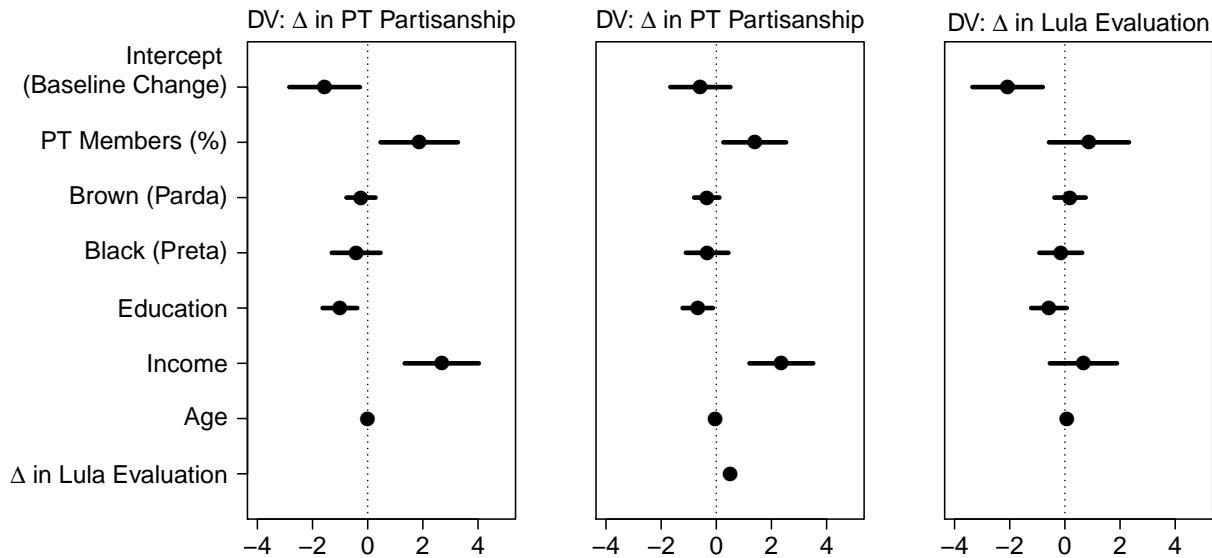


Figure 8.8: The Effect of the PT’s Neighborhood Membership Base on the Change in Petista Party Identification during the Mensalão Scandal (OLS Estimates). *Note:* Petista party identification and Lula’s approval rating are measured on an 11-point scale, where higher values represent stronger support for the PT and Lula, respectively.

for changes in the respondent’s opinion of Lula, the effect of the PT’s neighborhood-level activist base is still significant, and the magnitude of the effect is largely unchanged. This suggests that although the PT’s image may have become deeply intertwined with Lula’s own image by the mid-2000s (Samuels and Shugart 2010; Samuels and Zucco 2014b), the strength of the PT’s local party organization continued to have an independent effect on PT partisanship that was not mediated by the voter’s opinion of Lula. For the model depicted in the right panel of this figure, the dependent variable is now the change in the voter’s evaluation of Lula. The effect of the party’s neighborhood-level activist density was statistically insignificant, and the effect size was substantively small. This implies that approval of Lula dropped even in the neighborhoods that had a high density of PT activists, while the partisan attachments of these voters were largely unshaken by the scandal. In other words, although strong neighborhood-level party organizations could not fully deflect voters’ attention away from the scandal or preserve the reputation of the party’s leader, they could still stabilize voters’ partisan attachments to the party during its image

crisis. These results are consistent with the idea that voters' opinions about party elites are less important for their partisanship in places where the party is well-organized at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

This chapter has tested the effect of party activists on the partisanship of the other voters in the activists' neighborhoods. Using several novel neighborhood-level and spatial datasets on contemporary local party organizations, I showed that a party is more likely to attract and hold partisan support in the neighborhoods where it operates a strong local party organization or a larger network of grassroots party activists. Having a higher density of early activists in a neighborhood helps a new political party attract new members and partisans, both in that same neighborhood and in surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood-level party organizations can also influence voters' partisan attachments to older and better-institutionalized political parties. They activate voters' latent partisan loyalties during election campaigns, and they reinforce voters' partisan loyalties during their party's reputational crises.

These findings help resolve the puzzle of subnational variation in partisan trajectories that I discussed in the introductory chapter, and they complement the municipal-level results that I showed in Chapter 6. This chapter suggests that the reason why trends in party identification often vary widely across different parts of the same country is because parties are organized unevenly across different regions, municipalities, and even neighborhoods. In the places where the party is well-organized, it is often able to leverage its grassroots party organization to expand or at least maintain its partisan support. But in the places where the party is weakly organized, it may even struggle to hold onto the partisans that it already has.

This raises important implications for how we think about partisanship and party images. Recent work on partisanship in Latin America has attributed sudden changes in levels of party identification to shocks to a party's national level image or brand, and this scholarship suggests that

misbehavior by a party's senior politicians—such as corruption scandals and policy-switching—can trigger declines in partisanship (Seawright 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2014; Lupu 2016). However, my findings suggest that national-level party elites are only part of the story. Local-level factors such as grassroots party organizations can also shape how voters view a party and whether they identify with it. Elite missteps on the national stage may still matter for partisanship, and it remains quite plausible that these shocks are the main factors that trigger sudden national-level shifts in partisanship. Yet these shocks are likely to matter more in some places compared to others. The results from this chapter's Brazilian analysis suggest that the same national-level scandal might have a devastating effect on voters' partisan attachments in neighborhoods where the party is weakly organized, but a relatively mild effect in neighborhoods where the party had a robust activist network on the eve of the scandal.

Due to considerations of data availability, this chapter has had to focus on a much narrower range of parties compared to the other chapters in this dissertation. Chile's Democratic Revolution, Uruguay's *Frente Amplio*, and Brazil's PT are each a similar flavor of left-of-center party that spent its formative years in the opposition and had to develop strong roots in civil society in order to survive (Van Dyck 2014a; Luna 2014; Samuels and Zucco 2018). This narrow focus has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, focusing on these relatively ideological parties helps alleviate concerns that my results are really just capturing the effect of clientelism rather than grassroots party activism. These parties have generally been the *least* clientelistic parties in their party systems (Hagopian et al. 2009; Luna 2014), and Democratic Revolution in particular is still quite resource-poor. Thus, clientelism is considerably less plausible as an alternative explanation in the case of these parties than it would have been if my analysis had instead focused on parties like Argentina's Peronists or Mexico's PRI.

On the other hand, this focus on well-organized, left-wing parties might limit the generalizability of my findings. Would party activists have the same effect on voters' partisan attachments to centuries-old elite-founded parties like Uruguay's National Party, newer right-wing parties

like Chile's UDI, or weakly-institutionalized and non-ideological parties like Brazil's PMDB? Although I do not have sufficient data to answer this question at the neighborhood-level, I will be able to provide at least a partial answer at the social network-level in the next chapter, which analyzes the social contagion of partisanship across a wide range of Latin American parties that vary in both their ideological position and their level of institutionalization.

Chapter 9

Party Activists and Partisan Change in Social Networks

The core assumption behind this dissertation is that voters' partisan attachments are rooted in their personal social networks. In Chapter 2, I developed a theoretical framework for the social logic of partisanship, and I argued that low-level party activists are one of the most effective tools that parties can use to shape the partisan composition of a network. In Chapters 4 and 5, we saw parties use this social network logic to their advantage as they expanded their reach into previously untapped social networks and leveraged their activists' preexisting social ties to pull recently-enfranchised voters into the party. Then in Chapters 6 and 7, we saw several Latin American parties withdraw from these social networks and lose their hold over their supporters' partisan loyalties in the process. I also argued that the social nature of partisanship was one of the mechanisms behind the results shown in Chapter 8, when I examined the relationship between party activists and other voters' partisanship at the neighborhood level.

In this final empirical chapter, I provide empirical support for this crucial social network mechanism. My analyses rely on several different types of network panel datasets that enable me to test the social logic of partisanship across a wide range of different Latin American political

parties and political contexts. By triangulating across multiple different network types, parties, and countries, I demonstrate that this social network logic is a fundamental part of party politics in Latin America that a variety of parties use—both consciously and unconsciously—to expand and shore up their partisan support. This triangulation also helps compensate for the weaknesses or limitations of any one identification strategy or measurement strategy.

At the most basic level, the social logic of partisanship implies that partisan attachments are “contagious” through a social network. Over time, voters bring their own partisanship into alignment with the partisanship of their network peers. If they start out with a weaker party identification than most of their peers, they would grow closer to that party over time; conversely, if they start out identifying with the party more strongly than anyone else in their immediate social circle, their party identification would weaken over time. These relationships have already been well-established by previous research on partisanship in the United States, Europe, and Latin America (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Baker et al. 2016; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007), and this chapter will seek to push deeper.

The theoretical framework that I developed in Chapter 2 suggests that although even ordinary voters and partisans can affect their peers’ partisanship, party activists who are long-term members of a particular party and consciously proselytize on behalf of that party are likely to have an even greater effect, compared to ordinary voters. Unlike most ordinary voters, party activists tend to be well-connected to many other members of the social network, and they also go out of their way to broadcast their political loyalties and communicate with their peers about politics. The intensity of their own political loyalties also enables them to withstand communicating with people who may disagree with them without losing faith in their partisan cause. I argued in Chapter 2 that these features make party activists an invaluable tool for shaking a social network out of its partisan equilibrium. In particular, the presence of party activists in a social network explains both how partisan attachments to new parties *grow* through social networks that are initially indifferent or opposed to the party, and how new and established parties alike *maintain*

voters' partisan ties in contexts where they would otherwise be unsustainable. If this is the case, then we should expect to observe that party activists would have an additional effect on their peers' partisanship, above and beyond the effect that is explained by the partisanship of the rest of the network. That is, even after accounting for the partisan composition of a voter's social network and the voter's own partisanship during the current period, voters who have social ties to a party activist should identify with the activist's party more strongly over time.

The framework in Chapter 2 also suggests that some types of voters may be more responsive than others to social relationships and interactions with party activists. First, an activist should have a greater effect on peers who see the activist as similar to themselves or share the activists' world-view. Second, the effect of the activist should depend on the partisan composition of the rest of the voter's social network. The marginal activist is likely to have the greatest effect on voters who are cross-pressured by diverse personal networks that contain a variety of political views.

I begin this chapter by discussing the key identification challenges in social networks research and how I seek to overcome them. Next, I analyze the recent growth of mass partisan attachments to the new Chilean party Democratic Revolution (RD) and its alliance, the *Frente Amplio de Chile*, across several different network settings. Finally, I use panel survey data to extend the analysis to a variety of other parties in Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Brazil.

Research Design

Analyses of social contagion face many of the same identification challenges that I discussed in the previous chapter, along with a couple of new ones. A first challenge is the endogeneity of political outcomes within the network. Although a party activist may influence the political views of her network peers, it is also plausible that these peers will influence the activist's own views. In order to study social contagion, it is necessary to measure the dependent

variable at different points in time and analyze changes in outcomes over time. All of the analyses in this chapter draw on individual-level panel data in which the partisan loyalties of the same voters are measured in multiple periods. This type of data allows me to account for an individual's prior partisan attachments and establish the order in which members of a dyad or a network began supporting the party.

A second challenge is that the network structure itself may be endogenous to the outcome of interest as people are more likely to form and maintain relationships with peers who share their political views or values. I address this problem several ways in this chapter. I begin by focusing on networks that are unlikely to change during the window of analysis and are plausibly causally prior to the voter's partisanship. I then extend the analysis to less-stable networks by modeling contact between a voter and an activist through a cross-lagged model. I show that while voters who develop a relationship with a party activist are more likely to identify with the activist's party in future periods, stronger partisans are *not* more likely to develop a relationship with a party activist.

A third challenge is the traditional confounding variable problem: people who inhabit the same social network are likely to be exposed to many of the same social, political, and economic conditions, and these variables may exert an independent effect on their political views. This alternative explanation is more difficult to rule out completely, but I can alleviate this concern by controlling for relevant factors that might affect the network members' party identification, such as their neighborhood, their socioeconomic background, and their ideology.

The analyses in this chapter employ three broad types of research designs. The first part of the chapter analyzes the formation of partisan attachments with the Chilean political party Democratic Revolution, and its alliance, the *Frente Amplio* during 2017. I restrict my sample to Chilean voters who were not yet a member of Democratic Revolution by early 2017, and I examine whether non-affiliated voters who were socially-connected to an early member of the party were more likely to join the party themselves by the time of the November 2017

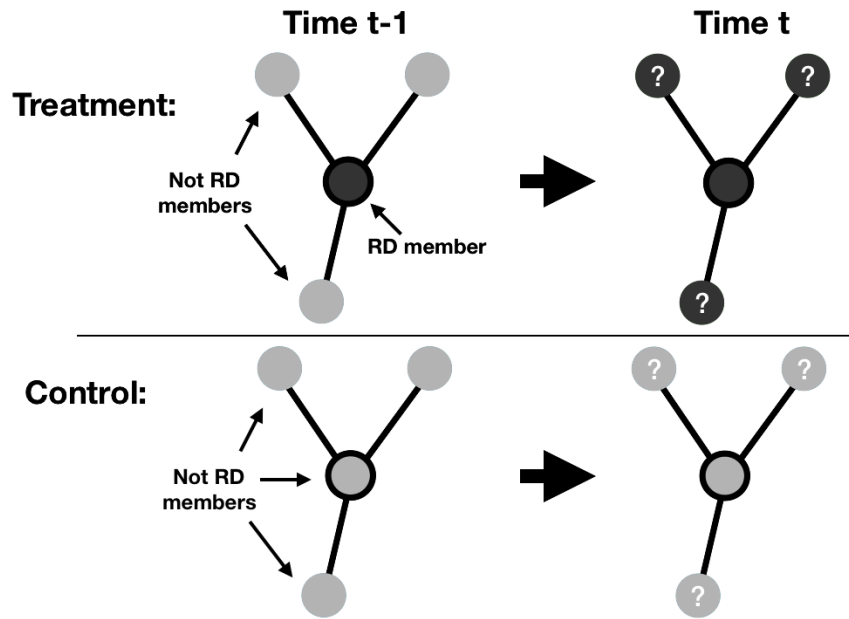


Figure 9.1: Summary of the Research Design

election. Using coarsened exact matching and a fixed effects design, I compare social networks that are highly similar across most characteristics, but differ in whether they contained an early Democratic Revolution member. Figure 9.1 summarizes this research design. Because I focus on social networks that were formed prior to Democratic Revolution’s rise in early 2017, it is unlikely that the voters’ lagged partisan attachments to this party affected the structure of these networks.

Although this research design is well-suited for studying the rise of party identification with a new party, it is inappropriate for analyses of partisan attachments with established parties because many voters may already have an opinion about a mature party, and these opinions are more likely to be old enough to affect a voter’s social ties. In order to extend my analyses to established parties, I must account for the voter’s lagged partisan attachment to the party. I use a lagged-autoregressive model to evaluate whether having social ties with party activists in one period affects a person’s partisanship in the following period, even after controlling for their

partisan attachment during the previous period:

$$Partisanship_{i,t} = \eta_i + \beta Partisanship_{i,t-1} + \delta ActivistTie_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_i$$

η_i are individual fixed effects that account for time-invariant characteristics of the voter that might affect their partisanship, while $Partisanship_{i,t-1}$ is the individual's lagged partisanship. While a voter's partisanship can change over time, their partisanship in one period is generally a good predictor of their partisanship in the next. If having social ties with party activists affects a person's partisanship, it should shift their partisanship above its baseline level and make the person even more partisan than they were in the previous period.

The lagged-autoregressive model is still vulnerable to endogeneity if the autoregressive effect of partisanship extends over multiple periods. The most common way of addressing endogeneity in public opinion research is by using a cross-lagged model that simultaneously estimates the structural equations

$$Partisanship_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Partisanship_{i,t-1} + \delta ActivistTie_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_i$$

$$ActivistTie_{i,t} = \alpha_0 + \gamma Partisanship_{i,t-1} + \alpha_1 ActivistTie_{i,t-1} + \phi_i$$

If social ties with activists are endogenous to a person's partisanship, then we would expect that the coefficient γ would be positive and significant, which would mean that their lagged partisan attachment to the party would predict a greater likelihood of having social ties with the party's activists in the next period. But if δ is large and significant but γ is small and insignificant, that would suggest that the direction of the relationship runs mainly from activist ties to partisanship, and not the other way around.

Social Contagion and Democratic Revolution Partisanship

In this section, I analyze the partisan growth of the Chilean party Democratic Revolution (RD) during the run-up to Chile's general election in 2017. RD is one of the clearest cases of a contemporary Latin American party that consciously used social networks as part of its broader party-building strategy. The leaders and activists from RD that I interviewed during my fieldwork in Chile reported that from RD's earliest days as an organization, it sought to leverage the social ties of its "well-connected" members to pull new supporters into the party. Moreover, several of my interview subjects emphasized the importance of social relationships in their own recruitment into RD:

Some of my friends joined RD a few months before I did. I often overheard them talking about party business, and I finally asked them to explain to me what their party was about. They didn't explain it very well, to be honest, but they tried to get me involved: 'Come to a party meeting this evening and everything will become clear.' So I went and I started to see the party in a different light. I think I am still a lot more left-wing than most people in the party, but I recognized that they were taking politics seriously, which is something relatively rare on the Chilean Left today. (RD activist, Chile, October, 2017)

I got involved in RD in 2013, largely through my friendships within other party members. One of my closest friends has been a member of the party ever since it was founded, and over the course of the many political conversations we had, I came to realize that I already agreed with most of the things that her party stood for. I think many people joined RD the same way. You could say that RD was built upon preexisting social relationships—friendships between people who knew each other at the university, and ties between people who had previously worked together in the same social movements. (RD activist, Chile, November, 2017)

Some of my subjects also suggested that in addition to leveraging the social ties of the party's founding members, RD also went out of its way to recruit well-connected civil society activists who were likely to bring other supporters into the party or raise the party's profile in their organizations.

Data

Most previous research on the social contagion of support for a political party has relied on survey-based measures of partisanship or voting behavior (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Baker, Ames, and Renno 2006; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007). However, survey-based measures are problematic for studying the growth of a new party that still has only limited popular support. Because the party's early supporters are likely to comprise a tiny share of a nationally-representative sample, attempts to identify them in the survey may be overwhelmed by measurement error (Ansolabehere, Luks, and Schaffner 2015). I avoid these problems in this section of the chapter by using behavioral measures of both partisanship and social network ties. I analyze the spread of support for Democratic Revolution through three types of social networks: family household networks, university students networks, and Twitter networks.

The analyses of the household and students networks draw on the same Chilean voter dataset that I used in the previous chapter. This dataset contains a list of the more than 14 million adult Chileans who were registered to vote at the time of Chile's 2017 election,¹ along with their personal ID number (which is highly correlated with their age), their gender, and their street address. I identify which of these registered voters were members of RD by checking the voters' personal ID numbers (RUN) against the ID numbers listed in RD's membership registry. Because RD has reported its full membership registries at several different points in time since its founding, I am able to approximate the year in which a given voter joined the party by comparing the set of voters listed in one membership registry with the set of voters listed in the earlier registries.

I measure the voters' family networks by exploiting the Spanish naming convention that a person's two surnames are their father's first surname followed by their mother's first surname. I use the street addresses in the voter registry to verify that voters who share a surname are part of the same household, and I use the data on the voters' approximate age and gender to

¹Since 2012, voting registration has been compulsory in Chile, while voting itself is optional. Both Chilean citizens and non-citizens who have resided in Chile for five years or more are entitled to vote in Chilean elections.

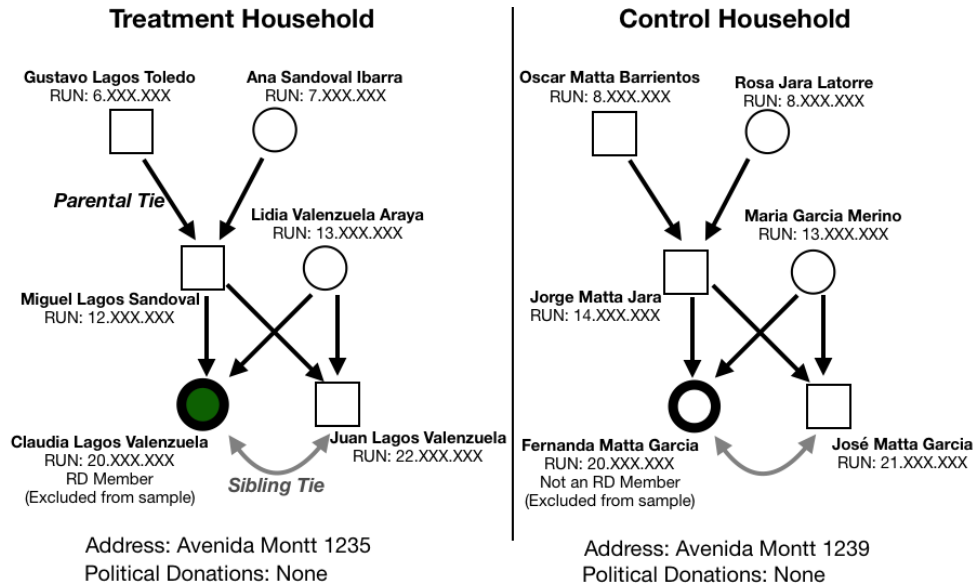


Figure 9.2: Example of Household Network Matching

determine the direction of parent-child relationships. For the vast majority of households in the sample, it is possible to reconstruct the multi-generational network structure within the household using only the surnames, relative age, and gender of its members. I match treatment and control households using coarsened exact matching on the network structure of the household, the age and gender of the household’s members, the street segment on which the household lives, and the household’s political donations history prior to the 2017 campaign. Figure 9.2 illustrates this matched design in the case of two fictional households. Each member of the treatment household has a counterfactual in the control household who occupies the same position in the family network and is of a similar age. Matching on street segment ensures that the treatment and control households are exposed to similar geographic factors such as variation in the neighborhood-level organization of political parties. In the Chilean context, matching on the street segment also makes it likely that the treatment and control households will share the same socio-economic background.

I measure the networks of university students using academic degree data reported by the University of Chile, the most prestigious public university in Chile. Although RD grew out of the

2011 Students' Movement and actively recruited activists and members at Chile's universities, relatively few of the party's founders had attended the University of Chile. Instead, the party drew most of its early recruits from the Catholic University, where Giorgio Jackson and other RD leaders had been student leaders at the time of the 2011 protests. As a result, RD was hardly a hegemonic force in the University of Chile's student politics by the time of the 2017 election, and most of the party's growth among the university's students and alumni occurred in 2016 and 2017. I focus on student cohort networks that are defined by the student's major and the year that they graduated. Education in most large Latin American universities is highly segregated by academic discipline. Prospective undergraduate students of the University of Chile apply to a particular department, and they take most of their courses within that same department. Different faculties are located in separate buildings and often on separate urban campuses spread across five different municipalities in the Santiago metropolitan area, and this reduces contact between students from different departments during the regular school day. Moreover, the courses in most departments follow a fixed three to six year curriculum with limited electives, and students take most of their classes with the same group of students who began the program the same year that they did. This education structure produces strong social and professional ties between students who belong to the same major-year cohort, and these ties often endure after the students graduate. I analyze the contagion of Democratic Revolution membership in these major-year cohorts. The dependent variable is whether the student joins the party between March and November, 2017; the main independent variable or interest is whether anyone in the student's cohort was already a member of the party by March.

I supplement the analyses of family and students networks with an analysis of contagion through Chile's Twitter network. Although social media-based measures have weaker construct validity and external validity compared to other measures of partisanship and social networks, this data source has distinct advantages as well. In particular, the Twitter data allows me to measure a person's political leanings and social setting during granular time intervals and take into account

their ideology and position within the broader network. Between June 1 and December 31, 2017, I collected data on the tweets, replies, retweets, and likes of approximately 150,000 Chilean Twitter users using an algorithm that continuously cycled through different users and recorded data on their recent activity.

My dependent variable in the Twitter network analysis is whether the user “liked” (“favorited”) a tweet from one of the *Frente Amplio*’s official accounts (or the official accounts of any of its constituent parties) during a given period. Unlike retweets, likes are an unambiguous expression of affect, support or approval. Party and alliance accounts include not only the main account for that organization, but also the accounts of all of its regional and municipal branches, functional branches (such as women’s and students’ sectors), and substantive groups (such as the party’s working committee on LGBT rights). I focus on tweets from party accounts rather than the broader set of tweets from all politicians and members affiliated with the party because party accounts are more likely to tweet exclusively about the party, and their partisan affiliations are immediately obvious to observers of the like.² This strategy also avoids the ambiguity between a user’s partisan attachment to the party as a whole and their personalistic support for a particular politician. I analyze both the time until a user’s *first* like of a *Frente Amplio* tweet and week-to-week changes in the number of *Frente Amplio* tweets that the user liked during a given week.

I measure Twitter users’ social ties based on their “replying” behavior. I consider two users to be “socially connected” if they *repeatedly* converse with each other over Twitter by replying to each other’s tweets over many different days during a given interval. Intuitively, this measurement approach allows users themselves to identify which accounts out of the many accounts they follow are the most important or salient to them, based on their engagement with those accounts. Repeated interactions between accounts is also one of the factors that Twitter’s timeline algorithm takes into account, which means that users are much more likely to see tweets

²Many Chilean politicians who are active on Twitter do not mention their party affiliation in their bio.

from accounts that they reply to regularly. Although I find similar results for network ties based on followings and retweets, I prefer this reply-based measure because it is a closer analogue to the “discussant networks” used in survey-based research on social networks (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Baker, Ames, and Renno 2006).

My main independent variable is whether the respondent is socially connected to an activist from the *Frente Amplio de Chile*. I code a user as a *Frente Amplio* activist if they describe themselves in their profile description as an activist of either the *Frente Amplio* or any of its member parties. I exclude non-human accounts (such as the accounts that belong to organizations or corporations) from the analysis, so official party accounts are not coded as “activists.” Because Chile has a highly programmatic party system, a person’s ideology is a strong predictor of their partisanship, and it is vital that I control for the ideology of the Twitter users in the sample. I measure users’ ideology using the Bayesian IRT approach developed by Barberá (2015). This approach is based on the assumption that the set of political accounts that a user follows is indicative of that user’s ideological preferences, and it simultaneously estimates both the ideal points of the users and the ideal points of the followed political accounts along a unidimensional ideological spectrum.

Results

Family Networks

Family household networks are particularly conducive to the spread of partisan loyalties due to the many similarities between the family members and the intimacy and long duration of their relationships with each other. Partisan socialization within a family is one of the oldest findings in the literature on partisanship in the United States, and it is one of the few assumptions that unites most of the rival approaches to understanding partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960; Achen 2002; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007).

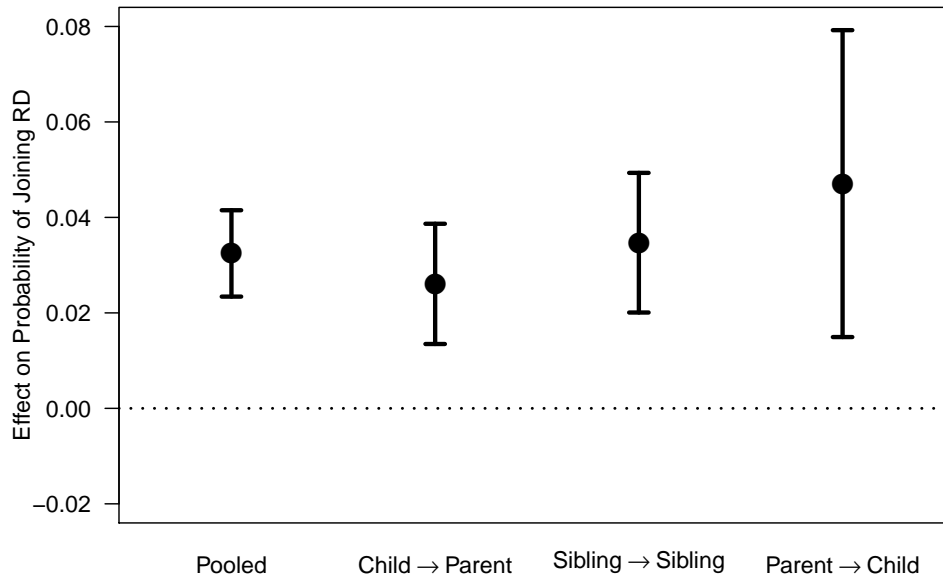


Figure 9.3: Social Contagion of RD Membership in Family Networks

Figure 9.3 shows the difference in the proportion of household members who joined RD between March and November, 2017, between the treatment and control matched samples. Non-affiliated voters who had an early Democratic Revolution member in their household were around 4 percentage points more likely to join the party during the campaign. This represents roughly a ten-fold increase relative to the party’s growth in the control group. By the time of the November election, less than 0.3% of registered voters nation-wide and less than 0.5% of voters in Santiago were affiliated with the party.

Figure 9.3 also shows how the contagion effect varies with the type of relationship that links the family members. While the differences between the treatment and control groups were positive and significant across each type of relationship, there is some evidence of heterogeneous effects based on the type of relationship. Parents who had a child in the party by March were only 2 percentage points more likely to join the party by November, while siblings who had a sibling in the party and children who had a parent in the party were 3 and 4.5 percentage points more likely to join, respectively. These differences are consistent with previous research on political

influence within immediate families (Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007).

Students Networks

Universities have long been a vital recruiting ground for Chilean parties, and some of the country's major parties including the Christian Democratic Party and the right-wing Independent Democratic Union originated as university students movements. University politics has also served as a "political nursery" for many of the new political parties and movements that formed in the aftermath of Chile's nation-wide students protests in 2011.

Figure 9.4 reports the effect of having an early RD member in one's department-year student cohort on the probability that an unaffiliated student joins the party between March and November, 2017. The first set of coefficients correspond to a linear probability OLS model. Because these models contain fixed effects for academic major, they are comparing students who belonged to the same department but started the program in different years. The second and third set of coefficients correspond to multi-level linear probability and logistic models, respectively. The fourth set of coefficients allows each department to have its own time trend in the likelihood that different "generations" of its former students would join the party in 2017. These departmental time trends help account for gradual, major-specific shifts in the party's popularity between students who attended the university at different times, and gradual shifts in the type of student who chooses to enroll in a given department. The treatment effect is quite similar across each specification of the model, and in each case, having an early member in one's cohort increased the likelihood that a student would join the party by around 50%.

The gray coefficients in Figure 9.4 correspond to samples that include only the students who graduated from the university before the end of 2010, a few months before Chile's famous 2011 students protests began. Students who had graduated by 2010 were not exposed to the same sustained political mobilization that students who were still at the university in 2011 and 2012 experienced. Restricting the sample to this older sub-generation rules out the alternative

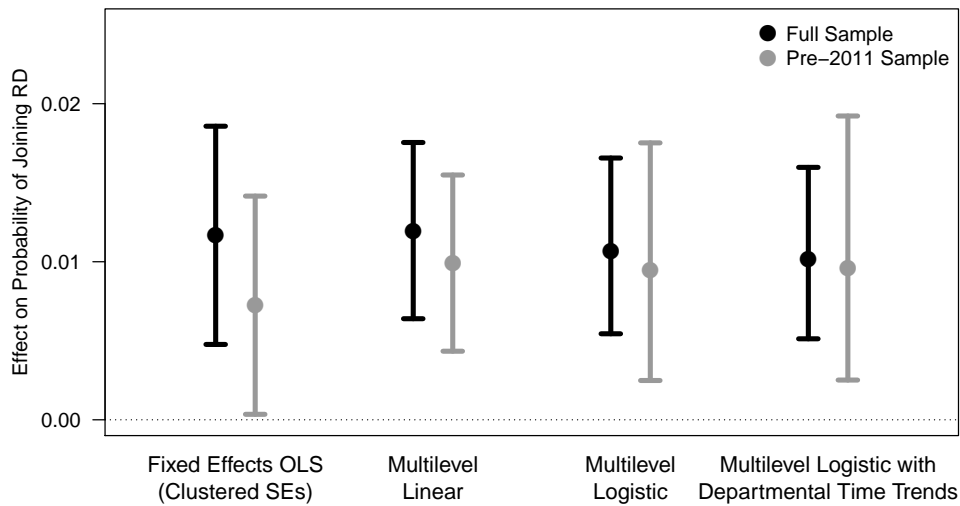


Figure 9.4: Social Contagion of RD Membership in University Students Networks.
Note: The OLS model included two-way fixed effects by the student’s major/department and the student’s year of graduation. Standard errors were clustered on the department level.

explanation that the differences between the treatment and control cohorts are merely the product of changes in the political environment at the university in the early 2010s. Although the effect sizes for the restricted sample are slightly smaller than the effect sizes for the full sample, they remain positive and significant, and they continue to represent around a 50% increase in the affiliations rate in treatment cohorts compared to control cohorts. The large effects for students who had already graduated by 2010 are particularly striking given that Democratic Revolution was not founded until 2012, and it did not become an official party until 2016. This suggests that the mechanism behind these results is not simply attending classes with students who are currently members of the party. Instead, these results indicate that support for RD can spread along older and potentially more-latent social ties formed between former classmates who had already graduated from the university many years earlier.

The results presented so far have relied on a binary measure of the main independent variable that coded an unaffiliated voter as “treated” if anyone in their network was a party member. However, social contagion theories also suggest that the prevalence of a type of political

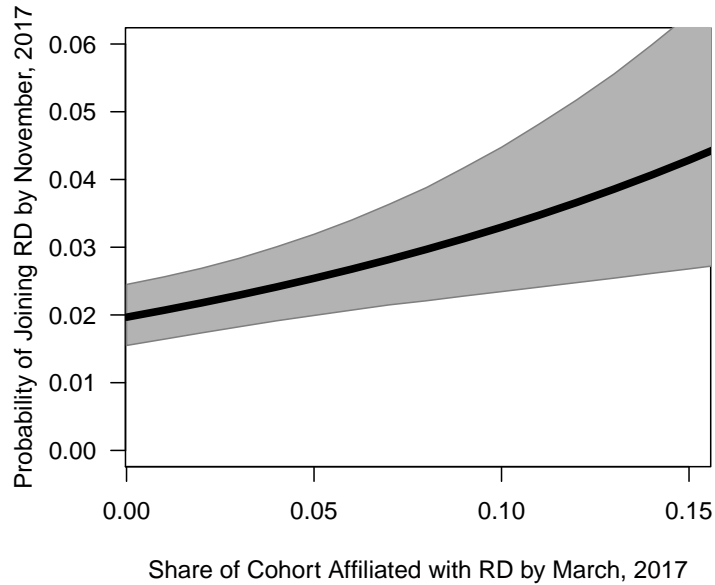


Figure 9.5: The Probability of Joining RD and the Early Membership Density in the Cohort.
Note: This figure shows the predicted probability of joining RD between March and November, 2017, as a function of the share of the other students in the student’s department-year cohort who were already members of the party by March.

view of behavior in the social network as a whole can affect the speed with which it spreads to other members of the network. In particular, people become more likely to emulate a view or behavior when that view or behavior is already well-represented in their network. I test this hypothesis by adapting the previous students network analysis and operationalization treatment as the *proportion* of the non-affiliated voter’s student cohort that had already joined the party by march. Figure 9.5 shows the predicted probability of joining RD, based on a logistic model. This figure suggests that the likelihood that an unaffiliated voter joins the party between March and November increases with the prevalence of early members in their network, and this is consistent with theoretical expectations.

Twitter Networks

Although the rhetoric of Democratic Revolution and its allies in the *Frente Amplio de Chile* emphasizes the importance of face-to-face meetings and territorial party work, these parties

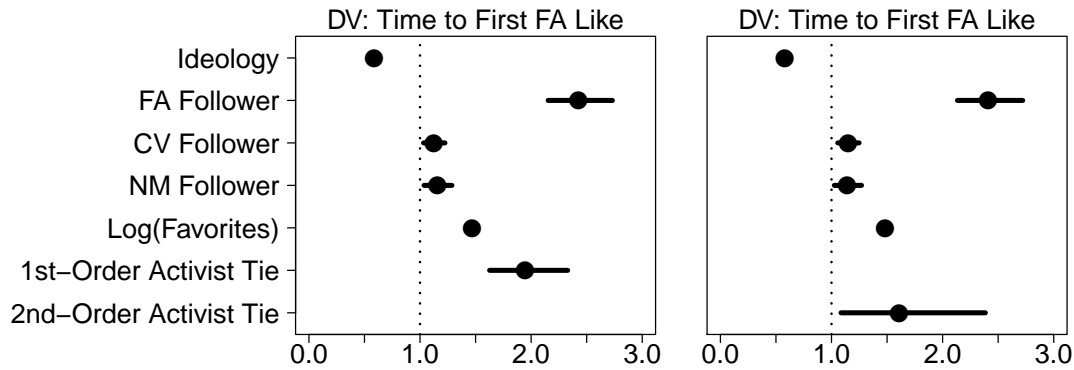


Figure 9.6: Effect of Activist Ties on the Time to a User’s First *Frente Amplio* Like (Hazard Ratios)

have also invested considerable time and effort in maintaining a strong social media presence. Social media allows a new party to communicate with potential supporters who are beyond the reach of its territorial party organization, and it also offers supporters ways to proselytize on behalf of their party that are less costly or time-consuming than participating in the party’s neighborhood activities.

I begin by examining the relationship between a user’s social proximity to a *Frente Amplio* activist and the amount of time it takes for the user to begin liking *Frente Amplio* tweets for the first time. For now, I assume that network ties are “static” or unchanging, and I consider only reply-based relationships that were formed prior to the beginning of 2017, when the *Frente Amplio* was founded. I estimate a survival model where the “at risk” population consists of Twitter users who have not yet liked a *Frente Amplio* tweet. Figure 9.6 reports the hazard ratios, which represent how the “risk” of liking a *Frente Amplio* tweet would change with a one unit increase in a single variable, when all other variables are held constant. A value of one means that the “risk” remains the same when the variable is increased by one unit (that is, the variable does not affect the time until a user’s first *Frente Amplio* like), while a value greater than one means that the “risk” increases as the value of the variable increases. The left panel tests the effect of a direct tie with a *Frente Amplio* activist, and it shows that the “risk” was twice as high among voters who

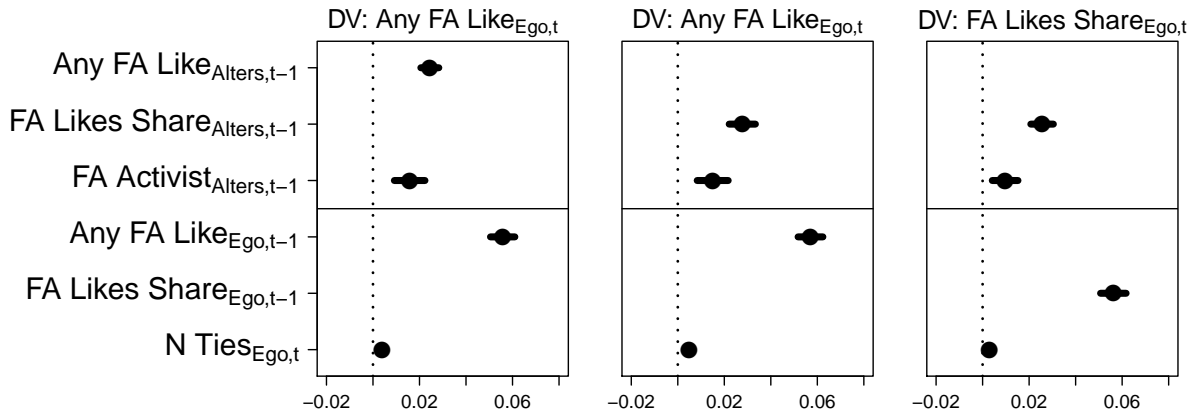


Figure 9.7: Effect of Lagged Activist Ties on Users’ Weekly *Frente Amplio* Likes (OLS Estimates). *Note:* Each model contained two-way fixed effects for the Twitter user (Ego) and the week. Standard errors were clustered on the Twitter user.

had a direct tie to an activist, compared to those that did not. The right panel tests the effect of a second-order tie with an activist (having a direct tie to a person who has a direct tie to a *Frente Amplio* activist) among the population that was only indirectly-connected to an activist. This effect is slightly smaller compared to the effect of a direct tie, but it remains significantly greater than one. This suggests that even indirect connections with *Frente Amplio* activists could increase the speed with which *Frente Amplio* partisanship reached an individual.

Social contagion may also operate over much shorter time intervals. Even week-to-week changes in a user’s social context—such as shifts in which parties the user’s peers support, or the formation of a new tie to a party activist—may lead the user to grow closer to some parties and more distant from others over the short term. I investigate these possibilities using a temporally lagged model with user fixed effects, where the user’s social network is allowed to change over time and both partisanship and network ties are measured at one-week intervals. Figure 9.7 reports the results of these fixed effects models. The left panel shows that having even one network peer who liked a *Frente Amplio* tweet during the previous week increased the probability that the Ego would like a *Frente Amplio* tweet by around 0.02, which is a large effect relative to the baseline probability that a user liked at least one *Frente Amplio* tweet during a given week (roughly 0.05).

The middle and right panels show that the Ego was also influenced by the aggregate composition of the partisanship of her network, and she became more likely to like *Frente Amplio* tweets when a greater share of her personal network liked *Frente Amplio* tweets during the previous week. Across each of these models, having a social tie with a *Frente Amplio* activist during the previous week had a positive effect on the Ego's attachment to the *Frente Amplio*, even after taking into account the partisan composition of the rest of her personal network and her own lagged liking behavior.

I also hypothesized that certain individuals will be more responsive than others to the appeals of their activist peers. One variable that is likely to condition the effect of social ties with activists is the Ego's own ideology. Although party activists often attempt to tailor their messages to diverse audiences, it may be more difficult for them to persuade peers who have drastically different political values or preferences. Interactions between activist Alters and ideologically-opposed Egos might even make the Egos *less* likely to support the party by confirming their suspicion that the party stands for everything that they despise. Although the *Frente Amplio de Chile* includes a few centrist parties and movements, such as the Liberal Party, most of its member organizations place themselves on the left of the ideological spectrum, and the alliance has adopted many of the symbols of the traditional Chilean Left. Consequently, social ties with *Frente Amplio* activists should be more likely to have a positive effect on *Frente Amplio* partisanship among leftist Egos, while they would be more likely to be ineffective or have a negative affect among right-wing Egos.

I test this hypothesis by interacting the Activist term with higher-order $Ideology_{Ego}$ terms. Figure 9.8 shows the marginal effect of having a social tie with a *Frente Amplio* activist for different values of the Ego's ideology. The ideology variable follows a standard-normal distribution, which means that the distribution is centered at zero and the units on the x-axis can be interpreted as standard deviations from the mean; negative values indicate that the user is left-wing. This figure shows that the effect of social ties with *Frente Amplio* activists was strongest

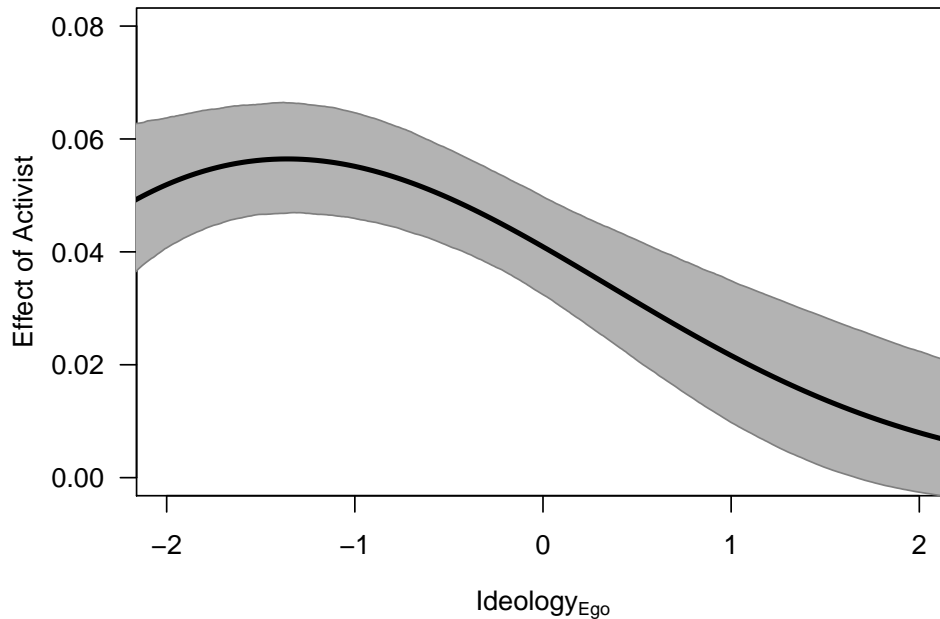


Figure 9.8: Heterogeneous Effect of Activists by the Ego’s Ideology.

Note: This figure depicts the marginal effect of having a tie to an activist on the likelihood that a user likes a *Frente Amplio* tweet, as a function of the user’s ideal point. The x-axis represents standard deviations in the distribution of users’ ideal points, which were normalized to be centered at zero. Users’ ideal points were estimated using the IRT approach developed by Barberá (2015).

among users who were around one standard deviation to the left of the mean ideology. These activists also had a positive effect on the *Frente Amplio* partisanship of centrist and center-right users, but this effect diminished as the Ego became more right-wing, and it fell to near zero among Egos whose ideal points were more than two standard deviations to the right of the mean. These results support the hypothesis that the effect of activist ties is conditional on the ideology of the Ego. But they also show that the positive effect of activist ties on partisanship was not limited only to the left side of the ideological spectrum, and *Frente Amplio* activists also had a positive influence on the partisanship of their center-right peers.

A second factor that conditions the influence of party activists is the heterogeneity of the rest of the Ego’s personal network. Following the framework developed in Chapter 2, we might expect to observe a non-monotonic relationship between the partisan composition of a person’s

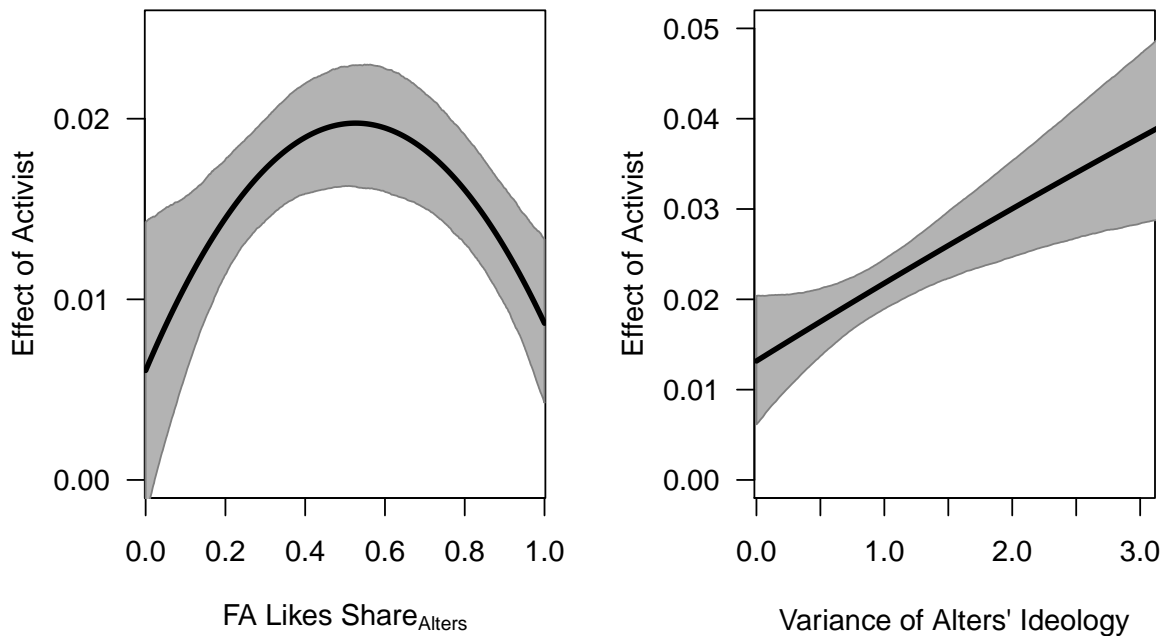


Figure 9.9: Heterogeneous Effect of Activists by the Diversity of the Ego’s Network.

Note: Both panels depict the marginal effect of having a tie to an activist on the probability that a user likes a *Frente Amplio* tweet. The left panel shows this marginal effect as a function of the share of the user’s *other* direct network peers (excluding the activist) who had also liked a *Frente Amplio* tweet over the course of the previous week; the right panel shows the marginal effect as a function of the variance of the ideal points of all of the users’ direct network peers.

social network and the size of the effect of party activists on their partisanship. Activists are likely to make the most difference in heterogeneous networks that contain a mixture of partisans of different parties. On the other hand, activists are likely to be redundant in networks that already uniformly support the activist’s party, and they are likely to have a harder time breaking through in networks that are uniformly opposed to the party.

The left panel of Figure 9.9 shows the marginal effect of having a tie with a *Frente Amplio* activist, as a function of the *Frente Amplio*’s share of all of the political likes in the Ego’s network during the previous week. Consistent with the predictions of the network model, there was a strong, non-linear relationship between the partisan composition of the network and the effect of activist ties. Compared to both extremes, activists were more than twice as effective in networks

where *Frente Amplio* tweets constituted around half of the political likes from the Ego's peers. The right panel of Figure 9.9 shows how the effect of party activists changes with the ideological diversity of the Ego's personal network. Party activists had a positive and significant effect even among Egos who had an ideologically homogeneous network, but the activist's effect grew larger as the Ego's network became more ideologically diverse.

Social Contagion in Other Parties

Democratic Revolution constitutes an easy case for my argument. First, it is a party that consciously incorporated social networks into its party-building strategy. Second, RD was founded at a time when most Chilean voters had already stopped identifying with their traditional political parties, which implies that a new party like RD would have had considerable room to grow. The remainder of this chapter will examine whether similar relationships hold for other Latin American parties that faced different political contexts.

Data

The analyses in this section of the chapter rely on panel surveys that measured respondents' partisanship and their contact with party activists at different points in time. The data for Uruguay and Chile come from the Comparative National Elections project, which carried out nationally representative panel surveys in Chile and Uruguay during their respective 1993 and 1994 elections.³ In each country, the survey waves were separated by one to two months. The data for Mexico comes from the panel conducted during the country's 2000 election; this panel

³As I discussed in Chapter 7, the mid-1990s were a transitional period in the politics of both countries. In Chile in the 1990s, most of the parties in the *Concertación* still operated grassroots, territorial party organizations, but mass media campaigning was becoming increasingly important. In Uruguay, 1994 was a somewhat atypical moment in which each of the country's three major parties had roughly the same level of electoral support, and voters' partisan attachments appear to have been unusually fluid. During this period, the Colorado Party was already starting to lose its partisan support, while the *Frente Amplio* was broadening its partisan base, especially in the rural areas where the alliance had traditionally been weakest.

consisted of four waves at approximately two-month intervals. The data for Brazil comes from the Two-City Panel that I used in Chapter 8, and the respondents were interviewed in two-year intervals in 2002, 2004, and 2006.

The dependent variable is the respondent's self-reported party identification. In the Uruguayan and Chilean panels, respondents were asked about their identification with each of their country's major parties individually. In the Mexican and Brazilian panels, respondents were asked to rate their attachment to each of their country's major parties on an 11-point scale. The question wording in each of these surveys allowed respondents to report identifying with more than one party. Because I have party-specific measures of party identification, I estimate the model for each party separately. I also control for the respondent's lagged identification with that same party in the previous wave of the panel, along with individual-level demographic controls.

The main independent variable in the first set of analyses is whether the respondent reported having face-to-face contact with a party activist from a given party during the previous wave of the panel. The activist contact questions in each survey asked respondents to specify the party affiliation of the activist who contacted them, and respondents were allowed to report contact with activists from multiple parties. This type of question is admittedly a less-than-ideal way to measure a respondent's network proximity to party activists because it provides no information about whether the contact between the respondent and the activist was merely a one-off encounter or part of a long-term relationship between the two individuals. Nevertheless, this question is one of the only questions asked in Latin American surveys that establishes any type of individual-level relationship between a respondent and an activist *from a particular party*. Moreover, a major advantage of this measure is that it allows me to generalize across multiple parties in multiple countries.

For the Brazilian panel, I also use an additional measure of a respondent's contact with a party activist that is better-suited for capturing long-term social relationships. In 2002, the survey respondents were asked to name three to four people with whom they discussed politics

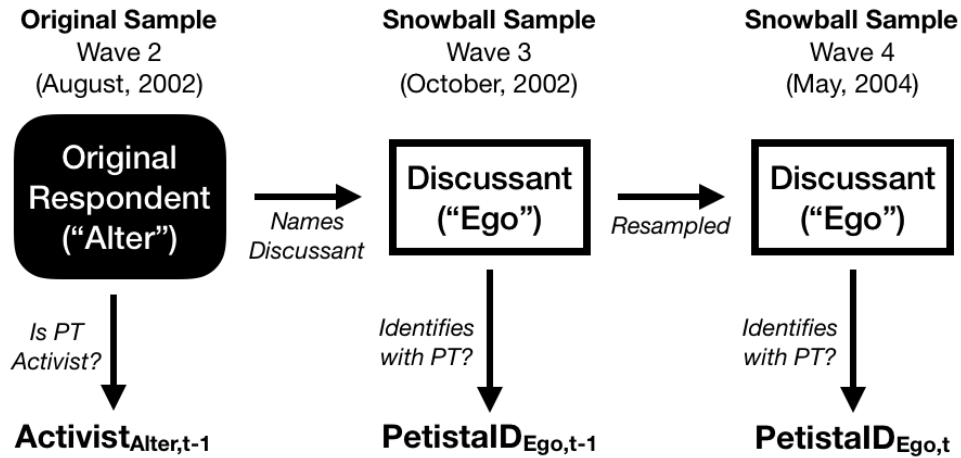


Figure 9.10: Generation of the Two Cities Discussant Network Data

frequently. The designers of the survey then used these “discussant lists” to create a snowball sample, and many of the discussants were interviewed in late 2002, and then again in 2004. The survey does not contain information on whether the discussants were party activists, but I can use data on the original respondents’ party activism to estimate the effect of the original respondent’s party activism on the stability of the discussant’s partisanship between 2002 and 2004.

The subjects in this analysis are the “discussants” (the people named by the original respondents) who were interviewed in both the 2002 and the 2004 waves of the panel; following the convention in social networks research, I will refer to these subjects as the “egos.” The dependent variable is whether the ego identifies with the PT. I also control for the ego’s lagged identification with the PT and the ego’s gender, age, education, and race. My main independent variable is whether the *original respondent* or “alter” was a PT activist in 2002. I code the alter as a PT activist if the alter identified with the PT and reported either doing work for the party or regularly attending party meetings. Every ego in the sample has a social tie with an alter, but only some of these alters are PT activists. The question of interest is whether having an alter who was a PT activist in 2002 affects the ego’s partisanship in 2004, even after controlling for the ego’s partisanship in 2002.

This analysis has weaker external validity because it rests on a non-random sample that is unlikely to be representative of the broader Brazilian electorate. However, this measurement strategy also has several advantages over the measure based on reported activist contact during campaigns. First, the question that generated the discussant list specifically asks the original respondent to name the people with whom they discuss politics the most. Consequently, it is much more likely that the measured social tie will reflect a substantively meaningful relationship between two long-term peers, rather than simply a one-off meeting or conversation between two people who would never see each other again. Second, under this design, my independent and dependent variables are not only measured in separate waves of the survey, but they are also measured by different people: the original respondent reports the existence of the social tie and whether or not they are an activist, while the discussant reports their party identification in 2002 and 2004. The discussant has no control over whether she is named as a discussant or the reporting of the original respondent's party activism, and this greatly reduces the risk that any individual-specific measurement error in the dependent variable would also be correlated with the measurement error in the independent variable. Third, since I have data on both members of the social relationship, I am able to separate out the effect of a social relationship with a partisan in general from that of a relationship with a party activist in particular. The theory outlined in Chapter 2 suggests that while any network peer may exert an effect on a person's partisanship, party activists should have an even greater effect compared to the average partisan network peer.

Results

I begin by analyzing the relationship between contact with party activists and party identification in Chile and Uruguay. Figure 9.11 reports the effect of lagged contact with a party activist on the respondent's identification with the activist's party shortly after the election. Even after controlling for the respondent's lagged party identification and other personal characteristics, respondents who had face-to-face contact with party activists during the campaign were around

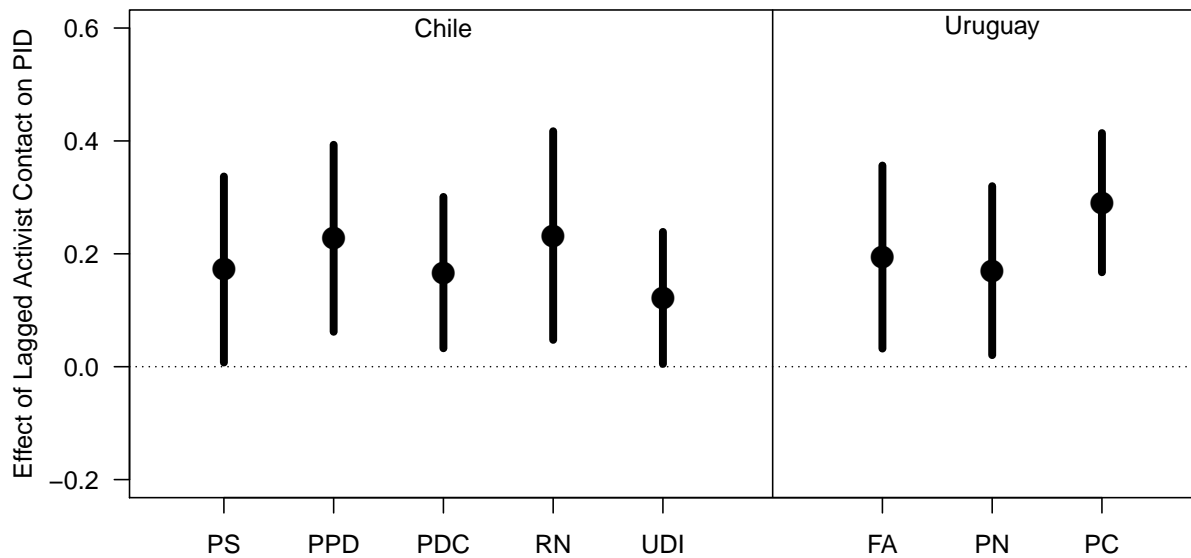


Figure 9.11: The Effect of Lagged Activist Contact on Partisanship in Chile and Uruguay.
Note: The models were estimated separately for each party. Each model controlled for the respondent's lagged partisanship to that particular party, and the respondent's ideology, religion, income, age, education level, and region.

15 to 25 percentage points more likely to identify with the activist's party. The effect size was quite similar across each of these eight parties.

A major concern in analyses that rely on survey measures of both the dependent and independent variables is that the observed relationship may simply be the result of measurement error that is correlated across multiple questions. One possibility is that respondents are predisposed to name a specific party in each survey question, perhaps because that party is the most salient to them at the time of the survey. In that case, we would expect to find a correlation between partisanship and many other party-specific survey responses, even in the absence of a causal relationship. A related concern is that this apparent effect of face-to-face contact with party activists may simply be capturing the effect of the election campaign more broadly. That is, the extent of a respondent's exposure to the election campaign might increase the likelihood that the respondent is contacted by the party, and it might also exert an independent effect on their

partisanship.

One way to address these concerns is by examining whether the respondent's partisanship is correlated with their responses to *other* party-specific campaign questions. If the relationship between activist contact and partisanship is driven mostly by measurement error or broader campaign effects, we should expect to see a similar relationship for other types of campaign exposure. The Chilean and Uruguayan panel surveys also asked respondents whether they were contacted by political parties by mail or by phone. The question wording for these other types of campaign contact was identical to the wording of the question about face-to-face contact with party activists, and the three types of contact were rolled into the same, multi-part survey question. Thus, it is extremely likely that any measurement error in the respondent's reporting of face-to-face contact with activists would also appear in their reporting of mail and telephone contact by political parties. On the other hand, there is no clear theoretical reason why being contacted by mail or phone should affect a person's partisanship. These features make campaign contact by mail and telephone a fitting placebo test.

Figure 9.12 repeats the analyses shown in Figure 9.11, substituting contact by telephone or mail for face-to-face contact with activists. All other aspects of the models were kept the same, including the lagged dependent variable and the individual-level controls. There is no evidence of a consistent positive relationship between a respondent's reported contact by telephone or mail and their partisanship in the post-election wave of the survey. For most parties, the effects are substantively small and insignificant, and for a few parties there is a negative relationship between these other types of campaign contact and the respondent's subsequent partisanship. Only in the case of Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* (FA) are the effects of telephone and mail contact both positive and significant. Over all, the results of these placebo tests suggest that the effects shown in Figure 9.11 are not driven mainly by measurement error in the survey or broader campaign effects. While these placebo tests hardly dispel all alternative explanations, they do suggest that there is something unique about the relationship between face-to-face contact with party activists

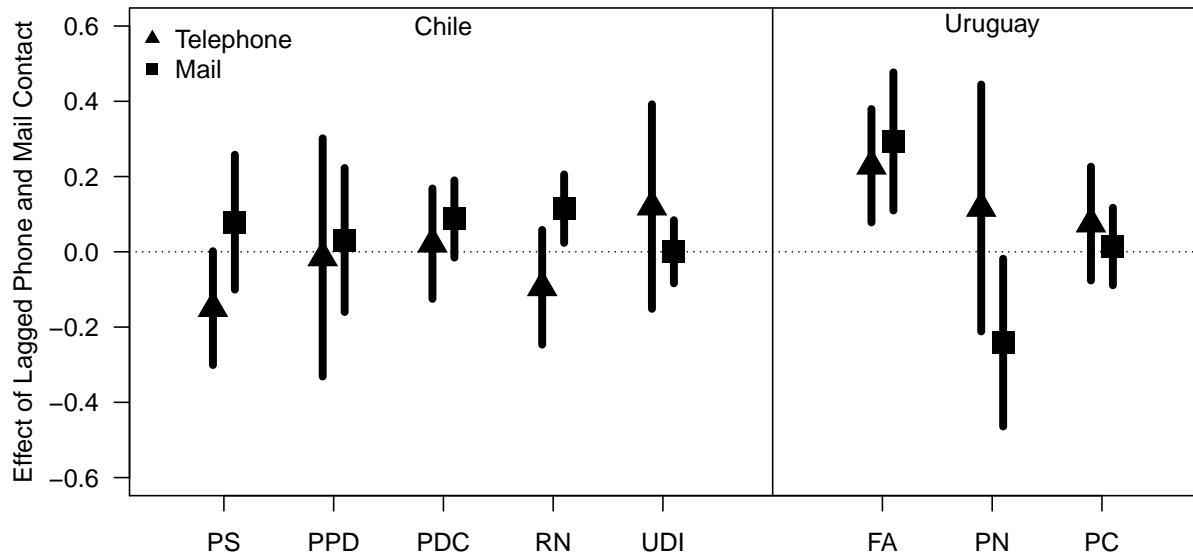


Figure 9.12: Placebo Tests of the Effects of Contact by Telephone and Mail

and partisanship that does not extend to other types of contact with the party that a voter may experience during an election campaign.

A lingering concern is that party activists may be more likely to contact voters who already identify with their party. The traditional solution for this type of endogeneity in public opinion research is to use a cross-lagged model to assess the direction of causal predominance. In the context of this analysis, a cross-lagged model would simultaneously estimate the relationship between lagged activist contact and current party identification and the relationship between lagged party identification and current activist contact. This model cannot be estimated using the Chilean and Uruguayan panels because the independent variable was measured in only one wave of the survey, but the cross-lagged model is appropriate for the Mexican and Brazilian panels.

Figure 9.13 reports the results of the cross-lagged model for each of the three major parties of Mexico and Brazil. The first panel shows the relationship between a respondent's lagged partisanship and their current partisanship, and it represents the stability of their party identification over time. This autoregressive effect was positive and significant for each party,

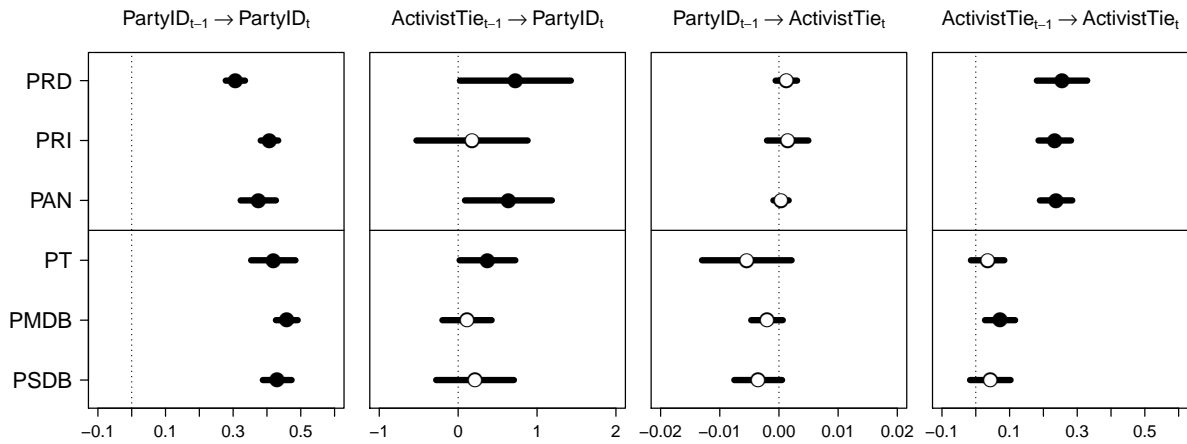


Figure 9.13: Cross-Lagged Effects of Activist Contact and Partisanship in Mexico and Brazil.
Note: The cross-lagged models were estimated separately for each party. Within a given party, the two cross-lagged models were estimated simultaneously.

and the effects were just as strong in Brazil, despite the fact that the time interval between survey waves was much larger in Brazil than in Mexico.

The second panel of this figure shows the lagged effect of contact with party activists on the respondent’s party identification in the next wave of the survey. This is the main independent variable of interest. The effect of lagged activist contact is positive and significant for the leftist PRD and the right-wing PAN in Mexico and for the PT in Brazil. In each of these cases, having contact with a party activist led to between a 0.5 point and an 0.8 point increase in the respondent’s reported attachment to the party in the next wave (measured on an 11-point scale), even after controlling for the respondent’s lagged partisanship and other personal characteristics. However, the effects of lagged activist contact are substantively small and statistically insignificant in the case of Mexico’s PRI and Brazil’s PMDB. The effect for Brazil’s PSDB was only slightly smaller than the effect for the PT, but the confidence interval is considerably wider because very few respondents in the sample reported contact with PSDB activists.

The third panel of Figure 9.13 indicates whether the relationship between contact with party activists and partisanship also runs in the opposite direction. There is no evidence that

respondents who expressed higher partisan support for the party in one wave were more likely to have contact with activists from that party in the next wave. Across each of these parties, the effects were statistically insignificant and substantively small, and the negative coefficients for the Brazilian parties indicates that if anything, these parties were more likely to contact voters who were slightly more opposed to the party compared to the average voter. These null effects of lagged partisanship on current contact with activists help dispel concerns of reverse causation, at least in these particular cases.

The final panel in the figure represents the stability in a respondent's reported contact with party activists over time. Respondents in Mexico who reported contact with activists in one period were significantly more likely to report contact with activists from the same party in the next period, but the results for the Brazilian parties were much smaller and, in the cases of the PT and the PSDB, statistically insignificant. These null results may be a product of the much wider time interval in the Brazilian panel: a party's grassroots operation likely changes more between elections than during the course of a single election campaign, and this could help account for the relative instability of activist contact in the Brazilian survey over time.

Finally, I take advantage of the snowball sampling in the Brazilian panel to estimate the relationship between a respondent's party activism and the party identification of their discussant. Figure 9.14 reports the results of this analysis. The left panel shows that the ego was around 6 percentage points more likely to identify with the PT in 2004 if her alter was a PT activist in 2002, even after controlling for the ego's own partisanship in 2002, gender, age, and education. The right panel introduces an additional term for the alter's own party identification with the PT in 2002. Because all PT activists are PT partisans by definition, the point estimate for the alter's party activism now represents the additional bonus to the ego's partisanship of the alter's party activism, above and beyond the effect from the alter's PT partisanship. The point estimate for the party activism term remains largely unchanged, though the effect is now only significant at the $\alpha = 0.1$ level. Over all, these results support the hypothesis that people who develop long-term

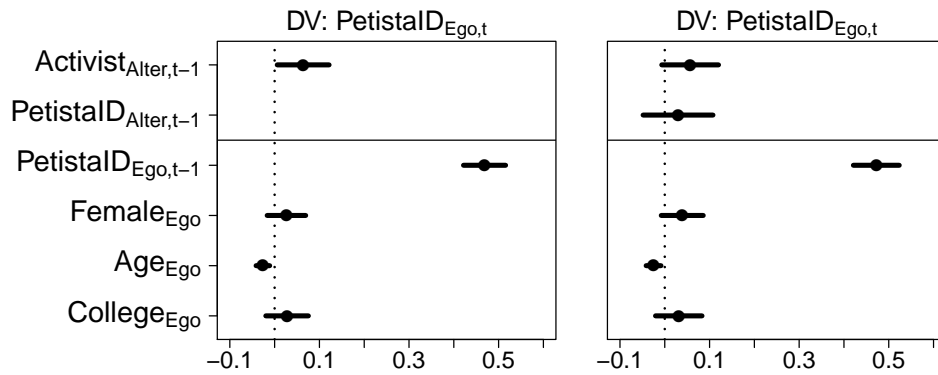


Figure 9.14: Activist Ties and Partisanship in the Brazilian Two-Cities Snowball Sample

social ties with a party activist are more likely to identify with the activist’s party in the future. These results also provide some support for the hypothesis that party activists wield a greater influence over their social networks compared to ordinary partisans.

Conclusion

This dissertation has argued that mass partisanship rests on the social relationships between party activists and the other voters in their communities. Although these social relationships have been more visible in some chapters compared to others, they were a driving force throughout my argument and each of my analyses. They were at the heart of the grassroots party work carried out by the Radical assemblies, the Batllista clubs, the Christian Democratic and Socialist shantytown organizations, the *Frente Amplio* base committees, and the Democratic Revolution territories. They were the principal tool that parties from across the ideological spectrum used to draw in new supporters and hold onto their loyalties during moments of crisis. These relationships are the single most valuable asset that activists bring to their parties. They were also a major source of the activists’ influence in their parties throughout much of the 20th century, and the reason why party leaders and politicians were willing to tolerate them for so long.

The ultimate test of this dissertation’s social network mechanism is whether the presence

of party activists in a social network or dyad leads to changes in the partisanship of the other members of that network or dyad. The results of this chapter indicate that party activists can affect their peers' partisanship across a wide range of social network settings and political contexts. The first part of this chapter demonstrated the critical role that activists played in the early partisan growth of the party Democratic Revolution using three original datasets on Chilean voters' family ties, classmates networks, and social media networks. The second part of this chapter replicated these analyses across over a dozen other political parties from Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Brazil using panel survey data that asked respondents about their social network ties and face-to-face contact with activists.

One important way in which the analyses of this chapter differed from previous work on the social contagion of partisanship (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Baker, Ames, and Renno 2006; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007) was that several of my analyses sought to disentangle the effect of a party activist from the effect of an ordinary partisan. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 suggested that party activists should be uniquely effective at shaping the partisan composition of their social networks due to their hybrid role as a party actor who inhabits the same networks as the voters that they seek to influence. The findings of this chapter support that hypotheses. In the Twitter analyses, I found that social ties to party activists still mattered even after I took into account the partisan leanings of the other members of a user's social network. Similarly, in the analysis of Brazilian discussant networks, I found that a voter's status as a PT activist had an additive effect on their peers, above and beyond the effect of the activists' own partisanship.

Another objective of this chapter was to probe the scope of the activist's influence over their social networks. My findings indicate that the effect of activists on other voters' partisanship is generalizable across a diverse range of network settings, political contexts, and political parties. While my argument in this dissertation has emphasized the importance of routine, face-to-face contact that takes place over the course of months or even years, some of the findings of this

chapter imply that activists may be able to affect voters' partisanship over relatively short time-frames, and over other types of social ties as well. The results of the university network analysis suggest that this influence can even operate over potentially latent ties between alumni who may no longer see each other in person on a regular basis. Likewise, the results of the Twitter analyses indicate that activists could influence social media users that they may not know personally. One of the Twitter analyses also suggested that activists may even be able to influence the partisanship of users with whom they are only indirectly connected.

At the same time, these findings also demonstrate the limits of the activists' reach. Party activists had the greatest amount of influence over voters who already shared their ideological viewpoint, and voters whose political views were cross-pressured by the heterogeneous partisan preferences in their social networks. This second type of heterogeneous effect is particularly important because it suggests a scope condition for my argument about the relationship between party activists and other voters' partisanship: party activists are likely to matter the most in social networks that have a heterogeneous partisan composition, while activists may be either ineffective or redundant in contexts where most voters' social networks are homogeneous in the sense that most of their peers already overwhelmingly support the same party. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this scope condition limits the generalizability of *some* parts of my argument to other regions of the world, where voters' social networks tend to be of the homogeneous type.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This dissertation has highlighted the social nature of partisanship in Latin America, and the role that low-level party activists play as representatives of their parties in their communities. I argued that political parties use their activists to shape, forge, and maintain the partisan identities of the other voters who inhabit the activists' social networks and communities. Consequently, the depth of a party's partisan support in a community is a function of its ability to recruit activists in that community who are willing to work for the party over the long term. In communities where the party has a strong grassroots party organization and a large base of local activists, the party can pull new supporters into the party and reinforce the partisan identities of the supporters that it already has. However, in communities where the party is weakly organized, the party may struggle to attract new partisans, and the partisans that it does have are more likely to desert it during moments of crisis.

The first part of the dissertation elaborated on my theory about the relationship between party activists, politicians, and ordinary voters. In Chapter 2, I developed a theoretical framework about how partisan identities can spread through a social network over time, and how party activists' grassroots work can both forge and stabilize the partisan identities of their network peers. In Chapter 3, I modeled the strategic interaction between party activists and party elites, and

I identified two main strategies that parties use to keep their activists mobilized on a year-round basis: patronage and a voice in party decisions.

The second part of the dissertation traced the historical development of Latin American parties from the 19th century to the present. I showed that variation in the relationship between parties and their activists over time explains the rises and falls of mass party identification over the last two centuries. In Chapter 4, I examined why some 19th century elite-founded parties chose to transform into mass parties by incorporating middle and lower-class activists into their organizations on a permanent basis. I also showed that parties that successfully made this transition were more likely to acquire mass partisan support during the 20th century and remain electorally-viable after the onset of mass democracy. In Chapter 5, I looked how the activists' grassroots work and their relationship with their parties changed during the decades following the expansion of suffrage. I showed that while having a large activist base enabled a party to mobilize recently-enfranchised voters into the party, the activists also became more threatening to the interests of party elites, and this led to severe internal conflicts within many Latin American parties in the mid-20th century. Chapter 6 turned to the decline of grassroots party organizations and mass partisanship at the end of the 20th century. I argued that the state reforms of the 1980s and 1990s severed parties' grasp on patronage resources and led many of them to demobilize their activist networks and transition to cheaper forms of party organization. However, I also showed that parties' activist-based party organizations and mass partisan support were more likely to endure in places where the party had access to patronage in local governments. Chapter 7 examined how granting activists a voice in party decisions could help a party hold onto its activists in countries where patronage is no longer widely available. I showed that the unusually high amount of influence that party activists wield in the decisions of Uruguay's *Frente Amplio* has helped this alliance keep its activists mobilized, while the efforts by Chile's *Concertación* to curtail activist voice in party decisions has deterred activists from working for the alliance or its constituent parties.

The final part of the dissertation returned to the relationship between party activists and the partisan loyalties of the other voters who live in their communities. Chapter 8 tested this relationship at the neighborhood level, while Chapter 9 tested it at the social network level. The findings of these chapters suggest that party activists are a powerful tool that help new parties grow their partisan support, and help established parties strengthen and maintain their supporters' partisan loyalties.

Generalizability Beyond Latin America

A natural question is whether the patterns that I have demonstrated in this dissertation are unique to Latin America, or part of a broader phenomenon that is also relevant to other regions in the world. One part of my argument that travels particularly well to other contexts is my theory about the social nature of partisanship. In fact, the social contagion and social network models upon which this dissertation rests were developed mainly in other regions of the world, and they have only recently been imported into the study of Latin American politics. These models grew out of the Columbia School of voting behavior (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948; Berelson et al., 1954), and they have been used to explain political mobilization in the United States (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Christakis and Fowler 2011; Bond et al. 2012), Europe (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007), and the Middle East (Steinert-Threlkeld 2017; Doherty and Schraeder 2018).

Another part of my argument that travels well is the proposition that even elite-founded parties rely on low-level activists and grassroots party organizations to attract partisan support. The Americanist literature on the historical development of the Democratic and Republican parties of the United States shows that 19th century grassroots party organizations such as party clubs helped these parties broaden their base of support (Aldrich 2011, 102-111; Cohen et al. 2008, 57-60), and that the political machines of the 20th century helped these parties pull recent

immigrants into the party's orbit (Shefter 1994). Activists and local party organizations have also featured prominently in recent work on the development of parties in Europe. Ziblatt (2017) shows that several 19th century European conservative parties went through many of the same structural and organizational transformations that I demonstrated in Chapter 4. Parties such as the British Conservative Party and several of the conservative parties in Scandinavia developed strong mass organizations by the early 20th century, and this helped them broaden their base of support and remain electorally-viable even after the expansion of suffrage. We also see similar patterns in many contemporary "elite" parties in the Global South. For example, Thachil (2016) demonstrates that India's Bharatiya Janata Party used community activists to cultivate support among lower-caste voters who were traditionally hostile to the party.

While there is considerable evidence that activist-based party organizations have helped parties in other regions of the world *attract* partisan supporters, it is less clear that parties in other regions always need activists in order to *keep* their partisans. One of the implications of the model that I developed in Chapter 2 is that whether or not party activists are necessary for sustaining partisanship within a network depends on the degree of partisan heterogeneity in that network. Party activists are most critical in networks with a *heterogeneous* partisan composition, where partisans frequently come into contact and build social relationships with partisans from other parties. Because Latin America's 20th century parties rarely mapped onto clear social cleavages such as race or class, many Latin American voters' social networks were traditionally of this heterogeneous type; Latin American voters often lived next door to, worked with, and socialized with people who did not share their political beliefs, and this made parties' grassroots organizations and neighborhood activists an especially important tool for reinforcing voters' party loyalties in the face of disagreement (Rama 1971).

However, the model in Chapter 2 also suggests that if a social network's partisan composition is *homogeneous*, then the partisanship of the network may be self-sustaining even in the absence of activists. This is likely one of the reasons why the decline in party activism in the

late 20th century did not have the same effect on partisanship in the United States that it had in Latin American and Europe. Unlike party loyalties throughout much of Latin America, party loyalties in the contemporary United States are strongly correlated with a variety of social cleavages, including race, region, and class. Since these same cleavages also tend to structure voters' social interactions, the partisan composition of the average voter's social network is considerably more homogeneous in the United States than in Latin America, and this helps reinforce voters' partisan attachments even in communities where parties lack strong grassroots party organizations. Similarly, activists are unlikely to play a major role in reinforcing partisanship in countries where parties compete primarily along ethnic lines.

Implications

How Political Identities Form and Endure

Over the last decade, Latin Americanists have shown a renewed interest in mass partisanship. With a few important exceptions (Samuels and Zucco 2018; Poertner Forthcoming), much of this recent research has assumed a strictly top-down model of partisan identity-formation and change, in which a voter's partisanship is essentially a response to the actions of the party's politicians in office (Seawright 2012; Lupu 2016; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro 2015). By contrast, this dissertation treats partisan identity-formation as a largely decentralized process that may have very little relationship to the behavior of elite politicians on the national stage. According to my argument, a voter's partisanship is rooted less in her opinion of the party's senior politicians than in her opinion of the party that she sees in her daily life: the party organization that is active in her neighborhood, and the party activists who are part of her social network.

My decentralized model of partisanship raises several implications about how party loyalties are likely to develop and evolve. It opens up the possibility that a party's "brand" may vary widely across different constituencies, and supporters of the same party may develop

drastically different understandings of what their party is and whom it represents. In this way, parties like the Colorado Party of 20th century Uruguay could hold together a vast and diverse set of supporters by becoming simultaneously a guardian of tradition in the eyes of rural ranchers, an agent of economic progress and a bulwark against revolution in the eyes of the middle class, and a champion of the poor in the eyes of Montevideo workers. This dissertation's decentralized model of partisanship also helps explain why many Latin American parties have managed to hold onto significant levels of partisan support despite experiencing repeated corruption scandals and abysmal performance in office. When a voter's partisanship is rooted primarily in her social relationships with that party's activists and other partisans, she may continue to support her party even after she recognizes that it is full of corrupt politicians who routinely pursue policies that are against her interests. A political party is much greater than the elite politicians at the top, and these elite missteps may make little difference to a voter who thinks of the party in terms of the activists down the street rather than the politicians in the congressional palace.

Whom Do Parties Serve?

One of the ongoing debates about parties in the United States is whether parties are the agent of politicians who use them to win and retain office (Aldrich 2011; Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005), or tools that interest groups use to achieve their "intense policy demands" (Cohen et al. 2008). This debate has rarely surfaced in the literature on Latin American parties because it was blindingly obvious to most observers that the vast majority of the parties that existed in the region prior to the late 20th century were the agents of their politicians. The elite-centric nature of Latin American parties was perhaps clearest in the cases of the region's 19th century "traditional parties," but it was also emphasized to some degree in studies of most of the mid-20th century "labor-based parties," including Mexico's PRI (Collier and Collier 1991; Garrido 1982; Osten 2018), Argentina's Peronists (McGuire 1997), Brazil's PTB (Skidmore 1967), Peru's APRA (Graham 1992), Venezuela's Democratic Action (Martz 1966; Coppedge 1994), and Chile's

Socialist Party (Drake 1978). The more-recent rise of parties rooted in social movements like Brazil's PT and Bolivia's MAS was greeted as a welcome change by many Latin Americanists, but even in these cases, some observers worried that their images were in danger of being eclipsed by the images of their popular leaders, Lula and Evo Morales (Oviedo 2010; Samuels and Shugart 2010; Samuels and Zucco 2014b).

This dissertation has taken a more-nuanced approach to the question of whom parties serve. On the one hand, my assumptions about how parties *form* conform closely to the politician-centered model. This can be seen in the way that I wrote my own model in Chapter 3 (the elite politician founds the party at the beginning of the game and decides how to structure it), and in my focus on the decisions of party elites and political leaders in Chapter 4. On the other hand, this dissertation has also emphasized that low-level party activists *did* eventually gain a meaningful voice in many of these parties, at least temporarily. Like the intense policy-demanders in Cohen et al. (2008), policy-seeking activists in Latin America used political parties as a tool for bringing about social, economic, and political change. At the same time, however, these party activists never dominated their parties completely. Even in cases when activists seized control over their party's convention and national leadership bodies, they still had to contend with powerful politicians who were often adept at co-opting groups of activists and reclaiming their leadership roles in the party.

In this dissertation, I have treated parties as battlegrounds between different groups of politicians, party leaders, party activists, and organized interests, rather than a tool that can be owned and wielded by a single leader, social movement, or social class. Internal conflicts pervaded Latin America's major parties throughout the 20th century, and these conflicts are essential for understanding why these parties behaved the way that they did—for example, why their ideological positions often swung sharply between the left and the right during the course of a single presidential term, or why many of these parties often seemed to be in a constant state of civil war between rival factions. The actions of parties like Chile's Radicals in the 1940s, or

Uruguay's Colorados in the 1930s and again in the 1960s would appear irrational if we viewed these parties as unitary actors that were firmly in the hands of either a homogeneous collection of politicians or a single policy-demanding group that was united in purpose. On the other hand, they are less surprising when we view the party as an uneasy alliance of actors with diverging interests who are each trying to pull the party in a different direction.

Parties Without Patronage

Although this dissertation has maintained that clientelism is neither necessary nor sufficient for party activists to turn voters into partisans, I have argued that patronage is one of the most important tools that parties use to keep their activists mobilized over the long term. Chapter 5 showed that the large supply of patronage in the ISI-era Latin American state helped parties finance vast networks of grassroots party organizations that penetrated nearly every neighborhood and town; this chapter also argued that patronage was often a stabilizing influence that helped parties mitigate their internal conflicts. Then Chapter 6 showed that party activism became harder to sustain once parties lost control over patronage at the end of the 20th century. It seems unlikely that parties in countries like Chile and Uruguay will ever again control the abundant patronage resources that helped fuel party activism in the 20th century, and one of the most vexing questions that Latin American parties have grappled with over the last thirty years is how to keep the party alive and relevant to voters in a world without patronage.

The transformation of Chile's contemporary parties illustrates one way that parties can adapt to these new constraints. By the mid-2000s, all of Chile's major parties had chosen to walk away from their historical grassroots functions, and they soon evolved into minimalist organizations. They exist as collections of highly-visible politicians and less-visible political consultants and technocrats who have strong governing records and offer clear and distinct policy alternatives. Their electoral endurance over the last three decades demonstrates that parties do not need to be anything more than that in order to win elections and channel voters' policy demands.

Moreover, the Chilean party system is arguably the Latin American party system that most closely conforms to the “responsible party model.” By nearly every metric, Chilean parties appeared to be everything that many Political Scientists believed parties *ought* to be—no more, but no less.

Yet while Chile’s Polity score has held steady at +10 throughout the last decade, it has become increasingly difficult to see Chile as a healthy democracy. The minimalist nature of Chile’s contemporary parties is not the only cause behind the decade-long series of political crises that has paralyzed each of the last three presidencies, but it has left the parties and their politicians uniquely incapable of managing these crises. As the parties withdrew from society, they lost most of the legitimacy that they had relied on in the early 1990s, when they navigated Chile from military dictatorship to democracy. Most voters in Chile now view their parties with deep distrust, a majority of eligible voters have withdrawn from electoral politics altogether, and a growing number of Chileans of my generation have come to see street protests as the only realistic way to get their voices heard. According to recent public opinion polls, the share of adult Chileans who participated in the *cacerolazos* and marches of October and November, 2019 was more than twice the share of Chileans who still identified with *any* political party.¹ Under these conditions, it is difficult for parties to lead their country through political crises or even credibly claim to represent a majority of citizens.

Uruguay’s *Frente Amplio* demonstrates a second way that parties can respond to the disappearance of patronage. While many Latin American parties demobilized their territorial party organizations in the 1990s, the *Frente Amplio* choose to double down on grassroots party activism by granting its activists voice-based incentives in the form of institutionalized influence in party decisions. This has helped the *Frente Amplio* keep its activists mobilized even in the absence of patronage, and it is difficult to walk more than a couple of blocks in any neighborhood of Montevideo without passing a *Frente*amplista base committee. As this dissertation has argued, the *Frente*’s strategy of motivating its activists with a voice in party decisions is hardly a novel

¹CEP poll # 84, December 2019

strategy in Latin American politics. Chapter 4 showed that several Latin American parties in the 19th century relied on voice-based incentives to incorporate lower and middle class activists into their organizations, and activist voice became an enduring part of the identities of organizations such as Chile's Radical Party and Uruguay's Batllista movement for generations. However, this dissertation has also highlighted the severe electoral and policy costs that politicians incur when they relinquish control over their parties in this way. While the *Frente Amplio's* experience suggests that voice-based incentives continue to be an effective strategy for mobilizing grassroots party activists in the absence of patronage, it remains unclear whether many parties today will ever be willing to accept the political risks that such a strategy entails.

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